

The effectiveness of the preventive system in the lens of social learning spectrum: An exploratory case study of a youth delinquency camp in South Korea

Mankeun Yoon, Ed.D

Director, Institute of Don Bosco Youth Spirituality & Ministry, 65 Yeouidaebang-ro, Yeongdeungpo-gu, Seoul South Korea, 07434

Email: yunmose@hotmail.com, Mobile Phone: ++82-10-9949-7797



*Author

Mankeun Yoon, Ed.D

Director, Institute of Don Bosco Youth Spirituality & Ministry, 65 Yeouidaebang-ro, Yeongdeungpo-gu, Seoul South Korea, 07434

*Author Email:
yunmose@hotmail.com, Mobile Phone: ++82-10-9949-7797

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine the principles, implementation, and perceived impact of the Preventive System on youth delinquency in a Salesian Youth Center in South Korea. This study yields findings regarding the practice and the effects of the Preventive System, i.e., structural elements, the internalized principles in educators, and the impact on the development of character and the life trajectory of the young. The findings suggest that the Preventive System can play a role as leadership pedagogy, humanizing pedagogy, and remedial pedagogy that help transform young people who are dehumanized by family, school, and society.

Key Words: The Preventive System, social learning, delinquent youth, humanizing pedagogy, pedagogy of educational leadership

Introduction

As many societies are economically polarized, many families grapple with their children's education due to economic condition. Such economic condition is likely associated with parents' social status which can negatively affect their children's behaviors and attitudes. In addition, these negative consequences likely lead young people to engage in deviant behaviors as they experience negative things (e.g., violence, abuse, criminal behaviors, negligence, and coercion) from family, peers, and even at school.

Although this youth delinquency is observed by many societies as a looming issue, they hesitate in providing a clear answer. Instead they tend to undermine the issue.

However, educational intervention not only can remediate this issue, but it further produces positive learning outcomes such as changing perception on male adults, reconciling family relationship aside from fostering character and intervening in the life trajectory of young people.

As educational approach is highly considered an antidote to remedy such negative behaviors learned from social engagements, I attempt to find a right pedagogy through this study, which helps remediate youth problems prevalent in many societies.

Statement of the Problem

Juvenile delinquency seems to be a worldwide issue and

many societies are highly concerned about this issue, though they would not prescribe to unravel this problem. The fact that youth delinquency emerges in the form of violence, criminal activity, and antisocial behaviors reflects a multi-layered gray area of our society that triggers juvenile delinquency.

Although many researches provided evidence of etiological factors of youth problems, i.e., individual, family, peer, school (Henry et al., 2012; Holiday et al., 2017; Hwang, 2018; Peterson et al., 2016; Vasile & Ciucurel, 2010; Weatherburn & Lind, 1998), none of these factors is isolated from the problem of youth delinquency. They are rather associated with each other and contribute to shape the personality traits of young people (Mercy et al., 2002).

Furthermore, the problem of youth delinquency associated with social learning (Akers et al., 2006; Snyder et al., 2003) and family socioeconomic status (Kramer, 2000; Wight et al., 2001) provides a notion to understand the issue in social learning perspective (Akers et al., 1979) within social structure (Colvin & Pauly, 1983). In this standpoint, juvenile delinquency needs to be construed as an intricately tangled societal problem rather than delinquent phenomena *per se*.

As many societies grapple with the issue of juvenile delinquency, it is enormously critical to provide a right tool that can be applicable to remediate youth delinquency. Accordingly, I intended to present in this research a practical pedagogy, the "Preventive System" developed and applied by John Bosco (1815-1888), as it is deemed an interventional pedagogy that helps disentangle youth problems.

Of various educational approaches that attempted to resolve the youth delinquency (e.g., character education, humanistic education), I presume that the Preventive System is more likely a practical method in producing effective outcomes. It provides a detailed guideline for the educational practice, particularly, the role of the educators. It articulates how educators need to approach young people in their educational practice (Gonsalves, 2009). Thus, this pedagogy is considered a right tool to promote the humanizing process through effective and efficient approach for delinquent youth (Comoglio, 2009; Pereira, 2012).

Despite various benefits and positive outcomes of the Preventive System, it is little known to education field and has little empirical research that attempted to demonstrate the educational effects of the Preventive System. In this vein, this study intended to explore the effectiveness of this educational practice whether it is a proper pedagogy that could help remediate the issue of youth delinquency as an antidotal pedagogy.

Statement of the Purpose

This study aimed to examine key components of the Preventive System practiced in a delinquent youth camp in South Korea. The research focused on how effectively this preventive pedagogy impacted on moral perception and behaviors of the youth in the facility, and their life trajectory.

The study also explored how teachers and staff in the facility practiced the Preventive System since educational leadership is a sine qua non in relation to students. Namely, the research attempted to investigate educational engagement of teachers and staff, and their impact on the delinquent youth who have been and who are currently staying in this youth camp.

