

Career Development for Youth with Disabilities in South Korea: The Intersection of Culture, Theory, and Policy

Jina Chun

Michigan State University

Annemarie Connor

Michigan State University

John F. Kosciulek

Michigan State University

Trenton Landon

Utah State University

Jinhee Park

Michigan State University

Abstract

Youth with disabilities face difficulties resulting from attitudinal, environmental, and organizational barriers not only in initially accessing and entering school (World Health Organization [WHO], 2011), but also as they transition from school age youth to working adults. With a focus on facilitating a better understanding of the issues, challenges, and solutions associated with the design and implementation of career development services for youth with disabilities, this article describes the status quo for students with disabilities in South Korea and then discusses career development services that potentially reduce variation, help facilitate optimal career development, and promote future employment opportunities. To accomplish this task, we explore the intersection of culture, theory, and policy in the Korean transition service delivery system.

Keywords

Youth with disabilities, career development, employment, education, transition service

Introduction

The educational dropout rate for youth with disabilities is disproportionate to that of their nondisabled peers, resulting in difficulties for them in accessing vocational training and employment (Mitra, Posara, & Vick, 2011; WHO, 2011). While the need to vocationally engage and prepare youth with disabilities for

postsecondary education and employment is both intuitive and well documented, barriers to

Corresponding Author:

Annemarie Connor, Office of Rehabilitation and Disability Studies, Department of Counseling, Educational Psychology, and Special Education, Michigan State University, 620 Farm Lane, Room 401A, East Lansing, MI 48824
E-mail: connora1@msu.edu

effective implementation exist not just in the United States (Benitez, Morningstar, & Frey, 2009), but also in South Korea (Lee, 2014; H. Seo, 2007). Early career interventions within school settings have been shown to improve work outcomes of youth with disabilities (Benz, Lindstrom, & Yovanoff, 2000; Harvey, 2002; Luecking & Fabian, 2000; Scholl & Mooney, 2003), yet systematic and equitable career development service provision is lacking. This article explores existing and promising career development practices for youth with disabilities from both Korean and American paradigms. While the reader will note both distinct and subtle cultural, practice, and policy differences, parallels can be drawn between American and Korean theory and models of career development for youth with disabilities. What remains constant across hemispheres are the unique challenges of youth with disabilities to initiate and advance through the stages of career development.

Regardless of how disability is acquired, or the level of interaction one may have with persons with disabilities, disability remains a part of the human condition (WHO, 2011). In fact, disability is the one minority group that anyone can join at any point across the lifespan. Yet, while universal, disability is manifested in individuals, families, local communities, and society through the lens of culture. The term culture conceptualizes ways of living among groups and encompasses subconscious ways of “thinking, behaving, and believing” (Ehrich, 1949). Given this quality, the nuances of culture are not readily apparent to outsiders. Culture influences everything, not only individual behavior, but also theory, policy, and service delivery. It is at the intersection of culture, theory, and policy that this article examines how model-driven vocational services can support developmentally appropriate, culturally sensitive, and solution-focused services in both U.S. and Korean contexts.

Global Status of Youth with Disabilities and Education

It has been suggested that disability has a bidirectional relationship to poverty, meaning the presence of a disability increases the likelihood of the individual living in poverty, while someone living in poverty is, in turn, more likely to acquire a disability (WHO, 2011). This relationship is due to a number of contextual factors such as limited access to education, healthcare, and suitable employment opportunities. Regardless, conservative estimates project that 10% of the world’s population possess a disability (Levers, 2013), with the number likely higher due to poor reporting or individuals not identifying as having a disability. Disability is more common among women and youth (Levers, 2013; United Nations, 2013; WHO, 2011), the groups often having limited access to formal educational opportunities.

In the United States, students with disabilities are twice as likely to drop out of high school, half as likely to seek out post-secondary education, four times more likely to be imprisoned; and they can expect to face higher adult unemployment rates, leading to poverty rates three times as high as their non-disabled counterparts (National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability [NCWD], 2009). Successful employment for youth transitioning from school to work is closely linked to career exploration and development fostered during the school years. In fact, a longitudinal study in the United States by Schmidt-Davis (2000) found better employment outcomes, increased self-esteem and self-determination, and less need for Social Security benefits among students who received rehabilitation services, including vocational rehabilitation counseling and guidance, case management, consultation, assessment, and advocacy. Other researchers have also linked early transition services and

interventions with improved outcomes (Benz et al., 2000; Harvey, 2002; Luecking & Fabian, 2000; Scholl & Mooney, 2003). Thus, while the evidence supports the value of career development services for youth with disabilities, systemic barriers to service access still exist (Benitez et al., 2009).

