Counselor education programs are designed to promote the development of students' professional competencies in supervision, teaching, research, counseling, leadership and advocacy (Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs [CACREP], 2009). CACREP standards (2009) require professional training experience, specifically a practicum and an internship for the application of theory and the development of counseling skills. Although these experiences can be challenging for all counselors-in-training, they are additionally challenging for international students.

The number of international students enrolled in higher education in the United States continues to increase (Institute of International Education [IIE], 2014), and the same trend can be observed in counselor training programs (Ng, 2006). International students are enrolled in nearly 50 percent of CACREP-accredited counselor training programs across all five geographic locations, including the Western, Southern, North Atlantic, Northern Central, and Rocky Mountain regions (CACREP, 2009). Reflecting the trend of the growing number of international students enrolled in counselor preparation programs, it is essential that counselor preparation programs provide culturally appropriate training and education. In addition, counselor educators should supervise and mentor the sizable population of international students in culturally-competent ways to appropriately support them. However, the topic of international students in counselor education programs has received relatively limited attention in comparison to racial/ethnic minority trainees from the United States (Mittal & Wieling, 2006; Nilsson & Anderson, 2004; Ng, 2006), even though international students face unique challenges and difficulties in their training programs, especially during their practica and/or internships.

Research has shown that international students face different challenges during their preparation programs than the challenges other minority students experience (Chen, 1999;

Morris & Lee, 2004; Ng & Smith, 2009; Nilsson & Anderson, 2004; Sangganjanavanich & Black, 2009). For example, Chen (1999) identified three main stressors for international students as educational stressors (e.g., note taking, examinations), social stressors (e.g., social adjustment, housing, social isolation, culture shock), and second language anxieties. In addition to the difficulties that international students commonly face, international counseling students, in particular, reported that they experienced unique challenges and difficulties specific to the counseling discipline, such as language and cultural differences, difficulties in academic and/or clinical experiences, and interactions with clients and/or supervisors from the dominant U.S. culture.

Consequently, these findings indicate that international counseling students require distinctive training and supervisory needs. International counseling students face challenges in all stages of their training, specifically before and during their practicum and/or internship experiences because of language barriers (Killian, 2001; Mittal & Wieling, 2006; Ng, 2006) and different backgrounds, which can lead to varying interpretations of counseling in general (Killian, 2001; Mittal & Wieling, 2006; Pattison, 2003). Further, international students who were less acculturated reported less counseling efficacy and more role difficulties in supervision (Nilsson & Anderson, 2004). Indeed, they tend to experience greater levels of cultural adjustment concerns (Ng, 2006), so they need "to learn a new way of being, talking, and thinking to adapt to their new cultural context" (Mittal & Wieling, 2006, p.378).

Additionally, Ng (2006) studied the counselor educators' perspectives of international counselor trainees' training experiences in the U.S. According to the study, counselor educators noted that international students experienced difficulties in the areas of language, clinical training, adjustment, and cultural differences. Jang, Woo, and Henfield (2014) highlighted the

unique challenges that international doctoral trainees confronted in supervision training, in comparison to their U.S.-born counterparts. Specifically, international trainees had concerns regarding language barriers, cultural differences, and/or a lack of understanding about the U.S. counseling system to provide effective supervision. These two studies reveal the challenges of international students, as well as point to the necessity to conduct further research about international students' specific training and supervisory needs.

Clinical courses, namely, practica and/or internships, are key components of counselor preparation training as a comprehensive learning process in integrating trainees' knowledge, theory, and skills. As such, there is a need to investigate the experience of international students enrolled in the field of counselor education with a focus on how clinical courses best train them in a culturally appropriately way. The purpose of this study is to qualitatively explore the distinctive challenges international counseling students faced before and during their practicum and/or internship experiences, in addition to the strategies used to overcome them. This qualitative study interviewed ten international students enrolled in counselor preparation programs, both on the master's and doctoral levels, who have experienced at least one practicum and/or internship at a CACREP-accredited program in the U.S. To explore international counselor trainees' challenges and needs related to their practica and/or internships, the following research questions were established:

1) What, if any, are the major fears and expectations of international students regarding their practica and/or internships?

2) What, if any, are the most challenging and frustrating obstacles international students face in their practicum and/or internship period? And how did they overcome those?

3) To what, if any, extent does the practicum and/or internship experience influence international students' counseling self-efficacy?

4) If additional support and training were available, what, if any, would international students like to have?

