

School counseling in the United States: A Theory-building Case Study

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Abstract

The profession of school counseling within and beyond the U. S. has been cited as having evolved over time to meet the needs of school children, incorporating aspects of career, mental health, and education. Some scholars have asserted that this circuitous path has led to a degree of role confusion for counselors, educators, parents, and students. This study used a cross-national comparative methodology approach to compare aspects of the development of school counseling in the U.S. and S. Korea in order to build theory about the profession of school counseling. Three transfer topics were used to explore transferability of meaning: historiography of the profession, current school-based problems, and credentialing. Data sources included archival governmental and association information, and published works in academic journals and professional books. Findings suggest that school counseling in both countries share similarities and that the school counselor educators and policymakers in the U.S. could transform the profession by creatively exploring modifications to service delivery, considering the development of national policies, and implementing mandatory mental health screenings for all school children.

Keywords: school counseling, cross-national comparative study, international counseling

School counseling in the United States: A Theory-building Case Study

School counseling in the U.S. has continuously evolved over the past 115 years into a profession that has caused major transformation and confusion for school counseling within and beyond national borders (Author, 2010). Current challenges in K-12 schools, such as school-based violence and persistence underachievement for some segments of the school population, have fueled major changes to the school counseling curriculum and professional development training. One such change has been the development of the national model unveiled by the American School Counseling Association ASCA (2003, 2005, 2012) that integrates three areas of competence: comprehensiveness, developmental focus, and evidence-based interventions.

While there has been critical analysis at every juncture of metamorphosis, few scholars have investigated the evolution of the profession in order to build theory. Using a cross-national comparative methodology (Ernste, 2012; Masser, 1984), we explored the specialty of school counseling in two developed countries: the United States and the Republic of South Korea. In this theory-building exercise, we compared the historical development, current challenges, and credentialing in S. Korea to that of the U.S. to identify common strengths and areas for growth. Based upon our findings, we see the need to: (a) consider ways to increase the number of school counselors in elementary and middle schools, (b) unify of the profession to create a national policy unit within or in conjunction with the federal government, and (c) implement universal mental health screenings for all school children as a form of prevention and advocacy.

The Historiography of School Counseling in the U.S. and S. Korea United States

Three significant eras mark the 100-plus years of the U.S. school guidance and counseling movement: vocational guidance, mental health, and developmental guidance (DeKruyf, Auger, & Trice-Black, 2013; Gysbers, 2010). Each of these eras has contributed its own characteristics to the current framework of leadership that the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) promotes in its ASCA National Model (ASCA, 2005, 2012) for 21st century school counselors. The vocational era shaped the notion that school counselors assisted students in finding career avenues relevant to their interests and passions (Gysbers & Henderson, 2000). The mental health movement expanded the career focus of the school counselor to include responding to the personal and social aspects of students and their

families in the form of remedial services (Herr & Erford, 2011). This movement encouraged school counselors to consider the unique developmental circumstances their diverse students face in reaching quality education. Finally, the developmental guidance movement evolved as school counseling moved from a responsive service provided for some students to a comprehensive school counseling program for every student (ASCA, 2012; DeKruyf et al., 2013). As school counselors address the challenge of creating educational opportunity for the increasingly diverse students, they are re-positioning themselves as leaders within schools in order to meet the academic, vocational, and personal/social needs of students while collaborating with school stakeholders (Dahir & Stone, 2012).

Several examples of strong school counseling models exist in other countries, such as Canada (Paterson & Janzen, 1993), Britain (Avent, Sisterson, Fawcett, Watts, & Newsome, 1983), The Republic of Ireland (O'Morain, McAuliffe, Conroy, Johnson, & Michel, 2012), Germany (Martin, 1993), Switzerland (Thomas & Henning, 2012), New Zealand (Hermansson & Webb, 1993), and Australia (Schofield, 2013). For the most part, school counseling emerged as a profession in the 1960's for these nations, with Australia starting in the early 1950's and New Zealand in the 1970's. Additionally, China, Japan, Singapore, the Philippines, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and S. Korea have emerged in the Pacific Rim as key nations that are developing school counseling as a profession. Although professional counseling is at different developmental stages in these countries, significant advancements are evident (Hohenshil, Amundson & Niles, 2012). Globally, most of the school counseling programs use teacher-counselors trained at the bachelor level. In S. Korea, in particular, early U.S. influence is evident in the development of school counseling as a profession.

