Cognitive and Behavioral Aspects in the Career Development of Korean College Students

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I. Objectives

Western theorists and researchers have focused mainly on the cognitive aspects in the career development and career behavior. They have studied career decision-making, career self-expectancy, career attitudes, etc. Accordingly, career counseling services also have paid attention to the development and changes in the clients' cognitive aspects, for example, enhancing their career decision level.

Respectively, behavioral aspects of career development have been less studied by the Western scholars. Even if a few researchers (Aiken & Johnston, 1973; Krumboltz, 1963; Stumpf et al, 1983) have attempted to include career exploring behaviors when they study career development, they have paid more attention to the cognitive aspects like development of decision-making skills than the behavioral aspects.

Korean college students experience their career development process different from the American or Western students. Even if the Korean college students declare their major area when they apply to the college entrance examination, many of them discover that their major is not the one they really want. However, because of the administrative rigidity in the college systems, most of the students who do not like their major cannot change it. Whether a student likes his/her major or dislikes it, he or she needs to do something to get a job he/she wants: preparing for the job tests (professional knowledge and skills, aptitudes, personality and attitudes, etc.) and interviews. Regular course work and the GPA are not sufficient for getting a "good" job in the Korean job market, such as the legal

profession, business, public administration, engineering, banking, and financing. These orginizations require separate written tests and interviews as well as the curriculum vitae and a high college GPA. However, the professors' recommendation letters are not regarded as important documents.

The behavioral aspects, like career preparation behavior, need to be studied to understand the career development of the Korean students. Career preparation behavior and career decision-making could be considered together. In Korea there probably exist four types of students in regards to career development: (1) students who have decided what they are going to do and are doing significant preparation; (2) students who have decided what to do but are not doing serious preparation; (3) students who have not decided what to do, but are doing some preparation such as attending TOEIC class; and (4) students who have not decided what to do and are not doing anything seriously for his/her employment future.

The typology might be useful for career counseling of Korean college students because the counseling strategies should be different according to the types. Type (2) students need to be counseled to find out why they are not prepared for their jobs, and they need to be motivated to move in to preparation; type (3) students need to be counseled to find out what they want to do and how to prepare for the job, they have chosen.

The present study is first interested in the measurement of career preparation behavior, which has been minimally attempted before. Secondly, the study is also interested in knowing if the four types of students are found among the Korean college students. Thirdly, the study is to investigate if the career decision level (cognitive aspect) and career preparation level (behavioral aspect) develop in accordance with the age (college year) of students. Finally, the study wants to investigate the relationships between the career types (the four types mentioned above) and other variables such as the school year of the students, career maturity, and career identity.

II. Methods

Subjects

Eight hundred and seventy-nine students were sampled from five universities, which were randomly sampled out of thirteen state (national) universities in Korea. The subjects were all enrolled in teachers college. The ratio between male and female was 46:54 which is quite similar to the ratio in the population, 40:60. The numbers of subjects in each of the school year were: freshman-215, sophomore-244, junior-220, and senior-200.

Measurement

Career Decision-Making Level Questionnaire This is a self-report type questionnaire with 18 items, which is four-steps Likert style report. The Korean version was developed by Koh(1992) based on the American version of Osipow et al (1980), the name of which was the Career Decision Scale. Reliability quotients were acquired from 293 college students in teacher education programs: Cronbach alpha .86, half-split .80.

Career Preparation Behavior Level Questionnaire Sixteen items (four steps Likert) were prepared to measure how much and what the subjects do to prepare for their careers. The items were developed by the researchers of this study. Cronbach alpha was .84, half-split reliability was .74, and test-retest reliability (two weeks difference) was .82, the coefficients of which were gained from 293 college students enrolled in a teacher education program.

Interview Schedule of Career Preparation Behavior The structured interview schedule was developed to "measure" career preparation levels. This is to be used as a complimentary tool for the Career Preparation Behavior Level Questionnaire which was assumed to measure the same construct. The information related to the 'convergent validity' will be discussed in the following chapter.

Career Maturity Inventory A Korean version (Kim, 1989) of the Career Maturity Inventory (Crites, 1978) was used for this study. Only the attitude scale was administered, the test included 47 items with a four-step Likert. Cronbach alpha was .85, and half-

split reliability was also .85, which were gained from 293 college students in a teacher education program.

Career Identity Scale Eighteen items of the Career Identity Scale developed by Holland et al (1980) were translated by the present researchers. This is assumed to measure how much of a "clear picture" the subjects have regarding their own career goals, interests, talents, and personality. Cronbach alpha was .89, and half-split reliability was .86, which were gained from the same sample as the above.

Procedures

Questionnaires A set of questionnaires were administered in each of the five institutes. The administraters were chosen out of the professors of Education of the sampled institutes, who volunteered to cooperate with the project. About forty minutes were used to answer the questionnaires.

