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Career Counseling Centers in Higher Education: A Study of Cross-Cultural Applications from the United States to Korea

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Interest in career development and career counseling is growing in Korea. Nevertheless, neither the research nor the literature adequately address the question as to what applications can be cross-culturally transferred from career counseling centers in the United States to Korea. This study qualitatively examines the practice of career counseling in seven university career counseling centers in the United States in a search for concepts and methods that may be cross-culturally applied to Korean universities. Nine categories of data emerged in our qualitative analysis of information gathered: (a) types of systems; (b) staff; (c) services provided; (d) career assessments; (e) alumni networks; (f) workshops and outreach; (g) publicity; (h) information technology; and (i) facilities. Applications and ideas for the Korean context, limitations, and suggestions for future research are discussed.

Key Words: career counseling centers, cross-cultural, Korean counseling, Asian counseling

Psychology as an academic discipline and applied psychology fields such as counseling psychology in Korea has seen a rapid growth and increasing popularity in the last century. While considered to be a young discipline when compared with other scientific fields, the concept of counseling in Korea is not new. As early as 1957, the Seoul Education Committee provided counseling education for about 40 teachers (Kim et al., 2000). Counseling centers in Korea have also been steadily developing. The Center for Counseling and Student Services in Seoul National University (SNU), for example, has had a long history and has maintained a strong reputation as both a counseling and research center. A recent change in the official name of The Center for Counseling and Student Services at SNU to The Center for Campus Life and Culture suggests that the embodiment of how psychological services should be delivered continues to develop and evolve. This willingness to change also reflects a healthy desire to understand the demands of students and to substantially serve their needs. Recent studies further illustrate Korean researchers' commitment toward a better understanding of help seeking and, consequently the delivery of counseling services to Koreans (e.g., Jang, 1999; Jang, 2001; Kwon, 1996; Yoo, 1997; Yoo & Lee, 2000; Yoo & Yoo, 2000).

More specifically, the question of how career counseling is provided within university counseling centers in Korea is also gaining attention. Kim (1995) noted that career education was introduced as early as 1964 and termed "career guidance" but was considered generally unfamiliar to the general public until the late seventies. A 1998 study at SNU revealed that about 60% of students at the university listed "study and career problems" as being their greatest concern when seeking counseling (The Center for Counseling and Student Services,

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1998). Yet in a study by Lee (2001), only 40% of respondents from six four-year universities reported having ever received services from a university career center. Kim (2001) noted that between 1990-1998, there were 197 articles that researched career related issues in Korea. However, while more and more studies look at the career development and career decision-making processes of Koreans (e.g., Jang et al., 1996; Kim, 1997; Kim & Kim, 1996; Kim, Kim, & Jung, 2000; Koh, 1992; Lee, 1997; Lee, 2001), few studies look at the concept of university career counseling centers in general and even fewer (we found none) specifically address cross-cultural issues in transferring concepts and models of career counseling centers developed in the United States for use in the Korean context. Anecdotally, it appears that most Korean university counseling centers do not separate career counseling issues from general psychological counseling issues and consequently their functions are not seen as distinct and thus not organized as such. We are aware that career counseling centers that stand as separate entities in Korean universities do exist (for example, Ewha Women's University) but believe these to be a minority.

In order to better understand career counseling as a concept and service in Korean higher education, we considered looking at university counseling centers in the United States where the theory and practice of career counseling has the longest history and is the most mature and developed (Herr, 2001; Zunker, 2002). Would it not make more sense to try to study career development and counseling in an Asian country rather than the United States? A logical rationalization in theory but in reality, university career counseling centers are rare in Asia and tend to be influenced by, or adapted versions of, extant theories and models, oftentimes because of the educational and economic exchanges between Asia and the United States (Leong & Pope, 2002; Tan & Goh, 2002) and also due to "prevailing forces that have facilitated the transfer and exportation of Western models of career psychology and career counseling…a natural gradient in the flow of scientific information from the West to the East" (Leong, 2002, p. 278).