S. Korea

In the 1950s, U.S. delegations of educators provided consultation to the newly formed Republic of Korea and introduced the idea of guidance and counseling within schools (Lee & Yang, 2008). Subsequently, the Central Education Research Center began providing training, conducting research, and publishing resources related to school counseling. By 1963, the Korean Counseling Association was established to formalize professional development opportunities for school counselors nationally (Yoo, 1996). In the next decade, the government introduced directors of school counseling in schools. Later, the Korean Youth Counseling Institute (KYCI) was formed to further program development and training for school counselors. This was followed by increased institutionalization of school counselors

with placement of youth counselors in schools and district offices in 2005. The most significant development has been the recent establishment of the WEE (We + Education and We + Emotion) project in 2009 that provides a three-step safety net for students.

Current Challenges in K-12 Schools: the U.S. and S. Korea

Challenges in the United States.

U.S. schools are beset with problems from within as from outside of the classroom, such as high profile incidents of school-based violence, increased prevalence of bullying, and multicultural concerns (Chambers, Zyromski, Asner-Self, & Kimemia, 2010; Flannery, Wester, & Singer, 2004; Gregory & Cappella, 2008). Employing approaches that reflect the major tenets of the counseling profession, school counseling interventions represent a humanistic perspective emphasizing client/student empowerment, a developmental focus, culture-centeredness, and advocacy (Lemberger, 2010).

School Violence

Incidents of school violence range from mass shootings, interpersonal physical violence between students, and various forms of bullying (Flannery et al., 2004). Forty percent of all violent crimes against adolescents between the ages of 12 and 19 occur on school grounds (Chambers et al., 2010) and male students tend to be overrepresented and female students underrepresented in the study samples (Gregory & Cappella, 2008). For children living in urban areas, they often experience an accumulation effect of trauma, frequently leading to learning disabilities, lower academic scores, and externalizing behavior problems (Zyromski, 2007). Students who have experienced trauma and violence in their home or neighborhood environments often begin to exhibit an increase in aggression and violence toward peers, delinquency, antisocial behavior, and impulsivity among other behavior problems (Zyromski, 2007).

Bullying may be the most prevalent form of violence in the schools and the form of violence that is likely to affect the greatest number of students (Batsche, 2002; Chibbaro, 2007). Bullying involves either physical or verbal negative actions inflicted by one or more person upon another person. Educational leaders have attempted to investigate and resolve these school violence issues with mixed results (Schellenberg, Parks-Savage, & Rehfuss,

2007). However, the role of school counselors in mediating school violence has been insufficiently investigated.

In response to increased public fear of school violence, many schools have taken an increasingly punitive, zero tolerance approach. Yet, some scholars have advocated for a more humanistic perspective when addressing school violence (Gregory, Skiba, & Noguera, 2010). The Harvard Civil Rights Project (2000) argued that punitive disciplinary approaches differentially affect African American and Latino students, who are overrepresented in suspensions and expulsions (Gregory & Cappella, 2008). As an alternative to a zero tolerance approach, some educators advocate for the use of peer mediation programs to reduce school violence (Schellenberg et al., 2007).

Another intervention for school violence has focused on parent involvement. When parent-teacher conferences are oriented toward problem solving and establishing consistent policies and communication across home and school, they may be helpful. However, when they occur only after negative events and emphasize punishment, their helpfulness in reducing problem behaviors is questionable (Gregory & Cappella, 2008). In one low-income, predominantly African American, urban elementary school, structured and organized games on the playground were associated with higher cooperative play and lower rough physical play over the school year, while active supervision by parent volunteers was associated with higher intercultural interaction (Leff, Costigan, & Power, 2004).

