

## A Study on Formative Characteristics of the Metro Sexual in Men's Fashion<sup>+</sup> – Focused on Male Consumers in their 10's~40's –

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### Abstract

This study was attempted to be a help in estimating changes of men's fashion in sociocultural environment by examining the diversified trends of domestic men's fashion through literature review, fashion collection analysis and questionnaire in various aspects. For data collection in this study, questionnaires were used, and these were corrected and supplemented after preliminary survey for male consumers from September 2009 to March 2010. Among total 460 copies, 431 copies were used in final analysis.

First, among typical factors of changes in image of men's fashion, change of sexual role was shown as the most important factor. Contrary to men of the past, modern men are actively taking care of their appearance with changes of social values, which indicates that viewpoints on men have become flexible, such that the image of beauty does not apply just to women. Second, analysis on factors of image changes in men's fashion by age revealed that high mean values were obtained in factors of change of sexual role and trend with difference between groups, and factors of expression of individuality were highly rated without remarkable difference, and aesthetic factors were poorly rated without significance. Third, analysis on preference for formative characteristics of the Metro Sexual showed that feminine materials were negatively rated, and analysis on wearing experience revealed that several items become popular, indicating that wearing experiences are increasing in various areas.

This study suggests a new viewpoint of cultural sexual consciousness of the youth that is continuously changing, and is meaningful in understanding emotional and rational lifestyle and cultural style of Metro Sexual, a recent phenomenon of men's fashion.

**Key Words** : Metro Sexual, Men's Fashion, Formative Characteristics, Ubersexual,  
Preference for Men's Style

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## I. Introduction

The trends of unisex, androgynous, and genderless, which emerged on a full scale after 1960s, have been expressed modern men's fashion, and with appearance of the Metro Sexual phenomenon. Recently men over the Internet to share information with each other as women and is emerging as a trend setter. In addition, men share their stories and latest information as cool hunters, and real time sense market changes in expansion of micro trends. That is today's new men's shows this.

Changes in social paradigm seeking after diversity do not adhere to sex. And instead, get men accustomed to variable sexual roles to change if necessary, and they are searching for their reason for being and identity through external factors. Also, modern men have an interest in female style or design and positively intervene in and accept visual and aesthetic things what has become actively involved.<sup>1)</sup> The resulting changes of gender roles have changed cultural form and are closely related with sociocultural code phenomena. And also generalizing the Metro Sexual phenomenon for cultural and social reasons and ultimately leading to a new fashion phenomenon.

Therefore the feminization trend of men's fashion is required to be viewed not as a simple fashion phenomenon and sharp changes in men's fashion should be viewed in more multi-sided standpoints. This study was attempted to be a help in estimating changes of men's fashion in sociocultural environment by examining the diversified trends of domestic men's fashion through literature review, fashion collection analysis and questionnaire in various aspects. To perform this study, detailed objectives of this study are established as

follows: The first objective is to look into emotional factors of male consumers to the Metro Sexual image; the second objective is to analyze difference in factors of image changes in men's fashion by age; and the third objective is to see preference and experience by formative characteristics of Metro Sexual by age.

## II. Theoretical Backgrounds

### 1. Generation and Variation of Metro Sexual

Metro Sexual, one of the most innovative elements being spot-lighted whenever men's lifestyle is described, represents the feminization trend of men, and such trend has existed until now.<sup>2)</sup> Although there have been lots of viewpoints that fundamental nature of the Metro Sexual phenomenon results from the feminization of men. Now it is generally analyzed that they are not focused on feminization but expression of one's individuality being pursued by individuals became clear. Diversified styles have emerged to give men a range of options who felt stuffy to the previous limited men's clothing. This reflects that rather men's desire to express themselves than feminization of men plays a more important role with use of ornaments for women's clothing or pattern materials that have never been used in men's clothing.

The Metro Sexual phenomenon basically supports the characteristic of masculine culture. According to transition to digital information society with development of computer, Internet, etc., social structure has taken on individualistic aspects,<sup>3)</sup> where men share culture with people of peer group out of a monolithic social atmosphere and show a creative aspect therein. As women's emotional thinking and ability have

become more important, men have changed, and the Metro Sexual phenomenon centered on them is acting as a major factor in masculine culture.