As an exploratory case study, this research employed the social structure and the social learning model (SSSL) developed by Akers (1998) as a theoretical framework to better understand the problem of delinquent youth and to explore the educational effects produced by the practice of the Preventive System. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine how the preventive pedagogy practiced in the juvenile delinquent facility and what factors contributed in altering the perception of delinquent youth in regard to character development and intervention in their life journey as they were relocated to the delinquency camp in South Korea.

Literature Review

This research attempted to explore the educational effects of the Preventive System applied in a delinquent camp in South Korea. Yet, it is also essential to understand the problem of juvenile delinquency and the school culture in South Korea since the research uses SSSL model as a macro lens to see the cause of youth delinquency and the effects of the educational practice. In what follows, therefore, I discuss about the concept of juvenile delinquency, the educational system in South Korea, and the Preventive System.

The concept of Juvenile Delinquency

The term *Juvenile delinquency* is widely defined from deviant behaviors to criminal activities that offend social norms or reject social rules (Jeon & Chun, 2017; Lim & Sea, 2007). Juvenile delinquency covers various forms of transgression including criminal activities such as theft, burglary, violence, robbery, vandalism, fraud, and drug use. However, the unclear boundary between what is legal and illegal raises problems in using a legal definition (Farrington, 1992), for this term is mainly used in the criminal justice system. Although the definition of this term is not well-clarified in legal position, it is obvious that juvenile delinquency is associated with deviant behaviors and academic risk behaviors that negatively impact the development of adolescents.

Since adolescents engage in various forms of problematic behaviors, the causes of youth delinquency are differentiated based on various patterns, types, and risky profiles (Agnew, 2012; Carr & Vandiver, 2001; Hwang & Kim, 2018; Kim et al., 2005). Many studies found the factors causing delinquent behaviors such as family and peers (Agnew, 2012; Carr & Vandiver, 2001; Jeon & Chun, 2017; Peterson et al., 2016), family social-economic status and delinquency (Wright et al., 2001), family socioeconomic condition, peer, and neighborhood (Chung

& Steinberg, 2006; Weatherburn & Lind, 1998), and school and delinquency (Li & Lerner, 2011; Smith, 2000). However, these studies approached the issue of juvenile delinquency based on individual predictor rather than social structure and social learning perspective.

Nevertheless, some studies strove to understand this issue based on social structure (Kramer, 2000; Riele, 2006; Smith, 2000) and social learning (Akers & Jensen, 2017; Donges, 2015; Garnier & Stein, 1998; Prather & Golden, 2009). These perspectives postulate that the essential cause of juvenile delinquency is predicated in the social environment and learning process that reinforces the production and reproduction of delinquent behaviors.

Juvenile delinquency in Korean education system

The South Korean education system has two distinctive characteristics such as “the egalitarian ideal and zeal for education” (Kim, 2002, p. 30). Since a modern school system has been introduced in Korea, according to Kim (2002), the Korean education system has developed based on the egalitarianism that provides an opportunity of education regardless of gender, religion, and socioeconomic status.

However, the traditional value of education in Korean society engenders not only the zeal for education but also severe competition among schools, families, and students due to the desire of better college entrance (Kim, 2002; Lee, 2006; Sorensen, 1994), which generates multiple social problems such as elitism, the instrumentalization of education values, egoistic familism, excessive expenditures for private tutoring, and social disharmony (Kim & Lee, 2002; Lee & Brinton, 1996; Lee, 2006; Sorensen, 1994).

Indeed, the school culture in South Korea reflects the whole social structure since school culture is dominated by standardized test-focused curriculum and meritocracy-oriented class environment (Giroux, 2004) due to college entrance examinations (Lee, 2006; Sorensen, 1994). Besides, this academically driven school culture is highly connected to social capital such as family structure and family social background that influence academic achievement (Byun et al., 2012; Ellinger & Beckham, 1997; Lee & Brinton, 1996; Sorensen, 1994), school engagement (Li & Lerner, 2011; Wang & Fredricks, 2014), and the relationships between teachers and students (Skinner & Belmont, 1993; Sutherland & Oswald, 2005; Wang & Holcombe, 2010).

As a result, school in South Korea becomes a venue to produce delinquent youth and at-risk youth among those who do not adjust well to academic attainment-oriented school culture and college-focused curriculum due to low family support and low socioeconomic background (Christle, 2010; Henry et al., 2012; Kramer, 1998; Riele, 2006; Winkle-Wagner, 2010). This school culture causes students to be dissatisfied with school programs and discourages them to engage in academic performance, which ultimately leads them to delinquency.

The Preventive System

The Preventive System is defined as an educational pedagogy developed by John Bosco (1915-1888), also known as Don Bosco, who was an Italian Catholic priest and the founder of the religious congregation *The Society of St. Francis de Sales*. This “educational method practiced in 8,996 formal and informal educational institutions in 131 countries is designed for the holistic growth of young peoples, especially for those who are poorer” (Gonsalves, 2012, p. 155).

