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Career Counseling in Cultural Minorities: How Competent, Efficient and Engaged do Practitioners Feel in Greece?

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Abstract

Career counselors are more than ever being called to assist new comers in their country migrating there in search of a better quality of life due to either financial reasons or an ongoing war in their homeland. The aim of this study is to shed light on the ability of career counselors to cope with cultural minorities in Greece since currently it is vital they provide guidance especially to those from less privileged backgrounds, whereas more and more practitioners have been employed in relevant institutions during the last decade. The focus is on examining the practitioners' ability to communicate effectively with people from various cultural backgrounds, as well as their self-efficacy, job engagement and their self-perceived stress when working with clients with different cultural identity. Randomly selected participants working as career practitioners, both in the private and public sector, were invited to submit a questionnaire online which contained measures of these factors (n=146). Results indicated that the overall intercultural effectiveness is affected by socio-demographic characteristics and correlates more significantly with participants who have working experience with multicultural clients and practice in group settings rather than individually, presenting better results in the private sector, as opposed to public institutions. Furthermore, self-efficacy proved to be a predictor for intercultural effectiveness, correlating though less significantly with job engagement and perceived stress. Conclusions are discussed with the international research literature and implications for career practitioners are formulated.

Keywords: Multicultural Career Counseling, Intercultural Effectiveness, Self-Efficacy, Work Engagement, Counselors' Competence, Cultural Minorities

1. Introduction

Career counseling is widely considered an assisting tool to ensure global justice (Sultana, 2017) and it is interrelated with important events in society. Career counselors promote social values and alongside the current policies, they are responsible for encouraging their clients' personal and career development in order to achieve mobility in social status and thus a better quality of life. Social justice is essential for human development and should be the main goal for counselors (Arthur & Collins, 2014), since societies have all rendered multicultural, therefore awareness and sensitivity towards other cultures is crucial nowadays. Migrants and refugees carrying their cultural diversity in a new society, usually hold different viewpoints regarding education and career pursuit and younger populations are the ones who face most problems in search of a job due to limited chances offered to them in the work field (Beadle, 2014). According to research, the consequences of a forced migration might

last longer than a decade (Ivlevs & Veliziotis, 2018) while the longer one remains in the state of refugee, the more they draw apart from a smooth transition into a safe working environment (Codell et al., 2011, Hainmuller et al., 2016); at the same time, the bigger the cultural differences, the longer the time spent being unemployed (Lundborg, 2013). The most effective strategy to combat this unfortunate situation leading to unemployment is career counseling (Behrendt et al. 2019), in order for moving populations to learn how to adapt to sudden, unexpected and violent changes (Juntunen et al., 2019). According to Arulmani (2011, p. 92):

“Career guidance would serve a larger cause if it moves beyond helping a person find a ‘good’ job to helping a person discover how he or she could contribute to the broader human situation.”

Public policy and regulations according to the current legislation regarding career guidance and counseling define who delivers such services, the kind of interventions and the training those practitioners should have, to whom those services are offered and the purpose of them (Herr, 2003). Career guidance is included in strategies aimed at solving national, political, financial and working issues. It is crucial for the prevention and reduction of unemployment rates, the creation and development of an effective and productive workforce, the update and adaptation of employees in the constant changes of the job market due to technological advancements and finally the support of socially vulnerable groups of people due to lack of skills, disability or social problems. Legislation is supposed to ensure justice and equality in education and work opportunities, no matter what the gender, the race or the nationality of the potential employee is. Inclusion of career guidance in the school curriculum proves the existence of policies towards the above direction. What should be emphasized, though, is that career guidance is not a one-off procedure, but instead, it should be considered lifelong. It is a spectrum from traditional approaches, including questionnaires to discover the clients’ skills and interests, to interventions to reduce stress, to retrace crucial life experiences and to discover more profound obstacles in the clients’ career path including family impact. All of them should be issues to concern practitioners focusing on assisting the unemployed or under-employed.