The Metro Sexual image in modern male fashion is divided into several forms and is developing into various terms such as Alpha Male, Cross Dressing, ubersexual, chosik-nam(herbivore man), Grooming,<sup>4)</sup> etc., however, it also means men who generously invest in themselves as their sexual identity becomes clear<sup>5)</sup>, their feminine emotion is naturally recognized, and their egoism of putting stress rather on me than social relations becomes stronger. It is deemed that formative studies and analyses on Metro Sexual are required in diversified aspects including silhouette, material, color, pattern of clothes, accessory, and make-up.

## 2. Formative Characteristics of Metro Sexual

For modern male fashion businesses, the boundaries of items are disappearing with alteration of male consumers' consciousness, kinds of dresses are subdivided all the more according to age, price, concept and distribution. And the men's clothing market that has been simple is encountered with new changes with formation of niche markets in the boundaries of each product group.<sup>6)</sup>

To investigate the features of men's fashion in market being subdivided and specialized in the said manner, the formative characteristics of Metro Sexual were analyzed. Seen from men's fashion magazines(Gap Press Men's, Fashion News Men's, Uomo Collesioni) and Internet fashion sites, the first characteristic is the line of design that is, silhouette, and the representative silhouettes are hour-glass

silhouette that emphasizes the waist and expresses the gentle shoulder line, etc. and fitted silhouette that reveals the man's body in tops and bottoms. In addition, for details, those that have been utilized in women's clothing such as ribbon, frill, ruffle, and tuck are being commonly used.

For materials, those characterized by soft texture that have been used with limitation to women's clothing, for example, lace, chiffon, vinyl, mesh, velvet, silk, fur, etc., are being increasingly used, and the utilization of see-through material lays emphasis on sexualism<sup>7)</sup> by showing the skin. For color and pattern, pink and violet colors that represent the existing femininity are increasingly used, and the utilization of brilliant primary colors or pastel tone is being generalized. For pattern, contrary to conventional men's fashion featured by stripe or check, floral patterns or fine natural patterns are being used, expressing flexible and soft image.<sup>8)</sup> For fashion accessories, they most reflect the masculinization of products exclusive for women. The utilization of various fashion accessories that have been neglected in traditional men's fashion such as scarf or high heels develops men's fashion and makes it more gorgeous. For instance, seen from a tie regarded as exclusive property of men, ribbon forms like a bow tie have appeared and are being utilized as point accessories. Finally, for hair and makeup, diversified hair styles without distinction of sex have emerged in addition to skin care or make-up cosmetics exclusive for men.

As mentioned in the above, the characteristics of feminization that appears at the same time with pursuit of one's individuality and style out of fixed ideas of men's fashion are summarized by formative factors as shown in <Figure 1>.

and the results of analysis on formative characteristics of the Metro Sexual image such as make-up into silhouette, material, color, fashion accessories, and others of men's fashion are reflected in questionnaires to analyze men's fashion.

for male consumers in Seoul and Gyeonggi areas from September 2009 to March 2010. Among total 462 copies of questionnaires, 431 copies were used in final analysis except for those including insincere responses. The demographic distribution of subjects is as shown in <Table 1>.

For data analysis, factor analysis was conducted using Varimax orthogonal rotation with SPSS Ver.10 in order to look into the components of image of men's fashion, and Cronbach's alpha was obtained to verify reliability. To see difference between factors of image changes and preference of men's fashion by age, one-way ANOVA and Scheffe test were conducted.

### III. Method

#### 1. Data Collection and Analysis Method

For data collection in this study, questionnaire was used, and a preliminary survey was conducted for each ten male consumers in their late teens to forties (40 in total), and this study was conducted with questionnaires corrected and supplemented after the preliminary survey



<Fig. 1> Formative Characteristics of the Metro Sexual

<Table 1> Demographic Characteristics

	Contents	Frequency (%)
Age Group	Late 10s	95(22)
	20s	112(25.9)
	30s	121(28.0)
	40s	103(23.9)
Occupation	Students	121(28.)
	Professional worker	68(15.8)
	Office workers	206(47.8)
	Looking for work	12(2.8)
	Other	24(5.6)
Monthly income	Less than 2 million	124(28.8)
	2 million – 3 million	141(32.7)
	3 million – 4 million	104(24.1)
	More than 4 million	62(14.4)
Status	Married	117(27.1)
	Single	314(72.9)
Money spent on their appearance	Less than 50 thousand	129(29.9)
	50 –100 thousand	248(57.5)
	100 – 200 thousand	48(11.1)
	200 – 500 thousand	27(6.3)
	More than 50 thousand	9(2.1)
Total		431(100)