Silverstein, Julnes, and Nolan (2005) described education as foundational to the successful transition to work or higher education. The right to an education is also clearly articulated in the preamble (section v.) and throughout the entirety of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (e.g., Article 8, Article 24; United Nations, 2006). Yet, limited access to education is a concern regarding many youth with disabilities (Levers, 2013). From a global perspective, youth with disabilities are often not enrolled, or start school later than peers, and drop out of school at higher rates (Groce, 2004; Mitra, Posara, & Vick, 2011; WHO, 2011). It has been reported that 93 million children have a disability, and many children with disabilities are not enrolled in school for reasons ranging from lack of accommodations to family members feeling that the individual is unable to benefit from education (UNICEF, 2013). The lack of social inclusion and access to education limits potential occupational attainment later in life (UNICEF, 2013; Wehman et al., 2015). With a dominant ideology that a high quality education is critical for upward social mobility (Carter & Reardon, 2014), educational achievement is a critical dimension of empowerment, societal participation, and overall human well being (United Nations, 2013). Unfortunately, youth with disabilities are often segregated into separate classrooms or schools instead of being included in the mainstream educational system (United Nations, 2013); or they may simply be viewed as unable to benefit from an education and kept at home by family (Groce, 2004).

Career Development Theory and Transition Policy

Theory provides a useful framework for understanding the complex career development challenges of youth with disabilities. Super's (1980) career development theory is a widely known life-span view of career development. Super proposes that career development is a continuous lifelong process of developmental experiences which emphasizes the role of self-concept in the development of an individual's career choice and adaptation (Savickas, 1997). Specifically, Super's theory (1980) conceptualizes transition youth (ages 15-24) within the exploration stage, recognizing their changing aspirations and need for career cruising. For adolescents, this stage is characterized by "trying out" careers through classes, work experiences, and leisure activities. The exploration stage is a time for adolescents to make tentative choices and begin to develop skills that match their aspirations. School is a natural context in which these choices and skill building activities occur. The role of the career counselor is to facilitate exploration while assisting the student in moving toward the next stage of career development (establishment, ages 25-44), while also taking into account what Super (1980) termed as lifestyle factors. Super's lifestyle factors are threefold and include environmental factors such as job market conditions and labor practices; situational determinants such as socioeconomic status and cultural factors; and personal determinants which are both biological and psychological, including type, onset, and severity of disability. While career development theory espouses the benefits of counseling as a catalyst for continuous and sequential stage progression for all students and workers, career counseling is particularly impactful and instrumental for individuals with disabilities who may be vulnerable to stage disruption or stagnation (Kosciulek & Perkins, 2005).

While models such as Super's theory address the early development of self-concept, attitudes, and learning needs in relation to career development (Stage 1: Ages 0-14), transition planning is not mandated in the United States until students are 16 years old (IDEA, 2004). Furthermore, transition *planning* does not necessitate service delivery, such as vocational rehabilitation services, which are frequently not initiated until a student's senior year of high school. As such, transition policy in the United States does not mandate early implementation of career development services for youth with disabilities. As such, in the United States perhaps culture, and not simply policy, is in conflict with career development theory. Through the elevation of autonomy and independence over interdependence, the expectation is for youth to be largely self-directed in their career interests and activities. Such an individualistic approach to career development contrasts with collectivist models of transition education in South Korea.

Korean Cultural Lens

Cultural lines of distinction may be drawn when comparing the Western, individualistic culture of the United States with the Eastern, collectivist culture of South Korea. Similar to other Asian cultures, Korean life can be described as family-centered and based on principles of Confucianism, which emphasizes interpersonal harmony within a prescribed hierarchy (B. Kim, Atkinson, & Umemoto, 2001; Kim-Rupnow, 2001). The Korean cultural emphasis on harmony and order is fundamentally different from the mainstream American cultural emphasis on individualism and self-reliance, and extends to the family, community, and broader society (Kim et al., 2001; Kim-Rupnow, 2001; Sue & Sue, 2008). Fundamentally, Koreans "regard family as the basic social unit and consider harmony at home to be the first step toward harmony in the community and in

the nation as a whole" (Kim-Rupnow, 2001; p. 12).

In addition to harmony, Koreans value hard work, ambition, and education, balanced with humility (Kim-Rupnow, 2001). While increasingly challenged by the influence of Western culture, Koreans continue to uphold Confucian ideals of respect for elders, good will, loyalty, trust, cooperation, and reciprocity (Hur & Hur, 1999). Within this collectivist construct, Koreans view decision-making as a family or community process rather than as an individual privilege, since Koreans perceive personal accomplishments as family achievement (B. Kim et al., 2001). Decision-making based on personal preference, or placing one's own needs ahead of others, is considered selfish within Korean culture (B. Kim, Atkinson, & Yang, 1999; Kim-Rupnow, 2001; Sue & Sue, 2008). In fact, it can be observed that the pronoun "my" translates as "our" in the Korean language.

Youth in South Korea

In regard to youth, Koreans deeply value and highly prize academic achievement (Sue & Sue, 2008). Rather than being viewed as dependent, children are seen as interdependent and subordinate within the hierarchical structure of the family (Kim-Rupnow, 2001; Sue & Sue, 2008). In turn, parents are expected to support their children's academic endeavors, often at the expense of their own desires or needs. Fitting with the view of family as the primary decision-making unit, parents with traditional cultural values make school, career, and marriage-related decisions for their children (Kim-Rupnow, 2001).