Purpose of the Study

University career counseling centers in the United States vary in the types of services that are offered to students. Services may include some or all of the following: personal counseling, career counseling, educational or psychotherapy groups, individual appraisal and testing, and learning and academic skills. Our interest in this study is on the career counseling component. The focus in this article is on our study that explores exemplary models of career counseling services in the United States for the purpose of extrapolating concepts and methods that might be applied to Korea. Naturally, this study is unlikely to find uniformity either in the delivery or organization with the great diversity of career counseling centers across the United States. As such, the goal of this article is not to generalize or draw general conclusions about pervasive trends in career counseling services in the United States but rather to explore if certain career development ideas and practices are applicable. In this article, we will (a) describe selected career counseling services that are considered good examples; (b) analyze the organization and delivery of such services; (c) highlight potential applications for the Korean context; and (d) discuss some limitations, future research ideas before our concluding remarks.

Method and Procedure

In this study, six midwestern and one southern university career counseling centers in the United States were visited. As agreed with participating centers, the names of the universities are not critical for the purposes of this study and shall remain anonymous in this study. They are referred to as Centers A, B, C, D, E, F, and G in this study. The focus of this study required a sample that would provide rich sources of information rather than a generalization of findings. That is, it was considered more important to gather data from career counseling centers that would represent good exemplars of the construct being examined. Qualitative methods are preferred in these cases when the essence of concepts is sought and for an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under study (Patton, 1990). It is therefore quite deliberate that this study, as part of a visiting scholar program, took place at a university steeped in the history, research, and practice of career development and college student development (Borow, 1990). For this study, we used the criteria provided by Davidson, Heppner, and Johnston (2001) who suggested that exemplary career counseling centers are: technologically sophisticated; incorporating diversity; applying new theories and approaches for diverse populations; staffed by skilled and competent members; and creative in reaching their clientele. Three key informants, characterized by their role as reputable career development academics, researchers, and practitioners, were asked to identify career counseling centers, within a geographical area, considering the above criteria. Nine centers were consistently nominated and identified by the key informants. Phone calls explaining the

nature and purpose of a visit resulted in six career counseling centers expressing a willingness to participate and times for the visit were then scheduled. The visit to the seventh career counseling center in a southern state was suggested by the second author's Korean colleagues and confirmed by the three key informants as an excellent exemplar. Naturally, the sampling was limited by the time and travel resource constraints of the duration of the scholar exchange. It was certainly possible to include several other career centers that represented different academic majors or college systems but, in consultation with the key informants and their knowledge of career development centers, we concluded that there would be replication and redundancy in the sample selected. Visits to the career centers lasted an average of 60 minutes and involved the two authors and one to two participants from the center; for example, the director and/or associate/assistant director of the career center.

Data Analysis

A data matrix used to sort all the information gathered from the visit and interviews are presented in Table 1.

Although this study is more qualitative in methodology, the matrix in Table 1 helps readers to understand how information gathered was organized. Information and data collected comprised interview notes, career center brochures and materials, digital photograph record of the facilities, and career center websites. Using content analysis (Patton, 1990), data were collated and sorted by the authors without any preconceived notions as to the nature and components that should define career services. Inductive analysis was further employed "using small units of data to develop larger categories, patterns, and themes, and hence interpretations and findings" (Whitt, 1991, p. 412). The analysis resulted in the following nine categories of data: (a) types of systems; (b) staff; (c) services provided; (d) career assessments; (e) alumni networks; (f) workshops and outreach; (g) publicity; (h) information technology; and (i) facilities.

Categories were assigned only if 6 out of the 7 centers (86%) visited demonstrated characteristics within a category. We decided on this stringent criterion because it was important for us to find strong consensus of effective concepts and methods of career counseling from these exemplary centers. The matrix that emerged reflects only two categories where the application of this criterion still led us to include the categories: career assessments and alumni network.

Results

The richness of qualitative data analysis comes in the details that allow readers to understand the phenomena under study as comprehensively as possible.

While we have tried to be concise in the reporting of the results, some details are necessary for a more complete understanding of the results. Details act as a guide should readers attempt to adapt and create similar models in Korea. Therefore, other than for *Types of Systems* and *Staff*, it was felt that all other qualitative data would be better presented in a textual rather than tabular format.

