
Research Article

A case study on multicultural student counseling experiences as multicultural competence in school counselors of Korea

Jung Lee Choi

Inha University, Incheon, South Korea

ABSTRACT: This study was conducted with the purpose to discover the cultural diversity and multicultural sensitivity in school counselors. In order to achieve that in-depth interviews were conducted with 7 school counselors where we explored their thoughts on cultural competence as well as the influence multicultural competence in school counselors have on counseling their students. The criteria in selecting the research participants included a minimum of 2 years in school counseling and experience counseling multicultural students. In-depth interviews were conducted from August to September of the year 2016, recorded and transcribed. The result of the study is as follows. School counselors performed individual as well as group counseling, psychological testings and measurement, administrative work, association with centers and hospitals, counseling maladjusted students, counseling program development and operation, counseling promotion and education, peer counseling club management, career guidance, as well as parent training. Practical activity for the acquisition of role performing ability was conducted mostly through informal education. The difficulties faced by school counselors in counseling multicultural students include 1) absence of language communication 2) lack of information on cultural diversity 3) lack of opportunities in multicultural counseling experience 4) lack of confidence, factors of organizational aspects include 1) demand for various counseling professionalism role performance 2) lack of human resources of school counselors: 1 counselor per school 3) absence of counseling case management and incomplete school support etc.

By showing a career development direction needed for the role performing ability in school counselors, this study is significant as fundamental research for the nation, unit schools and training institutions to support career development needed for the role performance of school counselors.

KEY WORDS: school counselor, multicultural sensitivity of school counselors, professional capacity, counselor role performance.

INTRODUCTION

1. Research necessity and purpose

Starting from September 2005, itinerant school counselors were placed in each regional office of education, and from the year 2007 school counselors were placed in unit schools as well. Also, school counseling includes not only students, but also school parents, teachers, administrative as well as community labor (Schmidt, 2008), various services including counseling, education, association and administrative services are provided (Korea Education Development Institute, 2012). However, in some schools, apart from an expert per school, there are no other human resources with which one can cooperate or receive help (Kim, 2011b; Kim 2010).

School counselors have certain limitations in counseling multicultural students. First, compared to counseling regular students, in multicultural student counseling, a student counselor's various cultural competence makes a big difference. Second, in multicultural students counseling, there are differences in the specialty and clinical level. While acquiring a degree in counseling psychology and teaching profession gives the qualification of a school counselor, in multicultural student counseling there is a difference according to cultural diversity and diverse culture competence in school counselors. Third, the counseling range of school counselors is not clear. Due to the lack of clarity in the duty range, there is a

difference in the type and amount of work they perform, according to the counselors or the perception of school management (Kim et.al., 2014).

There have not been any studies related to the influence of multicultural student counseling experience on the counseling experience of school counselors, such as this one. There is a need for preemptive efforts to accurately understand the problems related to school life and cultural adjustment of students, find a solution of countermeasure and fulfill it. The purpose of this study is to expand the professional competence of school counselors, understand the problems and cause of cultural adjustment in multicultural students through cases, and propose a solution.

Theoretical Background

1. Multicultural students and their current situation

With the rise in the number of multicultural families and multicultural children the number of multicultural students is quickly rising as well. Meanwhile, according to the 2015 Survey on Multicultural Families Nationwide presented by the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family (presented on April 26, 2016), in the year 2015, the number of multicultural children aged 9-24 revealed to 82,476 children, which

demonstrates a 24% rise compared to the 66,536 children from the year 2012. Also, the percentage of discrimination experienced by multicultural children revealed to be 9.4% which is a 4.4% decrease compared to the year 2012. In case of discrimination, the action taken by students such as notifying their parents or teachers of the case revealed to be increased from 38.3% of the year 2012 to 50.6% in the year 2015. As for the adjustment to school life, 89.8% of the students enrolled in school answered positively, not being able to socialize with other students was revealed to be the most common reason for maladjustment to school life with 64.7% of the answers. The second most common reason revealed to be the lack of interest in school education, which took up 45.2% of the answers (Ministry of Gender Equality and Family, 2016). The main reasons for withdrawal from school revealed to be due to different school life and culture (18.3%), difficult school education (18.0%), transfer admission and study abroad preparation (15.3%), the need to earn money (14.4%), simple lack of desire to attend school(11.1%) among students who discontinued their education after a certain period of time (Ministry of Gender Equality and Family, 2015 Survey on Multicultural Families Nationwide press release).

To resolve the issues of cultural maladjustment of multicultural students our society is experiencing, there is a need for every person to understand that we are fundamentally coexisting in different cultures. However, a change of understanding of multicultural education holds a more important place for school counselors responsible for multicultural education in the actual education field, In other words, in a multicultural society, school counselors have to perform the role of a mediator as well as a coordinator not only equally accepting members of the society with various cultural backgrounds but also helping them in their coexistence.