Often, school counselors are the first professionals in the schools to hear about bullying incidents and are often trained in conflict resolution, individual counseling, and group counseling. These valuable skills lay the foundation for the school counselor to be the logical point person for bullying prevention and intervention efforts (Swearer, Esplanage, Vaillancourt, & Hymel, 2010). The school counselor can play an integral role in preventing or intervening for school violence (Gregory & Cappella, 2008). Traditionally, school counselors have focused on interventions predominantly at the individual level and without taking into account children's environmental influences, such as the classroom, home, and community (Cholewa, Smith-Adcock, & Amatea, 2010). The use of ecosystemic intervention programs has important implications for the work of the school counselor in terms of: (a) delivering direct services to students, (b) consulting with parents and teachers, and (c) providing leadership within the school (Cholewa et al., 2010).

Multicultural Issues

Research over the past several decades has documented the educational disparities between low-income students from culturally and socially marginalized families and communities and their more privileged White peers (Grigg, Donahue & Dion, 2007; Lee, Grigg & Dion, 2007; Lee, Grigg & Donahue, 2007). The experiences of Native American Indian, Asian American/Pacific Islander, Latino, and African American students have roots in their social, cultural and historical positioning within U. S. society. Thus, persistent underachievement has been associated with institutional oppression due to culture and class as well as instructional practices and student-teacher relations (Author, 2008, 2012; Nieto, 2004a, 2004b).

The bulk of the research in this area has focused on African Americans and Latinos in that they are largely represented within the United States population. Unfortunately, research on other diverse groups is not as extensive. For example, research on Native Americans is scarce due to the low representation in research samples (Marshall, 2002) whereas Vietnamese Americans and Pacific Islanders tend to be overlooked because of the lack of differentiation from other ethnic groups within the Asian culture, such as students of Japanese and Korean heritage (Kim, 2003). Viewed monolithically and as a model minority, students from these subgroups receive less than adequate attention in the educational research literature.

Upon examining national trends in mathematics and science achievement, it is evident that African American and Latino youth are at risk educationally. The National Science Foundation ([NSF], 2003) reported statistics from the year 2000 based on 4th, 8th, and 12th grade students' performance on mathematics from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). These statistics show that, in 4th grade, the percentage of students performing below basic level in mathematics was 20% for White students and 52% for Latino students and 61% for African American students. Similarly, for 8th grade students, 23% of White, 59% of Latino and 68 % of African American students were below basic level. In 12th grade, 26 % of White students were below basic levels in mathematics compared to 56% Latino and 69% of African American students. Similarly, national trends in average science scale scores in the NAEP, which range from 0 to 300, indicate that for 9-year-olds, the average scores for the year 1999 were 240 for White students, 206 for Latino students and 199 for African American students. For students 13 years old, average scores were 266 for White and 227 for both African American and Latino students. Finally, for 17 year-old students, science scale scores for that same year were 306 for White, 276 for Latino and 254 for

African American students (NSF, 2003). These figures are alarming in that they show that both Latino and African American youth are trailing behind in the core subjects of mathematics and science.

Another problem faced by African American and Latino students relates to the centrality of Eurocentric values in the educational system (Author, 2008a; Banks, 2006; Grant, 2006). This ethnocentric monoculturalism in school environments is characterized by a lack of sensitivity to culturally diverse students in which: (a) teachers do not use culturally responsive teaching practices (Ladson-Billings, 2005), (b) the material used does not represent individuals from diverse cultures (Gay, 2000), and (c) racial segregation amongst students exists (Grant, 2006; Kozol, 2005). Some of the consequences of cultural marginalization include low teacher expectations (Garrahy, 2001; Harry & Anderson, 1994; Skiba, Michael, Nardo & Peterson, 2002), and an increase in punitive actions (Author, 2005, 2006; Noguera, 1996).

