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Decision Making in the Classification of the Juvenile Delinquents in the Juvenile Detention and Classification Homes — Second Interim Report: An Analytical Study of Factors Relating to Recidivism and of Those Affecting the Effect of Treatment Programs —

TOKUYAMA, Takayuki
MATSUMOTO, Yoshie
TSURU, Motoharu
HASHIMOTO, Kenichi
AKO, Hiroshi
OKAWA, Chikara

I. Purpose

The ultimate objective of classification conducted in juvenile institutions is to establish the most effective treatment program for juvenile delinquents committed to such institutions and, as a matter of fact, the process of classification is conducted with the help of various data regarding the juveniles. This research purports to examine such data and consider, on the basis of the results of the examination, what a normative system for classification should be.

The First Report analyzed the actual circumstances of decision-making process conducted in the classification homes and presented the typical methods for classification decision which employed a quantified system based on weighted scores and a flow chart or branching system. The present Report will make analyses of such factors that have caused recidivism of juvenile delinquency in the light of their importance as clues for the process of decision-making, and those other factors which influence the results of the treatment programs accorded the juveniles after the Family Court dispositions. Furthermore, attempts are being made to establish the recidivism prediction and the method for predicting the results of treatment programs.

II. Methods

1. Methodology

The present Report has employed 1) a quantified system by regression obtained from varimax criterion, 2) a point method based on discriminant analysis and 3) a predictive attribute analysis.

2. Subjects

Analyzed in this examination were 876 juveniles discharged from the classification homes during the period of February and March, 1969, traffic offenders being excluded.

3. Check items

(1) Basic data for classification decison: criminal records, life history, parental protection, social environment and personality traits.

(2) Data concerning past treatment records: a general rescription of past treatment records of the juveniles who have been placed under parole supervision or committed to training schools, and the assessment of these past records.

(3) Data concerning fingerprints: records of apprehension due to recidivism.

III. Results and assessment

1. Factors that have caused recidivism

Following division of juveniles were analyzed in respect of the factors responsible for recidivism: (1) all of 876 juveniles under analyses (2) those placed on probation by Family Court, (3) those disposed of by Family Court to be referred to training schools, (4) those to be released or dismissed at the Family Court either with or without court hearings (5) those disposed of by the Fimily Court to be referred to the Public Prosecutors Office and (6) those to be referred to rehabilitative hotels.

The results of the analyses showed that past criminal recoords had considerably a strong influence over the incidence of recidivism in all of the groups, regardless of the method employed for the analysis. Perhaps, it was because of lack of enough information on our part to make us grasp the personality of the juveniles examined that has led to such findings, but, on the other hand, it has become clear at least that the past experience greatly affects the future conducts of the juveniles examined.

The past occupational experience has also been found to have a great influence on the incidence of recidivism, and this was most notable with the groups (1), (2) and (3). Especially in the group (3), it was found that the attitude toward past job experience played a vital role in giving rise to the future misconduct and all the methods that were employed for the analyses confirmed this finding.

The family relationship, on the whole, was also found to have a strong influence on the misconduct committed in the later period of juvenile's development. It is quite natural, therefore, that Family Court takes such a relationship into consideration when, after hearing, it renders the dispositions of parole-supervision or discharge since such a relationship has a great bearing on the incidence of recidivism and because these dispositions are meant to let the juveniles return home for rehabilita-

tion. It should be noted that the disposition of discharge after hearing is usually given only when Family Court is satisfied with the family relationship of the juvenile concerned.

The educational background was found very much connected with recidivism in the case of juveniles in the Group (3). We suspect that certain personality factors are commonly shared by the juveniles that let them assume an attitude toward educational institutions and an attitude by which they adjust themselves to such institutions.

In respect of relations of personality traits with recidivism, although emotional unstability never failed to lead to recidivism, regardless of which group the juveniles belonged to, other personality traits differed in their relations with recidivism, depending on the method by which the analysis was conducted and on the type of disposition accordded the juvenile concerned. Particulary interesting findings with respect to value system or flexibility were that the juveniles in the group (3) with such a trait were rather prone to recidivism when some other triats were added to such as one.

Neutral responses obtained in the SCT's were found, by and large, very closely connected with high incidence of recidivism. In terms of item wise findings, neutral responses regarding "home" and "friends" and responses of maladjustment in personal relations as well as positive attitude to oneself were all found in intimate relations to recidivism. This means that what stand the subject juvenile assumes toward such tests as well as toward his existence in a given circumstance can be a very important index of recidivism.

As has been described above, we have succeeded in grasing, by means of basic data used for classification, the factors responsible for recidivism as a whole, but, it will require a further research effort before we could undertake the analysis of such factors which should make it possible for us to approach the very mechanism of recidivism itself. Results of our analyses conducted so far on 876 juveniles are given in Tables, 1 and 2, and Chart 1.

