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Suggesting an education program for successful adjustment of North Korean refugee adolescents to South Korean public school: through an analysis of 'Creative Theater Workshop' program of the Set-Net school.

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Abstract

This study examines an education program of the Set-Net school, '*Creative Theater Workshop*', designed for addressing North Korean refugee adolescents' psychological distress. The study attempts to answer the question of whether or not the education program is effective in dealing with the psychological distress. By answering the question, the study seeks to give an insight into a specialized program which is necessary to facilitate the refugee adolescents' successful adjustment to South Korean public school. As data for analyzing, the study makes use of official documents about the education program published by the Set-Net school and one semi-structured interview with a teacher who is in charge of the education program. Also, the study explores the theory of drama therapy and, additionally, the *parasocial interaction* in order to build theoretical framework. The study findings show that North Korean refugee students of the Set-Net school went through traumatic events in the past and they suffered from mental sufferings such as loneliness, identity crisis and depression while resettling in South Korea. But, the findings indicate that the refugee students enjoy several therapeutic processes through the Creative Theater Workshop. As a result, as the findings demonstrate, the refugee students improve their hurt dignity and self-worth, and achieve confidence. Further, they begin to seek their dreams and meanings in the South Korean society. Therefore, this study concludes that the education program is, to a large extent, effective in addressing the psychological distress of the refugee students.

Keywords: drama therapy, North Korean refugee, education program, refugee adolescent, mental health, psychological distress, traumatic event, adjustment

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Chapter 1. Introduction

In the wake of defeat in WWII, Japan's 35 year occupation of Korea ended and they withdrew. Korea was divided into two parts, by what is known as the 38th Parallel. The emergent powers after WWII drew up a temporary trusteeship agreement whereby South Korea would come under American stewardship and North Korea under Soviet. After the establishment of North and South Korea, the two developed into opposing regimes. The south established the *Republic of Korea (ROK)* based upon the principles of liberal democracy. In contrast, North Korea became the *Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)*, a communist state (Stueck, 1995). The two regimes were frequently involved in armed conflicts after the establishment of the two governments. With the North's invasion of the South on 25 June 1950, the armed fighting escalated into the Korean War which was a civil war from 25 June 1950 to 27 July 1953 between South Korea supported by mostly the US and the UN and North Korea supported by the Soviet Union and China. Three years later, the Korean War was ended by signing the armistice agreement, and the current border was set up between North Korea and South Korea. The border consists of 4 km width and 250 km length of the demilitarized zone (DMZ) with extremely tight security such as electrified fences, minefield, round-the-clock surveillance, and patrolling armed soldiers.

From the construction of the DMZ until 1990, very few North Koreans defected to South Korea and in such rare cases, defection was mostly for political reasons. For instance, just 59 North Koreans defected to South Korea in the 1970s, and the total number of defectors¹ up until 1993 stood at 641 (Ministry of Unification [MOU], 2002; 2004 as cited in Lankov, 2006). The few

¹ The term of 'North Korean refugee' within this context: A North Korean refugee is identified in diverse ways, because of its special circumstance. In South Korea, two terms, *North Korean refugee* and *North Korean defector*, are used most frequently. The MOU officially uses the term *North Korean refugee* (MOU, 2014a), on the other hand, the South Korean society uses both the terms in general. North Koreans in the third countries, especially in China, who escaped North Korea are widely identified as refugees by many nations based on the Refugee Convention 1951 of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (Kurlantzick & Mason, 2006). In other words, the term *North Korean refugee* is more commonly used by most of cases. For this reason, the term *North Korean refugee* is used in the context of this thesis. But, when pointing to the early North Korean refugees who defected to South Korea until the early 1990s, the term *defector* is used as the same meaning as *early refugee*, because North Korean refugees in the early period were only called as defector in South Korea. Also, the word, *current refugee*, is used for North Korean refugees who have defected to the South since the early 1990s by now. In addition, to avoid confusion of using the word 'refugee', just saying 'refugee' in this context means 'North Korean refugee'. Refugees with other nationalities are mentioned specifically, for example, Bosnian refugee or refugee from Bosnia.

