

The Environment Encouraging “Something to Do”, Being Lively, in Juvenile Correctional Facilities: Case Study in Juvenile Vocational Training Center, Thailand

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The Asian Conference on the Social Sciences 2017
Official Conference Proceedings

Abstract

The youth are always important for the future. With their limited experience and maturity, they occasionally make a mistake. In developing countries such as Thailand, the number of teenagers in juvenile correctional facilities is a serious problem. This qualitative case study was conducted to understand the life in Juvenile Vocational Training Centers (JVTC) in Thailand and important factors of environmental design of JVTC. Participatory observation was conducted in 15 JVTCs for 12 days considering personal context and circumstance. Typically, the activities in JVTC focus on rehabilitation programs which are boring for juveniles. Most of them ignore the program for various reasons. The result showed that juveniles cannot be rehabilitated efficiently if they feel depressed and they cannot feel lively if they are not secure. Clear environment is proposed to ensure that all juveniles can be always noticed by others for safety. Being lively, juveniles need to have “Something to do”. The study has strongly recommended that 1) natural environment (such as pond, soil, and big tree) and 2) everyday environment (such as garage, street vender, and local meeting point) are key elements for them to start creating activities in JVTC. The environment with a good combination of these two elements is significant for juveniles to mean their future living in centers. “Something to do” in this case could be considered as driving force for them to be away from worry and be lively to benefit from future opportunities particularly from rehabilitation programs.

Keywords: Experience Design, Driving Force, Juvenile Detention, Correctional Facility, Rehabilitation

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Introduction

Juvenile correctional facilities under the control of the Department of Juvenile Observation and Protection, Ministry of Justice, Thailand, consisted of three types: Juvenile Observation and Protection Center, Juvenile Observation and Protection Center with Remand Home, and Juvenile Vocational Training Center (JVTC). The main purpose of these centers is to provide the treatment and rehabilitation programs to juvenile offenders. However, current situation shows that there are rapid developments of law such as classification process, social and economic changes, as well as rehabilitation programs. In the international level, family rights and children's rights should be highly concerned and protected. These developments have highly affected the development of activities, classes, and treatment of juvenile.

In Thailand, the Department of Juvenile Observation and Protection (DJOP) has focused on promoting the children's rights and welfare and strengthening family and society institute. DJOP also works on criminal and family cases including governance supervision, rehabilitation, protection, and other assistance services as well as follow up and evaluation of the cases. In 2017, there are 44 Juvenile Observation and Protection Centers, 33 Juvenile Observation and Protection Centers with Remand Home, and 19 Juvenile Vocational Training Centers including eight Special Juvenile Vocational Training Centers. According to the development above, one of DJOP policies is to develop the environment for three types of juvenile correction to be appropriate with the external changes. DJOP would also like to deeply understand the driving force which could encourage juveniles to be ready to get rehabilitation program. This idea is supported by Vimolsiddhi, Butsakorn, and Sivaporn (2011) who confirmed that environment can encourage and prevent human behaviors, especially territoriality, personal space behaviors. The study was conducted by the interdisciplinary team including DJOP staff, design researchers, architects, interior architects, and designers to ensure that every aspect of life in juvenile correctional facilities is clearly understood. Design opportunities were classified and discussed with juvenile, staff in juvenile correctional facilities as well as the management team of DJOP. Finally, the study would suggest the significant factors of environment design to improve the juvenile living quality and enhance the efficiency of rehabilitation program.

The study aimed to classify the stakeholders, such as juvenile, staff, and visitors and understand the factors affecting their behaviors. This study was conducted under the constraints of DJOP policy, treatment procedure of JVTC staff, and the context of use of each correctional facility. Data collection was focused on first-hand data from interview and observation to ensure that real users' requirements were delivered. These requirements were systematically analyzed. Pattern and case study development were the analysis framework for this project.

The study was conducted to understand realities and design opportunities classification. Qualitative research methodology particularly case study was utilized to capture the insights of the participants of the study. Data were gathered from interviews with 10 management team members of the Ministry of Justice and DJOP to understand the future vision and management context such as:

1. Current Situation of Correctional Facilities
2. Policy and Vision of Future Correctional Facilities Development
3. Treatment Procedure Development
4. Policy Problem of Facilities Renovation
5. Sample and Site Identification

Participatory observation was also used as an important tool to understand the life of juveniles in the correctional facilities and context of uses such as the following:

1. User Persona
2. Users Behavior Typology
3. Factors Driving Behavior Change
4. Interaction of Users and Facilities
5. Effect Created by Inappropriate Facilities

Four research assistants were sent to 15 JVTCs and stayed there for 15 days in each JVTC where they conducted interviews with 300 juveniles and 120 staff. .

