Journal of Counselor Preparation and Supervision

Volume 18 | Number 1 Article 4

2024

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JOURNAL OF COUNSELOR PREPARATION AND SUPERVISION
The official journal of the North Atlantic Region Association for Counselor Education and Supervision

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Received: 05/30/23
Revised: 03/01/24
Accepted: 04/13/24

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Abstract

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Supporting students with international backgrounds is critical as there are more students with international backgrounds in doctoral counseling programs in the U.S. than ever before (Kuo et al., 2018; Li & Liu, 2020). Doctoral students with international background represent a diverse spectrum of racial and ethnic identities, home countries, native languages, ability status, and socioeconomic statuses among other possible identities (Woo et al., 2015). It is important to note their complex intersections of identities that combine elements of privilege and marginalization. With the lack of global awareness in academic counseling research (Kuo et al., 2022), doctoral students with international backgrounds can face many cultural insensitivities and challenges in counseling programs including language barriers, assimilation, grief and loss, a lack of support, discrimination such as microaggressions, and stress related to immigration visas during their time in the doctoral programs (Ng & Smith, 2009; Woo et al., 2015). Additionally, doctoral students with international backgrounds in counseling programs can struggle with cultural differences such as adopting the Eurocentric counseling ethics and counseling theories (Interiano & Lim, 2018), and experiencing imposter phenomenon (Fitriyah, 2022; Tran, 2023) in the counseling field in the U.S. (Asempapa, 2019).

Supportive mentoring can serve as a critical source of support for counselor education doctoral students (Flynn et al., 2012; Zeligman et al., 2015). The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) 2024 standards encouraged counseling programs to promote diversity and inclusivity, which includes students and faculty with international backgrounds (2023, 1.H). Yet, there is limited research on the experiences of counselor education doctoral students in cross-cultural mentoring relationships (Kuo et al., 2018; Woo et al., 2015). Given the

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various unique challenges faced by this population, cross-cultural mentoring can help the marginalized doctoral students with international background (Flynn et al., 2012; Zeligman et al., 2015). This duoethnography offers a critical, transformative, and self-narrative dialogue of how [author 1], a U.S.-born counselor educator, and [author 2], a former doctoral student with an international background, experienced our cross-cultural dissertation mentoring relationship.

Counselor Education Doctoral Students with International Backgrounds

Doctoral students with international backgrounds include but are not limited to international students on student visas, permanent residents with green cards, and immigrated individuals from different countries (Interiano-Shiverdecker et al., 2022). Doctoral students with international backgrounds in counseling programs can struggle with cultural differences in the counseling field in the U.S. (Asempapa, 2019), including the expectation to have strong communication skills, to understand the nuances of systemic social issues in the U.S. (e.g., racial differences and racism in the U.S.), to possess skill in effective use of the Euro-American based counseling theories, and to uphold ethical standards which differ from those in their home countries (Interiano & Lim, 2018). Although doctoral students with international backgrounds may have limited privilege, counseling programs can benefit from recruiting doctoral students and faculties with international backgrounds to enrich the diversity of the program and increase the stimulation of class discussions (Asempapa, 2019; Mamiseishvili & Lee, 2018).

Another challenge that doctoral students with international backgrounds can face is the imposter phenomenon (Fitriyah, 2022; Tran, 2023). Even though there is limited existing literature on the imposter phenomenon among doctoral students with international backgrounds, imposter phenomenon is often reported by individuals with marginalized backgrounds such as students of color and women (Wyatt et al., 2019). Lau and colleagues (2019) defined imposter phenomenon in academic settings as "feelings of inadequacy experienced by those within academia that indicates a fear of being exposed as a fraud" (p. 50). Imposter phenomenon is common among faculty as well as doctoral students (Bothello & Roulet, 2019). Imposter phenomenon can lead to procrastination and mental health challenges such as anxiety, depression, and somatic disorders among doctoral students generally (Chrousos et al., 2020). However, many have underestimated the seriousness of imposter phenomenon, probably because of the culture in the academic world which discourages showing weakness and vulnerability (Hutchins, 2015) with expectation to assimilate into the dominated culture (Tran, 2023). As systems of oppression can heighten experiences of imposter syndrome (Purgason et al., 2016; Zhang, 2022) and U.S. cultural expectations of assimilation (Ng & Smith, 2009; Tran, 2023), imposter phenomenon may cause counselor education doctoral students with international backgrounds to feel doubt, inadequacy, or a lack of belonging (Tran, 2023).

Cross-Cultural Mentoring

For the purposes of this study, we define cross-cultural mentoring as a relationship between counselor education doctoral students with international backgrounds and faculty members with the focus of offering support and guidance to the student. Cross-cultural mentoring relationships require the mentor to have the flexibility to meet the mentee's personal needs and commitment (Lertora, I.M., Croffie, 2020; Purgason, et al., 2018). A positive cross-cultural mentoring relationship can lead to positive academic outcomes, including a higher rate of retention and building trusting mentoring relationships (Chan et al., 2015). This might include discussing mentee's experiences of being foreigners in the U.S. while being minoritized based on their race or ethnicity (Ng & Smith, 2009) and understanding cultural differences in the

mentoring relationship and structure (Li & Liu, 2020).