Methodology

Consensus qualitative research (CQR)

The authors elected to use qualitative methods to gain a more in-depth understanding of the practicum and/or internship experiences of international students in CACREP-accredited programs. Qualitative methodology is a better fit given the exploratory nature of this study (Creswell, 1998). Specifically, researchers used the consensual qualitative research (CQR) method, which is widely used to analyze nonquantifiable data (Hill et al., 1997; Kim, Brenner, Liang, & Asay, 2003; Ladany et al., 1997; Yeh et al., 2003).

CQR is relevant for our research goals because it is "especially useful in the early stages of research on previously unexplored topics" (Hill et al., 1997, p. 518). The systematic approach of the CQR method in analyzing data addresses some of the concerns raised about many qualitative methods (Hill et al., 1997). This study included the distinctive and unique components of CQR. First of all, the authors used open-ended questions in a semi-structured interview (Hill et al.). Following Hill et al.'s (2005) suggestion that researchers recruit approximately 8 to 15 participants, this study recruited 10 international students who experienced at least one practicum and/or internship in the U.S. The second component is the rigorous protocol of consensual agreement of the data gained from the participants. In order to overcome possible subjectivity, prejudice, and bias in interpreting the narrative data, the CQR method recommends the use of several judges from the research team to gain multiple

perspectives. This means that CQR uses multiple researchers to arrive at consensus at each step of the process. In this study, the research team comprised of three members, two primary researchers and one auditor, for a more accurate interpretation through a process of checks and balances to negate any potential biases of any one team member during the data analysis (Hill et al., 1997, 2005). The third component is the identification and categorization of domains and core ideas. Domains are defined as a conceptual framework to manage the data collected, whereas core ideas summarize the domains which capture the essence (Hill et al., 1997). The domains and core ideas in this study were generated from the narrative data from the participants. Then the authors conducted cross-analysis of the data to understand the whole picture of the data through generating the consistencies across the domains and core ideas. The fourth component of the CQR process is the use of an outside auditor to check the results derived from the primary research team and to offer constructive feedback in order to minimize potential biases and prejudices. The external auditor of this study, a faculty member in a large Midwestern university, performed as an adviser of this research project, going over the domains and core ideas that were generated by the team and provided feedback to the team regarding the data analysis. The authors discussed the outside auditor's feedback and finalized the data analysis.

Researcher Team

The research team consisted of three researchers who were at the same CACREP-accredited program in a large Midwestern university in the U.S. Both of the first and second authors had master's level training in counseling programs from different schools in South Korea, and are graduating or graduated from the same program in the U.S., which requires an advanced practicum and internship training, as well as a supervision practicum. Also, the first two authors are actively involved in international students' communities. The third author, a Caucasian

American associate professor in the same program, has expertise in qualitative research and in training international students in counseling. Each member of the research team had opportunities to conduct multiple qualitative studies. Interviews and data analyses were conducted by the first and second authors, while the faculty researcher played as the auditor to supervise and review the research process.

Participants

In contrast to quantitative research, sampling in qualitative research is purposeful rather than random in nature (Jones, Torres, & Arminio, 2006). Since this study has a clearly defined population that is a group of international students who are trained in CACREP-accredited programs in the U.S., the screening procedures included identification of contact persons' relevant demographic information. To qualify as potential participants, they were asked whether they completed their practicum or internship experience(s) in the U.S. for at least one semester.

Prior to participant recruitment, the researcher obtained approval from the University of Iowa Institutional Review Board (IRB ID #: 201307756). To access potential subjects, the researchers distributed the research invitation describing the study through the listservs, including COUNSGRADS and CESNET. In addition, the researchers sent colleagues an e-mail, a research invitation describing the study to recruit alumni who have graduated from the counselor education and supervision program in a Midwestern university in the past five years and who are practicing counselor educators. Also, the researchers engaged in a snowball method of gaining potential participants by requesting current participants to forward the solicitation e-mail to their colleagues. This e-mail introduced the research team, explained the study, and invited them to participate. Ten international students in the U.S. expressed their interest and voluntarily participated in this study to share thoughts regarding their practicum and/or

internship experiences. Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the participants in this study.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Pseudonym	Gender	Major	School year[a]	Years of residence[b]	Nationality
Sunmi	F	Counselor Education	Doctoral 3rd	3 years	S. Korea
Mina	F	Counselor Education	Doctoral 3rd	3 years	S. Korea
Yujin	F	Counselor Education	Doctoral 3rd	3 years	S. Korea
Liu	F	Rehab Counseling	Master 2nd	4 years	Malaysia
Juyeon	F	Rehab Counseling	Doctoral 1st	3 years	S. Korea
Jihoon	M	Counselor Education	Doctoral 3rd	2 years	S. Korea
Sieun	F	Counselor Education	Doctoral 4th	7 years	S. Korea
Megan	F	Counselor Education	Doctoral 6th	5 years	Ethiopia
Jane	F	Counselor Education	Doctoral 1st	1 year	Ghana
Fred	M	Counselor Education	Doctoral 1st	1 year	Turkey

[a] School years in their training programs in the U.S. at the time this study was conducted.