2. Multicultural competence in school counselors

School counselors who were placed in schools starting from the year 2005 are school counseling experts who operate programs related to students' emotional and behavioral characteristics as well as psychological testings and therapy programs. Those who possess credentials of a school counselor are counselors who have passed the certification of public or private schools, and are placed in regional education offices or unit school (Park et. al., 2014).

With the increase in the number of multicultural students, in order to prevent maladjustment to school as well as the school dropout crisis, school counselors can help students in their adjustment to school through multicultural counseling, psychological testings, group counseling, mediation, education, commission and community networking. In certain schools general subject teachers are in charge of multicultural work and are also responsible for the support management of multicultural students. Multicultural student counseling within the school premises are conducted following a request to the counselor.

School counselors have to be able to understand the students' characteristics and actively assist them. Also, multicultural oriented schools are conducting support programs fit for multicultural students without much difficulty in the education support for teachers, but in other schools, counseling education support service can change according to the interest and competence of school counselors.

3. Multicultural sensitivity in school counselors

Banks (2009) emphasized that a teacher competent in the multicultural environment needs to possess knowledge, attitude, skills related to multicultural education, as well as knowledge about various ethnicities and culture, and explained the meaning of multicultural education as the equal school education for students, regardless of cultural, racial, social class (Min, 2010).

Multicultural competence and multicultural sensitivity in school counselors includes in itself various knowledge, skill recognition and attitude (Moh, 2009). Through the literature review of a number of scholars' works, the researcher understands a school counselor's multicultural sensitivity as culturally unbiased counseling, mutual understanding, communication as well as sharing their culture.

Thus, in this study, as a component of multicultural counseling competence of school counselors, knowledge and attitude on multicultural sensitivity which apply to counseling knowledge, professionalism competence of school counselors will be analyzed through cases, the differences in multicultural student counseling will be examined.

Research Method

All In this study, in order to deeply explore the experiences of school counselors in counseling multicultural children, one of the qualitative research methods, case study research was selected. Miles Huberman (1994) defined a case as a phenomenon occurring in a limited context. Also, he stated that it is suitable research for the examination of change according to time when obtaining the meaning held by a distinctive case. (Yoo et. al., 2012: 94). Therefore as a study dealing with counseling experiences of school counselors case study was judged to be the most suitable research method. This study was conducted through in-depth interviews of school counselor in elementary, middle and high schools.

1. Research participants

The selection of participants for this research is as follows. In this study, 7 school counselors with a work experience of at least 2 years, and who have experienced counseling multicultural students, were selected. In-depth interviews were conducted and the contents of the interviews were analyzed. For the selection of research participants, the number of multicultural students, in public and private schools in each administrative territory, was verified according to the statistical data "Current situation of multicultural students" of the year 2015 issued by the Incheon Metropolitan Office of

Education. Then, getting recommendations from teachers, school counselors with counselors with experience in counseling multicultural students, made up the research participants. Among the counselors recommended, 12 were

contacted inquiring their thoughts on participating in a study. As a result, 7 of them agreed to participate in the study. The general information on the research participants is shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1. General information on the research participants

Research Participants	Sex	Teaching career (years/months)	Multicultural student counseling experience				
			Counseling frequency	Student age	Special notes on counseling students		
	Number of students	Sex			Other		
1	F	4	12 times	15	2	M	immigrated student
2	F	2	10 times	9	1	M	international marriage
3	M	3	15 times	19	2	M, F	remarriage
4	F	8/2	15 times	9	2	F	international marriage
5	M	5	10 times	13	2	M, F	international marriage
6	F	10/2	8 times	15	3	F	international marriage
7	F	2/8	0	17	8	M	international marriage

Research participants : 7

As shown in Table 1, the participants of this research are 7 school counselors. Their career as counselors varied from 2 years to 10 years. With regard to the selection of research participants, schools with multicultural students currently enrolled, were selected first, and it was revealed that multicultural students are gathered and enrolled in one place. If we examine the citizenships of their parents, most of them revealed to be marriage migrant women, and their maternal citizenships were diverse. In case of research participant 3, the father belonged to the Korean ethnic group in China. As shown above, in this part, characteristics of research participants, and the cases of multicultural counseling experience of school counselors were examined. The following demonstrates the data collection and analysis conducted for this research.

2. Data collection and analysis

This study is a qualitative case studies research which used in-depth interviews. Data collection was done through conducting in-depth interviews with teachers, as well as

related literature deduction. In-depth interviews were conducted with 7 people individually. The research participants were informed that the interview contents would only be used for the research and the participants anonymity would be intact. During the interviews, research participants shared their stories freely and naturally. After the interviews were conducted, the contents were transcribed, then additional information was obtained through phone, e-mail as well as in writing, and embedded analysis was done.