Strong supportive relationships between doctoral students with international backgrounds and their dissertation chairpeople can help students overcome these challenges and process important issues (Asempapa, 2019; Li & Liu, 2020) including enhancing their professional identity development as a future counselor, educator, and advanced clinician. The supportive mentor is crucial for the healthy professional identity development of doctoral students (Borders et al., 2012). Additionally, a supportive environment and productive feedback can help doctoral students honestly share their struggles with their chairpeople and, in turn, feel unstuck (Flynn et al., 2012; Waalkes et al., 2022). The positive mentoring relationship is more important for students with international backgrounds, including doctoral students, due to their marginalized intersectionality in society (Lertora, I.M., Croffie, 2020). In cross-cultural mentoring, chairpeople should use intentionality to address cultural differences and offer support for culturally related stress, which can help minoritized mentees benefit from their mentors' networks of privilege (Brown & Grothaus, 2019). Counselor educators utilizing effective cross-cultural mentoring strategies can create opportunities for discussions of culture and offer more in-depth support for minoritized students, including students with international backgrounds (Borders et al., 2012; Purgason et al., 2016). Additionally, support from mentors can help doctoral students with international backgrounds gain important skills, examine their beliefs and philosophies, and feel inspired (Li & Liu, 2020).

In most cases, doctoral counselor education students with international backgrounds receive mentoring services from faculty who have a different cultural background than them, which could cause anxiety and uncertainty due to the possibility of feeling misunderstood and invalidated (Woo et al., 2015). Generally, doctoral students from minoritized groups may mistrust privileged faculty because of experiences of overt racism and tokenism and feel the need to code-switch in mentoring relationships (Brown & Grothaus, 2019) and doctoral students with international backgrounds are not exempt from these challenges. Since counselor education international doctoral students do not often see people who look like them in positions of power in higher education, they may feel disenfranchisement or worry that setbacks are due to personal deficiencies rather than the result of pervasive and oppressive systemic messages (Brown & Grothaus, 2019; Purgason et al., 2016). For example, Zeligman and colleagues (2015) argued the importance of setting an example and becoming a mentor for other women of color who are marginalized in the academic institution. Even though supervisors and students may come from different cultures, their dissertation chairpeople can still approach the students with empathy and advocate for them. Cultural differences can discourage students from reaching out for help or voicing their opinions since some are not familiar with the non-judgmental and caring support in supervisory or mentoring relationships in U.S. culture (Li & Liu, 2020). These dynamics may limit the benefits of mentorship for doctoral students with international backgrounds and leave students feeling their mentors were not culturally sensitive or supportive (Woo et al., 2015).

Cross-cultural mentoring relationships require the mentor to meet the mentee's personal needs including possibly discussing power differentials in the relationship and the mentee's experiences of being marginalized in the U.S. (Borders et al., 2012; Ng & Smith, 2009). Additionally, mentors should understand cultural differences in mentoring relationships including students' potentially different expectations and understandings of these relationships (Li & Liu, 2020). Day-Vines and colleagues (2021) suggested counselors recognize and address the cultural differences between counselor and client using a skill called broaching. In a cross-cultural mentoring context, mentors take initiative to recognize and address the cultural and intersectionality identity differences with their mentees (Purgason et al., 2016). This culturally inclusive cross-cultural mentoring approach can

help take the pressure off counselor education doctoral students with international backgrounds to initiate conversations about culture, experiences of marginalization, and mentoring structures with their mentor (Li & Liu, 2020).

Purpose of the Study

Considering the increasing number of counselor education international doctoral students in counseling programs and the barriers they can face (Li & Liu, 2020; Ng & Smith, 2009), cross-cultural mentoring can serve as a critical source of support in overcoming barriers for them (Flynn et al., 2012; Purgason et al., 2016; Waalkes et al., 2022). Yet, few have researched the personal nuances and complexities of cross-cultural mentoring in counselor education with self-reflective and critical depth. Much of the research on mentorship in counselor education has focused on an American-centered view instead of a more global view that is inclusive of counselor education students with international backgrounds (Kuo et al., 2022). Therefore, in the present duoethnographic study, we present a critical, self-narrative dialogue of our experiences as a U.S.-born chairman, [author 1], and a doctoral student with an international background, [author 2], in a dissertation chairing relationship. We hope our dialogue creates critical self-reflection and discussion among counselor educators and doctoral students into the intricacies and cultural contexts of their cross-cultural mentoring. The purpose of this study was to have a transformative dialogue exploring our personal histories and how they impacted our cross-cultural dissertation mentoring relationship.