[b] Total lengths of time living in the U.S. at the time this study was conducted.

Semi-Structured Interview Protocol

To capture the experiences and perceptions of participants in this study, semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions were conducted, and all interviews were digitally recorded and then transcribed. Creswell (2002) explained that "attitudes, beliefs, and opinions are ways that individuals think about issues, whereas practices are their actual behaviors" (p. 398). Participants' attitudes and practices in this study were identified through the use of an open-ended interview protocol. An open-ended interview designed around the primary research question was used.

Interviews revolved around the guiding research question of how do international students in counselor training programs experience the practicum/internship process. Interview questions requested information: a) length of stay in the U.S., ethnicity, and past/current training

program; b) their experiences of practicum/internship experiences including frequency, required hours, starting semester for practicum/internship, and experience of practicum/internship in their own country; and c) experiences of practicum/internship training in the U.S., divided into three stages: pre-, during, and post-practicum/internship. Secondary follow-up questions probed for further information about the participants' attitudes, beliefs, opinions, and experiences regarding their practica/internships. The secondary questions, listed on the sample questions documents, elicited rich and detailed information.

Procedure

The researchers communicated with the participants via phone, Skype and e-mail correspondence for preparation of participating in the study, conducting interviews, and the cross-checking process of the interview reports. The informed consent document was utilized, which clearly explained the purpose and details of the study. Further, the informed consent guaranteed participants that their identities would be kept confidential by using pseudonyms.

After participants agreed to participate in this study, they received the consent letter describing the study and interview questions. After participants reviewed the consent letter and interview questions, an initial interview was scheduled between participants and one of the research team members, considering no interference with participants' daily routines. Before the interview began, participants were able to choose whether or not they wanted their interview to be recorded for the purpose of transcription. With their permission, interviews were then recorded and all audio/video tapes were transcribed as raw data for data analysis. During the transcription process, all identifiable information about participants was removed, and transcriptions were also destroyed after the triangulation process.

Interviews were conducted in a semi-structured format in either English or Korean, lasting between 60 and 80 minutes. The interviews conducted in Korean were translated into English by the interviewer, and reviewed by the research team to ensure the adequacy and accuracy of the translations of participants' stories. Interviewees were invited to member-check for both Korean and English transcripts after the research team reached consensus on the translation. Interviews conducted in English were also reviewed and confirmed by the interviewees through the member-checking.

Participants were asked about their practicum/internship experiences in their preparation programs, challenges, perceived counseling efficacy, possible suggestions, and other issues related to the study's purpose. Subjects were also free to skip any questions that they did not want to answer, and to ask for additional information at any time during the interview. If the researchers needed more information, subjects were contacted for a second interview by the interviewer. After the investigators finished the data analysis phase, subjects were contacted to review and confirm their interview reports, in addition to the confidentiality and authenticity of their information. During this step, subjects were also invited to provide any active feedback to investigators.

Data Analysis

Coding and Thematic Interpretation

Using the Consensual Qualitative Research (CQR) method (Hill, Thompson, & Williams, 1997), data were subjected to a series of analyses by a primary research team of two coders and one external auditor. The coders were doctoral level graduate students and external auditor was an associate professor. The primary team first identified all content relevant to the research question in the transcripts and reached consensus regarding the text to be analyzed. Next, the

primary team coded transcripts to determine and reach consensus on the domains, or general topic areas, represented in the text. During a consensus meeting, the two main coders and the third consulting coder verified the results of this first level of coding. The coded material was then given to the external auditor who reviewed the coding and provided feedback to the primary team. Based on the feedback, the research team revised the coding. The next level of coding was conducted to determine subcategories that captured the core ideas within each domain and were consistent across the data set of transcripts.