Meanwhile, the demands of the global job market increase and so do the demands for the task of the career practitioners’ themselves. There is an abundance of new information and new skills to be acquired and one of the most prominent is the intercultural competence in communication. About two decades ago, researchers could foresee the need to include in career guidance issues like learning how to manage stress caused by the adaptation to a new place, cultural shock and confusion related to working and organizational regulations in a new environment where thousands of people have been forced to relocate due to globalization (Herr, 2003). Today, this need is undoubtedly an emergency on account of the increased migration flows due to political, social, financial or even environmental reasons.

The vast majority of researchers focus far more on the part of the cultural minorities and the difficulties they come across in their effort to find their place in the job market and less on the research of counselors’ abilities and intercultural approaches. There is little evidence examining mainly the effect of professional training on intercultural competence and self-efficacy while no studies could be located examining the practitioners’ levels of work engagement and stress.

Considering practitioners’ intercultural effectiveness, there is scientific evidence only for specific abilities. For example, practitioners in Greece were reported to feel unable to use the appropriate tools for intercultural counseling whereas they were reported as more competent in intercultural sensitivity, proper attitude, empathy and respect towards clients from various cultural backgrounds (Sidiropoulou-Dimakakou & Pavlakos, 2007; Sidiropoulou-Dimakakou, 2009). Regarding their self-efficacy, research showed that the more prepared counselors feel, the more efficient they feel when facing unexpected situations (Paton, 2003; Sawyer, Peters, & Willis, 2013) while low levels of self-efficacy are related to high levels of stress (Larson & Daniels, 1998).

Other research studies -not focusing on career counselors in particular- indicate that work engagement correlates negatively with work-related stress, while people with high levels of self-efficacy tend to consider job demands to be a challenge to achieve a goal rendering them more devoted to their task (Akkermans et al., 2013; Ngo & Hui, 2018; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Ventura et al., 2015).

However, the gap observed in literature as for the effective communication of counselors with clients from multicultural backgrounds, how competent they feel, how absorbed and dedicated they are and all this related to the stress they suffer from has been the stimulus for the current study.

2. The present study

2.1. Purpose

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the practitioners' intercultural effectiveness (further IE) when interacting with clients coming from a different cultural background, as well as its relation to their perceived self-efficacy, work engagement and the stress they suffer from. More specifically, it was examined a) whether and how the demographics affect IE, b) how IE is related to the levels of self-efficacy, work engagement and stress and c) whether there can be any predictors among those four factors.

2.2. Method

2.2.1. Participants

Career counselors working for both private and public guidance institutions were asked to fill in an online questionnaire. They were directly approached by email using contact details obtained from publicly available databases while the purpose and request for consent to the research were sent to them together with the questionnaire link. Data were collected through the use of Google documents and no identifying information was solicited.

A hundred and forty-six counselors (146) were recruited and had a mean age of 43,3 years. The majority of the respondents were female (72,6%), well-educated (70,6%) and, most of them holding a bachelor's degree or above (75,3%), working in urban settings (71%), having working experience with cultural minorities (65,1%) though not being themselves a member of a cultural minority (99,3%). Demographics are further outlined in Table 1. The precise response rate cannot be estimated due to the nature of snowball sampling and our procedure allowing for initial contacts to share the information with others of their selection.

Table 1: Demographics

Sample characteristics	N	%
Gender		
Male	38	26,0
Female	106	72,6
Unstated	2	1,4
Age		
25-34	19	13,0
35-44	65	44,5
45-54	47	32,2
55-64	15	10,3
Marital State		
Married	88	60,3
Single	37	25,3
In a relationship	15	10,3
Divorced	5	3,4
Widowed	1	,7
Educational level		
BA degree	36	24,7