Methodology

Duoethnography is a qualitative methodology where two researchers engage in a critical, self-narrative dialogue to juxtapose their life histories and offer multiple ways of understanding a phenomenon (Breault, 2016; Norris & Sawyer, 2012). In a polyvocal dialogue where each of the researchers' voices is separate as opposed to being condensed into a solitary narrative, duoethnography emphasizes conversation about differences between the researchers to help facilitate deeper reflection and relational awareness (Norris & Sawyer, 2012). We sought to utilize this conversation to shed light on parts of ourselves and our relationship that were previously undiscussed and unconsidered in ways. In line with other counselor education researchers (e.g., Waalkes & DeCino, 2020) who have utilized duoethnography, we aimed to transform ourselves in radically reflexive ways by continually reconceptualizing the meanings we placed on the impact of our personal histories identities on our relationship through critical self-reflection and conversation (Smith & Luke, 2021).

Relational cultural theory (RCT; Jordan, 2017) was originally developed by Jean Baker Miller (1976) as a way for therapists to understand the experiences of women and focus on the development of relationships characterized by reciprocal acceptance. Since its inception, RCT has evolved to be applied to and inclusive of members of other marginalized groups (Jordan, 2017). RCT posits that reciprocal relationships and interdependence, rather than psychological separation, are central to human growth (Jordan, 2017). According to RCT, these growth fostering relationships are characterized by "(a) zest; or an increase in energy; (b) increased knowledge and clarity about one's experience, the other person, and the relationship; (c) creativity and productivity; (d) a greater sense of self-worth; and (e) a desire for more connection" (Jordan, 2017, p. 7). Growth-fostering relationships in RCT include: (a) relational awareness, or the way a process of an individual's schemas from previous relationships can help them develop growth-fostering relationships; (b) mutual empathy, or the way the reciprocal exchange and acknowledgement of one another impacts a relationship; and (c) authenticity, or the accurate, honest, and intentional sharing of insights, emotions and life experiences by both parties in a relationship (Jordan, 2017; Purgason et al., 2016). In the context of education, RCT can help develop strong

relationships characterized by mutual empathy, authenticity, and relational awareness between faculty and students (Purgason et al., 2016) and help students feel empowered and connected (Hall et al., 2018). RCT is relevant for cross-cultural mentoring relationships involving students with international backgrounds because it can help promote relational awareness and mutual empathy to help address isolation and marginalization.
(Purgason et al., 2016).

We rooted our duoethnographic inquiry in RCT (Jordan, 2017) to focus on the often unspoken cultural and emotional depth behind our interactions to develop mutual empathy and authenticity (Purgason et al., 2016). We chose RCT to guide our study because we wanted to engage in a critical dialogue that was rooted in the strength and authenticity of our existing relationship and promoted reciprocal cultural and relational awareness in our discussion (Breault, 2016; Jordan, 2017). Additionally, duoethnography emphasizes that reciprocity in research relationships can promote respect and empowerment in ways that align with RCT (Breault, 2016). Finally, RCT aligned with the calls for radical reflexivity (a complex and messy process researchers engage in to deconstruct the reflexive process and invite creativity and flexibility; Smith & Luke, 2021) in counseling research since both focus on relational awareness and closeness.

Data collection

We collected data by writing twelve journal entries (six per person) over a period of eight months. Each entry was about two to four single spaced pages and all journal entries combined for a total of 38 single spaced pages. All data collection took place after [author 2] had completed her dissertation and graduated. We developed our open-ended entry prompts as our writing process evolved by focusing on areas of difference between the two of us (Norris & Sawyer, 2012), dynamics related to RCT (e.g., topics that would elicit authenticity, how the relationship impacted our senses of self-worth, prompts to promote clarity about ourselves and our relationship) that felt central to our relationship, and the influence of our cultural backgrounds on our process (Jordan, 2017). The purpose of these prompts was to help us keep our study focused on our topic from an RCT perspective and to promote radical reflexivity (Smith & Luke, 2021). Before each entry, we met for approximately an hour to discuss our dialogue and use the immediacy of a synchronous interaction to promote authenticity and mutual empathy (Jordan, 2017; Smith & Luke, 2021), and to develop our writing prompts for the next entry. We also identified important unexplored areas in these meetings. For example, in our fourth entry, we prompted each other to write about the impact of culture on our experiences of imposter phenomenon and how imposter phenomenon impacted our relationship. We arrived at this prompt as we had both mentioned imposter phenomenon briefly in our previous entry as impactful to our personal histories and our relationship.

After writing each entry and before meeting, we responded to each other by commenting throughout the entry with our reactions. Then the original author responded to these comments. We used these comments to help write our findings section in a conversational way. After these twelve entries, six rounds of comments on the entries, and eight synchronous meetings (six times before each entry and two times to help us focus and develop the study), we both agreed that our data were rich, authentic, relationally aware, and transformative for both of us (Jordan, 2017; Norris & Sawyer, 2012).

Data Analysis

Rather than utilizing traditional qualitative data analysis methods which often involves developing themes, the data analysis process in duoethnographic research often involves focusing and revising the initial dialogue into a new form that is accessible for readers (Breault, 2016; Norris & Sawyer, 2012). This cyclical, non-linear, and iterative process of data collection, analysis, and collaborative meaning making does not have clear separation between data generation and writing (Norris & Sawyer, 2012). In other words, although

duoethnographies are written as conversations, they are actually reconstructed texts that never happened in the way they are presented (Norris & Sawyer, 2012).

