Chapter 15 - *Journal of Career Development*: Recommendations for Future Journal Practices for Integrating Career Theory, Research, and Practice

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A Brief History of the *Journal of Career Development*

Established at the University of Missouri-Columbia (MU) in 1972, under the title *Journal of Career Education*, the *Journal of Career Development* (*JCD*) was one of the first professional journals with a focus solely on vocational topics. *JCD* appeared around the time that the *Vocational Guidance Quarterly*, now known as the *Career Development Quarterly (CDQ)*, and the *Journal of Vocational Behavior* (*JVB*) were started. In the decade prior to the initiation of these journals, we began to see a shift in federal policies to support vocational education in the schools and to expand the training of vocational educators. For example, the Vocational Education Act of 1963 broadened the scope of vocational education and provided state-level grants to develop vocational schools, expand vocational education in traditional schools, and establish vocational-technical education programs and services for disadvantaged students. Later amendments to the act provided specific funds for each goal and, notably, earmarked funding for expanding vocational education opportunities for students in need (e.g., English language learners, students with disabilities, economically disadvantaged students, students at-risk for dropping out of school).

During this time period, MU's Department of Practical Arts and Vocational Technical Education (which no longer exists) received funding from the Education Professions Development Act (EDPA) and held regular seminars on vocational education topics (Heppner & Wagner, 2011). *JCD* was established by a group of doctoral students who were funded by EDPA and who participated in these seminars. Thus, *JCD*'s original focus on career education reflected the emphasis in the field on vocational education as vocational education training secured its foothold within schools, increased the training of career education professionals, and expanded to assist individuals with special needs.

Two aspects of *JCD* make it unique from other vocational journals: the editor history and its lack of affiliation to a professional society. First, though *JCD* has had a long history, it has only had three editors. *JCD* did not publish another issue after its initial issue in 1972 until the fall of 1974, with Hercules Kazanas as editor. He was followed by Norm Gysbers who assumed the helm of the journal in the summer of 1978 and continued until 2006. Heppner and Wagner (2011) identify several noteworthy shifts that occurred during Norm's tenure as editor: First, in 1984, he changed the name of the *Journal* to *JCD* to broaden the scope and focus of the journal as well as its audience. Second, in 1985, the publishing side (including copy editing, printing and marketing) was moved to a professional publishing company. The journal has been led by Lisa Flores since the fall of 2006. The second unique aspect about *JCD* is that it is not tied

to a professional society. There are clearly downsides to this (e.g., visibility, submissions, and subscriptions), but there are also advantages such as having the flexibility to take risks on covering a controversial topic in the journal, little pressure to make a profit on the journal, and little pressure to achieve specific metrics for the journal.

Under my leadership of *JCD*, the journal was moved to SAGE publishers and the editorial team structure was expanded to include two associate editors (currently George V. Gushue and Margaret Nauta, and formerly, Erin Hardin). Additionally, the number of journal pages has increased, and the journal has moved from a quarterly to a bimonthly publication. *JCD* is ranked among applied psychology journals and in 2015, had a five-year impact factor of 1.30. (The five-year impact factor is one metric used to assess journal quality and is the average number of times all articles published in *JCD* between 2010–2014 were cited in other publications in 2015.) *JCD*s articles are most often cited in other career journals, such as *CDQ, JVB* and *Journal of Career Assessment* (Chiachanasakul et al., 2011b).

Today, *JCD* covers topics relevant to professionals across a range of disciplines, including counseling, psychology, education, student personnel, human resources, and business management. *JCD* strives to provide the most up-to-date concepts, ideas, and methodology in career development theory, research, and practice. Broad topics that are solicited include, but are not limited to, theoretical approaches and advances, career development across the lifespan, career interventions, career development of diverse populations, and in international contexts, career development in the context of multiple life roles, career and leisure, workplace and workforce issues, career issues in schools, career transitions, and spirituality and career development. Examples of recent topics covered in *JCD* include career decision making difficulties and help-seeking behaviors, the retirement career phase across cultures, occupational health, and predictors of turnover intentions.

Now that the history of *JCD* has been described, next I will discuss how the journal's policies have shaped the integration of theory, research, and practice in vocational psychology.