This educational system that arose from Don Bosco’s lived experiences with the young people on the streets (Braidó, 1999; Miranda, 2006) was named by Don Bosco who came up with the idea against the *Repressive System* which had a demanding and severe educational pattern adopted from the military model (Braidó, 1999; Gonsalves, 2009).

The goal of the Preventive System is to foster the young to be “honest citizens and good Christians” (Braidó, 1999; Chávez, 2007), since it fully focuses on human growth through various practical strategies. However, Chávez (2007) explained that Don Bosco’s education method is primarily grounded in a solicitude that provides the youth with basic needs (e.g., food, clothing, security, work, physical and psychological development). From there on, education can be actualized as it “aims at fostering and expanding the cognitive, affective, and ethical dimensions” (p. 9), i.e., decision-making, moral and civil responsibility, professional dimension.

In addition, the Preventive System is very concerned with the educative intervention that could prevent deviations and errors in the life of the young (Comoglio, 2012). Austrian educator, Hubert Heinz (1964) in Braidó (1999) described that the preventive method prevents the moral damage of young people and the need for castigation. This system requires total support and dedication from educators who are constantly present to students (Braidó, 1999; Miranda, 2006).

Key elements of the Preventive System are composed of three pillars such as *religion*, *reason*, and *loving-kindness* (Braidó, 1999; Coelho, 2006; Comoglio, 2012; Miranda, 2006). Comoglio (2012) clearly defines the role of three elements; religion, plays the role “to lead to the highest perfection (human and mystical) of the gifts of each other”(p.212); loving-kindness operates as “the theological virtue of charity”(p.212) which leads to love neighbors as oneself; reason makes students understand whatever is required. Despite these concepts are defined independently, they are closely intertwined with each other and support each other rather than they stand alone (Miranda, 2006).

Having deeply entranced in the Catholic faith and its spiritual values, religion as focuses on human values, family, and the common good including moral values. Miranda (2006) stated that, “Don Bosco equated holiness with wholeness” (p. 105). To arrive at holiness and wholeness, individuals are required to respond to God’s love in freedom and love (Miranda, 2006), which becomes

the purpose of the education that fosters young people to be good Christians who have personal freedom and responsibility.

Moreover, religion plays the role to guide educators to understand the wounds of the young who experienced abandonment and marginalization. Coelho (2006) argued that this understanding of a wounded human being drives educators to see young people with respect and esteem. Namely, religion in the Preventive System not only keeps young people from the dangers and corruption of the world, but it also brings them comfort in the sufferings that come together with boundless happiness (Braido, 1999).

In regard to loving-kindness, it is an essential element in the practice of Don Bosco's pedagogy that originated from the Italian word '*amorevolezza*'. Braido (1999) elucidated that loving-kindness is a cluster of small virtues that expresses feeling of love, graciousness, and warm heartedness in human relationships which are particularly shown to children by parents. This element deemed as an educative love implies intelligent charity and loving dedication (Braido, 1999) and it refers the importance of the educational relationships between educators and the students.

Braido (1999) asserted that educators speak the language of the heart that makes students feel affectionate. In this sense, Panampara (1978) indicated that educator should show loving-kindness to obtain the affection and confidence from students. He added that "he who wants to be loved must show first his own love. When a person knows he is loved, he will love in return" (p. 116). Likewise, Coelho (2006) made a point that "Don Bosco insists that the young people be loved, but also that affection be perceptible" (p. 75). This emphasized that educational relationship between educators and student should be based on mutual affection.

Apart from religion and loving-kindness, reason is a critical element in the practice of the Preventive System as it balances between two elements. For Don Bosco, the concept of reason is deemed a guide that directs the ways and performances of loving-kindness and religion. According to Coelho (2006), "Don Bosco himself pointed out that love alone was not enough, love wills the good (*amorevolezza is voler bene*) but, is not able to say what is the good; only reason can do so" (p. 76).

Gonsalves (2009) wrote that reason mediates a loving relationship between educator and student "from degenerating into mere sentimentality" (p. 674). Braido (1999) contended that reason in the Preventive System, refers to "the balance, moderation, reasonableness of rules" (p. 202) that are motivated and integrated by educators who has religious piety and the empathic participation.

Although these elements presented above are core elements as well as a philosophy of Don Bosco's pedagogy, these are clearly shown in the practice of the Preventive System appeared in essential strategies. These strategies articulate how educator should approach their students and what educator should do to lead young people in educational practice. These strategies

"*assistance and familiarity*" are not only embedded in the values of three pillars but also maximize the educational effects of the Preventive System.

In terms of *assistance*, it is regarded as a keystone in the practice of the Preventive System. Braido (1999) contended that assisting the young for educator is a methodological role in the educational practice. Don Bosco's notion of assistance was "a way of being with young people and a journeying with the young on their way to maturity" (Gonsalves, 2009, p. 673). By practicing assistance, educator promotes individual activity. In other words, educators should be promoters and animators while they are present and participate in the life of students by listening to them, joining them, stirring up their interest (Braido, 1999).