Trustworthiness

Creswell (1998) listed eight specific verification procedures used in qualitative research: prolonged engagement/observation; triangulation; peer review/debriefing; negative case analysis; clarifying research bias; member checks; rich/thick descriptions; and external audits. He recommended that "qualitative researchers engage in at least two of them in any given study" (p. 203). The verification and validation procedures used in this study were member checks, bracketing (a way to clarifying research bias), and peer review. In addition, rich and thick descriptions of participants' experiences in this study also can be considered as the verification of the data.

Creswell (1998) argued that member checking is the most significant verification procedure to ensure the credibility of the data used in a study of this nature. Member checks involve "taking data, analyses, interpretations, and conclusions back to the participants so that they can judge the accuracy and credibility of the account" (p. 203). In order to verify and validate the data once the various interviews were recorded, transcribed, analyzed, and coded, participants were asked to review and verify the accuracy of the transcripts and the emerging

themes through e-mail communication. These 'verified' transcripts by interviewees were the data source analyzed in this study.

Prior to initiating any interviews, the researchers' own experiences were bracketed to identify any experiences, beliefs, and/or ideas about international students in counseling programs and their practica/internships. This was accomplished through a discussion about each researcher's own biases, attitudes, and beliefs relative to the research questions. In addition, a peer audit was performed by the external auditor. Then participant interviews were reviewed by the other members to ensure that each interviewer did not influence the interview process, so as to more thoroughly address the issue of bias. In combination with triangulation, member checks, bracketing, and peer auditing ensured that verification and validity were kept in mind, while reviewing and analyzing the data.

Results

The domain and subcategory structure of the data is displayed in Table 2. Three domains emerged that depicted international students' experiences regarding their practica/internships: 1) perceived fear, 2) specific challenges, and 3) perceived support from programs. Table 2 displays the number of occurrences and corresponding qualitative descriptors for each domain and its subcategories. In the 'perceived fear' domain, subcategories included language barrier, relationship with a supervisor and/or co-workers, cultural differences, and others' perceptions of 'me'. The most common challenges international students faced were language barrier, lack of understanding about the American counseling system, relationship with co-workers/clients/supervisors, unfriendly response to racial/ethnic diversity, time management, and finding appropriate interventions. International students' responses to support from their training programs were either satisfied or dissatisfied.

Table 2. Domains and Subcategories of International Students' Experiences

Domains	Subcategories	No. of Occurrences	Classification[a]
Perceived Fear	Language barrier	10	General
	Relationship with a supervisor and/or co-worker	5	Typical
	Cultural differences	5	Typical
	Others' perceptions of "me"	3	Variant
Specific Challenges	Language barrier	5	Typical
	Relationship with clients	5	Typical
	Unwelcoming environment	3	Variant
	Finding appropriate interventions	3	Variant
	Relationship with a supervisor	2	Variant
	Lack of understanding about site	2	Variant
Support from programs	Satisfied		
	Emotional support	4	Variant
	Culturally sensitive supervision	3	Variant
	Relevant information	2	Variant
	Dissatisfied		
	Perfunctory supervision	3	Variant
	Insufficient information	3	Variant

[a] General (9~10 cases); Typical (5-8 cases); Variant (2~4 cases)

CQR presents results in terms of general, typical, and variant outcomes. A general outcome means the theme is evident in responses from nine (90%) or ten (100%) of the ten participants. This type of outcome also suggests that the views were representative of international students in all cases. A typical outcome means the theme is evident in responses from at least five (50%) but no more than eight (80%) of the ten participants (see Table 2). Lastly, a variant outcome means that the theme is just applicable to two (20%) or three (30%) cases. The following section presents each theme.

Fears before Practicum/Internship

All ten participants described their perceived fears about their practicum/internship experiences. Specifically, seven of the participants reported that they felt fear due to their level

of proficiency in English before the practicum/internship. For example, Juyeon articulated the following:

> Above all, the first one was language. Because it was a practicum, definitely, I will do practice and I also need to do counseling at the same time. So, because of language barrier, the most fear was a language, thinking about "I can do this."

Since counseling is basically conveyed using verbal language, the majority of participants reported having the concern that their limited language competency may have resulted in ineffective counseling practices. Mina stated that, "In the U.S., I cannot ignore the language issue, so that was the significant concern for me. More specifically, a concern about whether I can understand well or not." Similarly, Jihoon mentioned that, "First one is language: can I fully understand clients? Can I touch the deep feelings of clients? My level of language was the biggest concern."