Our data analysis process included the following five step process. First, after writing our twelve journal entries, we both independently reviewed each entry and highlighted passages that emphasized key components of duoethnography (e.g., disrupting metanarratives of static and abstract knowledge), and RCT (e.g., authenticity, mutual empathy; Jordan, 2017; Norris & Sawyer, 2012). Second, we met to discuss our highlights and decided to focus our manuscript on a handful of topics that felt most salient to our dialogue from a lens of RCT (Jordan, 2017). We chose these topics based on reaching consensus on these areas being focused on our relationship dynamic and representing moments of authenticity and relational awareness for us. These topics included the initial meeting, imposter phenomenon, and broaching. We recognized that distilling down our lengthy conversation into these three topics necessitated trimming some rich topics. Topics that were not selected for inclusion were our communication styles and methods, differences in our expectation of the relationships, and how culture impacted our beliefs about work ethic. We did not select these topics because we felt they did not fit with principles of RCT as well as the topics we did choose and did not represent areas of strong transformation for us.

Third, we independently used the highlighted passages to condense and synthesize the journal entries we wrote into the findings section of this article. During this phase, we only reviewed our own entries and focused on interpreting our earlier selves and the growth we have experienced through the lens of our conversation partner (Breault, 2016). In this revision, we included mostly passages that both of us had highlighted with the intent of reaching consensus (Hays & Singh, 2023) and revised the entries to enhance clarity and flow. Fourth, we read each other's revisions, offered written comments on the text, and then met synchronously to discuss our feedback. In this feedback, we offered suggestions for emphasizing the articulation of our transformations (Norris & Sawyer, 2012) and evaluated the extent that our dialogue felt authentic and relationally aware (Jordan, 2017). We revised parts of our dialogue to focus more strongly on these elements in numerous places. After the meeting, we revised our sections based on this feedback. Fifth, we went through another round of iterative feedback (both through written feedback and synchronous discussion) and revisions on our sections focused on promoting cohesiveness and clarity (Norris & Sawyer, 2012). In keeping with the fluid nature of data collection, data analysis, and the writing process (Norris & Sawyer, 2012), our findings section below represents condensed and refined versions of actual journal entries.

Trustworthiness of the Study

Duoethnography researchers seek to disrupt the metanarrative that knowledge is static, universal, and abstract by situating their dialogue in time and context (Breault, 2016; Norris & Sawyer, 2012). Therefore, seeking truth and promoting validity are not a focus of duoethnographic research (Norris & Sawyer, 2012). Accordingly, duoethnographers believe that many traditional methods of establishing trustworthiness (e.g., member checking, bracketing) imply that there is a static truth (Breault, 2016). So, duoethnographic researchers seek to promote research quality through depth of researcher engagement, self-reflexivity, and regenerative transformation (Norris & Sawyer, 2012).

To promote self-reflexivity, we purposefully maintained a prolonged level of engagement with our dialogue (Hays & Singh, 2023). Over a period of eight months, we wrote twelve entries in a shared document amounting to over 24,500 total words. Additionally, we commented on each other's entries with our genuine reactions and engaged in numerous synchronous conversations to further our dialogue. In these conversations, we invited each other to discuss areas of vulnerability and cultural

depth. Additionally, we promoted depth by practicing radical reflexivity (Smith & Luke, 2021) throughout our interactions in this study including humble vulnerability, intimate tones, consideration of relationships to self and others, and discussion of messiness and incongruities in the research process. Finally, as trust between researchers is an essential component of duoethnography (Breault, 2016), we had developed a trusting relationship over time during the dissertation mentorship process and discussed our trust and the possible impact of this conversation on our relationship throughout the process.

To promote transformation, we encouraged each other to unpack the meanings and implications of our personal narratives, including the influences of culture and emotion on our experiences. Finally, transparency and self-reflexivity can promote catalytic validity, or the degree to which the research process focuses and energizes readers towards transformation (Breault, 2016; Norris & Sawyer, 2012). Therefore, we invite our readers to form their own conclusions about the degree to which we achieved catalytic validity as they engage with and reflect upon our dialogue.

Findings

The findings of this study are based on the exchanged dialogue between the authors in our journal entries (Breault, 2016; Norris & Sawyer, 2012). In each section below, we offer an introductory paragraph to elaborate on and clarify each theme before presenting our dialogue.

The Initial Meeting

The initial meeting is based on our first journal entry describing our first meeting. As the following dialogue shows, [author 1] and [author 2] have learned about each other on a deeper level since this first meeting to discover our similarities and differences. The initial meeting was important for us because it reflects how the RCT principles of mutual empathy and generosity existed from our first interaction (Jordan, 2017).