Types of Systems

Table 2 reflects how the seven career centers are organized, the higher education contexts, size of student

Table 1. *Emerging Categories of Data Collected from Exemplary Counseling Centers Visited*

Categories	Centers						
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Types of Systems	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Staff	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Services	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Career Assessments	X	X	X	X	O	X	X
Alumni Networks	X	X	X	O	X	X	X
Workshops and Outreach	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Publicity	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Information Technology	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Facilities	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Note. X = Information obtained that fit into the emerging categories; O = No information obtained that fit into the emerging categories.

Table 2. *Types of Systems, Higher Education Context, Student Population Sizes, and Number of Staff for the Career Centers*

Center	Categories			
	Type of System	Context	Student Population	Staff
A	Centralized	Undergraduates/Graduates	37,000	23
B	Centralized	Undergraduates	1,800	8
C	Centralized	Undergraduates	1,800	6
D	Decentralized	Undergraduates/Graduates	47,000	18[a]
E	Decentralized	Business School	3,252	18
F	Decentralized	Technology	6,364	4
G	Decentralized	Liberal Arts	16,209	25

Note. a = All counselors and psychologists work with career counseling clients but 5 consider career counseling their specialization.

population, and number of staff at each center.

Centralized systems meant that the center was the sole source of career information and services on campus. Decentralized systems meant that the center was one of many possible career resource centers on the same campus. Center D, was uniquely housed within a university-wide counseling center that also provided individual and group counseling, learning and academic skills counseling, and testing services. It is unusual because it exists within a university that has 16 other decentralized career centers in almost every college on campus. Unlike the other career centers, however, its services are available to any student, regardless of major. Centers E, F, and G were career centers that served both undergraduate and graduate students who majored in Business, Technology, and Liberal Arts, respectively.

Staff

The number of staff at the career centers ranged from as many as 23 to as few as 4. In Table 2, the number of staff that a center has is more likely a function of budgeting rather than any theoretical formula or size of the student population. Educational qualifications included doctorate-degree holders, masters-degree holders, undergraduates, and non-degree holders. We were not only concerned with individuals who provided career counseling to students but also anyone who provided indirect services such as administering career tests, updating the alumni network, receptionists who managed interview schedules with prospective employers, or librarians who organized career-related resources. We felt that all functions contribute to the overall quality and quantity of career services provided. Designated staff positions included center directors, assistant and associate directors, program coordinators, practicum students (typically masters or doctoral students in counseling), interns, career specialists, librarians, job fair coordinators, recruitment coordinators, receptionists, and technology specialists. Beyond the observation that directors and assistants or associate directors tended to hold at least a masters' degree - often in counseling or counseling psychology - there did not appear to be any fixed pattern of qualification. For example, some directors had doctorates and some only had masters' degrees. In the Business school, having a business-related degree or industry experience appeared to be more important than whether it was a masters' or doctorate. For example, in the graduate career services section of the Business Career Center, having an MBA was possibly seen as having greater value than having a Ph.D. in counseling psychology.

Services

Services that were provided by all seven career centers included: individual career counseling; career assessment; workshops on job-search and résumé preparation; and career library resources. The centers varied in terms of what information was emphasized or covered in the career library, what fees students were required to pay for career assessments or workshops, and the selection of career assessments available. None of the centers charge for individual career counseling services.

Centers B, C, E, and F provide mock interview opportunities where students can videotape a practice interview and review their interview skills and receive feedback from a career counselor. Center D provides mock interviews if students request it but does not typically videotape these interviews.

Centers A, B, C, E, and F have consistent ties to employers and maintain relationships with these employers who then participate in the university's or college's job fairs. In the case of Centers E and F, students are offered opportunities to

interview with these companies at various times during the year but most often in the immediate semesters prior to graduation. These interviews are typically conducted on campus. As part of these interviews, employers are also asked to provide feedback to the centers about the quality of candidates and the interviews. This feedback loop informs colleges about the strengths and weaknesses of their students and reflects the college's training and curriculum effectiveness and relevance to the real world. This allows colleges to better prepare students for the job market.