Second, five participants described concerns related with building quality relationships with a site supervisor and co-workers. Juyeon described the fear in the following way:

> I also thought the relationship with supervisors, how it will be. Because while I am studying after I came to America, most relationships of mine were with professors, and because it will be difference between the attitudes of professors toward international students and the real relationship with supervisors in practice, I was challenging the relationship how it will be.

Other participants reflected on their concerns of collaborating with co-workers at their sites. As Jihoon stated, "The concern was 'can I collaborate with co-workers well?' How they can see me? Perceive me? Do they believe me in that an international students counsel here?"

These concerns were closely related to a lack of understanding about international students from sites. As Juyeon mentioned,

> Second fear was a thought about how much this site and the team I will work with can understand international students. For example, co-workers or supervisor at the site, how much can they understand international students? Because, from their stand point, they also have an expectation. From the site, they also have an expectation toward practicum students. Will their expectation to the international students be the same as the American students? Probably many cases will be the same. Thus, I was worried about this.

In addition, Megan explained the reason for this concern was also due to the lack of information about the working environments of their practicum/internship sites: "Not knowing how it worked with site supervisor. I was not sure about what to expect and what to not expect, I think. Well, you know being a school, absolutely White school."

Third, five participants had concerns in terms of cultural differences. For example, Jihoon identified his cultural background as *collectivism* and he expected to face different cultural behaviors in the U.S. with *individualism*. In addition, Sunmi and Megan were concerned that their lack of cultural understanding may impact counseling relationships with clients. Sunmi described the concern as, "I was worried about cultural difference. Can I overcome any cultural differences that may arise? Different cultures may have different standards of healthy human beings, healthy and fully functioning people. It means that the U.S. might have different standards of well-functioning people in community."

The last perceived fear was regarding others' perceptions of 'me', which was mentioned the least. In this subcategory, Sunmi, Mina, and Yujin expressed their anxieties about whether people would trust their professionalism as a competent counselor. Though the anxiety level might be the result of individual differences, it is worth considering that Mina and Yujin were from the same doctoral program that requires students to take part in a practicum during the first semester. Since Mina and Yujin needed to start their practicum right after they arrived in the U.S., they might have experienced greater anxiety about their competency due to their lack of experiences and understanding about American counseling systems.

Challenges and Obstacles While in Practicum/Internship

Participants described two typical and four variant themes in terms of specific challenges and obstacles during their practicum/internship period. Within this domain, language barrier (50%) and building relationships with clients (50%) were typical challenges for participants in this study.

First, language barrier, one of the major challenges shared by five participants, significantly affected their counseling practices. Yujin described her experiences as "I could follow the counseling flow, but I missed specific information because of the language barrier. Even when I understood, it was hard for me to speak out something immediately." Mina also reported that "sometimes I realized that I got distracted by a certain English expressions. I couldn't focus on the counseling contents rather I was interested in planning what I should say next in advance." Even though the number of occurrences decreased when compared to the perceived fear domain, language competency was still a great challenge for international students.

Next, building relationships with clients was the other typical challenge participants faced during their practicum/internship period. Regarding this challenge, Megan and Sieun, who worked with minors, experienced low levels of motivation from their clients and their family members. Megan described the characteristics of her clients as "they did not allow me to make changes. Maybe they did not expect changes, because it was just one semester." Juyeon also described challenges in building relationships with clients because she is an international student who is "not fluent in English." Moreover, cultural differences became another challenge for participants when they interacted with their clients. As Megan recalled in a discussion on the concept of culture difference with her student clients,

One thing I did have the problem with was… personal experience like the prom, like who got the date, who did not. It was like... I tried my best to share with them to discuss, but they can tell that I don't know much about their culture. you know, the culture of working on weekends and getting money and going to this party or being more independent both in terms of their relationships with... you know, sexual relationship or friendship relationship. It was not something that I was used to from my own culture. I had to learn that culture of the students what's normal and not normal … some of them played pretty violent games, which I cannot even look at those games. For my culture, I come from more reserved and communal culture, the things they were comfortable to talk about what they spent their evening or which home they went to, which party they went to… was not easy for me to connect with.

In addition, clients' requests to change counselors were discouraged because the counseling practicum students were international. As Sunmi described,

> There was some kind of aversion to foreign counselor in school counselors, students, and parents. After I had the first session with my first individual counseling client, the parents called school counselors to change their child's counselor. The case referred to another intern, a Caucasian male. Though the site supervisor told me that they thought the case is not appropriate for interns. Since the student needs consistent help, supervisor explained me that the parents wanted one of the school counselors instead of a student counselor. But, I heard the real story from the male intern who was my close friend. Truth was, during a teachers' meeting, there was some conversation about me. "One of the interns is South Korean", "Can she speak even English?", and "What kind of work should we give her?"