MA degree	100	68,5
Phd degree	10	6,8
Training on Career Counseling/Guidance		
MA on career counseling	27	18,5
Phd on career counseling	6	4,1
Seminars	58	39,7
None	23	15,8
Other	32	21,9
Experience in years		
Up to 5 years	58	39,7
Up to 10 years	34	23,3
More than 10 years	54	37,0
Regions		
Urban	105	71,9
Suburban	30	20,5
Islands	11	7,5
Currently active counselors		
Yes	122	83,6
No	24	16,4
Working Environment		
Private sector	37	25,3
Public sector	85	58,2
Both	21	14,4
Other	3	2,1
Individual/group counseling		
Individual sessions	65	44,5
Group sessions	12	8,2
Both	69	47,3
Working experience with cultural minorities		
Yes	95	65,1
No	51	34,9
Being part of a cultural minority		
Yes	1	,7
No	145	99,3

Source: the authors

2.2.2. Research instruments

A demographic questionnaire (12 questions) sought for information about the counselors in terms of demographic characteristics as well as their work and counseling experience (Table 1).

2.2.3. The Intercultural Effectiveness Scale (IES)

The Intercultural Effectiveness Scale (IES, Portalla & Chen, 2010) is a 20-item self-report scale which measures the ability to interact and communicate effectively with people from different cultures. It is made up of six factors, including Behavioral Flexibility (4 items) with statements like “I often act like a very different person when interacting with people from different cultures”, Interaction Relaxation (5 items) as for example “I find it easy to talk with people from different cultures”, Interactant Respect (3 items) including statements like “I always show respect for my culturally different counterparts during our interaction”, Message Skills (3 items) “I often miss parts of what is going on when interacting with people from different cultures”, Identity Maintenance

(3 items) with statements like “I find it is difficult to feel my culturally different counterparts are similar to me”, and Interaction Management (2 items) including statements as “I am able to express my ideas clearly when interacting with people from different cultures”. Respondents were asked to indicate the degree to which they agree or disagree on 5-point Likert-type scale that ranges from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The coefficient alpha for the reliability of the original scale was $\alpha=.85$. In the current study the reliability coefficient after the factor analysis was $\alpha=.86$.

2.2.4. Counselor Self-Efficacy Scale (CSES)

The Counselor Self-Efficacy Scale (CSES) (Melchert, Hays, Wiljanen, & Kolocek, 1996) consists of 18 self-referencing statements (e.g. I can effectively facilitate client self-exploration.); participants are asked to rate the extent they (dis)agree with each of the statements on a five-point scale, ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. An overall score is derived by summing up all the item responses. The coefficient alpha for the reliability of the original scale was $\alpha=.91$.

2.2.5. Work Engagement Scale (WES)

The short form of the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES-9) (Schaufeli et al., 2006) was used to measure the levels of practitioners' work engagement. Though the initial scale is supposed to comprise of 3 dimensions (vigor, dedication and absorption), researchers conducting factor analysis conclude in using it as uni-dimensional (Mills et al., 2012; Schaufeli et al., 2006). After having conducted factor analysis for the purpose of this study, no dimensions were found in agreement with previous researchers. There are 9 statements on a 7-point Likert scale, where 0=never and 6=always (e.g. My job inspires me.). The coefficient alpha for the reliability in previous studies ranges from $\alpha=.80$ to $\alpha=.90$ (Montgomery et al., 2010; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).

2.2.6. Perceived Stress Scale (PSS)

The short version of Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) designed by Cohen (Cohen et al., 1983) was used to measure how stressful some conditions can be on daily routine and is one of the most popular tools for this purpose (Chan & La Greca, 2013). It consists of 4 questions about thoughts and emotions felt during the past month on a 5-point Likert scale, where 0=never and 4=very often (e.g. In the last month, how often have you felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life?). Internal consistency of the short version is quite satisfactory with Cronbach $\alpha=.60$.