[author 2]: Since I was aware of the business schedule of faculty, I was afraid to be a burden to anyone by asking them to be my new chair after my former advisor told me about her decision to leave for another university. I also felt the disadvantage because of my linguistic ability which has been one of the challenges for me to pursue higher education in the U.S. In a Ph.D. program, I started feeling more imposter phenomenon that I had to do better, otherwise, I would not be able to stay in the program.

[author 1]: This change in advisors sounds like it added fuel to the fire of your imposter phenomenon. You seemed like you did not want to burden me with your non-native English-speaking ability. I imagine it must have felt challenging to complete a dissertation in your nonnative language not just from a linguistic perspective but also from this emotional perspective. I have felt research imposter phenomenon too, especially when in my doctoral program and as a beginning faculty member. My imposter phenomenon seems different from yours, since yours is tied to your language abilities and your ability to feel understood.

[author 2]: Possibly, but I am glad to hear that you had a similar struggle. I decided to ask you to be my advisor since you had a similar research interest. Shortly after the decision, I emailed you with some hesitation since I had actually never spoken to you. During our initial meeting, I really liked seeing you engage in my topic. Your engagement made me feel much more comfortable. Toward the end of the meeting, I learned that you used to live in Japan and had Japanese art in your office, which made me even feel more comfortable with you! I felt that you would understand my feelings and challenges.

[author 1]: In that first meeting, I remember feeding off your enthusiasm for and knowledge of your topic. It was contagious and made me feel engaged quickly. I also love that my Japanese art

and the fact that I lived in Japan was impactful for you. My year living in Japan while working as an [position] in the [program] also shaped my enthusiasm for your topic and my approach to being your chair. My international experience helped me feel curious to learn more about TCKs from Asian countries while recognizing that as a White male there were limitations in my abilities to understand this topic. My experience in Japan helped me think about our interactions from the context of our different cultural backgrounds and the ways that your upbringing in Japanese culture might have influenced the ways you interacted with me.

The Imposter Phenomenon

Imposter phenomenon is common among students with marginalized social statuses (Wyatt et al., 2019). Faculty can also experience similar challenges (Bothello & Roulet, 2019). From the critical and self-narrative dialogue of our experiences, our dialogue around this theme addressed the similarities and the differences of our imposter phenomenon based on our cultural backgrounds.

[author 1]: I am struck by your mention of experiencing imposter phenomenon. That was not something in my awareness enough throughout your dissertation process and I imagine my privilege as a native English speaker and U.S.-born individual took this off my radar. From my perspective at the time, we were focused on talking about the product of your dissertation and you were continuing to make steady progress forward, so it did not seem like talking about the process felt as necessary. However, I recognize that I likely did not present many opportunities for us to discuss it if you had wanted to.

[author 2]: And I did not know that I could talk about the process. I tried to keep it as business-like and blunt as possible. Maybe this is coming from my cultural background which has a stronger sense of hierarchy. I was not aware that I could share my weakness or vulnerability in general.

[author 1]: That makes sense. Culture seems like it can have a significant influence on imposter phenomenon. I mostly hide my feelings of imposter phenomenon from students. I want to be viewed as a competent expert by students. I feel this is influenced by the cultural expectations of White males in the U.S., who should not show vulnerability or emotion. Even as these concepts of masculinity feel limiting for me, it is hard to escape them within myself. I want to work to understand my anxieties and take more risks to present myself genuinely and relationally, including integrating discussions of culture and systems of oppression into my dissertation relationships.

[author 2]: It gave me a good surprise to read about your imposter phenomenon. Since the first day we met, you were already miles ahead of me. You are a faculty member in a Ph.D. program. To me, you are too qualified to have imposter phenomenon at any point in life. Also, I automatically thought it would not commonly apply to someone who is an English native speaker in this country. My biggest fear regarding my imposter phenomenon is that there is always something that I do not correctly understand, and I will make mistakes no matter what I do. This fear is probably coming from being an immigrant, including the language barrier and not being familiar with common sense. I also felt that my issues from my immigration background should not be openly discussed to avoid misunderstanding. When I think about the impact on my dissertation from my imposter phenomenon, I remember that I always tried not to disappoint you and myself from my unproductivity. It was not an option for me to fail.

[author 1]: That sounds like a lot of pressure and responsibility to not be able to fail and to feel like you could not discuss your feelings of imposter phenomenon. I did not realize that your productivity was driven by not wanting to disappoint me and yourself.

[author 2]: Right, but I think it was also because of my language and cultural barriers. Every time I submitted my google doc to you, I felt guilty

and anxious about causing you extra work to review my dissertation and reading your comments and suggestions. I always felt "if only I was a Native English speaker, I would not have to ask my chair to babysit my dissertation."