While assistance is a key player, familiarity is a ground floor in the praxis of the Preventive System. Don Bosco intended to create an educational environment in a domestic setting by employing the concept of "family-spirit." Don Bosco realized the need for a warm and family-like educational environment that could embrace young people since the young educated by Don Bosco were generally marginalized and abandoned from their family. Thus, Don Bosco emphasized that the educational environment created by familiarity and presence of educators is significantly important, because it transmits vital values to young people and shapes the personality that widely ranged through optimism and goodness (Chávez, 2007).

Therefore, the Preventive System as an education method not only helps transform the lives of students, but it also contributes to enhancing the life of educators. In other words, "this system is oriented to the integral growth and personal development of both the educator and the student" (Miranda, 2006, p. 101).

Methods

In the present study, I employed a case study methodology to explore the educational practice of the Preventive System. By focusing on the delinquent youth camp, the study attempted to understand the cultural practice that can answer the research questions: What structures and characteristics of the Preventive System were practiced at the facility? How did staff and teachers at the facility understand the Preventive System? and how does social learning incorporated in the Preventive System approach interrupt the perceived life trajectory of delinquent youth?

The site of this research is the "Salesian Youth Center" which was established by the Society of St. Francis de Sales of Don Bosco in Seoul, South Korea in 1979. According to the mission of the Society, this institution has been serving the young who are in need of shelter, educational opportunities, and financial aid. Young people at this institution came from low-income families, single parent, or orphans with a background of abandonment or abuse and have various experiences of delinquent behaviors.

This facility is classified as a protection and treatment facility. It is recognized as one of 12 juvenile delinquency

camps in South Korea and is governed by the Juvenile Act (Article 32, 33) and the Child Welfare Act (Article 52). According to the Juvenile Act (Article 32), the young people in this facility should meet the criteria required for the placement of the protective disposition No. 6 and their stay is compulsory for six months or more (Article 33).

As the present study utilized a descriptive method to collect data, data was gathered through interviews, participant observation, and artifacts collection. Interviews were conducted with twenty-two interviewees who were intentionally chosen by the researcher (e.g., eleven educators, five current students, and six former students). Due to the characteristics of the interviewees, the interview protocol was intently designed for each group of interviewees. Interviewing was proceeded by explaining the aim of the research project. Each interview was conducted after receiving the signed informed-consent forms from individuals.

All interviews were conducted one-on-one in a semi-structured form with open-ended questions. Participant observation was carried out for approximately fifty-four hours in total, which focused on the educational practice of the staff and teachers, i.e., languages, attitudes, and behaviors when they dealt with young people in diverse programs. Artifacts were also collected to better understand the cultural practice such as annual plans, statistics of students' social background, the regulation and principles of the institution, photos of multiple events, and the like.

Data analyzed from collected resources were coded based on words, sentences, and themes and were categorized according to their characteristics. The coding was carried out through extracting themes based on the research questions; class management, the role of reason, religious activities, the function of religion, educator's passion, educators' sacrifice, leadership, the relationships between students and teachers, institutional values, the practice of assistance, self-perception of students' character development, students' impression of the institution.

These categorized data that came from the theory of the Preventive System were considered deductive codes, while those categorized themes that arise as a pattern were considered inductive codes. The emerged themes that were categorized from the coded data were organized and translated into the specified words that can represent the characteristics of the themes. These conceptualized languages were decoded and interpreted by the research questions.

Findings

The presentation of the findings is organized into three sections. The first section describes the structural elements of the Preventive System and the implemented strategies. The second section illustrates how the educators learn and internalize the values of the Preventive System. The last section demonstrates the effects of the educational practice that affects young people in changing the

character and intervenes in the life journey of them.

Structural Elements and the Implemented Strategies

The Preventive System practiced at the youth center structurally contains the values, i.e., reason, religion, and loving-kindness. Reason plays a role as the tool of equanimity and equity. The practice of reason led the educators to stand on rationale and respond reasonably in conflict situations between boys or any controversial issue "without losing equilibrium". It requires the educators to be mediators and to treat young people impartially without bias and prejudice. As a result, the practice of reason offered an opportunity for the educators to better understand unclarified situations and led students to trust educators which help students reflect on their behaviors and correct problematic behaviors without resistance.

With respect to religion, it played the role to bolster individual spirit and ethical values based on a humanistic approach. Religious activities (Appendix B) provided young people peace and joy as well as learning opportunities. Religion also offered young people an opportunity to reflect on what they did in the past. They prayed for themselves asking for forgiveness for how they wronged their parents. These attitudes shown during Mass explained how much they relied on religion as they became aware of their human limitations. Surprisingly, young people who have never felt sorry for what they did to others "admitted their fault and felt regret for the first time in their life." In this sense, religion helps young people to reflect on their behaviors based on moral standpoints and build a moral standard.