Data analysis was based on a theory of data being collected in as many situations and possible, and data collection as well as analysis was done through empirical search about empirical truth (Yin, 2003). For an effective operation of multicultural counseling education in the educational field by school counselors with a high awareness about multicultural diversity, there needs to be set up integrated multicultural counseling education which includes material related to diversity, which needs to be able to strengthen multicultural competence and sensitivity in school counselors.

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Results

In a multicultural society, the most demanded part is the change of understanding of teachers who implement multicultural education on the field. School counselors, especially, have to perform the role of facilitators who help understand diverse cultures communicate together. Cultural understanding, cultural diversity, multicultural sensitivity and unbiased counseling is what school counselors have to possess. These were presented through the cases of elementary, middle and high school counselors. We intend to provide a detailed description of multicultural student counseling through the cases of school counselors.

1. Multicultural counseling diversity

The attitude of school counselors towards cultural diversity in multicultural understanding is understanding various cultural backgrounds and accommodating various cultural demands of students.

The psychological and emotional anxiety of multicultural students is related to their cultural maladjustment and loneliness due to lack of friends. Many multicultural teenagers in their period of growth look like they socialize with many friends, but they said they do not have friends to whom they can open up talk.

- Possessing the capability of psychometry fit for students -

“Low self-esteem made school life difficult.”

Fortunately, he enjoyed coming to the counseling office, While receiving counseling, his relationship with his friends gradually improved and he became brighter in school. In the counseling office, art psychotherapy was the first approach, with the use of various board games he was able to learn about relationships with friends and through discovering his advantages his self-esteem was restored. Counseling was provided with a long-term plan. (Research participant 1)

- Absence of communication according to the fostering attitude of parents -

When a student struggled with adjustment to school and committed a misdeed, evaluating that student based on the result of the action not only cause the student to stiffen, but also created a difficulty in communication between the mother and the student, the father did not pay much attention to nurturing the student, and the student could not get help from his parents, but experience counseling alone. That was heartbreaking. (Research participant 1)

The school where Research participant 7 is placed, is a boy's high school, where 8 students are multicultural students. The homeroom teachers were managing multicultural student counseling. All the multicultural students rejected counseling,

because they were worried that they would be made fun of, so they did not want their classmates to know their home environment. It was revealed that they were introduced to a counseling center for youth, and are receiving counseling there.

Lee (2012) divided the multicultural competence necessary for a multicultural counselor into awareness, understanding and function. School counselors' awareness and attitude are important for the efficiency of multicultural counseling. The attitude of a school counselor towards various cultures, ethnicities and races greatly influences rapport forming initial structure. Although Research participant 1 wanted to proceed with family counseling with her student, there were limitations to communication due to language difficulties and lack of understanding of school culture from the mother's side. In addition, it seemed that the foreign mother was responsible for child rearing and the multicultural student was exposed difficulties due to the uncooperative attitude and neglect of the father.

Multicultural student with no career plans, father with disinterest in child rearing -

With the increase of multicultural students in their youth, there is a need for understanding the students' characteristics and creating a customized career plan fit for multicultural students. Although there were plans to proceed with counseling connecting families and the school, but due to the communication difficulties with the mother and neglect towards child rearing from the fathers' side, we faced obstacles in counseling.

(Research participant 3)

- Experiences and principles of a teacher -

When communication is unsuccessful with multicultural students, it is said that parent counseling has to be combined... In such situations, when an inexperienced school counselor worries about the difficulties of communication with the foreigner mother, thinks of not being able to convey their words to the mother, thus postpones counseling with parents, it might lead to the student to go back to their home country. Such cases did indeed take place. (Research participant 6)

- Counseling result as the counselor's lack of competence...

When a multicultural student makes a decision to drop out of school, this decision is judged as lack of ability of the school counselor. (Research participant 7)

Although all the school counselors interviewed claim that they did not have much difficulty in multicultural counseling. When asked if there were cases of unfinished counseling or reasons for that, some answered that there were cases such as the abovementioned case, when a student left the country or suddenly changed their address. Also, at school it was evaluated as a result of the counselor's lack of ability.

- Absence of communication in uninterested family -

Due to the difficult economic situation of the multicultural student, both parents come home *다문* late, which led to lack of communication in the family, they have their meals separately, and the relationship with the father is especially awkward, which is also said to lead to absence of communication. (Research participant 2)

As noted above, counseling approaches and structuring of counseling may vary depending on counselor experience in multicultural student counseling. The counselors' diverse cultural understanding of these changes is the result of their efforts to communicate with their cultures through various experiences and beliefs.