The Relevance of Integrating Theory, Research, and Practice

To identify where the integration of vocational theory, research, and practice are and are not addressed, a number of documents were reviewed: *JCD*'s description, policies related to manuscript submission and evaluation, and practices for selecting members of the Editorial Board and identifying ad hoc reviewers. *JCD*'s published aims for the journal, which appear on the journal's masthead and website, highlight the centrality of career development research, theory, and practice. The aims statement clearly emphasizes that "practical applications" must be presented in any manuscript submitted for consideration in the journal. An integration of theory, research, and practice is also mentioned in its aims statement and in sample topics that are covered, more often focusing on the implications of career theory or novel research on vocational psychology practice. Thus, *JCD* is explicit in its expectation that manuscripts integrate career theory and practice or career research and practice. This is also reflected in the evaluation that external reviewers use to evaluate a manuscript's contribution to career counseling *practice and research* and contribution to theory.

An analysis of *JCD* publications from its inception through 2007 (Chiachanasakul et al., 2011a) reveals that 33.4% of publications were empirical and 66.6% were non-empirical (e.g., conceptual/theoretical, commentaries, program description/evaluation, literature review). Although the journal largely included non-empirical publications prior to 2007, an analysis across the past 10 years indicates a significant increase in data-based studies and a decrease in non-empirical articles. Today, 80% of publications that appear in *JCD* are empirical. *JCD*s editorial team expects that all empirical studies be theoretically driven (integration of research and theory) and that all studies address implications for vocational-based practices (integration of research and practice). Prominent theories featured in *JCD*'s publications prior to 2007 include social learning and cognitive theories (35%), life span and development theories (35%), and trait factor theories (4%; Chiachanasakul et al., 2011a). It is rare that a research manuscript will be published if it is not framed in theory or if it does not use the findings to inform practice. So, for the most part, *JCD* largely focuses on articles that integrate research and theory (e.g., "Critical Psychology Perspectives of Work-Based Transitions" and "The Impact

of Attachment on Career-Related Variables: A Review of the Literature and Proposed Theoretical Framework to Guide Future Research") and research and practice (e.g., "Perceived Career Barriers for Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Individuals," "Career Development Concerns of Recent Immigrants and Refugees," and "The Career Institute: A Collaborative Career Development Program for Traditionally Underserved Secondary (6-12) School Students"), with some articles addressing an integration of theory and practice (e.g., "Facilitating a Whole-Life Approach to Career Development: The Role of Organizational Leadership" and "Career and Retirement Theories: Relevance for Older Workers across Cultures"). Chiachanasakul and colleagues (2011b) reported that *JCD*'s most cited article prior to 2007 was a piece titled, "The journey of the counselor and therapist: Research findings and perspectives on professional development" (Ronnestad & Skovolt, 2003), reflecting an integration of vocational practice and research.

The Challenges in Integrating Theory, Research, and Practice

There are several challenges to integrating theory, research, and practice in the career development literature. One is the challenge to hear the perspectives of experts across an array of professional roles to enhance the quality of articles. Like most journals, *JCD*'s editorial team, including the editor, associate editors, and editorial board members are largely faculty engaged in research and training. This is true of the authors who submit manuscripts for consideration in *JCD*: They are typically faculty, graduate students, or individuals who have research oriented appointments (Duffy, 2017). It is more difficult to enlist the participation of career counseling practitioners or vocational psychology professionals in other roles to serve as reviewers or to develop manuscripts because these activities are not required for their positions. As faculty, we can make time in our work schedules to serve as reviewers, and evaluating scholarship is expected in our roles. Career practitioners do this on top of their paid positions, and if they do, they sacrifice income or do it without support from their employer to engage in these professional activities during the work day.

The challenge for *JCD* and other journals is to engage more career counseling practitioners—people in the field who are working with youth and adults and assisting them in their educational or vocational pursuits—to be more involved in shaping the scholarship (either as reviewers or authors) in *JCD* and other vocational journals in ways that apply to practitioners' day-to-day activities (Duffy, 2017). Our knowledge is limited to the extent that those of us who do research may not be aware of the cutting edge practice concerns or ways in which practice has changed to accommodate modern technological advances or the diverse society in which we live. Thus, the practice implications suggested by researchers conducting the studies may not have the impact we want them to have because of our distance from these activities (Duffy, 2017). As editors and reviewers, we need to be more open to practitioners' ideas and the valuable contributions they can make to extend our knowledge base. The involvement of a broad range of professionals, especially practitioners, is vital to contribute to the career literature.