3. Results

3.1. Exploratory Factor Analysis for the IES

Exploratory factor analysis, (EFA), via varimax rotation, was conducted to explore the confirmation of the six scale factors in IES. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was $.832$ and the Bartlett's test of sphericity was also significant ($p < .05$). Subsequent analyses to interpret the component matrix resulted in eliminating 6 items and forming 4 final factors. This four factor structure which explained 63,2% of the variance was the best defined factor structure to be preferred depending on the communalities and reliability of the scale. The four factors extracted were: Interaction Relaxation including 5 items, which refers to the lack of stress or feelings of tension in intercultural interaction; Identity Maintenance with 4 items, which refers to the ability to separate and support cultural identity through the verbal and non-verbal interaction; Interaction skills with 3 items, which refers to basic verbal communication skills, and Interactant Respect including 2 items, which refers to both verbal and non-verbal messages exchanged by the interactants showing respect to their different cultural background (Table 2).

Table 2: Factor Analysis results

	1	2	3	4
I find it easy to get along with people from different cultures.	,86			
I find it easy to talk with people from different cultures.	,744			
I am afraid to express myself when interacting with people from different cultures.	,615			
I feel relaxed when interacting with people from different cultures.	,607			
I am able to express my ideas clearly when interacting with people from different cultures.	,561			
I always feel a sense of distance with my culturally different counterparts during our interaction.		,756		
I find it is difficult to feel my culturally different counterparts are similar to me.		,74		
I often act like a very different person when interacting with people from different cultures.		,719		
I find I have a lot in common with my culturally different counterparts during our interaction.		,657		
I often miss parts of what is going on when interacting with people from different cultures.			,778	
I am able to answer questions effectively when interacting with people from different cultures.			,634	
I always know how to initiate a conversation when interacting with people from different cultures.			,608	
I always show respect for my culturally different counterparts during our interaction.				,823
I use appropriate eye contact when interacting with people from different cultures.				,613

Source: the authors

3.2. IES, CSES, WES & PSS records

In interpreting and presenting the results of each scale, the current study adopted the constructors' recommendations indicating that higher scores imply higher levels of intercultural effectiveness, self-efficacy and work engagement and lower scores in the PSS indicate lower stress levels accordingly. The mean IE score in the current study is 55,23 (SD=7,28) ranging from 30 to 70. According to their self-reports, Greek practitioners reported fairly high scores in all IE factors: interaction relaxation (M=4,04, SD=0,67), identity maintenance (M=3,69, SD=0,73), interaction skills (M=3,71, SD=0,63) and interactant respect (M=4,55, SD=0,52). For the first two scales the scores ranged from 1 to 5 and the mean scores were 3,9 and 4 for the IES and CSES respectively while for the WES, the range was from 0 to 6 and the mean score was 4,5. Finally, the stress scores ranged from 0 to 4 and the mean score was 1,4. Generally speaking, the participants seemed to have high levels of intercultural effectiveness, self-efficacy and work engagement and relatively low levels of stress (table 3).

Table 3: Scales records

	Lowest score	Highest score	M.S.	S.D.
Intercultural Effectiveness	2,14	5,00	3,9457	,52013
Self-efficacy	1,92	5,00	4,0427	,53455
Work Engagement	,89	6,00	4,5860	,93597
Stress	,25	3,00	1,4880	,61190

To compare the effect of demographic characteristics with more than two values on the participants' IE, a series of one-way analyses of variance (ANOVA) was conducted. A significant effect of the marital/partnership condition was found on factor 4 indicating that married participants tended to show higher levels of respect during the interaction with culturally different people [$F(4,141)=3,269$, $p=.013$]. There was also a significant effect of the working institution on factor 1, ease and a sense of relaxation during interaction [$F(3, 142)=4,19$, $p=.007$], factor 3, ability to transfer message to the client [$F(3, 142)=3,45$, $p=.018$] and factor 4, respect towards the client [$F(3, 142)=4,93$, $p=.003$]. Counselors working at the private sector scored more highly on these factors than counselors working on the public sector. Finally, a significant effect of the way counselors perform guidance – with individuals only, with groups only or both – was found on the first [$F(2, 143)=7,05$, $p=.001$] and fourth factor [$F(2,143)=7,49$, $p=.001$] about relaxation and respect during interaction accordingly. In both cases, counselors working with groups seemed to be more relaxed during their interactions with culturally different clients than those who have performed counseling only individually and seemed to show more respect during this interaction. The mean scores and standard deviations can be seen in Table 4.