defectors weren't problematic to South Korea. They were assimilated into South Korean society without serious difficulties (Lankov, 2006, p. 53). However, since the early 1990s, the refugee situation in the South changed. As North Korea suffered a severe and prolonged famine, the number of North Koreans who defected to the South has increased rapidly. 148 North Koreans defected in 1999, 583 in 2001 and 2,028 in 2006 (MOU, 2001; 2015). The total number of North Korean refugees in South Korea to date is 27,518 (MOU, 2015). As a result of the growing number of refugees, integration has become an issue. Reportedly, many refugees have suffered severe difficulties in adjusting to South Korean society ("North Korean defectors", 2013)². The 2013 unemployment rate for refugees was 9.7 percent in comparison with South Korean unemployment rates for South Koreans which was 2.7 percent (North Korean Refugees Foundation [NKRF], 2013, p. 28). Four out of ten refugees relied on public welfare assistance for a living in 2012 (MOU, 2015). Some of the refugees who had resettled in South Korea moved to other countries after failing to adjust to South Korea (Song, 2011)³. Indeed, a survey in 2013 conducted by a member of the ROK's Assembly showed that 55 percent of 295 refugee informants had occasionally considered suicide ("North Korean defectors", 2013). That is, the adjustment problem of refugees has become a serious issue in the South Korean society.

1.1 Adjustment of refugee adolescents to public school

Recently, the number of refugee adolescents has gradually increased. The total number of adolescents refugees in South Korea between the age of 6 and 20 reached 3,823 by 2012 (Ministry of Education [MOE], 2013). Refugee adolescents between 15 and 24 were 2,520 by November 2010, and it made up 12.4 percent of the total number of refugees by 2010, according to the MOU (Hong et al., 2010). Also, most of the refugee adolescents attend public school after arriving in South Korea (NKRF, 2012, p. 4). The public school is the environment where most refugee adolescents experience adjustment to their new society. Hence, this thesis focuses especially on refugee adolescents⁴ who attend public middle and high schools. Schools are regarded as the main places where these youths experience adjustment in the context of the thesis.

² <http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20131124000049>

³ <http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20111116000776>

⁴ Refugee adolescents who attend public schools are also called as refugee students in the context of this thesis.

With the recent increase, the South Korean government and academic groups have given more attention to refugee students. The MOE (2014) increased its budget for the students by 40 percent in 2014. Many studies have been conducted by governmental and private institutes since 2000s. Despite the increased attention, it is still reported that many of the students have suffered severe difficulties in adjusting to school (Lee, 2011; NKRF, 2012, p. 34; Song, 2012)⁵. The difficulties are caused by great disparity of educational level, fierce competition, difficulties in befriending South Korean students, and direct prejudice and discrimination. These problems are specifically explained in chapter three. The poor adaptation of the students is well expressed through several indications. In 2002 the drop-out rate of refugee students in high school was 4.7 percent (MOE, 2012 as cited in Kim et al., 2013, p. 27), which is approximately three times higher than the overall drop-out rate of high school students (1.9 percent) (MOE, 2014⁶). Also, many youths reported having been discriminated against and bullied at schools (“Young N.Korean Defectors”, 2012)⁷. The students frequently display “anxiety caused by their experience in North Korea, uncertainty over their future and their confusion over how their past fits into their identities” (Jeong et al., 2006 as cited in International Crisis Group [ICG], 2011, p. 21). The extent to which the students adjust to school is serious. It is expected that failed adjustment to school life can result in a more generalized marginalization or exclusion from South Korean society. According to Kia-Keating & Ellis (2007, p.30), “adjusting to school and gaining a sense of belonging in their school community is an important phase in the overall adjustment” of refugee adolescents. Indeed, “school has a unique and influential impact on the lives of adolescents”, because it plays an important role in “defining and affecting one’s overall sense of community” (ibid). Hence, school is a crucial place for North Korean refugee youths as a stepping stone to successful integration into the South Korean society. Therefore, it is pivotal to encourage refugee students’ successful adjustment to school in order to facilitate their successful integration into the society. This is the wider significance of this thesis. In other words, this thesis seeks to understand how we can help refugee students adjust to school life successfully.

⁵ <http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20120314001152>

<http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20111207000559>

⁶ http://www.schoolinfo.go.kr/ei/ss/Pneiss_a02_s0.do

⁷ http://english.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2012/01/12/2012011200656.html

1.2 Topics on earlier research and the current educational support of the ROK

Topics on earlier research

As reports have grown that many refugee youths undergo severe difficulties in adjusting to school, public and private agencies have produced more detailed research on what difficulties they face in school and, in turn, suggest how to address the problems. Han et al. (1999) explored what difficulties refugee adolescents encountered in school. They stressed that the adolescents attained poorer grades compared to their South Korean counterparts. The adolescents also reportedly suffered difficulties in befriending their classmates. Hence, they suggested some solutions for improving the youths' adjustment to school, such as pre-education before attending school, tuition fee support and advising that teachers give more attention to the adolescents (ibid).