Loving-kindness, as the core element of the Preventive System, is practical and crucial in the educational practice. It played the central role at the institution whether in programs or daily life. This educational value heavily relied on the role of the educators as it directly emerged as the form of assistance and familiarity. Loving-kindness offered a warm and comfortable environment for young people and promoted an environment of "just like family." When the practice of loving-kindness becomes natural, students deeply feel that they are loved and cared for by educators, as a current student Kyung-woo described that "I have a feeling that I have some connection with the teacher. I like him and I don't want to let him down."

Although these elements are the grounded values, they are revealed as the implementation strategies such as assistance, familiarity, and curriculum design. Assistance is the key strategy that was practiced at the Salesian Youth Center. Assistance was described as "being in the midst of students," "educational presence," and "accompaniment," which asks educators to spend time as much as possible with young people outside of class activities. It requires educators to sacrifice their own private time by being with the young more. This sacrifice was observed, particularly, during the summer camp. They spent the whole time with young people by either preparing programs or accompanying students in the programs. These camp programs created by the educators made the young people

“truly happy and satisfied, and left unforgettable memories.” Surprisingly, such efforts were recognized by the students. They knew that “the educators tried to give them good things.” In turn, “students appreciated the educators for what the educators did for them.”

Moreover, the practice of assistance differentiated the Salesian Youth Center from other delinquent facilities and made the center an unique institution. This distinction was clearly seen by the educators and the students I interviewed. One teacher said, “I don’t see teachers who work at other youth centers spend time with the boys as much as we do. They just let the boys play on their own.” Likewise, it was observed by the current student. Seo-won responded that “the teachers at school likely do their job based on obligation. Yet, the teachers at the center are like my family. I saw that these teachers tried hard to do more for us and they truly cared for students.”

Regarding familiarity, it functioned to make young people comfortable and at ease at the center. Familiar environment comforted young people psychologically and physically by eliminating anxiety and fear and “helped them adjust to the life at the youth center quickly.” Familiarity is promoted by building the relationships between teachers and students. The educators approached students at their level and made an effort to learn what they are interested in (e.g., video games, sports, entertainment, and movies). These approaches extended the common ground between teachers and students and allowed educators to come closer to students. Such effort led young people to feel respected and understood when they were with the educators and it further encouraged them to open their hearts to the educators by trusting in them.

Curriculum is also revealed as a implemented strategy. Curriculum design based on the values of the Preventive System focused on developing the whole person. These programs are organized by frequency, offering season, and the characteristics of the programs, for they were intentionally designed to achieve certain goals and produce potential effects (Appendix A). Surprisingly, most programs offered at the youth center were activity-centered and student-centered rather than lecture-based traditional programs. Notably, the characteristics of the programs helped young people actively engage in them without resisting.

The Procedure of Internalizing the Preventive System

The educators who learned the values of the Preventive System through training programs and institutional philosophy were enabled to translate the values into their own language through grasping the core elements. Consequently, they were able to execute the learned and interpreted values by practicing assistance and leadership, while building the relationships with the students.

Regarding learning the values, the youth center provided various learning opportunities that immerse educators in the spirit of the institution, i.e., weekly meetings, workshops, and seminars. The weekly-based meeting invites the educators to reflect on their practices

and encourages them to better perform the educational values. The youth center also facilitates a seminar once a year that requires the educators to present “a successful educational story” of their students. This program reflects how the center values the expertise of their own employees and has a non-hierarchical view of where useful knowledge comes from. This study further suggests that the educators adopted the deeper values and philosophy by watching how the institution itself lived these values through what I have identified such as a supportive leadership practice and a caring community. Indeed, these were the catalysts that motivated the educators to actively engage in learning the Preventive System and contribute to constructing a familiarity.

By experiencing the institutional philosophy and the educational values, the teachers are able to conceptualize the Preventive System. They interpreted the Preventive System in their own language. Hyun-woo, a teacher, described the Preventive System as he conceived it:

I think Don Bosco's education changes the perception of my life and the way of dealing with kids. It can be called “family,” because these kids haven’t played a role as a member of a family. Some kids don’t even have their family. In Don

Bosco's education, adults should act like a father or elder brother. They should lead young people just like their younger brothers. In this sense, the Preventive System is like “family.”

By translating the educational values in their own language, the educators grasped essential elements of the Preventive System through educational practice and their experience. As they defined the Preventive System as “assistance,” “educational presence,” “accompaniment,” and “being in the midst of the young,” the core element of the Preventive System signifies that educators should be in the midst of the young wherever young people are found. Yet, these words do not indicate only the physical presence of educators. It further implies that the educator’s presence not only allows them to see what happens among young people but also provides opportunities for educators to intervene in whatever arises among them.

Having internalized the educational values by the interpretation of the learned experience, educators exerted the educational values by implementing assistance, building educational relationships, and performing educational leadership. Assistance was practiced in regular programs and wherever young people were, whether at meals, during athletics, doing house chores, or recess. Yet, this physical presence of the educators has more to it than meet the eye. Jung-soo, a teacher, asserted that the role of being presence is “caring,” which helps “prevent a problem before it actually breaks out.”