School counselors have been encouraged to integrate more advocacy and social justice initiatives into their skill sets to intentionally improve educational outcomes for diverse students (Author, 2010). Intervention programs have been offered that are culturally congruent with African American and Latino students' backgrounds. One such approach is reflected in rites of passage programs (Author 2005, 2008b). Typically designed as after-school, weekend, or summer programs, rites of passage programs can include: foreign language acquisition, arts and crafts, history, mathematics and science, martial arts, cultural excursions, and academic tutoring. The primary aim of rites of passage programs is to influence youth to be cooperative, understand and respect the sameness of self and of other individuals, and have a high sense of responsibility for the well-being and harmonious interconnection between self and community.

Although some of the challenges faced by school counselors in the U.S. are unique to the country's history and social climate, other countries face similar challenges. Issues of bullying, suicide, academic pressures, and internet/video gaming addiction are prevalent outside of the U.S. Schools in S. Korea are confronted with several challenges that include school violence, adolescent suicide, and multicultural concerns.

Challenges in S. Korea

School Violence

Within S. Korea, school violence has been recognized as the most serious for children and adolescents. Although prior forms of interpersonal violence reported in schools were characterized by mental and psychological violence, such as teasing, bullying, and cyber violence, recent forms of physical violence consists of student circles in which organized violent acts are committed (Kim, 2013). During the early 2000s, school gangs were brutalizing other students causing secondary problems, such as student suicides. As a result, full-time school counselors were deployed in youth counseling centers in the district office of education. Additionally, a school policy was developed to eradicate violence in schools. However, the number of school counselors in each school was limited due to funding and the problem worsened. Resultantly, the school counseling system was expanded.

In 2009, the government created a safety net for youth at risk by enacting the School Violence Act and implementing the WEE project (We + Education and We + Emotion). Policymakers believed that school violence prevention should be conducted at the national level and all schools should conduct mandatory school violence prevention education to all students at least twice a year (Kim, 2013). In the process, school counseling teachers were sent to schools and the Ministry of Education provided all schools with intervention manuals to be used with students who are victims or assaulters. Established policies state that students who are victims or assaulters should be counseled. Additionally, assaulting students should be identified in school records and their parents are required to participate in mandatory school violence education.

One school violence prevention approach has been the increase of art and physical education within the curriculum. Additionally, all schools have installed closed caption televisions throughout school campuses to monitor students' activities. In 2012, the government unveiled several measures against school violence that strengthened the role of teachers, school counselors, and headmasters in resolving school violence (Korea Herald, 012). The primary focus of government measures and laws addressing school violence focused on more punishment of violators and interventions after violent incidents.

Adolescent Suicide

In 2010, suicide accounted for 28.2% of all deaths among Korean adolescents. Of adolescents who had attempted suicide, 4.44% and 18.97% had attempted suicide or experienced suicidal ideation in their lifetime (Hong, 2012). Some of the major causes of adolescent suicide has been reported as family conflicts (35/4%), pessimism and depression (16.9%), academic achievement (11.6%), physical defects and diseases (2.6%), and violence/bullying (1.5%) (Kim & Kim, 2008). In examining risk factors for youth suicide, researchers have identified relevant microsystemic risk factors, including parent-child relationships, parent-child communication, peer support, peer victimization, and school satisfaction (Lee, 2010). A study by Jung, Im, and Go (2001) found that youth who experienced conflicts with family members were most likely to have suicidal ideations that also affected their relationships with friends and peers.

Interventions for suicide prevention and intervention are classified in a three-step sequence. In the first step, suicide prevention education and diagnosis are provided for all students. In the second step, suicide risk assessment and case-by-case interventions are offered. In the third step, clinical interventions are provided after a student has attempted suicide. In the process, high risk students are referred to services available outside of the school, such as a professional treatment institution, a health center, or clinical hospitals in the community.