[author 1]: For what it is worth, I did not feel this way. You came to the program from different life circumstances than other students and deserved equitable support. And the amount of competence and hard work I imagine it took you to do a Ph.D. in a non-Native language is very impressive to me. It sounds like you were carrying a lot of internalized stress without having much of an outlet in our program to talk about it. I'm struck by the fact that most of my time and energy in providing feedback on your dissertation was thinking about and providing feedback on your writing and your research design. Your experience of imposter phenomenon and how that was influenced by your immigrant status was often outside of my focus. I could have been more aware of the impact of emotions and culture on your process and our relationship. I wonder if I had presented myself in a more humble way where I self-disclosed about my own insecurities during my dissertation, how that might have changed our relationship dynamic. Maybe my presentation of myself impacted our relationship in subtle ways that might have reinforced imposter phenomenon and the power differential between us.

Broaching in Research Mentorship

The last theme is about the importance of broaching in our cross-cultural mentoring relationship. This theme was generated based on our intentional self-reflection about our cross-cultural mentoring. Through the dialogue, we talked about the importance of the advocacy initiated by the mentor, but also self-advocacy from the student. We believed broaching (Day-Vines et al., 2021) could reduce power differences and hierarchy in a mentoring relationship.

[author 1]: I wonder how broaching (Day-Vines et al., 2021) initiated by me might have affected our relationship. Since our relationship started in the middle of your dissertation process, it might have been even more important for me to proactively broach. It seems like I should have initiated broaching as the person in the relationship with more power both in terms of being a faculty member and in terms of being a White male. I also want to acknowledge that my numerous privileged identities cause me to feel less confident in talking about culture and systems of oppression. There is a feeling of comfort for me in focusing more on analyzing research design as sometimes I worry that I might not have enough to offer students around broaching conversations. Yet, initiating conversations about culture and our cultural differences might have left more space for you to talk about your feelings of imposter phenomenon, if you wanted to. These conversations also could have allowed us to openly acknowledge the impact of your international background on your dissertation process.

[author 2]: I agree with this all. However, I wonder if students also can advocate for themselves to build relationships. I have started thinking this way after I read your entry of how much impact I could bring to the relationship.

[author 1]: Yes, I agree, both parties can impact the relationship and I wonder how the evaluative component in dissertation chairing affects this. There is always going to be that power differential and that evaluative nature in faculty-student relationships.

[author 2]: Exactly. That is one of the biggest differences between broaching in counseling and academia.

[author 1]: I wonder if that evaluative component might impact students in not wanting to fully engage in broaching conversations if they worry how being more honest might impact their grade or their ability to move through their program.

[author 2]: That is another risk . . . I wonder if there is a good way to address it without raising

concerns or questions from students, such as explaining the purpose of the conversation.

[author 1]: I agree. Possibly a relationship built on trust and transparency helps. Maybe, for me, it should be a conversation where I am inviting the student to participate, but also not holding it against them based on their level of participation. I might also model openness and talk about my own limitations and areas for growth with humility. This self-disclosure might make me seem more human and less of this distant "expert" faculty member, which in turn might make students feel more comfortable being open.

[author 2]: I agree. I think broaching would have helped me tremendously to build trusting and transparent relationships in the program. Also, we need to think about how it might impact the relationship. I wonder if it raises any potential mistrust between students and chairpeople. These concerns might not be apparent to all counselor educators but could be prevalent for students with international backgrounds who are not familiar with U.S. culture. I would not have wanted to take unnecessary risk by appearing rude to the faculty members. As a student with an international background, I often felt intimidated from being the only or at least very few students with an international background in the program. This feeling discouraged me from talking about these concerns with any of my peers or faculty members including you. Again, the broaching is usually offered by the individuals with more power, therefore, I did not choose to talk about it with anyone while I was in the program.

Discussion

[author 1]: This dialogue helped me understand you and your experience of the dissertation process and our program with more depth. This dialogue felt like a way to celebrate your success in your dissertation and the ways we have built a lasting mentoring relationship and research partnership utilizing tenants of RCT such as mutual empathy and zest (Jordan, 2017). Our dialogue felt empowering and invigorating to me in recognizing some ways that our relationship was reciprocal and mutually beneficial in ways that helped you grow. In similar ways to how researchers have applied it to teaching (Hall et al., 2018) and advising contexts (Purgason et al., 2016), RCT seems like a promising framework for reflecting on authenticity and culture in dissertation mentoring relationships for students of marginalized backgrounds.

I also felt saddened to learn about your struggles with imposter phenomenon. It hurts me to know how much anxiety and pain this has caused. When I was your dissertation chairman, I approached mentorship with a largely individualistic and product-oriented perspective. I focused my efforts in my mentoring relationships on teaching, encouragement, relationship building, and critical feedback. I did not focus as much on systems of privilege and oppression impacted our relationship and on how your international background and racial minoritized status impacted your dissertation process (Ng & Smith, 2009).