Relatedly, there seems to be relatively little collaboration between researchers and practitioners. It is crucial to identify ways that vocational psychology researchers and practitioners can collaborate to strengthen scholarship and address broader issues related to career development.

Biases on the part of editors and reviewers are another challenge. These biases may include favoring research-based studies or certain theories or focusing more on the writing style or mechanics of a paper over the content of a manuscript. Sometimes it is easier to reject articles from individuals who are not strong writers or researchers because of personal biases as to what constitutes good scholarship, and this may disadvantage practitioners, student researchers, and international scholars.

Another challenge, also addressed by Duffy (2017), is that limited career theories are being used in our research. Others have noted that positivist paradigms are most frequently represented in vocational publications (Furbish & Smith, 2017; Schultheiss, 2017), and these theoretical challenges are further heightened by vocational psychology research designed to largely support, rather than refute, existing career theories (Gati, 2017). We can be more open and encouraging of others in using a variety of vocational theories, including theories of *career counseling* (Schultheiss, 2017), and we

can also encourage the application of theories outside of vocational psychology (i.e., social psychology, industrial organizational psychology) in understanding vocational behaviors (Schultheiss, 2017). As an example, some of Eric Deemer's work that has appeared in *JCD* has applied stereotype threat (2014) and regulatory focus theory (2015) to understanding women's STEM career choices.

Finally, in addition to involving more practitioners on editorial boards and research teams, we as researchers can be more involved in practitioner focused professional activities. Examples include attending practitioner-oriented conferences (state conferences, NCDA, ACA) or engaging in career counseling activities (teaching practicum, supervising students, providing counseling services).

The Opportunities for Integrating Theory, Research, and Practice

There are many opportunities available to address the challenges that we face in integrating vocational theory, research, and practice. One opportunity is to actively encourage practitioners to submit manuscripts to the journal for consideration. Editors and editorial board members can also attend practitioner-oriented professional conferences and solicit submissions from presentations relevant to career practitioners. As chair-elect of the Society of Vocational Psychology, Pat Rottinghaus is working with the National Career Development Association's leaders to bring together research and practice perspectives. Similar efforts in establishing shared initiatives with leaders of other professional organizations can help us advance the integration of career theory, research, and practice in vocational scholarship (Schultheiss, 2017). We can also provide some education about our journals and the submission process at these conferences, highlighting common pitfalls to getting manuscripts published. In sum, actively encouraging practitioners to share their knowledge and inviting papers on career counseling practice topics or other topics that are highly relevant to practitioners is one step to address these concerns.

Challenges to integration can also be addressed by including practitioner scholarship within graduate training programs. In career-related courses and applied experiences, faculty can select more career counseling readings to underscore the importance of involvement in the literature even if students pursue a practice-focused career.

Another way to tackle these challenges is through special journal issues that focus on the integration of vocational theory, research and/or practice. In 2010, *JCD* featured a special issue that was proposed by Fred Leong, *A Cultural Formulation Approach to Career Assessment and Career Counseling*, that used the DSM-IV-TR's cultural formulation model as a conceptual framework for guiding career counseling practice and assessment. Journal editors can develop or solicit ideas for special issues on integrated topics and also allow practitioners to propose their own ideas for a special issue that integrates practice with theory or research. Efforts can also be made to facilitate joint teams of researchers and practitioners to work together on papers for these special issues.

We can also facilitate collaborations between vocational psychology researchers and practitioners to explore common interests and opportunities for developing projects from the ground up that are informed by those who are most likely to benefit from the research. This can be done by developing links with staff at the college/university career center, school counselors in local districts, practicing psychologists, and educators in vocational education programs and learning about the most pressing issues related to practice. Using participatory action research methods, Drs. Ellen McWhirter, Krista Chronister, and David Blustein are exemplars for how this can be done, and products of their research in communities have appeared in *JCD* (e.g., Blustein et al., 2013; Chronister, Harley, Aranda, Barr & Luginbuhl, 2012; McWhirter, Luginbuhl, & Brown, 2014). It is time consuming to develop these relationships, but these researchers have demonstrated the value of this approach in producing findings that are driven by the needs of the community and that provide rich and meaningful implications for best practices. If we are going to advocate for more community-based research as a way to enhance the quality of our work and to integrate career theory, research, and practice, we must address institutional barriers within colleges and universities that can penalize researchers for engaging in this type of work during a merit review or tenure and promotion review.