Multicultural Concerns

S. Korea is increasingly becoming diverse for a host of reasons. First, the number of foreign nationals and their children has rapidly increased over the past seven years. The Ministry of Education (2012) reported that the number of foreign nationals residing in S. Korea increased almost twofold from 722,686 in 2007 to 1,265,006 in 2011 with foreign nationals representing 2.3% of the total population in 2011. From 2007 to 2011, the number of foreign-born children increased 3.4 times from 44,258 to 151,154 over this five-year period. Culturally diverse students, meaning those from cultural marriages and S. Korean children born outside of the country, account for .55% of the total enrollment in schools (Ministry of Education, 2012).

The common problems culturally diverse students face are learning deficits and school maladjustment issues due to prejudice and discrimination (Lee, 2011). Learning deficits are

important factors that frequently lead to school maladjustment and can cause retardation of language ability, such as reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills. Poor language skill development can negatively impact the family-school relationship and the relationship between children and their teachers and peers. As the number of diverse students who attend the middle and high schools gradually increases, continuing education for them is not being supported. Resultantly, these students often have difficulty attending school and drop out altogether.

North Korean refugees are another multicultural population in S. Korea. Since 2002, there has been a significant increase in the number of N. Korean refugees. As of 2010, the number of children and adolescents under the age of nineteen who entered into S. Korea was 3,013, accounting for about 16% of the total N. Korean refugees (Lee, Shin, & Lim, 2012).

Government sanctioned interventions for multicultural students include: (a) provision of pre-schools and multicultural coordinators for supporting multicultural students to enter school, (b) introduction of the Korean curriculum and strengthening the school's responsibility for multicultural children's academic standards, (c) enhancing bilingual education to integrate multicultural students with general students, (d) boosting career and academic guidance for multicultural students, and (e) fostering a multicultural friendly school climate (Korean Ministry of Education, 2012).

In sum, educators and policymakers in S. Korea believe that school children's problems are complex and, as a result, are not caused by a single factor but rather a combination of factors. Thus, multidimensional measures should be devised. Additionally, youth's challenges are more significantly influenced by environmental factors than personal ones. Hence, prevention takes precedence over intervention even after the occurrence of problems and schools should take an optimistic view of children as a potential resource for society. Finally, a network between home, school, and community should be built in order to effectively solve school-based problems.

Credentialing of School Counselors in the U.S. and S. Korea

Credentialing in the U.S.

Initially, in the U.S., school counselors were credentialed by their state boards of education. It was not until 1991 that a national certification for school counselors was created through the combined efforts of the American Counseling Association (ACA), American

School Counseling Association (ASCA), and National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC). Typically, states have educational requirements consisting of completion of a master's degree in counseling (or a teacher education program with an endorsement in school counseling) with stipulation of some specific coursework. Additionally, states may require: (a) an examination offered by their department of education or an outside organization, (b) a recommendation by the institution granting the master's degree, (c) and/or a background check. Today, the majority of public school systems within the states mandate advanced degree courses that often include: human growth and development, theories, individual counseling, group counseling, social and cultural foundations, testing/appraisal, research and program evaluation, professional orientation, career development, supervised practicum, and supervised internship. However, there is no consistency in the minimum number of credit hours required for a counseling degree and there is considerable variation across states. For instance, in some programs, only 36 credit hours of coursework is required to receive a graduate degree in counseling. In other programs, students are required to complete twice as many credit hours (72) to earn masters and specialist degrees to graduate. Further, standardization of field experiences has yet to be achieved. While CACREP mandates that counseling students complete a minimum of 700 hours of practicum and internship experiences, at some non-CACREP accredited programs students graduate with less than the standard number of field experience hours.

Although some states have their own school counseling assessment tools, professional school counselors can also take the National School Counselor Certification Exam (NSCCE) to become a National Certified School Counselor (NCSC). Consisting of seven simulated school counseling cases and 40 multiple choice items, the NCSC can be taken at approved locations that includes universities and state authorized sites. Simulated school counseling cases consist of three sections: scenario, information gathering, and decision making and cover five content areas: program delivery, assessment and career development, program administration and development, counseling process, and family-school involvements. The subject content of the multiple-choice questions on this exam includes the eight areas outlined by CACREP as stated above. Alternately, professional school counselors can take the National Counselor Exam (NCE) to become nationally certified counselors (NCC's). While the NCE does not test for specialization knowledge in the area of school counseling, it does certify general knowledge in counseling. All graduates of counseling programs are eligible to apply to take the NCE. Certification, based upon both the NSCCE and the NCE, is provided

by the National Board of Certified Counselors (NBCC) Originally started under the auspices of ACA, NBCC is an organization currently operating as an independent entity.