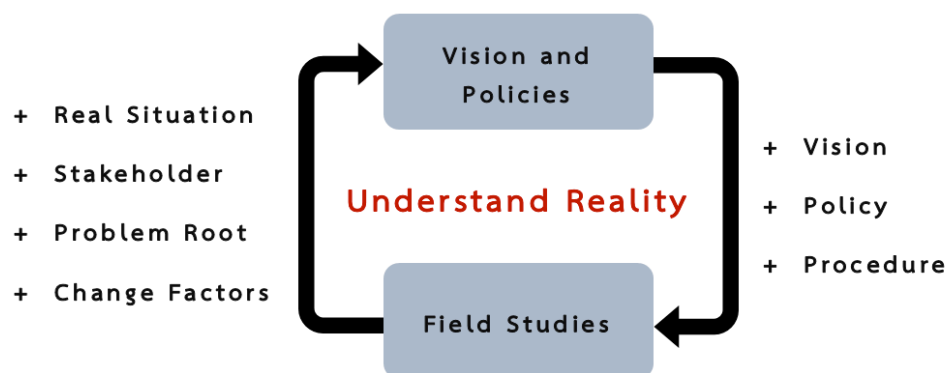


Figure 1. The Framework of Study Process

Each interview and observation was systematically scheduled. The information from each interview and observation could be cross-checked for data confirmation and exploration. All information were analyzed and displayed in various frameworks and models. Patton (1990) used the symbolic interactionism theory, which is emphasized to understand and interpret the process of interaction between people and symbols. This idea was developed to be visualization of diagramming, mapping, and experience map for co-creation workshops with juveniles in selected correctional facilities. The co-creation was arranged in the last week of participatory observation. The research assistants in each site were assigned to conduct the workshop in a casual atmosphere. The workshops were conducted with the small group of juveniles. They were encouraged to express their desires and problems of living in the facilities. The co-creation workshops were focused on characteristic matching and classifying potential

design opportunities of environment encouraging them to be more secure and comfortable, then be ready to involve in provided rehabilitation programs.



Figure 2. Co-creation Workshop with Juveniles in JVTC

However, the facilitators ensured that the ideas and concepts from co-creation workshops with juveniles will be carried to the final design and real facilities. The workshop with the management team of DJOP including the deputy director general, inspection-general, and directors of juvenile vocational training centers were arranged for the following objectives.

1. Data Confirmation
2. Solution Classification
3. Solution Identification

In the workshop, the participants discussed and brainstormed to build the direction of core concept of facility development. These were done to help develop the result, from co-creation workshops with juveniles, to be the core concept of future juvenile correctional facilities design.



Figure 3. Workshop with the Management Team of DJOP

Conclusion

The interview data from the juveniles showed that the changes of social context significantly affected their lifestyle in juvenile correctional facilities. Since traditional education environment has not worked well in the society, probably the traditional rehabilitation programs and activities have not been efficient, too. Most of them reflected that the rehabilitation programs and daily activities inside the facilities are not much different from what they do outside, except the limited space. Most of the facilities provided them the “school environment”. It is actually the environment they are trying to escape. One of the juvenile participants gave the example of environment and experience design: the mechanical workshop in the school and correctional facilities deliver big different experience in comparison with a small local garage outside. This could be explained that a small workshop plays symbolic aspect to juveniles (Vimolsiddhi, Butsakorn, & Sivaporn, 2011). The juvenile who is taking care of gardening in one facility mentioned that he does not like gardening at school but gardening at his home is acceptable. He gardens at the facility because he has to stay here. While a group of juveniles in the facility in the central of Thailand are full of willingness to repair the bicycles of staff and community nearby but they have never been happy in the official mechanical workshop class. They mentioned that they already understand all the knowledge taught in the class.

The interviews of staff showed that it would be much better if the environment is designed to support the security system. Many staff mentioned that the children’s right is very important even though when juveniles are escaping. Controlling juveniles is much more sensitive than controlling adults. The staff have to enforce very carefully the rules in the facility. In this case, many staff believe that environmental design such as security wall and electric fence can help prevent escapes but these kinds of ideas are in conflict with the concept of children’s rights. However, another staff presented the interesting idea to prevent escapes. He mentioned that normally some juveniles decide to escape especially in the first three months. Therefore, he is careful not to pressure this group of juveniles. These juveniles need something to do but it must not in forms of lessons and classes. Many times, he left these juveniles with sport programs on television and in the natural environment. The observation showed that juveniles with television stayed with television as much as they could. They did not interact much with other juveniles but they did not create any problem. On the other hand, juveniles in the natural environment took a few days doing nothing. However, they got gradually involved with the natural environment. They normally start from general tasks such as unconsciously interacting with terrain and moving on to complicated tasks such as farming and gardening. The observation also confirmed that the juveniles who stay in the facilities that mainly provide hardscape got very less idea of activities at their free time compared to the juveniles who stay in the facilities full of green space.