Recommendations for the Future

Next, recommendations will be provided for how editorial policies or practices can be changed to better deal with the challenges in integrating vocational theory, research, and practice. The hope is to maximize these opportunities in the future scholarship base of the profession. Most of these recommendations center on ways to involve more practitioners in the publication process as both authors and reviewers to strengthen the integration of practice with both career development research and theory.

1. Explore ways to incentivize reviews. When I speak with other journal editors, it seems that it is becoming harder and harder to solicit ad hoc reviewers and especially hard to include practitioners to serve as members of the editorial board. One approach that we can take is to ask publishers to provide some payment incentive for reviewers. They make a lot of money from the service of scholars; we can seek ways so that reviewers can receive payment or accumulate credits toward purchases from the publisher.

2. Address reviewing activities as a professional expectation/responsibility regardless of one's career path. We can incorporate reviewer training in graduate school and work towards making reviewing activities part of the culture of our profession.

3. Mentor graduate students, practitioners, and early career researchers through the review process. Most journals are open to reviewers inviting someone to co-review a manuscript to receive experience and mentorship through the process from an experienced reviewer. This often results in better reviews while also helping students gain experience. Engaging in review activities might also motivate one to submit their own work for consideration in a journal, as it provides insight into the publication process for reviewers. Journals can solicit parties interested in co-reviewing and encourage editorial board members and ad hoc reviewers to engage in this type of mentoring activity.

4. Encourage more collaborations between vocational psychology researchers and practitioners. This can be done via calls for papers for special issues (Duffy, 2017; Schultheiss, 2017), working conferences that bring researchers and practitioners together to address important professional issues, and by encouraging discussions from both researchers and practitioners about these publications within our journals (Gati, 2017). We need to find ways to incentivize researchers who invest in these collaborations, because it is time consuming and can reduce productivity in other areas, which is highly valued in academic settings.

5. Develop policies whereby authors of submitted manuscripts are expected to review at least one other manuscript in the same year. Expect that any author who submits work for review will serve as a reviewer for other manuscripts submitted to the same journal. As an editor, it is surprising to see individuals submit their own work and expect others to review it, but then turn down invitations to review a manuscript. All journals would need to adopt similar policies for this to work, because such policies might discourage authors from submitting manuscripts to journals that have these policies. At minimum, we need to start developing a culture among authors where they are engaged in the peer review process as reviewers.

6. Consider barriers in the submission process for practitioners and eliminate or reduce them. A review of the submission guidelines for *JCD* reveals potential barriers for practitioners or individuals whose appointment is outside of a college/university.

    a. Be flexible with length of manuscripts. Allow submissions of small manuscripts (i.e., 5–6 page short reports) that focus on an integration of research, theory, or practice. The standard length of manuscripts at 25–35 pages may prevent people who have good ideas that are publishable, but who do not have time to conduct extensive literature reviews or do not have access to journals to conduct literature reviews.

b. Do not judge a book by the cover—ease up on publication style formatting for practitioners or other professionals who do not have a psychology background.

c. Provide mentoring for practitioners and other professionals who are not familiar with the publication process. Be as transparent as possible about the publishing process, indicate if the journal is open to manuscripts from professionals in the field, and post the actual evaluation forms that reviewers use.

7. Provide awards for the most outstanding contributions that integrate vocational research, theory, or practice. Consider metrics other than an article's citation count for evaluating the impact of practice integrated publications, which may be highly used by practitioners and influence career counseling practice but may not be highly used by other researchers.

8. Encourage journals to move to open access venues. Our research should be more accessible to the public and to professionals who are not affiliated with colleges and universities that are able to pay the high costs of journal subscriptions. Editors can work with publishing companies to allow certain articles to be available to anyone or to offer open access to journal articles for a specific month of the year.

To conclude, this exercise has provided an opportunity to reflect on *JCD*'s policies and practices and to consider how they shape the content of the work published in the journal, who makes these contributions, and what the professional perspectives are that are represented in these publications. Several limitations have been identified for integrating career theory, research, and practice in *JCD* publications and I look forward to addressing these issues with the editorial team to implement new practices that can enhance the overall quality and scope of the work that appears in the journal.

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