**2. Tool for Measurement**

To develop a tool for measurement of components in image changes of men's fashion, first, image associated with the current change of men's fashion was investigated in an open-end question for 23 master's degree students and 11 doctoral students majoring in clothing and textiles. Also, preferred image measurement items used in previous studies on preferred clothing image(Kim Yuduok, Kim Miyoung ; Lee Myunghee ; Lee Hyunjung, Kim Miyoung)<sup>9)10)11)</sup> were reviewed, and questions used importantly in common were selected. The total selected number

of image adjectives of men's fashion was 20, and they were directed to be familiar with definition of terms and the cases of the Metro Sexual in questionnaires, and then to measure the image adjectives of the currently changing men's fashion on the 5-point Likert scale.

To develop questions used in the formative characteristics of men's fashion, first, results of analysis by the author on men's fashion collection, fashion magazines, and Internet data were put together and divided into six areas, and for detailed items, questions were developed based on previous studies on the Metro Sexual image(Choi Yunla ; Ahn Boeun ; Kong Chasook)<sup>12)13)14)</sup> as well as data analyzed

by expert group in an open-end type.

## IV. Results & Discussion

### 1. Components of Image Changes in Men's Fashion

Factor analysis was conducted on image changes in men's fashion using Varimax orthogonal rotation, and Cronbach's alpha was obtained to verify reliability. The results of factor analysis on image adjectives of men's fashion are divided into four factors as shown in <Table 2>, which account for 77.61% of all variables.

Fashion in men in their late teens to forties were shown to be change of sexual role as factor 1, expression of one's individuality as factor 2, trend as factor 3, and aesthetics as factor 4. Factor 1 accounts for about 35% of all variables, which indicates that it is the most important factor in components of image changes in men's fashion. This demonstrates that contrary to the past, viewpoints on men have become flexible, such that the image of beauty does not apply just to women.

### 2. Difference in Factors of Image Changes in Men's Fashion by Age

<Table 2> Result of Factor Analysis

Factors & Items	Factor Loading	Even Value	Explained Value	Cronbach's Alpha
Factor 1 : Change of sexual role - Soft - Feminine - Weak - Light - Pretty - Sexy	.790 .810 .744 .754 .796 .768	4.484	34.913 (34.913)	0.812
Factor 2 : Expression of individuality - Unique - Attractive - Unusual - Distinctive - Odd	.812 .692 .775 .781 .698	3.845	18.215 (53.127)	0.756
Factor 3 : Trend - Trendy - Fashionable - Ornamental - Unpractical	.766 .745 .686 .631	2.301	11.324 (64.441)	0.712
Factor 4 : Aesthetics - Stylish - Modern - Chic	.756 .712 .691	2.101	8.268 (72.61)	0.678

Emotional factors of image of the Metro Sexual

The results of ANOVA to see difference in factors of image changes in men's fashion by age are as summarized in <Table 3>. Analysis on difference in factors of image changes in men's fashion revealed that there was significant difference in factors of change of sexual role and trend between groups of male consumers in their late teens to forties. For factor of change in sexual role, those in their thirties and forties more preferred it than those in their teens to twenties, and for factor of trend, those in their teens and twenties highly rated it and those in their forties rated it to be lowest. For factor of expression of one's individuality, there was significant difference in all four groups with higher mean values, but aesthetic factor was poorly evaluated without significant difference.

### 3. Difference in Preference for Formative Characteristics of Metro Sexual

To look into difference in preference for formative characteristics of the Metro Sexual in men aged teens to forties by age group, preference for each item was investigated on the 5-point Likert scale. The results of analysis

using one-way ANOVA and Scheffe test with age as independent variable and design, color and pattern, material, accessories, makeup, and hair style as dependent variables are as summarized in <Table 4>. First, for design items, details of ruffle, tuck, etc., floral pattern or brilliant pattern, gorgeous shoes or high heels for men, BB cream or make-up cosmetics were shown to be statistically significant. For details of ruffle or tuck, and floral pattern or brilliant pattern in design items, those in their teens were shown to have higher mean value in those in their twenties, thirties, and forties, and for accessories of gorgeous shoes or high heels for men, those in their teens and twenties more preferred them compared to those in their thirties and forties. Also, for make-up of BB cream or make-up cosmetics, those in their forties were shown to have lower mean value than those in their teens to thirties.