Also, Lee (2001) analyzes the causes of refugee adolescents' failed adjustment to South Korean life. He underlined two main problems they confronted: one was their poor academic performance and the other was a difficult relationship with South Korean youths. The difficult relationship exists predominantly because of common misconceptions of each other and cultural differences. Based on the analysis he suggests some ways to improve their poor adjustment. The study proposes supporting more education programs for enhancing the youths' grades and strengthening teachers' roles in helping the youths build good relationships with their classmates.

Likewise, Gil and Moon (2003) explored the current state of refugee youths' adaptation to South Korea and suggest ways to improve adjustment for refugee youths in the South. The research states that the youths have difficulties keeping up with courses in school and that they also have anxieties over their future career. Many youths have found it difficult to establish good relationships with South Korean youths because of contrasting social values, different accents and deep-rooted prejudice against North Koreans. The research, as solutions, proposes training specialized teachers to help refugee adolescents integrate, and opening summer schools or supplemental classes to improve the academic standards of refugee adolescents.

As more studies on the adaptation issue have been carried out, more diverse approaches have emerged. Although two studies (Kim, 2004; Jeong et al., 2006) still focus on the youths' academic disparity and their poor relationships with South Korean counterparts as main obstacles to successful adjustment to school, their solutions are diverse. For example, Kim (2004) thinks that

emphasis should be placed on increasing the youths' motivation to study rather than pushing them to study harder, to achieve better academic performance. As a way to promote better adaptation to school, she also advises that refugee youths be encouraged to find independent ways to study, the fostering of a school climate without discrimination against refugees, and providing more opportunities to build good relationships with South Korean youths (Kim, 2004). In addition, Jeong et al. (2006) emphasize the severity of refugee students' psychological problems. They claim that the students' mental health problems such as anxiety, depression and identity crises hindered the students from successful adjustment to school (Jeong et al., 2006). Hence, they advise that early education for the students should focus on their mental health and recovering their self-worth rather than improving their low grades (ibid).

Moreover, Lee (2006), who was a former vice president of a primary governmental agency for supporting refugee adolescents, states that there are two main causes for failed adjustment to school. Firstly, there is an education gap between the North and South. The collapse of the North Korean education system has meant that adolescent refugees cannot keep up with their Southern counterparts. This is compounded by the long journey as a refugee from North to South which impedes educational growth (Lee, 2006). Secondly, the youths have difficulties building friendships with their classmates (ibid). He also empathizes that the youths show signs of severe psychological distress caused by traumatic events such as family separation and their escape from North Korea involving great fear of being discovered (ibid).

Considering the recent focus of the South Korean government on the education of refugee students, it is useful to explore two of the latest studies on this specific topic, which were conducted by the Korean Educational Development Institute⁸ (KEDI). The first study illustrates that many refugee students experience academic difficulty and anxiety over their future careers (Han et al., 2009). The students express the need for teachers who understand them better, to have close friends, to do more cultural activities and to get private tutoring (ibid). To promote the youths' better adjustment to school, the study suggests providing programs for psychological troubles, enhancing self-esteem and developing competence in future careers. They also advise offering education that matches their academic ability and employing specialized refugee teachers. Further, schools should develop

⁸ <http://eng.kedi.re.kr/khome/eng/webhome/Home.do>

policies on refugee student integration and supply the students and their parents with more information about higher education or job-hunting.

The second study finds that the problems the adolescents faced in adjusting to school were bad grades, poor relationships with their classmates, psychological instability and weak educational support from their family (Han et al., 2013). For the youths' successful adaptation to school, the study proposes the development of effective teaching methods tailored towards the specific needs of refugee students and more supplemental classes for improving their grades. School should encourage better relationships between the youths and their South Korean classmates, offer counselling programs for their psychological troubles and career advice as well as providing mentors for psychological support (ibid).

The current educational support of the ROK

Next, it is necessary to look at what educational support is currently given to refugee students to improve adjustment to school. I will examine the educational schemes currently offered by the ROK for refugee students (MOE, 2014) and main education programs of primary government agencies⁹ for the students. The main channels of support are the development of textbooks that match refugee students' academic level and strengthening vocational programs for future careers after school. Also, the governmental agencies provide teachers with workshops on refugee students' issues in order for the teachers' better understanding of the students and offer the mentoring programs between the students and professionals, teachers and volunteers for psychological support. Concerning the mentoring programs, more specifically, the roles of the mentors are to be advisers on vocations and academic difficulties and to be friends (MOE & Incheon Metropolitan City Office of Education, 2014; MOE, 2014). Also, the government provides supplementary classes after school and opportunities to participate in cultural activities (Hong et al., 2010, p. 26).