Whereas American culture in essence allows for the emancipation of young adults from their parents, Confucian ideals of filial piety require that adult children care for their elders. Filial piety is characterized by children showing respect, honor, and devotion to parents, and making sacrifices for them (B. Kim et al.,

2001). Stoicism is the norm and children, particularly boys, are discouraged from expressing needs or emotions, which might be interpreted as impolite or even hostile (Kim-Rupnow, 2001; Sue & Sue, 2008). Pang (2000) noted that first generation Korean American families struggle with the possibility that children's exposure to individualistic American practices might lead to family conflict through a disruption of filial piety.

Culture of Disability in South Korea

In regard to disability, while many Koreans view disability as a natural life process, much like birth, aging, death, or the result of medical or psychological causes (H. Jo et al., 2011), others see disability as a punishment by supernatural forces including karma or God. Further, some Koreans believe that a mother's inability to follow traditionally prescribed practices and avoid taboos causes harm to the developing child (Kim-Rupnow, 2001). Religion and its changing landscape within South Korea certainly influences the Korean worldview of disability and while a detailed analysis of religion is beyond the scope of this article, it should be noted that Confucian philosophy, as well as Buddhism and Christianity all play a part in shaping contemporary Korean religious ideology. Thus, the variety and interplay of multiple religions within South Korea create complexities similar to those generated in the heterogeneous American religious landscape.

Families and individuals with a strong belief in disability as a supernatural phenomenon may experience disproportionate feelings of helplessness, depression, self-blame, denial, and anger (Ferko, Jung, & S. Kim, 2010). Parents with such fatalistic worldviews typically expect that children with disabilities will eventually outgrow their conditions. Consequently, these parents typically do not seek services for their children. In contrast, Koreans with "scientific education" seek both

Western and Eastern medical treatments for their children, along with prayer and religious rituals (Kim-Rupnow, 2001).

Challenges to Persons with Disabilities in South Korea

While legislation designed to improve the lives of persons with disabilities in South Korea has been enacted (e.g., the Employment Promotion and Vocational Rehabilitation Act for People with Disabilities, 2000), stigmatization and misunderstanding about disability remain prevalent. In collectivist cultures with conservative values and customs, individuals whose appearance or behavior is outside the norm may receive negative attention, including, at worst, being the target of staring and gossip or being ignored as an outsider and, at best, being overprotected or patronized (Chen, S. Jo, & Donnell, 2004; Kim-Rupnow, 2001).

Traditional South Koreans believe that disability is caused by supernatural influences (Hur & Hur, 1999), resulting in families and individuals feeling disempowered, and even depressed when faced with disability (Yan, Accordino, Boutin, & Wilson, 2014). In addition, Kim-Rupnow (2001) cited results of a survey administered in both 1984 and 2000 that indicated that cultural bias against disability in South Korea was not improving. Over a 15-year period, survey results indicated that an unchanging and large percentage of citizens (approximately 83%) reported that they would rather terminate a pregnancy than have a child with a disability. Moreover, appraisals of causation and inferences of culpability are mixed, depending on the nature of the disability. For example, some Koreans believe that chronic disability is a form of "payback" for past indiscretion (Yan et al., 2014), while acquired disability, particularly while in the service of others, may affect a sense of pride and be attributed to "bad luck" rather than bad actions (National Center for the Dissemination of Disability Research, 2011). In

addition, disability as a result of aging is seen as natural, acceptable, and an extension of filial piety. Consequently, individuals and families experience a range of feelings, thoughts, and emotions in reaction to disability ranging from shame and helplessness to admiration and acceptance. While policymakers have made efforts to reshape perceptions of disability, Korean culture has been slow to adopt such ideals. For example, basic needs such as accessibility in public spaces continue to be a challenge, leading to the isolation of persons with disabilities.

While these examples illustrate generally “unfavorable” attitudes faced by persons with disabilities and their families in South Korea, efforts to reduce prejudice and reshape attitudes are underway. For instance, popular Korean public television programming showcases stories of individuals with disabilities, offering a glimpse of real struggles and accomplishments to viewers who might not otherwise have the opportunity to interact with persons with disabilities (Kim-Rupnow, 2001). At the service level, South Korea has a system of community rehabilitation agencies that are working toward integration and equality.

Rehabilitation Services in South Korea Culture Impacts Rehabilitation Service Delivery

Around the globe, persons with disabilities have historically been subject to treatment modalities and service patterns prescribed by a person of authority (e.g., doctor, rehabilitation professional, teacher). Since service providers in the Korean context are typically responsible for treatment decisions (Kim-Rupnow, 2001), and service recipients tend to adhere to advice from persons in authority (Smart, 2001), a predominantly medical model of care proliferates naturally within the culture. Concepts of empowerment and informed choice are relatively new and coincide with American

ideals of individualism and self-determination. Empowerment has been conceptualized to include five major components: control, competence, responsibility, participation, and future orientation (Kosciulek, 2005). While the American approach to rehabilitation philosophy may center these principles on the client, Koreans may be unfamiliar with the concept of empowerment and, when they do seek help, are more likely to seek guidance from individuals perceived as authorities (e.g., doctors, nurses, therapists, teachers) by virtue of their education and perceived levels of competence (Kim-Rupnow, 2001) and thus shift responsibility and control to the provider.