Current efforts to unify the profession would promote the use of national standards to facilitate portability of licensure and certification, establish minimum education requirements for all counseling graduates, and expand job opportunities by ensuring a base level of clinical competence for all graduates. Thus, credentialing procedures for professional school counselors in the U.S. is likely to change within the near future.

Credentialing in S. Korea

Training requirements, qualifications, and advancement for school counseling in S. Korea have transformed since the inception of the profession back in the 1950s and are still in development. To become a school counselor/teacher, individuals are required to take psychological assessment, personality theory, and counseling theory and practice courses and become certified as a school counselor teacher (Lee, Suh, Yang, & Jang, 2012; Lee & Yang, 2008). Additionally, school counselor teachers are required to complete a 4-week practicum at a school under the supervision of a professional school counselor. While most school counselors are trained as counselor teachers, some individuals complete masters degree counseling programs to acquire more field experiences and additional coursework.

Methods

The four investigators in this project were an African American female counselor educator with specialization in multicultural counseling, a male S. Korean school counselor educator with a corresponding background in educational administration, a European American male counselor educator who specializes in pediatric counseling, and a female, Chinese international doctoral student in counselor education with a specialization in counseling international students. Each of the researchers brought unique lived experiences to the design and analysis of this project as both insider and outsider witnesses (Tillman, 2002).

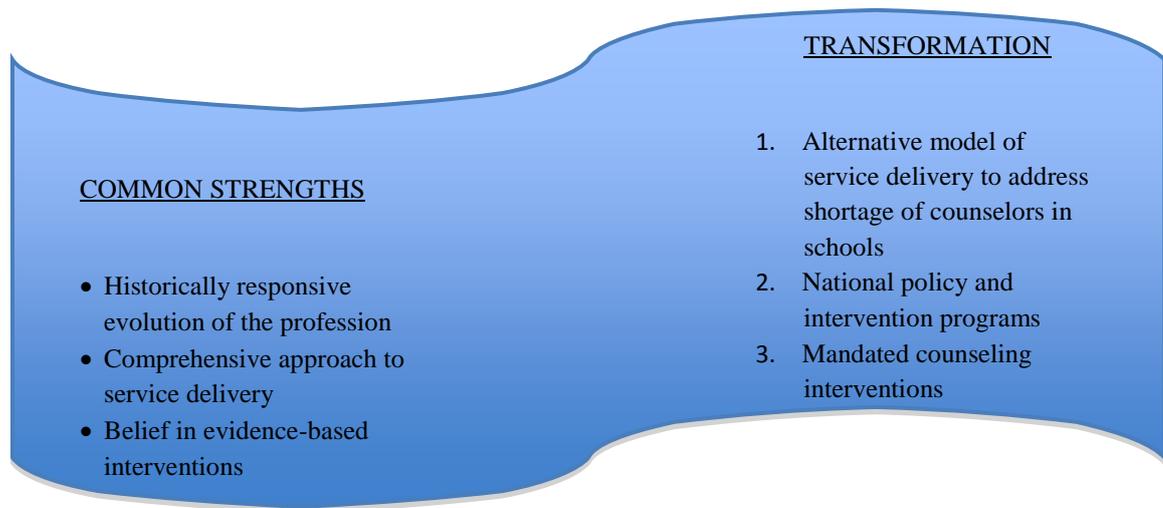
We employed a comparative methodological approach to build theory about school counseling in the U.S. Involving methods of analyzing parallel institutions, cross-national comparative studies investigate the similarities and differences to the environmental contexts across each of the countries involved (Ernste, 2012). This comparison process provides a higher degree variety and enhances the richness of insight as it uncovers the range of choices, culturally determined frameworks, and systems of meaning. This investigative approach aids