In comparison to the first domain, this domain includes various responses based on the participants' region, characteristics of practicum/internship sites, and the environment of their training programs.

Support from Programs

Participants' responses regarding receiving support from their programs were categorized according to satisfaction level. Based on the participants' responses, the authors delineated support such as resources and/or assistance provided from participants' training programs. All participants perceived supports from programs were effective in some way, yet most of them also felt discontent about the support. Satisfactory supports included 'emotional supports' from their peers, supervisors, and programs. Specifically, Mina described her positive experience with

a supervisor who understood her situation and provided relevant information along with emotional support.

> During supervision, I think my supervisor understood the challenges or situations of international students usually have gone through, so it was quite helpful. …for example, the most challenging case when I had in the career center was the veteran, someone who recently discharged from military service, case. I saw the client for one semester, but I had no idea about the military culture or veteran support system in the U.S. In the supervision, the supervisor encouraged me that it is totally natural that I don't know the military system well. She helped me to understand the situation clearly. … when there is any dubious thing arises in the counseling session, I could ask about it in the supervision.

In contrast, some participants who experienced the supervisory process reported perceptions that their supervisors lacked multicultural sensitivity. For example, Sunmi reported that the support from her program was ineffective due to a lack of cultural sensitivity in one of her university supervisors: "But I felt she didn't know me well. As an international student and overall understandings like the experiences I've gone through, experiences as a foreign counselor." Megan also stated that,

> It [the quality of supervisions] depends on the supervisors who were committed to their responsibilities as it was outlined. Those who were not as committed as I focused on their supervision responsibilities, it wasn't enough in terms of depth or content. It was really not enough. It depends on

the commitment of the supervisor. Either the site or the faculty supervisors'

commitment level matters.

The mixed responses of participants about support from their programs show that the

cultural competency of supervisors and faculty members may determine the quality and

relevance of support available for international students.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to explore international students' practica and internship

experiences in terms of fear, actual challenges, and supports from their training programs. The

findings of this study provide detailed insight on how international students went through the

process of their practica/internships and how these training experiences affected their counseling

efficacies and competencies.

The researchers discovered that various fears and challenges that international students

face in the practicum and/or internship training primarily came from their language barrier and

their lack of understanding of the U.S. counseling system. Additionally, through interviews with

ten international students, the researchers also found that the level of counseling self-efficacy

these students experienced varied throughout their practicum/internship experiences. Counselor

self-efficacy (CSE) refers to counselors' beliefs about their ability to perform therapy-related

behaviors or to negotiate certain clinical situations (Larson & Daniels, 1998), which is an

extension of Bandura's self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1994). Upon their arrival in the U.S.,

participants of this study experienced a significant decrease in their counseling self-efficacy;

however, most of their counseling efficacy recovered after having positive counseling

experiences during their training. Thus, to increase international students' counseling self-

efficacy in their practicum/internship, as well as to ensure improved training, it is necessary for

counselor preparation programs to address the anticipated fears and challenges of the preparation period (i.e., orientation or prerequisite training) of the practicum/internship.

In this study, international counseling trainees, who had their master's level training in their home country, described their practicum/internship experiences in the U.S. as a change from an expectable environment to a new and unpredictable one. Although there is scarce research on the acculturation process of international students in counselor training programs, researchers suggest that international trainees experience their cultural transition to the U.S. as changing their sense of self and interactions in their environment (Mittal & Wieling, 2006; Ng & Smith, 2009). By reflecting on their challenges during practicum/internship, participants indicated that their counseling practices were affected by the cultural change regarding perceptions about themselves and their counseling abilities.