2. Factors affecting the results of treatment programs

In order to identify the factors affecting the results of treatment programs the following five items of data of the juveniles were analyzed that were obtained by the staff members of the probation offices and the juvenile training schools on the basis of their evaluation of the juveniles' conducts: 1) over-all treatment records, 2) attitude toward authority, 3) personal relationship with other, 4) attitude toward own life and 5) attitude toward oneself. Also analyzed in the same connection were the cases of violations of parole conditions and of the rules of the training schools.

Analysis of the juveniles placed on probationary supervision showed that criminal records and past job experiences had a great influence on the results of treatment programs. The personal relationship of the juveniles with other, which was assumed to represent some aspects of personality traits and therefore to be influential with the outcome of the treatment, had actually no particular connection with it.

According to the analysis of those in the group (3), whether or not a subject juvenile had the habit of smoking and/or drinking and whether or not he had been blessed with a favourable educational background were recisively responsible for the results of the treatment there, and his positive attitude toward himself or his self-contentment was found to lead to the deterioration in the treatment records. Criminal records and past job experiences seemed to have no great effect on the treatment records of the subject juvenile in the training school.

In passing, while there were these five items of evaluation undertaken regarding the conducts of the juveniles either committed to the institutions, or placed on probationary supervision of the probation offices (such as over-all treatment records, attitude toward authority, personal relationship with others, attitude toward own life and attitude toward oneself) it seemed that the evaluation of one of these items made in a certain direction in a given institution determined that of the rest of the items there in the same direction. This fact seems to suggest that every institution has a propensity to employ a specific scale of its own on which to base the evaluation of treatment records conducted in such a way, therefore, actually had no significance in our research.

According to the analysis of the factors which have led to the pre-delinquency and to violation of disciplines of the training schools, the criminal records and how the juveniles adjusted themselves to their respective family circumstances, as well as of what personality they were, were all important factors for us to predict the commission of such misconducts in the case of the juveniles placed on probationary supervision, while in the case of those to be committed to the juvenile training schools, the factors for such misconduct predictions included educational backgrounds, sex, past job experience, age and personality difference.

3. Recidivism and the effect of treatment

In the case of the juveniles on probationary supervision, criminal records were observed to be important factors for predicting both the recidivism and the effect of treatment, and the attitude toward own past job experience, though closely related to the effect of treatment, was found to be less connected with the recidivism. By contrast, personality and adaptability ,which were very closely related to recidivism, had no important effect on the results of the treatment.

It was recognized in the case of the juveniles committed to the training schools that the criminal records and the past job experience were very closely related to recidivism but bore no such relation to the effect of treatment. On the other hand, the habits of drinking and smoking, very important factors for prediction of the effect of treatment, did not have much effect on recidivism. The attitude toward oneself proved to be a very important factor for predicting both recidivism and the effect of treatment.

4. Propriety and availability of predictions

Generally speaking, to expect perfect predictions is no other than a fatalist way of thinking, which denies the effect of correctional efforts and the correctional influence of appropriate circumstances upon offenders. No one with adequate knowledge of the achievements attained so far in the field of criminology would be able to take such a fatalist view of the correctional efforts. From our standpoint, the prediction rate of 70–80% that has been attained so far through the various prediction methods should be considered fairly satisfactory, though the ratio may dicline somewhat in practice because there still remain questions of general applicability.

Classification officers use these predictions in order to find out what types of treatments there are that can prevent recidivism with the pretest possible probability. For this purpose, it is necessary to estimate the recidivism ratio for each type of treatment, so that comparative analysis of factors responsible for recidivism may be possible in terms of the corresponding types of treatment. With this in mind, we have tried to predict the recidivism ratio by the types of dispositions the juveniles were subjected to, and in our future efforts we would pursue, if possible, the possibility of forming the prediction methods that are directly applicable to the actual treatment situations.

At any rate, we have been able to give a very brief account of the three kinds of methods for prediction of recidivism. As has been anticipated, the quantified system was found much better equipped than the other two ones to produce the more dependable prediction data, whereas both the point method based on discriminant analysis and the method of predictive attribute analysis were much easier for practical use. Particulary, the method of predictive attibute analysis, it was found in the course of the present research, was most readily available to the classification officers on the field work.

Table I: Structure of Synthesis Variables relating to Cases of Recidivism and Non-recidivism and Weight Vector obtained from Varimax Standard

Item	Structure of synthesis variables	Basic Weight vector	Partial regression coefficient
Time between first commission of delinquency and the case concerned	.63	.16	.04
Age	.04	−.20	−.08
IQ scores	.08	−.00	−.00
Family relations	.33	.13	.11
Sexual intercourse	−.01	.06	.07
Flexibility	.25	−.00	−.00
Habit of smoking	−.14	.01	.01
Content of delinquency	.28	.00	.00
Time between previous disposition and the case concerned	−.60	−.21	−.06
Own life	.12	−.11	−.05
Parental protection Adequacy of home	.04	−.11	−.16
Occupation	.37	.21	.16
Mental condition	.19	.09	.09
Sex	−.35	−.29	.57
Emotional stability	.37	.12	.06
Drug addition	.02	.15	.18
Association with friends	.16	.05	.45
Records of criminal procedures rendered	.72	.26	.29
Activity	.07	.05	.03
Frequency of job changes	.52	.46	.28
Membership with gangster group	.28	.15	.34

Notes 1. The 23 items sampled above as factors causing recidivism have obtained from factor analysis by a varimax method. The determination of the number of items was based on the best possible efficiency curve available for the analysis purpose.

