This paper discusses a study that attempted to explore the factors having an impact upon delinquents' behavior change in Korea. Specifically, it examined the risk factors and the protective factors related to delinquent behaviors in Korean youth. Participants (N=10) were interviewed about the history of their delinquent behavior; family background; school experience; peer relationships outside of school; the turning point and process of their behavior change; and factors perceived to have an impact upon their behavior change. Results found that nine out of ten youths had family risk factors. Failure in school was found to be another significant risk factor. With regard to protective factors, all interviewees regarded "self-determination to change" as the most important factor to prevent recidivism. Individual characteristics, such as intellectual capability to analyze the results of delinquent behaviors, were found to prevent recidivism. Experiences of success in school in the past was shown to help the youths to keep trust in their potential and protect them from conducting more serious problem behaviors. (Contains 22 references.) (MKA)
What makes a difference for juveniles in Korea?

Sung-Kyung Yoo, Ph.D.
Korea Youth Counseling Institute

Juvenile delinquency is increasing in Korea and is causing great fear both of and for youth. And solutions are being demanded to escalating youth problems in individual, societal, and national levels in Korea. Appropriate prevention and programmatic interventions for Korean youths can be developed on the basis of basic research on Korean youths.

The present study is an attempt to explore the factors that have an impact upon delinquents’ behavior change in Korea. Specifically, this study examined the risk factors and the protective factors related to delinquent behaviors in Korean youths. Counselors working at the national youth counseling centers located in the 16 districts in Korea were asked to select the youths satisfying the following criteria for interview. The selection criteria were 1) having been under probation before, 2) having not done any delinquent or criminal behaviors within last 6 months, and 3) having clear evidences for behavior change that can be recognized by others. Six out of the 16 counseling centers responded to the researcher’s request and recommended 10 youths as a total for interview. Of the 10 Korean juvenile delinquents (8 males and 2 female) interviewed, there were 7 high school students, 2 junior high school students, and 1 non-student. They ranged in age from 13 to 19. Primary problem behavior the interviewees reported were school dropout(2), theft(2), and violence(6).

The selected youths were interviewed by the researcher. The interview were semi-structured asking 6 open-ended questions regarding 1) history of the delinquent behaviors: onset age, process, severity, probation, and co-occurring problem behaviors 2) family background: structure, atmosphere, parental relationship, and parental response to their delinquent behaviors, 3) school experience: school achievement, peer relationship, relationship to teacher, and experience of drop-out, 4) peer relationship outside school, 5) the turning point and process of their behavior change, and 6) the perceived factors to have an impact upon their behavior change. The interviews were audiotaped and conducted at the counseling center. Before each interview, the researcher...
explained the purpose of the study to the youths. Each interview averaged approximately 90 min in duration. The audiotaped interviews were transcribed and the researcher listened to each interview while reading the typed transcriptions to ensure the accuracy of the transcriptions. Analysis of data was based on the inductive analysis (Patton, 1990), which starts with specific observations and builds toward general patterns. The inductive analysis procedure used in this study was a collaborative process in which the researcher, a research assistant, and a counselor who have an expertise in juvenile delinquency. In the beginning stages of the analysis, the researcher and the research assistant identified the concepts and themes. The latter stages of analysis involved the counselor and the researcher identifying themes and categories.

Results found that 9 out of 10 youths had family risk factors: parents' divorce, death, and runaway, family conflict, history of alcohol abuse, and poverty. When the youths had family broken, they were sent back and forth to one of parents or other relatives, which deprived them of consistent supervision and made them feel unstable and neglected. In Korea, since divorce is still stigmatic from a traditional Asian collectivistic point of view, family members after divorce seem to go through lots of emotional distress and family management problems.

Failure in school was found to be another significant risk factor. In Korea, since entering college is a gateway to the success in the rest of life, academic achievement puts a tremendous pressure on youths. Since school curriculum and other school activities are targeted mainly for "good students" and little services are not available for "poor students", the students who failed in school were shown to have an extreme difficulty to be interested in school. When the youths failed school, conducted problem behaviors, and their parents paid little attention to the youths, some teachers were found to ask the youths to leave school to protect other students. Eight out of 10 youths in this study reported having more than one school dropout experiences. School dropout and runaway in most cases of this study were co-occurrent phenomenon. After leaving school and family, the youths were found to be involved in
a group of other school dropouters and this peer group was found to be a significant risk factor for serious and violent behaviors.