Most of the staff participants agreed that juvenile activities during their free time are very important. Their first three months in the facilities is considered critical time for juveniles. Most of them are still shocked and confused. As newcomers, juveniles, especially teenagers, need to be accepted by the community (Manoch, Thanita, & Nida, 2012). However, in JVTC, if the newcomer does not know some juveniles inside, it is very difficult to get accepted to be a part of the community. Many times they get depressed. If juveniles have “something to do” during their free time, the

tendency of being depressed could be decreased. However, “something to do” in this case, must not be activities or tasks of rehabilitation programs. One of the staff mentioned that the best “something to do” is the activity or task that is created by the juveniles themselves. His personal observation confirmed that natural environment provides much higher performance to encourage juveniles to have their own activity than school environment. In addition, it is still important that natural space should be clean and clear. Clear environment could reduce the stress and pressure of staff members who take responsibility for safety and security.

Co-creation workshop also delivered the deep understanding of how they consider the environment. “Think out loud” made researchers understand the reasons behind requirements. A group of juveniles mentioned that their most favorite activity is taking a bath but it is extremely limited. A sporty group also said that normally classes are in the morning and they get free time in the afternoon. In fact, to avoid strong sunlight in the afternoon, they could do outdoor activities just 30-40 minutes in the evening. It is quite clear that juveniles who do not live in the urban area are very good at interacting with natural environment but urban juveniles did not show the benefit of creating free time activities in the school environment.

Juveniles in the co-creation workshop reflected that the size of workshop is very significant to their perception. Normal size of workshop in school or university is too big for them. The smaller one is better to make them feel more comfortable. Dividing space might create an opportunity to add more sub-contents which are better to touch juveniles. They also mentioned that if they could access their workshop after classes, they could do something they love as they are outside.

The learning space should become more inclusive toward activities, staff, and students as well as administrative support staff (Temple, 2014). Workshop with DJOP management team is very important. The result of workshop with management team focused on security and rehabilitation program. Natural environment, such as the depth of pond and the size of shrub, is acceptable but it needs to be under control. The main idea is to design the natural element to support the security system. Most directors reflected worry of smaller workshops because human resources are always a problem of DJOP. However, the idea of “friends teach friends” was mentioned and considered as high potential solution. One JVTC model, bicycle fixing station, was raised as a good example. This JVTC opens a part of workshop for juvenile to fix the bicycle for JVTC staff and community nearby. This idea was confirmed by the observation. Juveniles who worked in the bicycle fixing station are happy to do these unofficial classes and feel that they can also contribute to others.

Focusing on the living in JVTC, activities at free time is very important. DJOP provides variety of courses and classes including special workshops or events for juveniles to attend and learn. However, their qualities are dependent on the performance of the management. Some JVTCs are fully supported by big space and building but the number of staff does not meet the standard. That is why they cannot operate classes well. Most juveniles in JVTC have got more free time but there is not much to do. Leksomboon (2012) recommended to start from questioning which relies on community. Helsinki Design Lab is an example of how design can solve problems in big cities through simple questions such as how to create a recreational space for elder people and children in snow town. This case study gave the idea of simple

questioning is there “something to do” during free time? The analysis strongly recommended that natural environment can fully support this idea. Juvenile can be more relaxed when they are surrounded by nature. The observation showed that the participants naturally interacted with nature such as a part of tree or water in a pond. Moreover, some of them created more complicated tasks such as sport, game, farming, and gardening. Once they have more interactions with the space, the sense of belonging will be developed. As to the public space such as school or JVTC, developing sense of belonging is very important. Sense of belonging does not only benefit taking care of space but it can also make juveniles feel comfortable at the places.

The interview with management team of DJOP showed that all of JVTCs have been designed by traditional concept. The reference is educational environment. In fact, most juveniles in JVTC are students who do not leave school. Architects might carry this idea to be a part of their researches. “What are their everyday activities outside?” is an interesting question to ask to begin with. They might not want to go to school but it is just six to eight hours per day. In JVTC, juveniles have to spend 24 hours in it. The environment would consider space and atmosphere of everyday activities for them. This idea might explain the reason why they prefer small workshops for their bicycle fixing station rather than the big workshop provided by JVTC. The everyday activities in free time could make juvenile enjoy. DJOP and JVTC can benefit from this insight to design the program and environment to help juveniles to assimilate to rehabilitation program and rules of JVTC.

Based on the results of the study, “something to do” is considered as important tool to make juvenile lively at JVTC. Traditionally, JVTC has been designed under the concept of educational environment. The ideas of natural environment and everyday activities could be taken into consideration of concept generation. Although JVTC provides very good rehabilitation program for juveniles, it will not be beneficial if juveniles are not comfortable and willing to learn. Environment is actually powerful to drive human behavior. “Something to do” would be a good strategy to encourage juveniles to actively interact with their environment, other juveniles, and staff. These interactions can smoothly bring them into the small community in JVTC.

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