The increasing use of technology to deliver career services was evident in all the centers. While there is variation in the number of computers a center has (from two to ten), computers are available for students to: take self-administered career assessments; prepare résumés; utilize Internet resources; search job banks; apply for volunteer and internship opportunities; or access the career centers' websites which will be discussed in a later section.

Career Assessments

Except for center E, the Business career center, all the other centers we visited administered the Strong Interest Inventory (SII) and the Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) as career assessment instruments. The Business career center referred students to center D, the university-wide career center, if assessment was needed. The next most popular instruments were Holland's Self-Directed Search (SDS) and the Campbell Interest and Skills Survey (CISS). Other careers assessments that were commonly used included the Minnesota Importance Questionnaire (MIQ), Career Factors Inventory (CFI), Career card sorts, and computer-assisted career assessments like the System of Interactive Guidance and Information Plus (SIGI+) and DISCOVER.

Alumni Networks

Closely related to employer networks and on-campus recruiting is the notion of alumni networks. Centers B, C, and E had very well developed and maintained alumni networks. One of the more impressive was center C's network of about 6,500 alumni in various employment contexts. Alumni serve as mentors, provide job shadowing and networking opportunities, and provide speakers and panelists for forums and workshops. Alumni are usually surveyed prior to graduation to determine their willingness to be listed and what functions they may be willing to serve (for example, mentor, informational interviews, etc.) and then updated occasionally. Obviously an alumni network is only useful if it is current. In the centers we visited that utilized alumni networks, the job responsibility of managing and updating the alumni network was variously held by an assistant /associate director, career counselor, or an administrative or student staff member whose sole responsibility was to administer the network.

Workshops and Outreach

Career workshops that are offered by the centers appear to cover a multitude of career issues at various stages of career decision-making. On one end of the continuum, often referred to as the "front end" of career development, there are workshops to help students identify and choose major fields of study and assess career interests. In the developmental mid-section of the continuum, there are workshops that develop skills for gaining work experience and informational interviews. And for the latter stages, workshops are offered on resume writing and cover letters, researching employers, networking, and successful job interviews. Examples of workshop topics covered include: Choosing a Major; Job Search Strategies; Planning a Successful Career; Graduate School Opportunities; Changing Careers; Mastering the MBA Marketplace; Internet Job Search; Case Interviewing Techniques; How To Work a Room; Résumé Writing and Cover Letters; Networking; Etiquette Dinner Workshop; Offers and Negotiation; and Interviewing Techniques.

Publicity

Methods used to advertise career center services and programs include print media (e.g., brochures, flyers, college newspaper, orientation materials), open houses, and occasional events (e.g., graduate school fair, job fairs). Career center activities were usually publicized on bulletin boards outside the centers and around campus and, more increasingly, through the Internet. Some centers employed creative marketing strategies like offering free t-shirts, etiquette dinners, practical job search handbooks or guides and, as one center director described, "the aroma of fresh popcorn." That latter center purchased an old popcorn machine and made popcorn one afternoon a week and it is alleged that students were drawn to the center for the free popcorn but also became educated about the centers' services and career offerings by visiting the center. Giveaways were also common in the form of memo pads, pens, and other stationery that had the career center's information and programs listed on them.

Informational Technology

Information about every center we visited could be found on the Internet. In this study, we wanted to know how and in what ways career center websites enhance the provision of career services. When we tried to access these websites through several Internet search engines, the career centers that we sought usually appeared at the top of the search engine's list, thus indicating the facility with which one can access information about each center. Typical website contents include: an introduction to the center, staff, hours, directions, services, workshops, and links to in-house and web-based career resources. Examples of website accessible career resources within the center are: a computerized recruiting system; setting up mock interviews; access to employer or alumni databases; and registration for seminars and workshops. Examples of website accessible resources that link users with career resources outside of the center are: links to college/major specific career resources and centers (in the case of decentralized systems); links to state and national job banks and databases; links to career library resources such as guides, handbooks, and reference books that have been downloaded onto the Internet; and even self-administered career assessments that are free and fee-based.