In addition, assistance helped build the relationships between educators and students as a teacher insisted that

“the more teachers spend time together with the boys, the closer the relationship will be.” Indeed, physical presence allowed the educators to “communicate with their students,” and led them to “understand young people in depth,” which drive them to open their hearts.

With these internalized concepts, the educators practiced leadership by “listening to students,” “being patient until they are ready to learn,” “being a friend.” Thus, it contributes to promoting the educational relationships and familiar environment, which ultimately encourage students to engage in the programs.

Educational Impacts on Human Growth

The Preventive System accelerated the social learning process for the young. As learning took place based on interaction with the educators, it appeared in young people by changing their perception of adults, recovering family relationships, and fostering character in the young.

With respect to perception of adults, young people changed their attitude toward adults. The youth who had negative experiences (e.g., violence, abandonment, authoritarian attitude) from their parents, not only had noticeable anger toward their fathers but they were rather afraid of approaching all male adults. Yet, interaction with the male teachers at the youth center helped them open their heart and reverse their perception of male adults. Similarly, they also understand their parents whom they never understood before. This understanding promoted healing process in the family relationships as well as changing the perception of their parents.

Apart from a perception shift, many students admitted to the transformation of themselves regarding attitudes and behaviors. Being at the center allowed them to have more time to think about the past and reflect on what they did to others. As a result, they expressed regret and truly felt sorry for what they did, which they had not felt before. During dinner one boy started talking about how much he himself changed while at the youth center:

Since I came here, I became a better person. Staying at the youth center allowed me to rethink my past. I reflected on the past and I realized that what I did was wrong. I used to pretend I truly regretted my behaviors before a judge so that I could get a reduced punishment. I never felt sorry for the people I harmed before. However, now I truly regretted what I did and felt sorry for them.

Regarding character development, various programs contributed to foster the character of the young, i.e., self-achievement, self-confidence, self-esteem, cooperation, responsibility, patience, caring for people, etc. Those programs that have their own educational goals, help foster the character of young people, while they play a role to remediate issues of young people, viz., perception

changes on male adults, recovery of family relationships, and improvement of moral standards by interacting with the educators.

The learning that resulted in reconciling with family, complying with legitimacy, and upholding their humanity, ultimately led them to grapple with corruption, beguilement, and temptation. Indeed, young people tried to apply the values learned from the institution to their lives. As many of them committed delinquent acts due to an economic reason, they tried to get a job to make a living after they left the center and tried to “support the family.” In addition, the experience of a good example set at the youth center kept influencing them, though it had been more than ten years since they left the youth center. A former student shared his story:

I observed a good example from the Salesian brothers, priests, and teachers. As a result, I can't ignore the people in need when I see them. I have learned all these things from the people who were there during my stay.

Effect on a life journey does not apply only to former students. It also manifests in the life of current students who continue “dreaming for their future.” Many students I interviewed were able to dream about their future during their stay. As a result, they “decided to take the high school equivalency test” for their future and “planned to transfer to a vocational school after the youth center.” They even set up long term goals which were encouraged by the educators.

Most of all, educational intervention continually takes place in young people by reminding them of the life at the center. They remembered the youth center as “home.” They often revisited the center even if they left the place a long time ago. According to former students I interviewed, they often think of the youth center wherever they go. They often miss the center, because it was the place that showed them love, valued and supported them to be better persons.

Therefore, the educational values practiced through the programs by incorporating the implementation strategies, not only lead young people to change their perception, behaviors, and character, but these values of the Preventive System continuously intervenes in the life journey of students by reminding them of the place they grew up and learned as “home.”

Discussions

Structural Elements of the Preventive System

As this study examined the educational practice of the Preventive System and its potential to interrupt the negative social learning, I found the core elements that are solidly grounded in the educational practice of the system in South Korea. These core elements such as reason, religion, and loving-kindness, played out their roles in

exerting the values of the Preventive System through the practice of the educators as well as the programs offered at the center.

Reason rooted in rationale, played its role by practicing justice-focused, rightness-centered, and impartial action when educators dealt with problems of young people. Reason makes educators balanced by eliminating bias and prejudice when they approached the young. As reason drew educators to treat young people in a rational manner and a neutral position, it made them admit that they created problems and helped young people build "trust" in the educators. This finding indicates that reasonable approach should be grounded in emotional equilibrium without losing balance when educators deal with controversial issues.

Religion appeared in the role of "a spiritual guidance" and "moral teacher." Religion seemed to be the last resort that young people can rely on. They were helped to find comfort and peace through leniency and forgiveness. Similarly, religion functioned as a guide of moral values for the young who violated the civil law and had less experience of moral education. Yet, religion was rather presented to students as part of the program than a religion *per se* such as proclaiming the gospel or promoting a religious faith. The data in this research, therefore, is consistent with the existing theory revealed in the role of religion (Briado, 1999; Miranda, 2006).