1.3 Problem statement

As I have illustrated, many studies have been conducted to explore the adjustment problem of refugee students since 1999. The studies have proposed specific and practical solutions to the

⁹ The Center of Educational Support for North Korean Refugee Adolescents, <http://www.hub4u.or.kr/hub/main.do>, and the North Korean Refugees Foundation (NKRF)

problem. Also, the South Korean government puts considerable effort into addressing the problem of poor adaptation of the students through the provision of generous educational support (MOE, 2014; Hong et al., 2010, pp. 25-30). Nevertheless, the education support seems inefficient. Either many of the students still experience difficulties in adjusting to school or they graduate without addressing their adaptation problem. This is evidential from the drop-out statistics from schools and adjustment situation to universities. Firstly, the drop-out rate of refugee students in high school is higher than that in middle school (Center of Educational Support for North Korean Refugee Adolescents, 2015). If refugee students in middle school gained successful adjustment to their school, it would be expected that the drop-out rate of high schoolers was lower than that of middle school. Secondly, the youths have difficulties adjusting again when entering university and in a wider sense have trouble adjusting to South Korean society after graduating from school (Fackler, 2012; Song, 2012)¹⁰. If the youths adapt to school successfully, it would be expected that they adapt to university and society without significant problems, as adolescents understand their society fully through school (Kia-Keating & Ellis, 2007).

Accordingly, in order to raise the efficiency of current educational support, thereby facilitating the students' successful adaptation, a different and supplementary approach to the adjustment issue is required. The current support has focused mainly on enhancing academic difficulties, poor relationships with classmates and future careers. In contrast, support for the youths' mental health problems is relatively insufficient compared to that for other problems, even though the adolescents experienced several traumatic events before entering South Korea and thus most of them suffer from psychological distress¹¹. The current mentoring program appears helpful for psychological troubles. However, reflecting upon the seriousness of the adolescents' mental distress, the mentoring program doesn't seem adequate to deal with the complexities involved in mental health services. This is the gap in existing knowledge that the thesis seeks to contribute to. In other words, more attention should be paid to refugee adolescents' psychological issues and needs. A specialized education program in addressing the students' mental health problems is necessary for the students'

¹⁰ <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/13/world/asia/young-north-korean-defectors-struggle-in-the-south.html?pagewanted=all&module=Search&mabReward=relbias%3Ar%2C%7B%22%22%3A%22RI%3A16%22%7D&r=1&>

<http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20120314001152>

¹¹ In chapter 3, how much refugee adolescents' psychological distress is serious is discussed in large detail.

better adjustment and in order to raise the efficiency of current support. For this reason, the thesis does research on one particular education program called '*Creative Theater Workshop*' which provides drama therapy. It has been offered since 2007 as one of the main programs in the Set-Net school which is an alternative school in South Korea for refugee adolescents between the age of the late 10s and the mid-20s. The workshop is designed to deal primarily with refugee students' psychological distress and secondarily to communicate with South Koreans through performance. By investigating the education program, '*Creative Theater Workshop*', this thesis attempts to offer insight into an appropriate educational program for addressing psychological trouble. To a lesser but still significant extent, prejudice against the students is addressed in the thesis because the educational program aims partly to re-shape existing prejudices in South Korean society which negatively influence the students' mental health.

In short, this research stresses that the psychological distress of refugee adolescents is worth more attention than is currently given. It would enhance the efficiency of the current educational support, thereby helping the youths better adjust to school. The aim of this research is to study the content of and what can be seen as the outcome of the educational program of the Set-Net school in dealing with refugee adolescents' psychological issues. Through this analysis, the thesis questions whether or not the educational program has a positive effect in addressing refugee students' psychological problems. Additionally, it examines the effect of the educational program on reducing prejudices against the students.

1.4 Research question

This research answers the question; whether or not is *the Creative Theater Workshop* effective in dealing with refugee students' psychological distress?

In order to answer this question carefully, this research prepares the following sub-questions.

- What are the basic features of the workshop?
- What is the purpose and the necessity of the workshop?
- What traumatic events did refugee students experience?