Facilities

The category that represented the greatest variance for the career centers we visited was that of physical size and facilities. Nevertheless, even though form and size differed, we were able to find typical elements in all of them. For the sake of brevity, we will therefore only describe the largest and most comprehensive – Center A. Located in a building that also housed other student affairs services, the career center had separate spaces for advising and career information, internship services, employment services, a research and development laboratory, and additional classrooms for seminars and workshops. The career advising and information space housed the career library, receptionists and help desks, staff offices, postings for employer information and job openings, an audio-visual room with two terminals, a career guidance computer laboratory with 10 terminals, and a storage room. The internship services space had staff offices, interview rooms, an information desk, and an internship computer laboratory with four terminals. The employment services space was organized by staff offices, information desk, placement computer laboratory with 10 terminals, interview waiting room, recruiter's lounge, and 14 interview rooms. The research and development area, only found in Center A, had staff offices, a library and conference room, a meeting room, and a research and computer laboratory with three terminals.

Applications and Ideas for Korea

Based on the emerging categories above, the following applications may be considered for career counseling centers in Korean universities:

Types of Systems and Staff

Irrespective of whether centers were centralized or decentralized, the most striking observation from the career centers visited is the apparent design of each center to be a one-stop career counseling center. That is, every career center – regardless of whether they are centralized or decentralized– believes that it can provide comprehensive career services to the students they serve. Keep in mind, however, that a business career center is not expected to serve students from other fields of study but can nevertheless be designated a one-stop system if students can meet all their career development needs there without going elsewhere. In most cases, students can receive all the career services they need from one place (Imel, 1999; Mariani; 1997; Perry-Varner, 1998). Similar in concept is the idea of a self-directed career decision-making program (Peterson, Sampson, & Reardon, 1991). From start to finish, students at the career centers may: (a) explore the nature of their career concern; (b) take computer-assisted career guidance inventories or, paper and pencil tests followed by test interpretation, if necessary; (c) utilize computer and career library resources to research jobs and the job market; (d) utilize computer and career library resources to research employers, companies, and opportunities to contact alumni for networking; (e) prepare résumés and practice interviewing; and (f) meet and interview with prospective employers at the career center.

While a one-stop career counseling center may be considered for Korea, more efforts should first be made to educate Korean students about utilizing such a center's services. The Center for Counseling and Student Services (1998) and Lee (2001) studies suggest that while career concerns were a significant problem for Korean students, few appear to know how to seek career counseling. We should therefore not assume that career counseling as a concept is sufficiently well understood by Korean students. We hope that more studies (e.g., Yoo, 2002; Yoo & Lee 2000; Yoo & Yoo, 2000) on student's attitudes and perceptions of such

services, but specific to career counseling services, can educate us about how evolved concepts like *career* and *career development* are in Korea. Unless Korean students understand these concepts, career counseling is likely to be unknown, unsought, or misunderstood to be simply about "finding a job" and consequently view career counseling centers as a "jobs or employment offices."

Furthermore, if career development could play a bigger role in Korea's primary and secondary education system, perhaps students in higher education would be much more familiar with career counseling services, develop habits of career research, exploration, and decision-making, and experience heightened career and self-awareness.

Services Provided

Customer service was the hallmark of all the centers we visited. Centers emphasized the provision of services that meet the needs of students, training of staff to deliver quality services, and marketing as an essential part of customer service, applying many of the principles suggested by Carter (1995) for quality control and customer service in delivering career services.

It is also evident that these career centers do not just help students to find majors and prepare them for the workforce but help students plan for a lifetime and even develop work and life skills. This is evident in many center websites' invitation for community members and family to join in the career development process. The utilization of personality and career cum personality inventories (e.g., MBTI, MIQ) also encourage students to consider the person-job fit and quality of life issues that students may seek in their work. The fact that all the career centers extend their services to alumni also recognizes the ever-changing role of work in peoples' lives and the lifespan perspective of career development (Hansen, 1997; Herr & Cramer, 1996; Richardson, 1993). Another view similar to this is looking at career counseling as a holistic process (Lee & Johnston, 2001) by treating the whole person and not separate career concerns.