Table 4: ANOVA results

			N	Mean	StD
Marital State	Respect during interaction	Married	88	4,63	,42
		Single	37	4,31	,70
Working Institution	Relaxation during interaction	Private sector	37	4,30	,57
		Public sector	85	3,88	,71
	Interaction skills	Private sector	37	3,97	,52
		Public sector	85	3,60	,65

Individual/Group counseling	Respect during interaction	Private sector	37	4,79	,27
		Public sector	85	4,42	,60
	Relaxation during interaction	Individually	65	3,91	,65
		Groups	12	3,61	,70
		Both the above	69	4,24	,62
	Respect during interaction	Individually	65	4,53	,56
Groups		12	4,04	,78	
Both the above		69	4,65	,37	

Source: the authors

Results from t-test revealed a significant difference in the scores for practitioners with experience with people from cultural minorities ($M=4,02$, $SD=0,52$) and those without ($M=3,79$, $SD=0,48$); $t(144)=2,53$, $p=0,12$. When counselors have already worked with clients coming from different cultural backgrounds, they tend to be more efficient in their interaction with culturally different counterparts compared with those who have not had such an opportunity.

Comparing IE performance between active and inactive practitioners showed once again a significant difference ($M=4,00$, $SD=0,46$ vs. $M=3,65$, $SD=0,67$); $t(144)=3,11$, $p=,021$, indicating that being actively involved in performing career counseling tasks increases the ability to be more intercultural efficient than being inactive. Further details for the results of the t-tests can be seen in table 5.

Table 5: T-tests results

	N	Mean	SD	T	P
Working experience with cultural minorities					
Yes	95	4,02	,52	2,53	,012
No	51	3,79	,48		
Currently working					
Yes	122	4,00	,46	3,11	,021
No	24	3,65	,67		

Finally, Pearson results among factors of IES showed that high levels of interaction relaxation are related to better interaction skills ($r=.546$ $p=.000 <.05$) and identity maintenance ($r=.517$ $p=.000 <.05$). Practitioners who were more relaxed during a conversation with cultural minorities could receive and send messages more effectively without losing part of their identity. A weaker correlation appeared between the fourth dimension of respect during interaction and the rest of the dimensions, relaxation during interaction ($r=.352$ $p=.000 <.05$), identity maintenance ($r=.333$ $p=.000 <.05$) and interaction skills ($r=.380$ $p=.000 <.05$). Pearson correlations can be seen in table 6.

Table 6: Pearson correlations among the IES factors

	Interaction Relaxation	Identity Maintenance	Interaction skills
Interaction Relaxation			
Identity Maintenance	,517**		
Interaction skills	,546**	,426**	
Interactant Respect	,352**	,333**	,380**

Note: The correlations mentioned as ** are significant in level $p < .01$

3.3. Intercultural Effectiveness, Self-efficacy, Work Engagement and Perceived Stress

To pursue the second aim of the study, correlations among all variables were computed as reported in table 7. A significant correlation between IE and SE ($r=.581$ $p=.000 <.05$) suggests that practitioners who felt confident about their performance at work would be more effective when interacting with people from different cultural backgrounds. Furthermore, a moderate significance between IE and WE ($r=.336$ $p=.000 <.05$) and as expected a negative but moderate significance with stress ($r=-.319$ $p=.000 <.05$) were identified.