Loving-kindness is deemed a key player in practicing the Preventive System. It manifested itself in the educators' attitude such as "kindness," "patience," "empathy," "care," when the educators instructed students in daily life. Loving-kindness is deeply embedded in the efforts made by the educators who sacrificed themselves by giving priority to the education of the young. As a result, the educators' efforts were recognized by students and motivated them to change their mind-set by opening their hearts. Truly, educators need to make young people realize that they are loved. In this notion, loving-kindness provides great insights into how educators approach young people regarding educational practice.

Key Strategies for the Practice of the Preventive System

The implementation strategies drawn from the core elements demonstrated educational skills that efficiently promoted the practice. These strategies are *de facto* practical tools to perform the Preventive System, since they were found in this research in the form of assistance and familiarity. These strategies actually made the underlying educational values more evident.

Regarding assistance, it is a conspicuous strategy to reveal the values of the Preventive System. Assisting young people refers to the educators who are physically staying "in the midst of young people." By implementing assistance, the educators intended to protect and prevent young people from unwanted incidents and risky behaviors, while guiding them to undertake the right path by correcting wrong behaviors and elevating familiarity. As

the data revealed the role of assistance, it is consistent with the theory that explains the role of assistance such as "prevention" and "protection" (Comoglio, 2006), and "relationship building between educators and students" (Biesman, 2015; Gonsalves, 2009). This finding suggests that the practice of assistance is a fundamental educational practice for educators to encourage and motivate students who are vulnerable and marginalized to change themselves in effective and efficient ways.

Familiarity plays a role to promote "warm" and "comfortable" educational environment. This was created by the educators at the youth center who showed a "kind manner, generosity, patience, and listening" to young people. Familiarity was promoted by the effort of the educators when they meet young people. They made an effort to seek out and learn "what young people are interested in." In doing so, the educators enabled to come closer to students, for it established common ground between the educators and young people. This finding implies that a familiar environment promoted by the educator's effort makes young people open their hearts and be ready to learn based on interaction and the relationship practiced by the assistance.

Social Learning in the Practice of the Preventive System

In existing research, social learning was employed to understand how young people learn delinquent behaviors. However, social learning also plays a role in producing positive behaviors rendered by the educational practice in facilities like the Salesian Youth Center, as it intervened with the delinquent youth in their behaviors, attitudes, and even in their life journey.

According to the social learning theory (Bandura, 1971), children learn behaviors by modeling people who are influential in their lives such as parents, teachers, peers, and even neighbors. Through interaction with these people, children observe behaviors and imitate these behaviors in real situations. The youth at the center learned delinquent behaviors from negative experiences that came from parents and friends. This interaction grounded in negative situations resulted in negative consequences.

In contrast, interaction occurring by the practice of assistance at the youth center contributes to producing positive consequences. As assistance requires educators to be in the midst of young people, the educators deeply engage in a student's learning. While assisting young people, the educators interact with them by "introducing the rules" (e.g., the regulations and the principles), "showing examples" (e.g., good manners, consistent attitude, and etiquettes), and "performing leadership" (e.g., being patient and listening to students).

Through interaction with the educators, young people observed what the teachers did for them. They learned what the educators showed them and imitated the behaviors and actions the educators presented in programs and daily life. These include house chores, academic works, technical skills, and even a way of

speaking. By interacting with the educators, students learned values, attitudes, and manners, including technical skills that fostered the character of students.

As a result, young people were able to reconcile with their family and dream of their future which they never did before. Having a dream for the future gave young people a *raison d'être* and it led them to find out what they should do for their future. This positive outcome kept reminding them to practice what they learned and experienced.

They not only made a huge effort to restore family relationships, but also tried to help people who were in need, as they were supported and taught at the youth center. Most of all, they actually regarded the center as their "home" or "second home," since they grew up and learned at the center. As a result, they constantly thought of the center as their "home," when they encountered symbols that reflect Catholic Church or faced difficult moments in their life.

Consequently, what they learned and experienced at the center remained with them as valuable memories and it continually intervened in their life journey by reminding them of that learning. In this regard, the finding suggests that social learning that produced positive consequences contributed to developing the character of young people, and also kept intervening in the life of young people through the reflection on what they learned and experienced.

Social Learning Stance in the Preventive System

As this study departed from the social structure and the social learning standpoint in understanding juvenile delinquency, the primary cause of delinquency production is more likely accredited to social learning within social structures rather than each of the risk factors, i.e., individual issues, family, school, and peers, notwithstanding they are interwoven with each other. As the social structure is considered the basic condition of the existence and continuation of delinquent behavior based on social economic status, delinquent acts are the actual fallout induced by social learning. Namely, social learning within social structure delivers negative aspects that are experienced and learned from family, schoolteachers, peers, and neighbors (Garnier & Stein, 1998; Prather & Golden, 2009). In this view, juvenile delinquency arises from social learning rooted in observation and imitation obtained through negative experiences (Akers & Jensen, 2017; Colvin & Pauly, 1983; Nicholson & Higgins, 2017).