While the American philosophy of rehabilitation may assess a medical approach as being counter to the mainstream values of informed choice, empowerment, and independent living, (Kim-Rupnow, 2001), the medical model closely aligns with Korean and Confucian constructs of filial piety and social hierarchy constructs. Within this hierarchy of authority, family members are also important figures, as they play a key role in the selection of services, providers, and potential treatments. Thus, it has been suggested that families be included as early as possible in the rehabilitation process to ensure rapport building (Kim-Rupnow, 2001), and potentially empower more decision-making on the part of families and individuals. However, Yan and colleagues (2014) caution that facilitating family involvement in service delivery may be problematic in Asian cultures due to a traditional view of disability as shameful and under the purview of the family. Such attitudes may result in families refusing services they might otherwise benefit from (Yan et al., 2014).

Some Cultural Norms are Changing

The development of the World Health Organization’s 2011 International Classification of Functioning, Disability, and Health (ICF) and

trends in South Korea are leading to more families and persons with disabilities seeking second opinions and researching multiple options for services and potential treatments. This scenario suggests that global constructs of disability are shifting decision making from authoritative figures to persons with disabilities who are then supported by family, friends, and treatment providers. This cultural shift can be seen in the language used by the Korean Special Education and Rehabilitation Center for Excellence (2001), which outlined the categories of disability used by the helping professions in South Korea as: (a) impairments of the body and internal organs; (b) disabilities in intelligence, behavior, or emotion; and (c) handicaps created by society. Kim-Rupnow (2001) noted that these categories align with the definition of disability used by the U.S. National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research. In essence, Koreans view disability through not just a medical lens but also as a social/environmental construct. Information and education are seen as the most effective means for mitigating potential negative aspects of socially constructed disability in South Korea (Kim-Rupnow, 2001).

The Korean Context

With rapid economic growth in South Korea, vocational rehabilitation services for persons with disabilities have been developing with a sense of urgency since the 1980s (Oh, J.H. Kim, Rosenthal, & Lui, 2005). According to the Employment Promotion and Vocational Rehabilitation Act for People with Disabilities (2000), persons with disabilities are entitled to vocational rehabilitation services to obtain and retain employment. This legislation also mandates that private businesses and governmental organizations sustain a workforce comprised of at least 2.5 to 3% of people with disabilities (Oh et al., 2005). However, people with disabilities still experience disparity in

employment. In fact, only 36% of persons with disabilities were employed in 2013, compared to the 60.4% employment rate of persons without disabilities (Korea Employment Agency for the Disabled, 2013). Employment is further compromised for individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities, whose access to employment may be limited to sheltered workshop settings (H. Park, 2013).

Transition Policies in South Korea

Since the mid-1990s the field of special education in South Korea has increasingly focused attention on how special education can help students with disabilities both explore their career options and prepare for future careers (H. Park, 2013; Seo, 2007). The concept of transition was introduced as the “transition from school to adult life, which included the whole realm of adult life such as independent living, leisure activities, integrated community participation and employment” (J. Kim, 2001 as cited in Y. Park, 2014, p.14). Transition education and training have been recognized as important in South Korea due to limited national vocational rehabilitation support systems. Yet, within the educational process, systematic transition services to enhance the skills and opportunities for independent living for youth with disabilities are lacking (J. Kim, 2007).

To meet this need, the 1990 enactment of the Law of Promotion of Employment of People with Disabilities (now the Employment Promotion and Vocational Rehabilitation Act for People with Disabilities) included the term “transition education” and mandated that transition education and services be included in special education curricula throughout the school years (Y. Park, 2014; H. Seo, 2007). The Special Education Law for Persons with Disabilities and Others (2007) specified that schools should have qualified experts, equipment, and facilities in order to provide

adequate assessment and implementation of self-support training, such as vocational rehabilitation training, daily life adaptation training, and social adaptation training designed to meet the needs of students receiving special education services. While the term “transition” was not used in this legislation, the law clearly referred to the importance of community living, and career and vocational education for youth with disabilities (Y. Park, 2014). More recently, the Act on the Protection of Rights and Support for People with Developmental Disabilities of 2014 stressed that central and local governments should endeavor to provide appropriate vocational rehabilitation services to people with developmental disabilities so that they are able to develop their full vocational potential.