Table 7: Pearson correlations between overall IE and SE, WE and PS

	Intercultural Effectiveness	Self-efficacy	Work Engagement
Intercultural Effectiveness			
Self-efficacy	,581**		
Work Engagement	,336**	,460**	
Perceived Stress	-,319**	-,350**	-,411**

Note: ** $p < .01$

3.4. Predicting levels of intercultural effectiveness

A series of hierarchical regression analyses was conducted using the Enter method to investigate whether self-efficacy, work engagement or stress can significantly predict the levels of intercultural effectiveness. Table 8 depicts results from the hierarchical regression analyses. Due to the results, work engagement ($\beta=.087$, $t=1.14$) and stress ($\beta=-.131$, $t=-1.825$) could not predict levels of IE, while self-efficacy could be a significant predictor for that reason ($\beta=.581$, $t=8.56$).

Table 8: Regression Analysis

Variables	B	Beta	t	P
Self-efficacy	,503	,581	8,56	,000
Work Engagement	-,099	,087 ^a	1,14	,25
Perceived Stress	,028	-,131 ^a	-1,82	,07

Note: Independent variables: Self-efficacy, Work Engagement, Perceived Stress
Dependent variable: Intercultural Effectiveness

4. Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate: (i) the career practitioners' intercultural effectiveness in Greece, (ii) the possible effect of demographic characteristics on IE, (iii) the relation of IE with the participants' self-efficacy, work engagement and the stress they suffer from, as well as (iv) whether the levels of SE, WE and S may predict the career practitioners' IE.

4.1. Intercultural Effectiveness

High scores of IE were reported in all four factors of the scale derived after the conducted EFA. More specifically, participants appeared to have high levels of intercultural effectiveness with the factor of respect during interaction being the one with the highest score and the identity maintenance being the one with the lowest score. Marital state seemed to play a role in respect during interaction since married participants had higher scores in this factor.

Another trait that seemed to play an important role is being an active counselor since those participants scored higher in their total IE level. This could be a further implication for the need of constant practice in the field in order to maintain certain abilities together with the fact that the working environment also seems to be a crucial factor. More specifically, participants working in the private sector tend to be more effective in their intercultural interactions scoring higher both in relaxation and respect during interaction and their skills exchanging messages. This finding may correlate with the current increase of private institutions offering career guidance services in Greece, while practitioners in the public sector tend to stick to traditional methods without updating their knowledge and approaches (Kassotakis, 2017). In the research of Ulceluse et al. (2018) career services addressed to refugees followed a standardized procedure using conventional techniques and tools, thus neglecting the specific cultural needs of every human (Byars-Winston, 2010). Here comes again in the foreground, the need for training programs on intercultural issues for a more carefully designed guidance responding to the urgent needs of the clients (Behrendt et al., 2019 ; Niles et al., 2009).

A further interesting and rather surprising finding of our study showed that education level did not seem to play an important role in the overall participants' IE which stimulates interest for further investigation in the field using combined research methods. Comparing IE levels with the intervention setting, participants showed higher IE levels when working with groups rather than with one individual, with those working in both settings

scoring higher in relaxation and respect during interaction, showing that a supportive social network in group counseling can be beneficial for both sides- practitioners and clients- to achieve common goals (Collins and Arthur, 2010). Consequently, providing counseling in groups may be more appropriate when the target group is a cultural minority.

4.2. Intercultural effectiveness, self-efficacy, work engagement and perceived stress

As shown in the study, there is a strong interdependence between the intercultural effectiveness and self-efficacy, and moderate to weak interdependence between intercultural effectiveness, work engagement and stress respectively. The strong correlation between IE and SE is in agreement with the definition of the term 'self-efficacy' ,– the belief of how competent a person is to deal with a given situation– a fact confirmed by previous research as well (Massengale et al., 2020). The more effective practitioners feel in handling sudden situations, the stronger their ability to interact effectively with people from various cultural backgrounds. Regarding work engagement and stress, there can be no confirmation of the present findings due to lack of similar research data, however, in this particular study PS seems to negatively affect levels of IE, SE and WE also.