In addition, a majority of participants reported that their fears and concerns became trivial, and that their counseling efficacy recovered as their practicum/internship continued. This result is in accordance with previous research findings. According to previous studies, practicum training was found to contribute to an increase in counselor self-efficacy (e.g. Larson et al., 1992; Melehert, Hays, Wilijnen, & Kolocek, 1996) for both beginning and advanced counselor trainees. Also, regardless of the level of experiences, counselor trainees exhibit feelings of fears and anxiety at the beginning of training (Thompson, 1986). Stoltenberg, McNeill, and Delworth (1997) explained that entry-level trainees experience high levels of performance anxiety due to a lack of counseling skills, lack of self-efficacy in their ability regarding counseling performance, and the concern about receiving negative evaluations by clients and/or supervisors. However, as participants gained experience through training, their anxiety level decreased and their perceptions of competence in certain counseling skills increased. Although international students'

practicum/internship experiences have unique characteristics, they may travel similar developmental paths as general counselor trainees. Therefore, if international students anticipate that they will follow the natural process of counseling trainees' development, their level of readiness and confidence in counseling practicum/internship will increase, which in turn will affect their training effectiveness. This point should be highlighted in the preparation process of international counseling students' practicum/internship training.

Implications & Limitations

A major implication of this is a better understanding of the professional development of this population, as well as the real experiences of international trainees regarding practica/internships, which may contribute to increasing counselor educators' multicultural awareness and understanding. From the findings and discussion of this study, international students did have fears and face challenges mainly due to the level of their language proficiency and understanding the American culture including the counseling systems. However, thanks to the support from programs and sites participants positively perceived, their developmental paths, called counseling self-efficacy, appear on the right track.

To increase the readiness of international students, counselor training programs need to provide systematic support for this population. Participants responded that effective supports from their program were aligned with multicultural understanding and sensitivity about international students. In addition, providing practical information, such as information about practicum/internship sites, the American counseling system, insurance or welfare systems, and cultures was another key factor to help international students increase their practicum/internship readiness.

Furthermore, this study may contribute to an issue of advocacy for international students and provide some suggestions for counselor educators, counselor training programs, and site supervisors, in that, what aspects they need to pay more attention to and in what ways they can help international students experience better practicum/internship training. In the preparation period for international students' practica/internships, such as orientation sessions or prerequisite training, they need more information regarding their practice sites, American counseling systems, American cultures, and ways of building relationships with non-academic people to decrease their fears. Encouraging international students to advocate themselves can be another important implication of this study. Proactively asking questions, as well as seeking information and support they need are suggested for international students. International students should also have their feelings of fears about expected challenges and decreased counseling self-efficacy in the beginning of the practicum/internship experiences be normalized. In addition, during the practicum/internship period, significant supports from supervisor and peers, both emotional and practical support in counseling, may help international students adjust more easily to the site and environment, thereby effectively function as trained counselors, which in turn, would result in recovering their counseling competency and developing as professional counselors. Taken all together, as the enrollment rate of international students in CACREP accredited programs increases, counselor educators and faculty members can help to ensure positive training outcomes by understanding the experiences of international students in their practicum/internship process.

Although the researchers gathered in-depth information from ten international students during the interviews, our sample represented limited nationalities, mostly from South Korea. Another limitation is that the researchers only explored students' perspectives; therefore, it is

unknown whether faculty members, site/university supervisors, co-workers, or clients would have reported similar experiences. Lastly, there may be researchers' biases as the first and second authors were also international students. Moreover, as international doctoral students working in the same field, the researchers were able to gain a deeper understanding of the cultural issues in the analysis. This insider status was a potential source of subjective bias (Sato & Hodge, 2009). However, the researchers countered this through triangulation, member checking, and peer debriefing to establish trustworthiness and rigor (Maxwell, 1992).

Future studies are needed to represent more diverse populations in terms of gender, region, and ethnicity/nationality. Furthermore, the researchers studied a retrospective recall, so there is no way of knowing how accurately the participants remembered their practicum/internship experiences. Although Rhodes et al. (1994) explained that gathering information over time is more fruitful, the researchers also acknowledge that conducting interviews during the practicum/internship process could provide more descriptive and specific details. Lastly, language barriers were the most commonly reported fear and challenges of participants in the beginning of their practicum and internship. The authors can assume that the fear associated with their limited language proficiency was decreased as participants gained more counseling experiences in the U.S. based on the results. However, it would be beneficial if there are empirical studies that focus on the effect of language or verbal communications in counseling from the clients' perspectives toward counselors who are limited in English.

References

Baggerly, J., & Osborn, D. (2006). School counselors' career satisfaction and commitment: Correlates and predictors. *Professional School Counseling, 9*(3), 197-205.

Bandura, A. (1994). *Self-efficacy*. John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). (2009). *The 2009 Standards*. Retrieved from http://www.cacrep.org/2009standards.pdf

Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (2012). *The CACREP 2012 annual report.* Alexandria, VA: Author. Retrieved from http://issuu.com/cacrep/docs/cacrep_2012_annual_report

Chen, C. P. (1999). Common stressors among international college students: research and counseling implications. *Journal of College Counseling, 2*, 49–65.