Current Status of High School Graduates with Disabilities in South Korea

Unfortunately, despite legislative efforts, vocational education and training have not proved adequate for enhancing the employment and independent living of students with disabilities. According to the Ministry of Education (2014), 24.8% of graduates from special schools or special classes in general high schools entered post-secondary vocational education programs in special schools; 13.0% attended college or universities, and only 25.2% of all graduates with disabilities were employed. In addition, the unemployment rate of youth and young adults with disabilities in South Korea aged 15-29 is two times greater than their non-disabled counterparts (Employment Development Institute [EDI], 2010). Disparate transition outcomes are even more pronounced for students with intellectual disabilities. Despite receiving more special education services than other students with disabilities, students with intellectual disabilities experience a relatively low employment rate compared to peers with other types of disabilities (Ministry of

Education and Science Technology [MEST], 2012).

Since there have been rapid advances in technology within business and industry requiring the need for highly educated and skilled workers, youth and young adults with disabilities are facing increasing difficulties in obtaining and securing jobs. According to a 2014 special education report (Ministry of Education), most high school graduates with disabilities were likely to be employed in manufacturing, particularly packaging assembly jobs (23.4%). In contrast, only 7.8% of high school graduates with disabilities obtained office jobs.

In order to enhance services for youth with disabilities, in 2013 the Ministry of Education announced the fourth five-year plan for the development of special education services. This national plan emphasized qualified career or vocational education and increased opportunities to receive quality, individualized, lifelong education with the goal of improving employment and independent living outcomes after graduation. The plan increased the number and sustainability of integrated job-centered schools and also emphasized that school-based enterprises in special schools should give students with disabilities more opportunity to receive vocational training (Ministry of Education, 2013).

South Korean Transition Service Delivery Post-Secondary Vocational Education Programming in Special Schools

After graduation from high school, many youth and young adults with disabilities are not be ready for the transition to adult life, as this transition is often associated with high levels of uncertainty due to limited engagement in vocational activities (I. Jo, 1997). In order to prepare youth and young adults with disabilities to live in their communities independently, the

need to provide curricula and systematic vocational training has become a critical issue in transition education. Post-secondary vocational education and training programs have operated since 1995 (Y. Kim & Jeon, 2010). A total of 121 schools currently offer vocational education programs (Ministry of Education, 2014).

Post-secondary vocational education training programs offer a combination of focused vocational curriculum, soft skills development, and vocational skills training within the school setting. Youth and young adults with disabilities served through the post-secondary vocational program receive training for two or three years after completion of the high school curriculum (H. Park, 2013). However, program effectiveness is an unanswered question. Generally, graduates of post-secondary vocational programs experience lower employment outcomes, securing mostly manufacturing packaging assembly jobs that are not much different than those achieved by high school graduates with disabilities who did not participate in the post-secondary vocational education program (Ministry of Education, 2014). Potential causes of such disappointing employment outcomes are numerous and illustrate a need for further research. It is unclear whether the quality of program services and supports, characteristics of the applicants, bias among employers, or other unidentified factors lead to such disparate outcomes. However, one study (Y. Seo, 2013) identified lack of resources (e.g., facilities, equipment for vocational training, and qualified service providers), unspecified vocational education curricula, and limited partnerships with employers as significant shortcomings of post-secondary vocational programs.

Integrated Job-Centered Schools

Providing qualified vocational services to students with disabilities who attend general high schools has historically been difficult since

traditional schools focus mostly on academic achievement. In order to address this issue, integrated job-centered schools were started in 2010 (Yoon, 2012). Integrated job-centered schools are operated within select general schools and provide vocational education and training for students with disabilities (Song et al., 2012). In 2012, a total of thirty schools were designated as integrated job-centered schools to provide vocational services. These schools focused on providing an array of services both within schools and in the community, including classroom activities (e.g., soft skill training, independent living skill training, and vocational training), business or industry field trips, community based work experiences within rehabilitation centers, vocational rehabilitation facilities, and local businesses, supported employment, follow-up support, and family support (Song et al, 2012).

Special School Based Enterprises

Special school based enterprises create work environments that are similar to real business environments but are housed within special schools. The initiative expands opportunities for students with disabilities to have work experiences while still in school to and increase employment outcomes (Song et al., 2012). In order to be selected as a special school enterprise, the special school is required to choose a business they would like to operate based on analyses of local community businesses, student skill and ability in consultation with vocational rehabilitation professionals, and provide a revised curriculum that details how vocational training will be provided (E. Kim, 2015). Students with disabilities in these programs receive vocational training in conjunction with academic curricula. By 2014, there were twenty special school based enterprises under development or in operation (E. Kim, 2015). The program plays a role in not only developing vocational skills, especially in

manufacturing, processing, repairing, and sales, but also in providing financial support to schools from profits generated through the operation of the business (Song et al., 2012).

Community Based Vocational Education and Training

Due to the criticism that traditional special education in South Korea does not provide community based work experiences to enhance student post-school employment outcomes and independent living, current transition education has acknowledged the importance of community based vocational education and training (H. Park & H. Park, 2010). Community-based education and training is provided within welfare agencies, vocational rehabilitation facilities, and local businesses in the community so students with disabilities have more opportunities to not only acquire work experiences but also apply vocational knowledge and skills that are acquired in the classroom to real world work situations (H. Park & H. Park, 2010).