2. Unbiased counseling of school counselors

Multicultural students are not exposed to everyday exchanges in school life. If maladjustment occurs for any reason, counseling is linked to the school counseling room. In situations where the behaviors seen by counseling teachers in the multicultural counseling process can be attributed to other than prejudice, The student's prejudiced behavior will appear. Competing people feel relative deprivation, which they feel when they feel that they are not being treated better than the people or groups they are being compared to and that they feel unfair.

- Unattainable counseling -

While preparing for the counseling for a multicultural student, I received information about the family and other necessary information needed for counseling. I called the multicultural student and asked some questions before the counseling. The parents called the school and asked, "Why did you ask my child? I do not need counseling, so please do not bother my child." This decision was not made by me, but it was the principal's instructions, which I had to follow. (Research participant 7)

Marshall (2002) proposed that school counselors, who are responsible for students' mental health, have the intercultural ability to reflect on themselves, interact effectively with groups, and the knowledge of students, parents, and community is executive ability and passion towards school administration. If professional counselors are preoccupied with cultural diversity and understanding of multicultural students, the difficulties experienced by multicultural students will lead to relative deprivation, prejudice, and discrimination.

- Counseling error due to worries about bilingualism -

When I hear "multicultural student" I wonder where they came from and start worrying.

Before counseling with non-English speaking students, I worry and think about how to go about it. Can a student with a different mother tongue than me understand Korean?

(Research participant 5)

- They seem to communicate better with other students through gestures, rather than with me. When I am requested to counsel a multicultural student, I start worrying about where they came from and what the sentiment of that country is. Counseling with a student from an unfamiliar, to me, country makes me nervous. (Research participant 4)

In order to effectively perform counseling for multicultural students, counselors should be equipped with counseling professionalism, requirements for counselors, as well as requirements for teachers. In addition to various counseling techniques, multicultural counselors are also expected to have a strong interest in multicultural counseling due to differences in cultural understanding, characteristic diversity of multicultural students, reflection on oneself, interest and observation on students, and tolerance and consideration for minorities (Lee et. al., 2009).

3. Qualitative change in multicultural students and professional school counselors

The experience of multicultural students' counseling is also helpful for general student counseling. The multicultural counseling experience of teachers is more open to racial and cultural diversity, It has changed positively to reduce discrimination.

If the counselor thinks that the cause of school maladjustment in a multicultural student is in the cultural background, problems in the adaptation to the school culture of multicultural students who have cultural and monotonic characteristics will be ruled out.

- I felt the distance when I thought of counseling a student with different sentiments. -

When I showed interest in the worries and troubles my student was having, he started opening up to me and talking about his difficulties. Of course, it took us quite some time to communicate.

(Research participant 2)

- No active intervention -

Rather than calling parents to call the school and find out why the complaints are coming in, school administrators are sensitive to the complaints received. Why is there a need for a teacher to apologize to a parent when they are not at fault? At that time, I even wondered why I was teaching in the first place...

We have occasional management problems with outsourced counseling because we have problems, and we do not ask if we are not in crisis.

(Research participant 7)

The researchers say that the prejudices they experience are due to distorted perceptions about counseling or professional counselors and lack of accurate perception of reality and practice in counseling.

In the work of Kim (2014) among 325 respondents 90 (27.7%) revealed to have experienced the role of a homeroom teacher, while the remaining 235 (72.3%) did not. Also homeroom teachers of multicultural students conducted counseling with students about their school life. The statistics on the experience of multicultural student counseling and the progress of multicultural counseling in the school were not confirmed.

Conclusion and Proposal

As the number of multicultural students increases, interest in multicultural students' adaptation to school life culture and social competence and the professionalism of counselors who can help them are increasing. Due to the increase in the number of multicultural students, there is a limited number of teachers who are responsible as homeroom teachers and multicultural affairs. In case of multicultural student counseling, school counselors have a great influence on their cultural adaptation if they are concerned about ideological bias in multicultural counseling.

The purpose of this study is to present concrete data for future multicultural counseling education by analyzing counseling teachers' experiences of counseling knowledge, which is a component of various cultural competencies, as multicultural sensitivity, which is perception and attitude toward multiculturalism. In particular, the professional counselor in the multicultural student counseling analyzed cases of self-confidence in counseling, efficacy of multicultural counseling, and cultural diversity according to whether or not they had experience in multicultural counseling.

The role of school counselors in the accelerated multicultural society in Korea is very important. In order to foster the competence of professional counselors who are responsible for school counseling, continuous analysis and research of professional counselors who are subject to various changes are needed. A follow - up study is expected to verify the effectiveness of training and counseling cases on counseling teachers' professionalism in multicultural student counseling.

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