in creating mutually transformative understanding, establishing norms, and distinguishing what is essential in practice and policy within the respective systems (Masser, 1984). We used the method of developing transfer topics in order to develop frames or systems of meaning so that we could describe the presence of common strengths and differences (De Vreese, Peter, & Semetko, 2001; Ernste, 2012). The transfer topics in this study included: (a) historical overview of school counseling, (b) current problems in K-12 schools, (c) and credentialing of school counselors. Data from government and professional association archives as well as published works in academic journals and books served as sources for retrieving transfer topic information. By defining these three specific areas in which both countries have interest and relevant experiences, we were able to offer potential transference of theory to the U.S. (Masser, 1984). The greatest value of this methodology lies in its capacity to stimulate new ways of critically viewing models informed by institutional beliefs and structures in different countries without intentionally or unintentionally imposing carbon copies of these models in other contexts.

Findings

In reviewing the three transfer topics under investigation: (a) historical overview of school counseling, (b) current problems in K-12 schools, (c) and credentialing of school counselors, the research team was able to determine that there is transferability of topics. Both countries share similar understanding of the constructs and therefore there is reliability in findings. Thus, we were able to highlight the strengths of the profession of school counseling and build theory regarding the evolution of school counseling in the U.S. First, in both countries, school counseling has evolved to reflect a responsive design, emphasize comprehensiveness in program delivery, and focus on evidence-based interventions. Second, The U.S. could further evolve the pedagogical basis for school counseling by exploring the effectiveness of S. Korea's emphasis on: (a) the use of teacher counselors, (b) national policy and interventions as a safety net, and (c) mandated interventions in schools (See Table 1).

Table 1
Transforming Theory



The U.S. and S. Korea share a common historiography of the profession of school counseling in that educators have been responsive to the changing needs of their societies and have made changes to policy and training based upon those needs. Thus, the historical development of school counseling in both countries has been winding with many twists and turns, based upon student challenges and socio-political realities. These shifts have often included as well as excluded an emphasis on mental health issues all under the umbrella of educational priorities. Another common core in school counseling for both countries is the articulation of the need for collaboration between educators, such as principals, teachers, counselors, and specialists, as well as partnerships with parents and other community stakeholders. The idea of a collaborative network of professionals and caregivers to create a wraparound support network for youth seems to be a norm for both countries, rather than an exception. In the U.S., this is often discussed as the family-school-community collaboration (Bryan, 2009). Finally, while school counseling in S. Korean relies upon an evidence-based system whereby process and outcome studies are a constant, the U.S. has augmented its efforts in this area to promote more research in school counseling (McGannon, Carey, & Dimmitt, 2005).

In advancing theory about the profession of school counseling, three areas are discussed that may help to solidify and stabilize the profession. First, given the current high student-to-counselor ratios in schools (Carrell & Carrell, 2006) and, in some cases, the absence of school counselors altogether, U.S. counselor educators and policymakers may need to consider introducing other forms of service delivery. Despite the fact that the

counselor teacher model in S. Korea has been shown to be fraught with difficulties due to role confusion, lack of sufficient training, and low support from parents (Lee & Yang, 2008), there may be some aspects of this model that are worth consideration. One of the strengths of this model is that support services are available in every school. Given the shortage of school counselors in the U.S., it would be of benefit to explore creative ways to maximize support for students in every school setting.

Second, the WEE project in S. Korea is spearheaded by the government and is the first line of defense when students encounter difficulties within the school setting. Each of the three parts (WEE class, WEE center, and WEE school) of this comprehensive safety net is implemented in conjunction with the community. The U.S. could learn from having counseling as an integrated part of the school curriculum. Thus, counseling would be a built in support for student success at their degree of need. As it is today, counseling typically extracts children from their normal schooling activities. Finally, the S. Korean model of school counseling has mandated interventions for children, such as the career explorations program and mandatory mental health screenings for students. This is an element of school counseling that the U.S. could investigate to provide support to children and their care systems in the prevention of problems, such as interpersonal violence and bullying. Further, clinical screening could become a part of school counselors' tool kit of regular practices.