I wonder how this perspective impacted our relationship dynamic including how it might have reinforced potentially harmful viewpoints about research and discouraged conversation around some topics. Structuring our relationship with more intentional focus on RCT might have allowed more space for discussing the emotional elements of the dissertation process and allowed us to name the ways that systems of oppression and privilege impacted us (Jordan, 2017; Purgason et al, 2016). On my end, an intentionality in stepping outside of my privilege and thinking more critically about the systems surrounding our relationship and offering them up as potential conversation topics seemed missing (Day-Vines et al., 2021). This intentionality seems like it would have required more continual critical thinking about my positionality and the ways systems were impacting our relationship. Even as I celebrate your research and our successful mentorship, I am left thinking about how much more work I need to do in my ongoing journey to

unpack my privilege, recognize its pervasiveness, and take meaningful steps to address my areas of cultural unawareness. Additionally, I need to make meaningful contributions to our program taking substantive and systemic action to address inequities (e.g., creating structures to promote equitable access to mentoring and social connections; Brown & Grothaus, 2019). As I imagine many other counselor educators need to do similar work in considering mentoring relationships with students with marginalized identities, our dialogue might serve as an accessible catalyst for critical reflection and conversations in ways not currently available in the existing literature (Norris & Sawyer, 2012).

[author 2]: I enjoyed this process, and it has been a blessing and a great learning journey to be part of this project. This project filled the gap between us by allowing us to be vulnerable by using authenticity and mutual empathy (Jordan, 2017) to enhance our dialogue. Even though the power hierarchy might not be removed from the chairing relationship, the RCT mentoring approach can provide safety for mentees with international backgrounds by promoting open dialogue. They may feel empowered and less stigmatized to mention their unique struggles based on their marginalized identities.

Moreover, this study helped me to open my eyes regarding how to effectively mentor, advise, and supervise my students. This research project reminds me of the importance of remaining open minded and respecting students' needs when I support them. As a counselor educator, now I am more mindful that students might have unspoken struggles (Li & Liu, 2020). With this mindset, I have taken more initiative to broach my intersectional identities as well as my potential biases and areas of growth as a mentor. I intentionally acknowledge and address the systematic barriers which might negatively impact my mentees and seek any opportunity to advocate to improve their learning experience in our counseling doctoral program (Day-Vines et al., 2021). In addition, in line with RCT, I provide authenticity and anticipatory empathy (i.e., using my understanding of my mentee to predict the possible impact of my words and actions on them) in the mentoring relationship (Jordan, 2017; Purgason et al., 2016). I acknowledge mentees' potential imposter phenomenon and offer a place for mentees to feel safe and empowered by carefully selecting my mentoring approach to fit their needs based on their intersectional identities. For example, I am mindful to evaluate my mentee's readiness of completing internship hours in clinical, research, and teaching. Their unsureness and lacking confidence can be from their racial background, less familiarity, or past trauma. I offer support and acknowledgement with empowerment and compassion to help them address their imposter syndrome.

Lastly, I sometimes feel like an imposter when I supervise or mentor students, especially if they are from the U.S. (Woo et al., 2015; Fitriyah, 2022). However, this study helped me to focus on the similarities as well as differences between me and students beyond our presented intersectional differences such as race, ethnicity, language proficiencies, and others to have mutual empathy and enhance our connection (Jordan, 2017). By focusing on differences, I could be alerted and protect myself from getting hurt by microaggression in society. However, I also realize how it is sometimes important for us to acknowledge the shared experience as much as the differences which bring mutual empathy to the relationship. Being part of this study taught me how I can develop my professional identity and how to serve the best for my future students.

The dominant culture in the U.S. pressures counselor education doctoral students with international backgrounds to acculturate not only to the host culture, but also the counseling program environment (Li & Liu, 2020; Ng & Smith, 2009). Mentors may assume students with international backgrounds are similar or the same (Li & Liu, 2020) and suggest they find support within their cultural communities (Zhang, 2022). With the RCT framework, I realize the limitations of offering uniform support and recognize the individual unique

challenges for students with international backgrounds. As a counselor educator, I should reflect internally on how I perceive students from different cultures, question my assumptions, and adapt my support with intentionality using the anticipated empathy (Jordan, 2017). Since, as Zhang (2022) stated, faculty members tend to be unaware of the inadequacies of host societies, I, as counselor educator, should seek a culturally inclusive mentoring approach and institutional development to support doctoral counselor education students with international backgrounds.

Limitations

In this section, we note five limitations with our study. First, readers should consider our dialogue in light of our identities and our cultural differences. For example, our dialogue may have been different if we shared the same gender identity or if we were both native English speakers. Therefore, we suggest readers not make broad assumptions about cross-cultural mentorship based on our dialogue alone. Second, although we expressed vulnerability and took risks in our dialogue, we may have felt reluctant to open up about some relevant elements of our experiences on a public stage. Knowing we were publishing this dialogue for a broader audience of our peers may have inhibited what we shared. Third, English is not [author 2's] first language and writing this dialogue in English may have limited her ability to express her experiences. Fourth, although we did not start this project until after [author 2] had graduated from her doctoral program, a power differential between [author 1] and [author 2] remained throughout the project which may have impacted the dialogue. Although the relationship has evolved over the course of the study, [author 1] has continued to serve in a mentoring role for [author 2]. Additionally, during the study, [author 2] applied for and was offered a non-tenure track position at [institution 1] and [author 1], who is in a tenure-track position at [institution 1], served on the hiring committee. Finally, individualistic Western cultural systems and power dynamics likely influenced the interpersonal dynamic between us and our dialogue in ways that were outside of our awareness. Despite our intentions to critically reflect, we were not always aware of how pervasive domain cultural values were influencing us.