Creswell, J.W. (2002). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education.

Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry and research design* (3rd ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Hays, D. G. & Wood, C. (2011). Infusing qualitative traditions in counseling research designs. *Journal of Counseling and Development, 89*, 288-295.

Hill, C. E., Knox, S., Thompson, B.J., Williams, E.N., Hess, S. A., & Ladany, N. (2005). Consensual qualitative research: An update. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 2*, 196-205. doi: 10.1037/0022-0167.52.2.196.

Hill, C. E., Thompson, B. J., & Williams, E. N. (1997). A guide to conducting consensual qualitative research. *The Counseling Psychologist, 25*, 517–572.

Jang, Y., Woo, H., & Henfield, M. S. (2014). International doctoral students in counselor education programs: Perceived challenges in supervision training. *Asia Pacific Education Review, 15*, 561-572.

Jones, S. R., Torres, V., & Arminio, T. (2006). *Negotiating the complexities of qualitative research in higher education: Fundamental elements & issues* (pp. 37-61). New York: Routledge.

Killian, K. D. (2001). Differences making a difference: Cross-cultural interactions in supervisor relationships. *Journal of Feminist Family Therapy, 12*, 61–103. doi:10.1300/J086v12n02_03.

Larson, L. M., & Daniels, J. A. (1998). Review of the counseling self-efficacy literature. *The Counseling Psychologist, 26*(2), 179-218.

Larson, L. M., Suzuki, L. A., Gillespie, K. N., Potenza, M. T., Bechtel, M. A., & Toulouse, A. L. (1992). Development and validation of the counseling self-estimate inventory. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 39*(1), 105-120.

Mittal, M., & Wieling, E. (2006). Training experiences of international doctoral students in marriage and family therapy. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy, 32*, 369–383. doi:10.1111/j.1752-0606.2006.tb01613.x.

Morris, J., & Lee, Y. T. (2004). Issues of language and culture in family therapy training. *Contemporary Family Therapy, 26*, 307-318.

Mori, Y., Inman, A. G., & Caskie, G.I.L. (2009). Supervising international students: Relationship between acculturation, supervisor multicultural competence, cultural discussions, and supervision satisfaction. *Training and Education in Professional Psychology, 3*, 10-18.

Ng, K. M. (2006). Counselor educators' perceptions of and experiences with international students. *International Journal for the Advancement of Counseling, 28*, 1–19. doi:10.1007/s10447-005-8492-1.

Ng, K. M., & Smith, S. (2009). Perceptions and experience of international trainees in counseling and related fields. *International Journal for the Advancement of Counseling, 31*, 57–70. doi:10.1007/s0447-008-9068-7.

Nilsson, J. E., & Anderson, M. Z. (2004). Supervising international students: the role of acculturation, role ambiguity, and multicultural discussions. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice, 35*, 306–312. doi:10.1037/0735-7028.35.3.306.

Pattison, S. (2003). Cultural diversity: Mapping the experiences of students on an international counselor training programme. *Counselling & Psychotherapy Research, 3*, 107–113. doi:10.1080/14733140312331384472.

Reid, L. M., & Dixon, A. L. (2012). The counseling supervision needs of international students in U.S. institutions of higher education: A culturally-sensitive supervision model for counselor educators. *Journal of International Counselor Education, 4*, 29-41.

Rhodes, R. H., Hill, C. E., Thompson, B. J., & Elliott, R. (1994). Client retrospective recall of resolved and unresolved misunderstanding events. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 41*, 473–483.

Sangganjanavanich, V. F., & Black, L. L. (2009). Clinical supervision for international counselors-in-training: implications for supervisors. *Journal of Professional Counseling: Practice, Theory, and Research, 37*, 52–65.

Tatar, M., & Horenczyk, G. (2000). Counseling students on the move: The effects of culture of origin and permanence of relocation among international college students. *Journal of College Counseling, 3*(1), 49-62.

Van Manen, M. (1990). *Researching lived experience: Human science for an action sensitive pedagogy*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Institute of International Education (IIE). (2014). *Open Doors 2014: International Students in the United States and Study Abroad by American Students are at All-Time High*. From http://www.iie.org/Who-We-Are/News-and-Events/Press-Center/Press-Releases/2014/2014-11-17-Open-Doors-Data