4.3. Self-efficacy, Work Engagement and Perceived Stress as Predictors of Intercultural Effectiveness

In predicting the levels of intercultural effectiveness, the multiple regression analysis showed what was actually expected: The level of intercultural effectiveness was significantly predicted by the level of self-efficacy, because of the strong correlation found in the previous step. Levels of work engagement and stress did not prove to be able to predict levels of IE in Greek practitioners, though.

5. Implications for career policy makers

The huge movement of refugees and immigrants gathering in European countries like Greece, forced by war, health and/or financial conditions demand more than ever career services adequately differentiated to adjust and respond to the specific needs of culturally specific clients. Those people need to be supported in their effort to enter the labor market in a new/unknown country and/or be equipped with life career skills, eventually other than the ones they had. Provision of career guidance services through cultural competent practitioners, is here the key.

According to the results of the present study career practitioners need to become more effective and confident in their interaction with clients from other cultures. Focused education and training in intercultural competence has not only to be added in initial education and training of guidance practitioners but also to be a discrete component within their lifelong training. Modules, workshops and seminars in intercultural communication, job self-efficacy and work engagement may ameliorate the practitioners' competence leading to more effective career interventions, that will serve both sides, not only the clients' social integration but also the host country to efficiently use the incoming human resources.

6. Limitations and further research

The present study was conducted during the pandemic of SARS-Covid 19, a fact that maybe limited the number of the participants, as during lock-down periods access in organizations and institutions was denied. Furthermore, the scales used are self-referencing, which includes a more or less subjectivity of responses. The fact that there was only one peer-practitioner belonging in a minority group does not allow conclusions for peer-practitioners which also need to be further studied.

To capture a more accurate picture of the effectiveness among practitioners serving clients from multicultural backgrounds, more diverse populations such as ethnic/racial minorities need to be included. In addition to the quantitative measure of IE, in-depth qualitative interviews with practitioners could be useful in understanding their experiences and the challenges they face from their perspectives. Future research could also explore effective strategies that career practitioners could use to cope with diversity promising important educational and consultative opportunities for professionals willing to strengthen their expertise.

7. Conclusions

Modern society has been defined as digital and the changes due to new technologies and globalization affect economies as well. More and more people are moving, contributing to the increase of social and cultural diversity in most countries of the western world. All those changes, together with the absence of a stable working environment due to digitalization making people be in constant search of a job, lead to the need of career guidance and development of new skills, thus, career practitioners are more than ever necessary (Amundson, 2006; Neault, 2005). On the same wavelength, Savickas has pointed out “the global economy has produced the insecure worker, including employees who are called temporary, contingent, casual, contract, freelance, part time, external, atypical, adjunct, consultant, and self-employed” (2012, p. 13). Practitioners focus more on the identity and the adaptability and less in the personality or the maturity and on the narrations instead of the results of questionnaires. Holistic approaches are suggested, taking into consideration all aspects in the clients’ life offering motivation to engage actively in the interventions for their life and career (Chen, 2001; Zunker, 2016). The changes are so many and so rapid that practitioners are frequently asked to adapt their job without having any theoretical background. For this reason, the field of career counseling and guidance is considered to be in need of research in order to foster modern approaches and be more effective. Most researches, referring to moving populations, have in the epicenter the populations themselves, the “visible racial ethnic minority groups” (Sue et al., 1992, p.66) and focus more on the younger demographic rather than adults (Lee et al., 2017), leaving a significant gap in strategies of career planning, work related stress and working patterns for these populations. There is a gap regarding the application and the validity of theories concerning migrant populations and their career development. The biggest gap, though, is found in the part of the career practitioners, their skills and their needs, and it is this gap that the present research tried to cover. Most governments consider career guidance the key to the economic development of their country. However, the field is undermined whereas it should be seen as a public good accessible to all, just like education and health services (Kassotakis, 2017).

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