Conversely, social learning does not always produce and reproduce negative aspects. It can rather be a tool in understanding positive learning outcomes, for learning also occurs by positive impacts. Social learning can function to produce positive behaviors through positive social interactions, while remediating negative fallout. In this regard, the Preventive System is the right means to produce positive learning outcomes. This system strives to accommodate positive social interactions embedded in its implementation strategies. These essential constituents that accelerate the learning process elicit positive

outcomes from the youth themselves. Therefore, social learning eventually drives delinquent youth to transform by fostering character and persistently intervening in the life path of young people.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study is to explore the key components of the Preventive System approach to youth rehabilitation at the Salesian Youth Center in South Korea, and how these elements contribute to positive social learning and the suspension of negative social learning.

According to the findings the Preventive System that is practiced at the center is structured with core elements that represent the values of the educational method, viz., religion, loving-kindness, and reason. Religion plays the role as a spiritual guide and moral teacher whereas loving-kindness is identified as the keystone for educational practice. Yet, reason rather plays the role as the tool of equanimity and equity.

Most of all, the values of the Preventive System were entirely immersed in the educational practice of the educators such as assistance and familiarity. As being present in the midst of the young the educators promote a family spirit and a pleasant educational environment while preventing unpredictable incidents from students and guiding them to do the right thing by correcting misdemeanors. Implementing assistance and promoting familiarity precipitate the learning process of young people by opening their hearts and putting new energy into restarting their life. In other words, social learning takes place by educational interaction grounded in a familiar and comfortable educational environment.

Consequently, it renders positive consequences for young people not only in developing character (e.g., self-esteem, responsibility, and cooperation) but also in preparing for their future life as they begin to dream for their future. Furthermore, it persistently intervenes in the life of the young by reminding them of what they experienced and learned from the educators. Namely, these findings demonstrate how the Preventive System contributes to producing positive learning outcomes and it play a role to remediate juvenile delinquency.

Implications

According to the findings, the Preventive System consists of three core values, i.e., religions, loving-kindness, and reason.

These core values were revealed in the form of assistance and familiarity, which are essential to yield positive learning outcomes such as eliminating bias on male adults, rebuilding family relationship, including developing character of young people while constantly intervening in their life journey. These findings indicate that the Preventive System further expands its role in educational parameters such as pedagogy of educational leadership, humanizing pedagogy, and remedial pedagogy.

First, the Preventive System can improve the role of

educators as leadership pedagogy. As the system heavily relies on the role of educators, it requires them to practice assistance and promote familiarity. Promoting familiarity by assisting indicates how educators should perform and in what way they should behave in a classroom or educational field. Namely, assisting can be translated as educational leadership that implies how educators should guide young people as educational leaders. This leadership can be the tool to link educators and young people in modern society that brings various challenges in communicating with young people.

Second, the Preventive System can be introduced as humanizing pedagogy. The educator who practices the Preventive System deals with young people in a humanistic manner. They treat young people not with bias and prejudice but with respect. Thus, they encourage the young to respond with decent attitudes. It asks educators to eliminate favoritism and treat the young equally, which makes them build trust in educators. In doing so, educators precipitate a humanizing process for young people who were dehumanized by unfair treatment, stigmatization, and discrimination.

Third, the Preventive System can be played out as remedial pedagogy. It can be a means to remediate the issue raised by hierarchical and submissive cultural practices. Most young people at the youth center had negative experiences from school rooted in authoritarian and dictatorial attitudes. Such school culture can be modified by the practice of the Preventive System, for it encourages educators to be of a father, teacher, friend, and guide by practicing assistance and accommodating familiarity. This educational practice will transform the dominant school culture into a familiar and equitable school environment and allow the school community to accept the diverse characteristics of students without exclusion. Thus, it will ultimately remediate the issues of the school community raised by negative school culture.

Limitations and Future Research

This study demonstrated the educational effects of the Preventive System that concluded that this educational method can be the proper tool to cultivate the whole human growth of the young. Yet, a few questions still remain in regard to the generalization of the educational effects, which need to be answered in future research.

First and for most, this juvenile camp is a male-only facility. The programs offered at the institution were designed based on student's gender, which are more applicable and productive for male students. These male-centered programs have limited the range of the findings of the educational practice. It is not clear if this educational system renders the same results when it investigates the educational effects applied in a delinquent facility for teenage girls.

In addition, the juvenile delinquent camp that the research focused on is a live-in facility that has a residence hall. This privilege would yield better results of the research since young people at the center were far more exposed to

the practice of the Preventive System during their stay. It is unclear that the results will be consistent if the research will be conducted for regular schools during school year that have no residence hall.

These limitations should be considered in the research design for future research to generalize the outcomes of the educational practice of the Preventive System.

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