Issues in Vocational Education and Training Programs

Although most special high schools and special classes within general high schools have implemented a vocational education curriculum for students with disabilities, less than half of the special classes within general middle schools have provided a vocational education curriculum for these students (Lee, 2014). As career development is a multi-faceted, complex, and personal process that evolves over a person's entire lifetime (Patton & McMahon, 2006), vocational education and training should ideally start before high school and be based on individualized career plans that meet individual student needs (Lee & H. Kim, 2013).

Lee (2014) recently asserted that youth and young adults with disabilities often have difficulties retaining jobs because of limited

training in terms of the meaning, perceived value, and demands of work. Current vocational education and training curricula are often perceived as having a job search and skills development focus, while overlooking the need to instill a deeper understanding of career or vocation. Offering work adjustment training provides students with individualized situational assessments and training that help students with disabilities develop work attitudes, values, behaviors, and characteristics while fostering their understanding of the demands of work. A variety of approaches, including work adjustment training, field training, and/or work-centered education should be infused into the vocational education and training curriculum to help students with disabilities secure meaningful employment and live independently (Lee, 2014).

With respect to the perspective of caregivers and teachers on career development of students with disabilities in special schools, both special education teachers and parents of students with disabilities noted that there is often little communication between parents and schools, potentially causing gaps between program goals and individual needs (Y. Kim, 2009; Lee & H. Kim, 2013). Special education teachers reported difficulties in implementing effective vocational education programs that increased positive outcomes. For instance, Y. Kim (2009) found that some teachers felt pressured by parents to disregard program eligibility criteria, and include students with severe disabilities in vocational programs. While parents understandably wanted what they thought was best for their children, teachers felt that these parents had little understanding of the training programs. As a result, the student-teacher ratio has increased and limited teacher ability to provide individualized career education and training (Y. Kim, 2009). Teachers also felt that parent demands for other types of skill development, rather than vocational skills, diluted the main purpose of these vocational

education programs (Y. Kim, 2009). On the other hand, parents believed training programs should be specifically designed to meet the needs of individual students, acknowledging each student's different level of learning and skills (Y. Kim, 2009). According to Kim, grouping all students, regardless of skill level or severity of disability, in one class is likely to limit appropriate knowledge and skill development for those students with severe disabilities (Y. Kim, 2009).

Parents of students with disabilities also reported limited involvement in the vocational education and training process for their children due to poor access to information on career education (Y. Kim, 2009; Lee & H. Kim, 2013). In order to better understand of their child's career development, parents expressed the need for earlier acquisition of specific information on career development and training programs through active communication with teachers and service providers as well as through parent involvement in the career counseling process. Parents perceived that this early career development support from teachers would enable them to help their children maximize career decision opportunities (Lee & H. Kim, 2013).

With limited collaboration among schools, community businesses, and vocational rehabilitation agencies, students have little opportunity to receive community based vocational services, or consequent employment after graduation (Minister of Science and Technology, 2009). Moreover, Y. Park's (2014) study showed that although special education teachers recognized the importance of transition services, they perceived that the implementation of these services was relatively low. H. Seo's (2007) study highlights a systemic barrier to service implementation: special education teachers felt that they were not adequately trained to provide qualified transition services

and rarely performed these services with youth with disabilities.

Due to the lack of a comprehensive system-wide approach (J. Kim, 2007), youth with disabilities tend to be excluded from community participation after high school graduation, becoming isolated in their own homes or rehabilitation facilities. Thus, it is necessary to provide such youth with a systematic approach to transition education and training while they are in school and still have ready access to services (J. Kim, 2003). Specifically, effective career development programming begins in elementary school, continues throughout high school, and is individualized to meet student needs and aspirations (J. Kim, 2007; Lee & H. Kim, 2013).

A Korean Model of Transition Education and Training

Recognizing the importance of systematic transition services during the school years for youth with disabilities, J. Kim (2007) developed a school-based transition education model. The model, which is based on the analyses of several transition models developed in the United States, is applicable to the current educational situation in South Korea and sensitive to the complex needs of youth with disabilities. J. Kim's model is designed to guide integrated and collaborative school-based transition education with a focus on enhancing independent living and quality of life. The model consists of two parts: (a) transition education content and (b) transition education application. Regarding successful transition and positive post-school outcomes, J. Kim (2007) suggested three main transition education outcomes including daily living, career life, and social and leisure life. He also detailed required skill sets for each outcome, organized into four periods of transition education.