With regards to the protective factors, all the interviewees regarded "self-determination to change" as the most important factor to prevent recidivism. Bonding relationship was found significant to lead the youths to the self-determination to change. Seven interviewees reported that bonding relationship with one of the family members, religious leader, and friends in an alternative family (i.e., group home). This bonding relationship seemed to provide the youths motivation to change. The youths reported that after they felt a bond, they can open their minds and be willing to follow the rules suggested by the person who they felt connected with. Results showed that bonding could be promoted when the person provided meaningful opportunities (i.e., returning school, providing alternative family, obtaining licence for future job), and recognized the youths' strengths and efforts to change (i.e., encouraged the youths when they failed to overcome temptation in the initial stage of change).

Individual characteristics, such as intellectual capability to analyze the results of the delinquent behaviors was found to prevent recidivism. The youths were shown to be able to learn from other delinquent youths' life path, and they determined not to choose the same negative life path. Also, experience of success in school in the past was shown to help the youths to keep trust in their potential and protect them from conducting more serious problem behaviors. Results also indicated that experiences of achieving something (i.e., getting a better academic record, obtaining drive license, winning a prize in a contest) consolidated the youths' self-determination to change. All the youths interviewed were shown to put positive value on school, and this high value on school helped them to return to school.

(Number of words=993)
References


I. DOCUMENT IDENTIFICATION:

Title: "What makes a difference for juveniles in Korea?"

Author(s): Yoo, Sung-Kyung

Corporate Source: 

Publication Date: 

II. REPRODUCTION RELEASE:

In order to disseminate as widely as possible timely and significant materials of interest to the educational community, documents announced in the monthly abstract journal of the ERIC system, Resources in Education (RIE), are usually made available to users in microfiche, reproduced paper copy, and electronic media, and sold through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). Credit is given to the source of each document, and if reproduction release is granted, one of the following notices is affixed to the document.

If permission is granted to reproduce and disseminate the identified document, please CHECK ONE of the following three options and sign at the bottom of the page.

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 1 documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

[Signature] 

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

Level 1

2A

Level 2A

2B

Level 2B

Check here for Level 1 release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche or other ERIC archival media (e.g., electronic) and paper copy.

Check here for Level 2A release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche and in electronic media for ERIC archival collection subscribers only

Check here for Level 2B release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche only

Documents will be processed as indicated provided reproduction quality permits.

If permission to reproduce is granted, but no box is checked, documents will be processed at Level 1.

I hereby grant to the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) nonexclusive permission to reproduce and disseminate this document as indicated above. Reproduction from the ERIC microfiche or electronic media by persons other than ERIC employees and its system contractors requires permission from the copyright holder. Exception is made for non-profit reproduction by libraries and other service agencies to satisfy information needs of educators in response to discrete inquiries.

[Signature] 

Printed Name/Position/Title: Assistant Professor Sung-Kyung Yoo, Ph.D.

Organization/Address: Korea Youth Counseling Institute 295-61 Shindung 6-dong, Choeng-kwu

City: Seoul, KOREA

Telephone: (82)-2-233-5190

Fax: (82)-2-233-5190

E-Mail Address: sekwc@kcc.or.kr

Date: ARA 2000
III. DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY INFORMATION (FROM NON-ERIC SOURCE):

If permission to reproduce is not granted to ERIC, or, if you wish ERIC to cite the availability of the document from another source, please provide the following information regarding the availability of the document. (ERIC will not announce a document unless it is publicly available, and a dependable source can be specified. Contributors should also be aware that ERIC selection criteria are significantly more stringent for documents that cannot be made available through EDRS.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Publisher/Distributor:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Price:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

IV. REFERRAL OF ERIC TO COPYRIGHT/REPRODUCTION RIGHTS HOLDER:

If the right to grant this reproduction release is held by someone other than the addressee, please provide the appropriate name and address:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

V. WHERE TO SEND THIS FORM:

Send this form to the following ERIC Clearinghouse: University of North Carolina at Greensboro
ERIC/CASS
201 Ferguson Building
PO Box 26171
Greensboro, NC 27402-6171

However, if solicited by the ERIC Facility, or if making an unsolicited contribution to ERIC, return this form (and the document being contributed) to:

ERIC Processing and Reference Facility
4483-A Forbes Boulevard
Lanham, Maryland 20706
Telephone: 301-552-4200
Toll Free: 800-799-3742
FAX: 301-552-4700
e-mail: ericfac@inet.ed.gov
WWW: http://ericfac.piccard.csc.com

EFF-088 (Rev. 2/2000)