Overall, the U.S. and S. Korea share many aspects of school counseling that address the challenges in school settings and promote wellness and the socio-emotional development of children. In considering ways in which school counselor educators and policymakers can theorize about the future of the profession, we have provided three areas in which school counseling can be strengthened to better meet the needs of school children and invest in the future of U.S. society.

Discussion

We often view the evolution of school counseling as confusing or problematic when, in fact, it might be better viewed as responsive to the needs of society and youth. In our comparative analysis of school counseling in the U.S. and S. Korea, we concluded that the evolution of the profession has not been sequential but rather responsive, moving forward, sideways, and backwards when necessary in response to the needs of society. Additionally, we often think that our multi-state system does not lend itself to educational policies enforced at the national level. However, the current priorities of First Lady, Michelle Obama place

school counseling as a priority (USA Today, 2015). Finally, we confirm that: (a) an ecological framework that is advocacy oriented, such as the ASCA Model, has potential for providing increased support for schoolchildren as a norm and (b) evidence-based interventions can improve outcomes for youth and provide more targeted efforts by school counseling personnel.

Recommendations

Our recommendations include the need to: (a) consider ways to increase the number of school counselors in elementary and middle schools, (b) unify of the profession to create a national policy unit within or in conjunction with the federal government, and (c) implement universal mental health screenings for all school children as a form of prevention and advocacy. It is highly recommended that school counselor educators and policymakers organize a think tank to dialogue ways to augment the presence of school counselors at elementary, middle, and high schools. Such a think tank might include parents and community stakeholders who could provide key information about school children's needs and challenges. Novel modifications to the service delivery might include training paraprofessionals and parents to deliver some of the interventions that are currently under the auspices of school counselors. This might relieve school counselors of some of the tasks that are not particularly germane to their advanced level of training. Additionally, this might enhance the cultural specificity of interventions being used. Parents and community members may have knowledge of cultural mores and traditions that have therapeutic value. Thus, there can be an equal Exchange of knowledge between the community and the school.

Another area that may be in need of transformation is the necessary unification of the profession beginning with school counselors. Establishing national policies that relate to the overall wellbeing of schoolchildren is of paramount importance. We can no longer stand aside while large variances in service delivery, sometimes related to issues of cultural and social marginalization, impact the growth and development of children. Establishing national policies would provide a defined base level of service delivery for all children, regardless of their social or cultural backgrounds. It would also ensure that school counselors would become an integral part of educational service delivery in schools.

As part of this national policy, the first order of business would be to establish the mandate for mental health screenings for all children at various critical stages in their development. Given the current social reality with dual career parents among the privileged

and two or multiple job parents for those of the lower Socio not economic status groups, children's mental health needs often go unattended until there are critical incidents. By stepping in and focusing on prevention, school counselors can serve a critical role in schools to identify and intervene early before a crisis occurs. Additionally school counselors can also focus on asymptomatic children to ensure that students go beyond absence of symptoms to actually thrive and self-actualize during their school years.

In sum, school counseling have in the US has the ball over time to responsibly meet the needs of children. However, in comparing the evolution and historiography of school counseling in the U.S. to that of South Korea, we have been able to identify several areas where school counseling in our society can evolve and transform. Most important of the three recommendations is the idea that school counseling should be a core element of educational service delivery in our schools. A national policy and the mandate for mental health screenings would assist school counselors and performing at the level to which they have been trained. Additionally, it behooves us to think creatively about ways in which we can modify and adapt service delivery to expand our reach in elementary and secondary schools. In order to enhance the quality of U.S. education and compete globally, U.S. policymakers need to better demonstrate ways in which we invest in children because they are our future.

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