Transition Education Content

In the first period of transition education, the preschool period, the model focuses on early diagnosis of disability, intervention, and family support by facilitating overall development in cognition, communication, interpersonal relationships, health, and daily living. The second period, the elementary school years (ages 6 to 11), focuses on daily living skills, pre-vocational skills, career recognition, and social and leisure skill development. During the elementary school period, it is also important to provide students with community-based education and training designed to develop the ability to generalize knowledge and skills acquired in the school setting to the broader community setting (J. Kim, 2007). Once students enter the middle school transition education period, which is the third transition education period, Individualized Transition Plans (ITP) should be established based on individual performance and interests. In addition to the development of the ITP, an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) should be integrated in assisting students with disabilities with their career development (J. Kim, 2007). During this period, students are encouraged to engage in job search activities, explore career options, and seek relevant information such as requirements, duties, wages, and rewards among careers. In the last phase of the transition education period, the high school years, transition education services should focus on the development of work adjustment skills, specific vocational skills, job readiness training, and placement through collaboration with community based vocational rehabilitation agencies (J. Kim, 2007).

The education content component of the model represents a theoretical ideal of comprehensive transition service delivery throughout the school years. Yet, at the national level, South Korea currently has a limited vocational education and service system and,

therefore, cannot consistently implement all aspects of Kim's model. While vocational education and training service providers are encouraged to emphasize individualized career development education and training, the implementation of such ideals and related service outcomes are still limited. In relation to career development approaches, limited attention has been given to other variables, such as regional differences, severity of disabilities, and demands of work, that might predict employment outcomes (Lee, 2014). Moreover, vocational education and training service providers need a stronger focus on the context of employer business and organizational process. The traditional approach of providing educational and vocational services to improve functioning and job skills alone is no longer adequate for achieving successful employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities (Chan, Strauser, Gervev, & Lee, 2010). The demand-side of employment services (market-driven approach) has been an essential factor for successful employment outcomes (Chan et al., 2010). Therefore, it is important for South Korean vocational education and training service providers to recognize the importance of the demand-side employment approach by identifying and understanding variables and strategies that will be effective in increasing the quantity and quality of employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities (Saunders, Leahy, McGlynn, & Hernandez, 2006).

Transition Education Application

The application component of J. Kim's model recognizes collaboration needs among employers, relevant agencies and schools as well as the participation of students and their families in the transition education process across the school years. During the school years, transition education and training programs in South Korea should be planned and implemented to enhance the development of

necessary skills. Therefore, multiple ITPs and IEPs should be written, describing specific long term and short-term goals for successful adaptation to adult life and identifying the required services and training to help students achieve these goals (Heward, 2006).

Also, an IEP team meeting should be held early in every academic year, with the special school teachers, both current and previous year, the student, parents, and other service providers in attendance. During the meeting, the student's previous IEP should be evaluated, and the new education plan as well as teaching strategies should be developed or modified based on the student's needs (J. Kim, 2007). Transition assessment could also be conducted as needed to evaluate not only the student's strengths and weaknesses, but also the environment within which the student will pursue career options and live his or her life (Flexer & Luft, 2005).

In addition, functional curricula should be utilized to provide students with daily living, vocational or job related skills, and social skills training in integrated school environments and community based training. Community based vocational education and training not only enables students to experience the various job types in their community, but also promotes employment after graduation (Baek, 2005). To effectively provide community based training, J. Kim (2007) suggests six steps in the training process: (a) community businesses analysis; (b) contacting employers and selecting a business based on students' needs and abilities; (c) workplace and job tasks evaluation; (d) planning vocational training program; (e) providing the training; and (f) program evaluation.

To facilitate successful career development and transition from school to adult life of youth with disabilities, post-high school vocational education programs can provide additional support in regard to individual student's needs

in conjunction with the abilities required for job performance. In order to facilitate student participation in the community and achieve meaningful education and employment outcomes, ongoing supports and evaluation should also be provided (J. Kim, 2007). Thus, collaborative approaches that include social and vocational agencies, individual students, families, and employers will mitigate resource limitations and move the Korean system of transition toward J. Kim's ideal of a stage specific, individualized, and comprehensive model of transition education and training.

Implications of the Model

Previous research has supported J. Kim's Transition Education and Training model by showing that several components of this model were effective in enhancing career development and employment outcomes among students with disabilities. For instance, community based vocational education and training had a significant impact on developing and maintaining job related tasks (J. Kim, 2014; K. Kim, Jung, & J.W. Kim, 2011). In addition, collaboration between schools, rehabilitation agencies, and employers was effective in improving job preparedness and employment outcomes among youth with disabilities (Hwang, 2013; H. Park, 2006). Another study demonstrated that a work adjustment training program, which was based on the function-oriented curricula, was effective in improving student daily living skills, work skills, and social skills (S.Y. Jo & S. Lee, 2005).