These items have been used to composed the variables that are to predict recidivism and non-recidivism grasped as basic variables.

2. The recidivism scores can be represented by multiplication and summation of weight vector or partial regression coefficient and item scores.

Table II: Recidivism scores obtained from analysis of all the juveniles under the present study

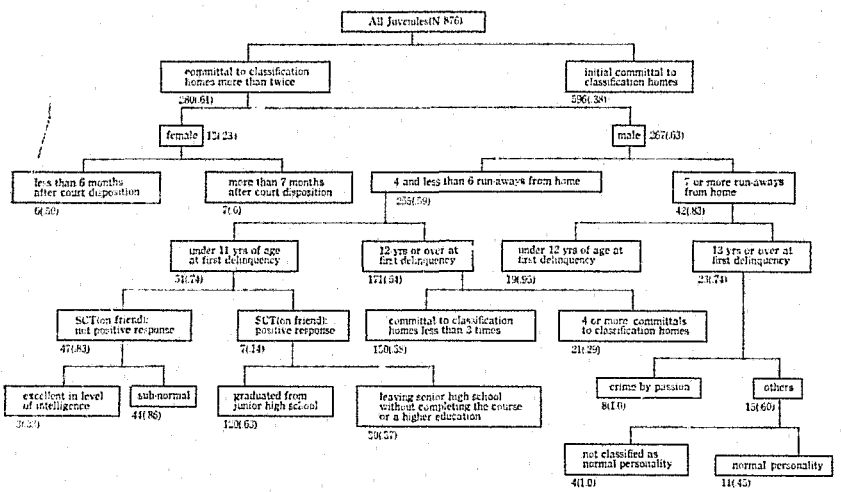
Item	Sub-items	
Age	under 15 years of age	0
	16 years and over	1
Sex	male	2
	female	0
Degree of damage suffered by the victims	serious	0
	moderate	1
	none	2
Conent of delinquency	habitual	2
	planned or by passion	1
	in concert with fellow offender	0
	accidental or motivated otherwise	1
Age at first delinquency	under 11 years of age	2
	from 12 to 15 years of age	1
	16 years and over	0
Time between first delinquency and the case concerned	less than 2 years	0
	2 years or over and not more than 3 years	1
	over 3 years	0
Time between previous disposition and the case concerned	less than 3 months	2
	less than 6 months	1
	6 months or over	0
	no previous disposition	0
Experience of leaving home	1 time and over	1
	none	0
Occupation	loafing	1
	otherwise or jobless	0
Frequency of job change	none	0
	less than 9 times	2
	10 times and over	3
Membership with delinquent group	none	0
	juvenile group	0
	gangster group	0
	gamblers group	2
	others	1
Disposition records	dismissal after hearing/on probation/no record	3
	referred to rehabilitation hostel for guidance	0
	commital to juvenile reform home	4

Item		Sub-items	
		committal to juvenile training schools	2
		criminal procedure	3
Frequency of committal to juvenile classification homes		first committal	0
		2nd and 3rd committal	1
		committal more than 4 times	0
Educational background		graduation from senior high school or higher institution	0
		others	1
Parental protection		present	2
		absent	0
Mental condition		normal	2
		otherwise	0
S C T	attitude toward family	neutral response	3
		otherwise	0
	attitude toward friends	neutral response	1
		otherwise	0
	personal relation with others	positive response or positive/negative response	0
		otherwise	1
	attitude toward job	positive/negative response or neutral response	1
		otherwise	0
	attitude toward own self	positive/negative response	1
		otherwise	0
Emotional stability		present	0
		absent or doubtful	1

Notes 1. Each of the sub-items sampled as factors contributing to recidivism was treated as independent item, and as such, given the obtained scores each, thus developing a scale for prediction. What was sought after in establishing the above factors was the minimum number of items having the maximum correlation with recidivism.

2. Recidivism prediction can be obtained by summation of the scores.

Chart 1
Flow-chart for the analysis of recidivism causing factors regarding all juveniles under the present study



Notes to Chart 1

1. The subclasses of each factor were treated as independent divisions for analysis purpose.
2. With any subclass of a particular factor the following process of analysis was conducted:
   1) the classification of the juveniles into the two divisions: those coming under the subclass and those otherwise.
   2) the examination by a χ^2 (chi-square) test of their relationships to recidivism in order to determine the one bearing the highest relation to recidivism.
3. With the each one determined as bearing such a relation to recidivism, the same process of examination was conducted, which then yielded a new subclass to be subject to a new examination.
4. With each new stage of examination, the findings provided the more approximate prediction for recidivism.
5. Numbers in parentheses to the subclasses given in the chart show the incidence of recidivists.
6. The flow-chart for the analysis of the subclass indicated as "initial committal to classification homes" in the chart was ommitted for lack of the space.

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