Interview Forty students who were enrolled in an Educational Psychology class at one of the five institutes were interviewed with the interview schedule by the second author. About thirty minutes were used for each interview.

III. Results

Measurement of career preparation behavior level

Two different methods were attempted to measure a single construct: career preparation behavior level. Because the construct is quite new in the field of career study, and also because the measurement of the construct has not been attempted, a series of analysis was tried to investigate how much the two measures coincide with each other

First, three independent raters were trained to rate forty subjects by "high", "moderate", and "low" in accordance with the level of career preparation. And, the matched self-report questionnaire scores of the career preparation level were also transformed into "high", "moderate", and "low". Out of the forty matches, thirty four matches coincided (85% coincidence). Thus, the two measurements of career preparation behavior level were accepted as measuring the same construct.

Development of career decision and career preparation

Figure 1 shows how the career decision level changes in accordance with the age (school year) of the college students. Interestingly, the sophomores' score was lower than the freshmen's. (This difference will be discussed in the following section). But, the career decision level develops as the students advance to the higher classes in college. The differences between sophomore and junior, between junior and senior, between freshmen and sophomore are statistically significant ($p<.05$).

Figure 2 shows how the career preparation behavior level changes in accordance with the age (school year) of the college students. The score of the sophomores was a little higher than the freshmen but it was not significant statistically. However, The score of the juniors is higher than the sophomores and the difference was significant statistically. And, the score of the seniors was significantly higher than the juniors.

Four types of career development

Types of career development were defined in accordance with the two constructs, career decision level and career preparation behavior level.

Figure 3 shows the typology of the types of career development: the ones who are high on both career decision and career preparation are defined as "ideal" type; the ones who are high on career decision but low on career preparation are