While components of Kim's model are currently implemented in South Korea, the full implementation of both the transition education content and application aspects is lacking. Using only parts of Kim's model is akin to indiscriminately applying only select phases of

Super's model; key components are lost and the model as a whole loses strength. Thus, the full realization of Kim's model can and should guide the development and delivery of transition services in South Korea. The significance of transition services for helping students with disabilities pursue independent adult life within their community has been well recognized through previous literature. J. Kim's (2007) transition education model aligns with Super's (1980) original theory and augments it with goals and activities relevant to youth with disabilities in South Korea. To better align with Kim's model, vocational education training programs in South Korea can be improved by: (a) expanding employment and career options rather than focusing on only limited career options (e.g., the manufacturing industry); (b) providing specialized career counseling (Lee, 2014); (c) providing on-the-job training support within community-based settings (Kwak et al., 2011); (d) strengthening the qualifications of service providers (Y. Park, 2014; H. Seo, 2007); (e) ensuring family involvement in the process of career development (Lee & H. Kim, 2013); (f) collaborating among schools, community businesses, and other vocational rehabilitation agencies (Lee & H. Kim, 2013); and (g) ensuring a more student-centered approach in the career development process.

J. Kim's application model recognizes current limitations in the realization of an ideal phase model of transition education and training and offers collaborative strategies as a means to mitigate resource scarcity, such as funding, infrastructure, and qualified personnel so that the phase model could be more effectively utilized in real school settings. In combination, Kim and Super's models offer a disability-relevant and theoretically sound approach to addressing the complex needs of transition youth with disabilities in South Korea. When

objectively evaluated, Korean models of transition, education, and training show promise in guiding transition service systems towards the realization of earlier and more coordinated efforts of comprehensive, developmentally appropriate, and disability sensitive transition services.

At the national level, South Korea as well as many other countries have struggled to both implement theory into policy and improve educational and vocational outcomes for transition youth. Consequently, it is important that policy-makers work to build a more systematic and comprehensive transition infrastructure, establish clear service delivery guidelines, and increase funding for transition services. Moreover, transition related laws in South Korea should clearly state the requirements of developing ITPs and IEPs based on students' specific needs as well as offering collaborative community based transition education and training programs starting from early childhood. In order to guide legislation, policy and practice, future studies are needed to examine the effectiveness of the application of the full model in both special education and vocational rehabilitation service settings.

Summary

Acknowledging that youth with disabilities face difficulty succeeding in the transition from school to adult life, and recognizing the value of career development services for youth with disabilities around the world, the current article has explored the impact of Korean culture on issues related to disabilities, specifically youth with disabilities. Policies regarding transition education and training and current services provided to youth with disabilities in South Korea have been examined. The Special Education Law, and other related legislation in

South Korea, address the importance of providing transition services in special education and seeks to provide Korean youth with disabilities more opportunities to enhance their employment outcomes and independent living skills. However, despite the current legislation mandating vocational training and transition services, systemic barriers to effective service delivery still exist (Lee, 2014; H. Seo, 2007). It is important to ensure that students with disabilities receive comprehensive vocational rehabilitation education and training through not only intensive job search and skill development, but also work adjustment training, work-centered education, job shadowing, and internships, all while maintaining congruence with cultural ideals and values. Recognizing several challenges in providing effective transition services to students with disabilities in South Korea, J. Kim (2007) developed a comprehensive transition education model. Implementing this model maintains congruence with Korean culture and values while pushing for a more systematic approach to effective service delivery throughout the transition process for Korean youth with disabilities.

Author Note

All authors contributed equally to this manuscript.

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About the Author(s)

Jina Chun, MS, CRC is a doctoral student and research/teaching assistant of Rehabilitation Counseling in the Department of Counseling, Education Psychology, & Special Education, College of Education, at Michigan State University. Her research interests include the career development of people with disabilities, the vocational needs of transition-age and college-aged students with intellectual and developmental disabilities, psychosocial adjustment, quality of life of individuals with disabilities, and multicultural rehabilitation counseling.

Annemarie Connor, MS, OTR/L is an occupational therapist and doctoral student of Rehabilitation Counselor Education in the Department of Counseling, Educational Psychology, & Special Education, College of Education, at Michigan State University. Her research and teaching interests focus on interdisciplinary collaboration, the biopsychosocial aspects of disability, and evidence-based interventions that address adaptive functioning and psychological wellness among individuals with neurodevelopmental disabilities, particularly youth.

John F. Kosciulek, PhD, CRC is a Professor of Rehabilitation Counseling in the Department of Counseling, Educational Psychology, & Special Education, College of Education, at Michigan State University. Dr. Kosciulek's ongoing teaching, research, and clinical interests include the career development of people with disabilities, vocational rehabilitation, theory development, research methodology, and family adaptation to brain injury.

Trenton Landon, PhD, CRC is an Assistant Professor of Rehabilitation Counseling in the Department of Special Education and Rehabilitation at Utah State University. His teaching and research interests include the professional development and clinical supervision of counselors, issues of social justice, community inclusion and equity for persons with disabilities, and transition of youth with disabilities.

Jinhee Park, MS, CRC is a doctoral student and research/teaching assistant of Rehabilitation Counseling in the Department of Counseling, Educational Psychology, & Special Education, College of Education, at Michigan State University. Her research interests involve psychiatric rehabilitation, working alliance, vocational rehabilitation for transition youth with disabilities, and multicultural rehabilitation counseling.