As seen from the above, in general, men are positively rating the changing men's fashion, and there is a trend of widespread viewpoints on design and color, fashion accessories, hair, and makeup. This result, coinciding with the result reported by Park Soojin and Park Gilsoon<sup>15)</sup>,

<Table 3> Factors of Image Changes in Men's Fashion by Age

Contents	10s	20s	30s	40s	F-value
Change of sexual role	3.15 b	3.24 b	4.12 a	4.45 a	3.86***
Expression of individuality	4.15	4.15	4.02	4.04	3.78
Trend	4.06 a	4.01 a	3.45 b	3.17 c	9.81***
Aesthetics	2.57	2.66	2.88	2.45	1.23

\*\*\*p<.001

&lt;Table 4&gt; Preference for Formative Characteristics of Metro Sexual

Contents	10s	20s	30s	40s	F-value
Silhouette	4.12 a	4.25 a	4.18 b	4.08 b	2.154
Details	3.85 a	3.18 b	3.11 b	2.98 b	7.245**
Pattern	4.02 a	3.61 b	3.42 b	3.31 b	3.487*
Colors	4.12	4.25	4.01	4.08	2.417
Material	2.78	2.87	2.45	2.12	1.447
Accessory	4.55	4.32	4.35	4.12	2.132
Shoes	3.35 a	3.21 a	3.04 b	2.24 c	11.587***
Make-up	4.32 a	4.12 a	4.15 a	3.87 b	8.745***
Skin-care	4.12	4.35	4.32	4.28	.133
Hair Style	4.15	4.11	3.97	3.92	.169

\*p<.05, \*\*p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001

shows a trend that there is the increasing number of men who accept unique style of others as individuality and have broad-mindedness. However, lace or see-through material is still negatively rated in those in their teens to forties, therefore application of too feminine material to brand products requires proper discretion.

Such Metro Sexual consumption is rather a part of new trends reflecting appearance-oriented views than a form of consumption with feminization of men in modern society.<sup>16)</sup>

#### 4. Wearing Experience & Intentions of Metro Sexual Image

To look into difference in wearing experience of the Metro Sexual image in male consumers by age, cross-tabulation analysis was conducted. The investigation into 10 questions in total 7 areas of silhouette, color and pattern, material, accessory, skin care, makeup and hair revealed that as shown in <Table 5>, regarding wearing experience by item, 76.8% of respondents had experiences in wearing fitted clothing with a slender waist, and clothing in bright and gorgeous colors like pink or violet was found to be most worn by respondents as 81.9%.



However, for details of ruffle or tuck to put more emphasis on the Metro Sexual image, materials of a feminine feel such as lace or see-through material, shoes in gorgeous colors