Career counseling centers are designed to facilitate an individual's search and understanding of his/her place in the world of work and at the same time encourage the involvement of members within one's own support system (family and friends), those trained to help others in this process (career counselors), and those more experienced in the world of work and, perhaps, life planning (alumni, job mentors, employers).

The role of parents in individuals' career decision-making is well documented (e.g., Bregman & Killen, 1999; Hoffman, Hofacker, & Goldsmith, 1992; Young, & Friesen, 1992;). The strong influence of parents in career decision-making for Asians has been further addressed (Leong & Serafica, 1995' Sue & Morishima, 1982). While such a study has not been conducted on Korean nationals, many Koreans anecdotally agree that Korean parents are highly involved in determining their children's careers. Keep in mind that we do not view this negatively but it means that career services should try to educate and include parents in the career development process of their children and that career counselors need to explore the extent of familial influence and pressure for Korean students seeking career counseling. We find it fascinating to learn about a proposal to invite more retired Korean men and women to become involved in the career development of school children (J. K. Lee, personal communication, February 14, 2002). Perhaps more pragmatic than theoretical in its motivation, we nevertheless think that this is a wonderful opportunity for elders to be career role models to children; a potential positive impact that has been addressed in the career development literature (Leong & Serafica, 1995).

Career Assessments

When carefully adapted and normed, career assessment instruments used in the United States can be effectively used in Asian contexts (e.g., Tan, 1995). While several career instruments have been translated into Korean (e.g., MBTI, SDS, SII), norming of the instruments on Koreans is an essential next step. The norming and validation of career assessments is imperative for career assessment instruments to be reliably utilized. We are aware, however, that without such norming, career assessment instruments and even computer-assisted career guidance programs can still be used in Korea. Even without norming, such instruments are not ineffective but rather require that during test interpretation, students are given clarification to explain the sample individuals are being compared with, job classifications, and sometimes jobs that do not exist or are described differently in Korea (for example, in Korea, roofers may be classified more broadly as construction workers etc.).

Also to be considered is the fact that, like many other Asian countries, Korea is constantly developing amidst the ebb and flow of global and local economic fluctuations. Economic factors often dictate the needs of the labor force and economic downturns often limit occupational choice. Career choice is oftentimes an illusion and therefore the goal of helping individuals to find their career interests needs to be

tempered with an appreciation for the outlook and availability of certain occupational fields in Korea.

Alumni

The concept of university alumni and alumni networks is not well established in Korea – at least not to the extent whereby they are partnered with career services. The task of creating an up-to-date database of alumni, maintaining contact records, and soliciting participation for assistance with students in the career counseling process is no small task and probably requires empowerment from university administrators and a separate administrative unit as is the case in the United States (variously called Alumni Relations, Alumni Associations, etc.). On the other hand, it should present as an excellent opportunity when we consider the importance of relationships and networking in Korean culture. While such alumni programs are logistically cumbersome, getting past the setup phase will produce an ongoing resource for students in terms of volunteer, internship, mentors, job shadowing, and job opportunities that benefit both students and employers. We think that it is a challenge in Korea's already fast-paced culture to imagine that alumni will be willing to help. Nevertheless, we believe that this is definitely a positive conceptual as well as practical resource worth exploring.

Workshops, Outreach, and Publicity

Career centers' outreach efforts where career counseling, workshops, consultations, etc., are conducted in classrooms, student residence halls and student centers, away from the office, may present a more "normal" invitation for Korean students to seek help rather than expecting students to "find their own way" to the career centers. Students are often resistant toward help seeking because of the potential negative stigma of counseling (Yoo, 2002). In addition to being proactive, outreach activities and workshops have psychoeducational and preventive value and further humanizes counseling and career services by introducing center staff to students. Creative publicity and relevant titles that draw Korean students' attention are likely to attract a greater audience.