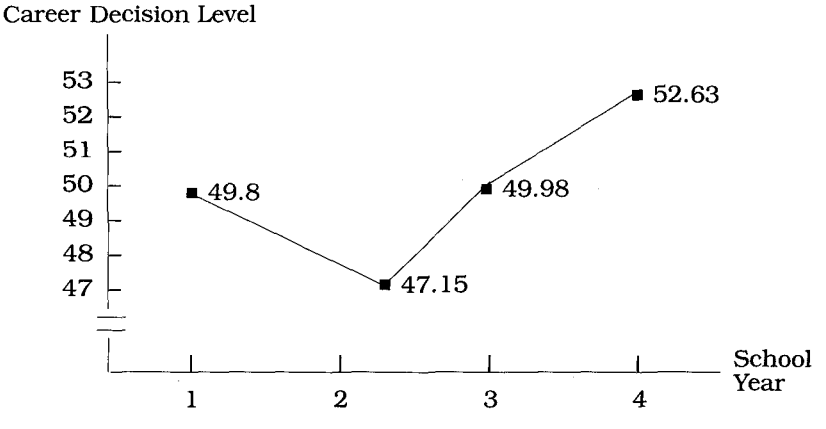

FIGURE 1. Development of Career Decision Level

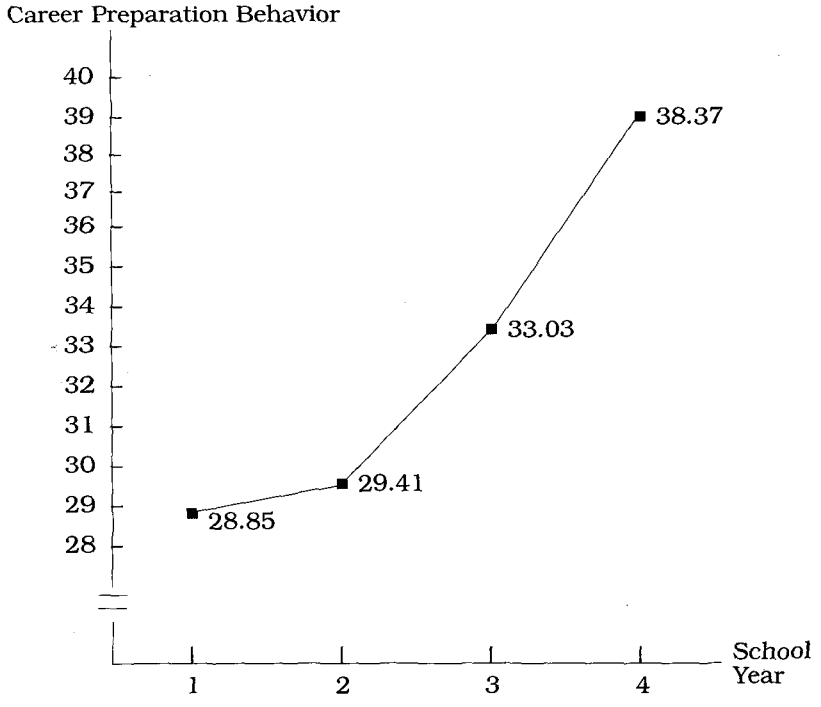

FIGURE 2. Development of Career Preparation Behavior

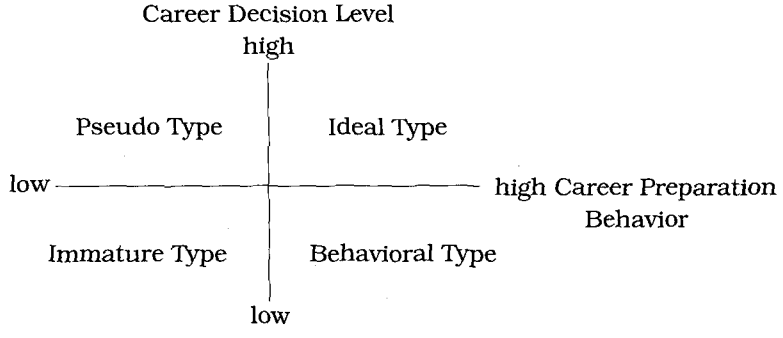

FIGURE 3. Four Types of Career Development

defined as "pseudo" type; the ones who are low on career decision but high on career preparation are defined as "behavioral" type; the ones who are low on both are defined as "immature" type

Table 1 shows the frequencies and the percentages of the four types in each school year. Among freshmen and sophomores, over fifty percent of students are categorized as immature type and only about ten percent are ideal type. But, the juniors and seniors are quite different from the younger students. Among the seniors, fifty-three percent were in behavioral type who are low in decision level but high in preparation behavior, but only about fifteen percent remained in the immature type. The ideal type of the seniors increases nearly twenty-five percent. This result means that the immature type students develop mainly into behavioral type or ideal type, but the behavioral type is more prevalent than the other types.

Career maturity and career identity and the four types

Table 2 shows the means of career maturity scale and career identity scale of each type. Duncan's tests were attempted to test the differences between each type. The results show that the four means of both career maturity and career identity are all different from each other. It means that, for example, career maturity of the ideal type is different from the pseudo type. It is also interesting to find out that the career maturity level and career identity level of the ideal type and the pseudo type are

Table 1. Career Development Types of the Korean College Students(%)

	Freshman	Sophomore	Junior	Senior	Total
Ideal	19(8.8)	29(11.9)	41(18.6)	49(24.5)	138(15.7)
Pseudo	35(16.3)	18(7.4)	18(8.2)	16(8.0)	87(9.9)
Behavioral	36(16.7)	64(26.2)	79(35.9)	106(53.0)	285(32.4)
Immature	125(58.2)	133(54.5)	82(37.3)	29(14.5)	369(42.0)
Total	215(100.0)	244(100.0)	220(100.0)	200(100.0)	879(100.0)

$\chi^2 = 94.1708$ significance = .0000

Table 2. Career Maturity and Career Identity of the Career Development Types

	Ideal	Pseudo	Behavioral	Immature
Career Maturity	152.63(8.33)	147.45(11.81)	134.95(10.93)	131.15(9.66)
Career Identity	56.67(6.52)	54.10(6.13)	45.82(6.27)	42.35(6.99)

higher than the behavioral type and immature type. It might be related to the theoretical assumptions that the career decision making is related to the cognitive aspects like career maturity and career identity.

IV. DISCUSSION

The results showed that the four types of career development exist among the Korean college students, and the career maturity level and career identity level of the four types are different significantly. It suggests the importance of the behavioral aspect of career development such as career preparation among the Korean students as discussed in the introduction section.

Then, what is (are) the benefit(s) when the career counseling researchers and practitioners know about the behavioral nature in career development? Most of all, it might help the career counselor diagnose their clients differentially. Pseudo type clients need different treatment from the behavioral types or immature types. If the counselor pays attention only to the cognitive aspect of career development, he/she might miss the client's lack of job preparation behavior, but the client needs to be helped to obtain career information and to prepare for the job tests and interviews rather than simply talking about his/her decision-making. When the career counselor considers the two aspects, cognitive and behavioral, all together, he/she may help the clients better.

This study also suggests that the career researchers pay well-balanced attention to both cognitive and behavioral aspects. It has been generally accepted that behavior is as important as cognition and that when the behavior comes along with cognition it is an ideal situation. However, in the field of career development, behavioral aspects have been rather neglected compared to cognitive aspects. The present study empirically shows the necessity of investigating the cognitive aspect of career development.

The data of Table 1 show that fifty-five percents of the college students in teacher education programs are in the behavioral type of career development, preparing for their jobs without

proper decision-making. This phenomenon seems to be related to the Korean culture and the structure of the Korean job market. Thus, the concept of career preparation behavior might have come from the unique situation of the Korean society. The situation of the United States and other countries could be different. Different behaviors of career preparation may be important for the American students and others. Cross-cultural and cross-national studies are strongly recommended.

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