<Table 5> Wearing Experience & Intentions of Metro Sexual Image

\* E : experience \* I : intentions

Contents	10s n=95		20s n=112		30s n=1921		40s n=17603		To n=4
	E	I	E	I	E	I	E	I	E
Silhouette	75 (17.4)	81 (18.8)	84 (19.5)	90 (20.9)	91 (21.1)	95 (22.0)	81 (18.8)	93 (21.6)	331 (76.8)
Details	14 (3.2)	32 (7.4)	24 (5.6)	31 (7.2)	7 (1.6)	21 (4.9)	3 (0.7)	25 (5.8)	48 (11.1)
Pattern	29 (6.7)	35 (8.1)	32 (7.4)	42 (9.7)	18 (4.2)	23 (5.3)	17 (3.9)	20 (4.6)	96 (22.2)
Colors	89 (20.7)	93 (21.6)	95 (22.0)	108 (25.1)	91 (21.2)	110 (25.5)	78 (18.1)	85 (19.7)	353 (82.0)
Material	5 (1.2)	18 (4.2)	7 (1.6)	13 (3.0)	4 (0.9)	9 (2.0)	1 (0.2)	5 (1.2)	17 (3.9)
Accessory	35 (8.1)	81 (18.8)	48 (11.1)	78 (18.1)	69 (16.0)	72 (16.7)	67 (15.6)	76 (17.6)	219 (50.8)
Shoes	6 (1.4)	24 (5.6)	15 (3.5)	21 (4.9)	3 (0.7)	19 (4.4)	3 (0.7)	10 (2.3)	27 (6.3)
Make-up	77 (17.8)	86 (19.9)	56 (13.0)	73 (16.9)	21 (4.9)	25 (5.8)	13 (3.0)	18 (4.2)	167 (38.7)
Skin-care	85 (19.7)	91 (21.1)	75 (17.4)	92 (21.4)	67 (15.6)	88 (20.4)	78 (18.1)	93 (21.6)	305 (70.8)
Hair Style	25 (5.8)	40 (9.2)	36 (8.4)	51 (11.8)	24 (5.6)	30 (6.9)	21 (4.9)	41 (9.5)	106 (24.7)

- \* Silhouette : Fitted clothing with a slender waist & skinny
- \* Details : Details of ruffle or tuck
- \* Color : Clothing in bright and gorgeous colors like pink or violet
- \* Pattern : Floral pattern or brilliant pattern
- \* Material : Materials of a feminine feel such as lace or see-through
- \* Accessory : Ring, earrings, necklace, scarf, etc.
- \* Shoes : Shoes in gorgeous colors or heels for men
- \* Make-up : BB cream or make-up cosmetics
- \* Skin-care : Using special cosmetics for keeping skin soft
- \* Hair style : Hair style in perm, dyeing, long hair

or heels for men, the level of wearing experience was found to be about 10%, which indicates that the Metro Sexual consumption in positive forms is limited to some men or those in their teens to twenties. For wearing intentions in Metro Sexual image were shown to have higher all over contents in wearing experience.

The level of experience in BB cream or make-up cosmetics was shown to be 38.8%, which was different from the result reported by Nam Soojung.<sup>17)</sup> For hair style, perm, dyeing, long hair, or binding the hair, or hair accessories of hair band, which have been considered as exclusive property of women, have also become popular in men, generating various image changes.<sup>18)</sup>

Therefore men tend to positively accept the trend and actively express themselves, and the more the changes in male consumers' sociocultural attitude toward their appearance are, the more the Metro Sexual consumption is.<sup>19)</sup> The Metro Sexual consumption is rather a consumption behavior for modern men to enhance their competitiveness in social environment and cope with the real world where importance of their appearance becomes larger as a tool for social success than emphasizes femininity or means change of sexual role.

## V. Conclusion

This study suggests a new viewpoint of changes in cultural sexual consciousness of the youth that is continuously changing, and is meaningful in understanding emotional and rational lifestyle and cultural style of Metro Sexual, a recent phenomenon of men's fashion.

In this study, based on this background, questionnaire was used for analysis to look into

changes in the Metro Sexual image of men in their late teens to forties, and the results are as follows:

First, among typical factors of changes in image of men's fashion, change of sexual role was shown as the most important factor. Contrary to men of the past, modern men are actively taking care of their appearance with changes of social values, which indicates that viewpoints on men have become flexible, such that the image of beauty does not apply just to women. Second, analysis on factors of image changes in men's fashion by age revealed that factors of change of sexual role and trend showed difference between groups with high mean values, and factors of expression of individuality were highly rated without remarkable difference, and aesthetic factors were poorly rated without significant difference. Third, analysis on preference for formative characteristics of the Metro Sexual and wearing experience showed that feminine materials were negatively rated, and analysis on wearing experience revealed that several items become popular, indicating that wearing experiences are increasing in various areas.

This study is to suggest a comprehensive viewpoint based on sociocultural background by analyzing the Metro Sexual phenomenon, which is a clue to predict the trend of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and based on development of early Metro Sexual, it is expected that this study will be helpful in predicting and analyzing future changes in men's clothing. The modern trend of men's fashion with such changes in social environment and culture code is evolving into diversified sexual images and how to express fashion is also changing, thus changes in design factors necessary for image changes in men's clothing are required to be considered to

predict the upcoming trend and perform product planning.

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