Information Technology

When space is limited, the infinite domain of the Internet provides another avenue for service. While some scorn at the diminishing role of face-to-face counseling, career counseling centers recognize that the Internet has become *the* source of career information and *the* choice mode of career information research for many students. Being able to serve students' career counseling needs entirely via a website has become the goal of many career centers and an emphasis in the career development literature (Davidson, 2001; Davidson, Heppner, & Johnston, 2001). It is important to remember, however, that the effective use of technology involves more than the Internet and also includes videotaping equipment for mock interviews, equipment for setting up teleconference and videoconference capabilities for connecting with alumni and job interviews, and computer equipment for computer- assisted career guidance programs. The effectiveness of Internet career counseling is also highly dependent on the accuracy of the information stored on websites and cyberspace and the diligence of webmasters who regularly update sites to keep them current.

Facilities

Career services that experienced high student traffic were those that were located centrally and strategically on campus, were housed together with other student services, or were decentralized services housed in the same building as the academic department for the students they serve. Related to the notion of a one-stop service center mentioned earlier is the implication that the career center has the capacity to provide a variety of service options. These options require different space configurations. Library resources need shelves. Computer-assisted career guidance programs require computers. Individual counseling requires private rooms and/or offices. And so on. While the varied sizes of the career centers we visited illustrate how much can be done with even the smallest of spaces, the more information and resources one intends to provide in a career center, the more challenging it becomes when physical facilities are limited (Meerbach, 1978; Sampson, et al., 1998). Depending on the state of Korea's economy and the financial health of any given Korean higher education context, securing modern, usable space to deliver comprehensive career services will often require political, administrative, management, and fiscal savvy.

Limitations

This study is exploratory in nature and limited by a small sample of career counseling centers in the United States and

the time and resource constraints of a visiting scholar's program. As mentioned earlier, we have not intended to represent all career counseling centers in the United States or the entire philosophy of career development as practiced in the United States. There are studies that attempt to capture such data with a more quantitative methodology (e.g., Ray, 1999) but such studies also fail to capture the diverse career counseling methods that exist in many different settings. We obtained fewer but more information-rich sources that provide substantial details so that Korean universities can actually experiment with some of these ideas. Even so, we are convinced that the data collected may have omitted many intricacies in the conceptualization and operation of these career centers.

Also, despite our efforts to be thorough, we believe that we may have overlooked career counseling centers at Korean universities that may be exemplars of what works well in Korea as well as Korean career development literature. Examining career development issues and career counseling centers in Korea with both qualitative and quantitative methodologies will bridge current gaps in our understanding of career counseling practices in Korea that are universally shared and indigenous.

This study also does not prove that the characteristics of career counseling centers we presented here lead to positive outcomes for students. It also does not demonstrate causation in that these activities per sé lead to better career outcomes. That is, the fact that many centers apply a certain concept or method does not, in and of itself, make it a good one. Leong (2002) recommends that a three-step cultural accommodation approach be considered when transferring Western models of career counseling to Asian countries. He suggests: "(a) identifying the cultural biases, cultural gaps, or cultural blind spots in an existing theory that restricts the cultural validity of the theory; (b) selecting current culturally specific concepts and models from the target culture to fill in the cultural gaps and accommodate the theory to racial and ethnic minorities; and (c) testing the culturally accommodated theory to determine if it has incremental validity above and beyond the culturally unaccommodated theory" (p. 283).

Future Research

In considering how future research can enhance our knowledge about developing career counseling services and centers in Korea, at least two areas should be given more attention:

The Role of Education in the Career Decision Making Process for Korea

Like many countries in Asia, Korean education at a minimum serves the goals of sustaining the economy. Engineering and technology fields have commanded prestige for many of Korea's developing years. Medical and other scientific fields have been coveted by students and parents for their earning power and prestige. Educational and career choices based on prestige has been documented to be a tendency for Asian-Americans (Leung, 1993; Leung, Ivey, & Suzuki, 1994) and although there have been no studies to confirm these findings with Koreans, it is not difficult to verify this anecdotally. From elementary to high school, students have little or no choice over the types of subjects they study. Grades and how well one performs on examinations tend to be key determinants of what courses students will study. Students take national examinations to enter universities in Korea, potentially creating a "one-chance only" notion that contradicts the career decision-making and exploration process of major career development theories. The level of competitiveness to enter higher education in Korea, especially the top universities is tremendous, often penalizing late developers and those who take too long or too much time in exploring and deciding on their careers. Changing of majors once admitted to the university is not impossible but very tedious and difficult.