Implications

Given that the focus of duoethnography is on dialogic change and regenerative transformation in the researchers' journey of continuously interrogating the problematic elements of their current positions (Norris & Sawyer, 2012), duoethnographers typically do not end their conversations with tidy conclusions and broadly generalizable implications. Instead, they emphasize the conversation as continuing by inviting readers to continue the dialogue in their own lives. Although our findings are unique to our relationship and may not be transferable to other mentoring relationships, we believe that our dialogue may provide a useful example for other counselor educators and doctoral students to engage in their own dialogues. In this way, readers can decide what implications and meaning our dialogue has for them based on their own contexts and experiences. For this purpose, we present the following reflection questions for readers. Doctoral students and dissertation chairpeople may reflect on these questions through journaling, research class discussions, or in dissertation mentoring meetings. Discussing these questions may help faculty and students facilitate growth-fostering dissertation chairing relationships characterized by empathy, relational awareness, and authenticity (Jordan, 2017).

1. What are your reactions to our dialogue? How has reading our dialogue changed the way you think about research mentorship and imposter phenomenon?
2. In what ways have you experienced imposter phenomenon surrounding research? In what ways were these experiences influenced by your marginalized identities and cultural backgrounds (Purgason et al., 2016; Zhang, 2022)? How might the culture of academia and your institution discourage you from discussing imposter phenomenon (Hutchins, 2015)? How might your experiences of imposter phenomenon impact your mentoring relationships? As a mentor, how

might you address the possibility of imposter phenomenon for your mentees?
3. As a mentor, what can you do to promote growth-fostering relationships with your mentees including mutual zest, clarity, and higher self-worth (Jordan, 2017)? What specific behaviors or dispositions have helped you foster growth-fostering relationships in mentoring relationships in the past? How do you believe mutual empathy and relational awareness should function in research mentoring relationships (Jordan, 2017; Purgason et al., 2016)?
4. What role do you believe broaching cultural differences has or could play in your research mentoring relationships (Day-Vines et al., 2021)? As a mentor, what ways do you believe you could grow in your broaching in mentoring relationships? As a mentor, how might you open the door to discussing culture and experiences of marginalization with mentees with international backgrounds who might have different expectations of mentoring relationships based on their home culture (Li & Liu, 2020)?
5. What do you believe effective cross-cultural mentoring should look like for you as a mentee and as a mentor? As a mentor, how might you address the possible intimidation students with international backgrounds can experience in mentoring relationships in not feeling ready to discuss their concerns with faculty (Woo et al., 2015)?

Directions for Future Research

First, future researchers could write conceptual articles offering more specific guidance and support for how mentors can broach cultural differences with mentees that provide space for discussion of the mentee's experiences of marginalization in the U.S. (Ng & Smith, 2009). Such articles could also offer guidance for how counselor educators can reflect on the impact of their privilege and marginalization and systemic oppression in higher education impact their mentoring relationships and intentionally draw attention to them in mentoring relationships (Brown & Grothaus, 2019; Purgason et al., 2016). Along similar lines, researchers might conduct phenomenological studies exploring the lived experiences and impact of broaching on mentoring relationships in counselor education from the perspectives of both mentors and mentees. These studies could help offer recommendations for how mentees experience broaching in crosscultural relationships. Second, as doctoral programs can present unique relational and systemic challenges for students with international backgrounds (Woo et al., 2015) as [author 2]'s experience reveals, future researchers may examine ways the experiences of international students in research mentoring relationships in counselor education with qualitative inquiries.

Narrative inquiry or case study may offer depth into the mentoring experiences of international students in counselor education that is currently missing from the counselor education research literature. Finally, researchers might conduct quantitative studies to examine constructs related to feelings of imposter phenomenon among students with international backgrounds in ways that help identify specific strategies for helping to increase self-efficacy in ways that extend the findings of this study.

Conclusions

Despite the increase in recruiting international students into the counseling doctoral program and their known challenges (Ng & Smith, 2009), there is limited attention and discussion supporting these students in the counseling program. From an RCT standpoint, it is important to understand the power dynamic between students and faculty as well as addressing how systematic change is needed at the administrative level (Kuo et al., 2018). It is undeniable that kinship and a sense of belonging through mentorship can help international students overcome unique challenges. However, it is also important for the mentors to take more initiative in supporting the student in a collaborative approach (Lau et al., 2019; Zhang, 2022). Successful cross-cultural mentoring in counseling programs can improve the overall mentoring relationship and can

increase the confidence and performance of the international students.

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How to Cite this Article:

Waalkes, P. L., & Mizutani, Y. (2024). A counseling student's experiences with vision impairment: A narrative inquiry. *Journal of Counselor Preparation and Supervision, 18*(1), 1-15.