Research on Korean Cultural Factors and Correlates

O'Neil et al., (1980) noted that the factors that influence career decision-making are numerous and complex. When national origin is added as a factor, new variables may emerge but more significantly, certain factors become more pronounced. For example, occupational stereotyping - that Asians tend to be over represented in certain occupations - may be a known factor in the career decision-making process in many cultures but, in Korea, additional stereotyping by gender adds another dimension to the complexity. Tradition and values that dictate the role of women in society may put added pressure on female Korean individuals to pursue certain life and career paths. The career development literature about Asian Americans, although not entirely applicable to Korean culture, does provide some initial insight into many other topics we have not mentioned that need to be explored for a fuller understanding of factors that affect the career development process for Koreans. These factors include: career interests and choices (Leung, Ivey, & Suzuki, 1994); family background

and self-efficacy (Tang, Fouad, & Smith, 1999); workplace dynamics (Redding & Ng, 1982); occupational segregation (Hsia, 1988), career maturity (Hardin, Leong, & Osipow, 2001); cognitive style (Gul, Huang, & Subramanium, 1992); occupational values (Leong, 1991); and decision-making style (O'Neil et al., 1980). This shortlist represents individual, familial, societal, institutional, and psychosocial factors that impact career development worth exploring for Koreans.

A research agenda that systematically explores career development issues for Koreans will help Koreans to understand the intricacies of career development and, for career counselors to more effectively counsel and develop career services, programs, and models that work for Koreans. For instance, studies like Park (2000) and Lee (1997) that investigate the career development of Koreans help to fill a much needed gap in our understanding of career psychology from a Korean perspective vis-à-vis extant career theories and practices and indigenous issues that affect the career counseling process. In our attempt to further the understanding of career development from a Korean perspective, we believe, as with many other countries, that research will likely reveal both culture-specific (emic) and culture-universal (etic) career counseling practices to be evident as Leong (2002) predicted.

Conclusion

Career counseling in Korea, as with many other countries in Asia is a fairly new but fast-growing development (Leong & Pope, 2002). Even beyond the higher education context of this study, the need for career counseling is rapidly evolving in secondary schools thus increasing the demand to educate and train career counseling teachers in Korea (Jin, 2002). Korean interest in career development parallels that of many other countries. Herr (2001) states that:

> The practice of career development is likely to be more comprehensive in scope, more evenly distributed and accessible, and more indigenous as nations increasingly identify how the practice of career development will best meet their needs. Such national and cultural tailoring of the practice of career development to political, economic, and demographic characteristics will increase dramatically in the next several decades. So will career theories and interventions that are invented and implemented in nations that differ substantially in their levels of educational and economic development. As such, career guidance, career counseling, and the practice of career development will become worldwide phenomena. (pp. 206-207)

As we try to be culturally sensitive to issues that need to be considered when transferring methods from the United States to Korea, we are also reminded by Leong (2002) that such knowledge transfers are often inevitable and reflect the natural course of economic forces and socio-political developments within regions and countries as a result of globalization. Increasing partnerships between some countries has also seen a concomitant intensification of nationalistic idealism in others. We therefore need to be as fervent in wanting to transfer career counseling ideas across cultures as we are in critically evaluating such transfers.

Similar to the development of career counseling services in other Asian countries (e.g., Chang, 2002; Leung, 2002; Pope et al., 2002; Salazar-Clemeña, 2002; Tan, 2002; Tatsuno, 2002; Zhang, Hu, & Pope, 2002), importing western career development theories to Korea with minimal assimilation or accommodation or with minor changes is relatively convenient. Nevertheless, we should always persist in the task of investigating the impact of career counseling practices on economies, on cultural and national identity, on educational systems, and the socio-political fabric of nations.

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