- What psychological or mental health issues have arisen amongst the students?
- Does the workshop show evidence of helping the students deal with their psychological traumas?
- Does the workshop have a positive effect on healing the students' psychological distress?
- Does the workshop have an effect on reducing South Koreans' negative perceptions of refugees?

1.5 Finding my thesis

I was watching a TV program in South Korea about how miserable a refugee's life had been in North Korea. My relative who was watching the program with me said that North Korean refugees were a tax burden on her shoulders and she didn't want them to enter and resettle in South Korea. She also said that the refugees weren't the same people as her and she would rather help poor people in other countries than the refugees. It was a shocking moment for me, even though I didn't show her my reaction. I believed that most South Koreans would also recognize the refugees as their brethren so that they would be willing to help them. But, in contrast to my thought, many South Koreans have similar views on the refugees to her.

The event attracted my attention to refugee issue. Specifically, I came to wonder about the refugees' experiences in South Korea. As my attention to refugees was growing, I researched the issue through literature and the mass media. After that, I came to know that many refugees suffer severe problems in adjusting to South Korea, even if they receive fairly generous resettlement packages and share a common language and cultural heritage. As a person who has lived in foreign countries for over five years and hence is aware of how beneficial it is to have a common language and culture in adjusting to a new society, this ironic situation allowed me to explore refugees' adaptation difficulties in more detail. At the same time, because of my work experience and interest in adolescents' education, I naturally focused on refugee adolescents amongst the various groups of North Korean refugees. Concerning my work career and interest, I worked as a volunteer and a co-manager for eight years in a non-government organization for adolescents who were from one-parent or low-class families in South Korea. Many youths in the organization experienced difficulties such as being bullied and marginalized in school, neglected at home, mental health

problems and a lack of basic education. To empower them, the organization provided the youths with a variety of education programs such as cultural activities, music and sports classes as well as academic classes.

Whilst examining the adjustment problems of refugee adolescents, I found out that many of the adolescents especially undergo severe difficulties in adjusting to school environment in the South. As school is a very important place to lead them to smooth integration into their society, it is crucial to their successful adjustment to school. Hence, South Korea should make a serious attempt to help students successfully integrate into school. Yet, the youths shows poor adaptation. The South Korean government supplies generous support of education to the youths, though. This point caught my interest greatly, and it led to my research on the adaptation of the adolescents to school. I have been attracted by the adolescents' psychological issues. From the literature search, I found that most of the refugee youths suffered traumatic events when they were still young children. On top of this, the cultural differences between North and South and prejudices within South Korean society against North Koreans were found to make life more difficult. Thus, they have experienced serious mental health problems. This discovery was connected mainly to my work experience. When I worked in the organization, many of the youths would display violent behaviors and had psychological instability. They were outsiders in their classes and received low grades in general. It was always a difficult task to find and arrange suitable programs for dealing with their problems. Getting better grades through studying harder didn't change their position as outsiders. Yet running art therapy and sports programs, it was observed that the youths who had shown behavioral problems were changing their behaviors step-by-step in a positive direction. These programs addressed youths' internal troubles through a self-healing process, thereby stabilizing their psychological state. As a result, with their psychological stabilization, it could be seen that their school life and grades were getting better and better. Through the experience, I learned that an artistic method is very effective in dealing with psychological troubles.

For that reason, I believe that dealing with the mental health problems of refugee adolescents through an artistic method is of much help to facilitate the youths' better adjustment to school, as the children in my workplace gained. It is especially necessary to provide such artistic programs for the adolescents who had extreme experiences in order to address their psychological distress.

The artistic method, like drama therapy, is effective in the self-healing process (Jones, 1996), in part because participants are not expected to be explicit about their painful memories. In contrast, a general service for psychological issues such as counseling could have a negative effect by reminding the youths of their painful memories. Also, the artistic method is characteristic of being free from stigmatizing eyes. It is important to seek a non-stigmatizing method to deal with the adolescents' mental troubles, given prejudices and discriminations against the youths in school (Ryang, 2012). This is why I have focused on the drama therapy program in dealing with refugee adolescents' psychological problems. I think that the '*Creative Theater Workshop*' which borrows the form of drama therapy can be a good example of the drama therapy program. This is how I found my thesis topic.

1.6 Structure of Thesis

Chapter 2 describes the background of North Korean refugees. It gives readers sufficient information to understand not only refugee adolescents' situation once they arrive in their new home and school, but also the overall situation of North Korean refugees in South Korea. Chapter 3 looks closely at how serious refugee students' psychological problems are, and thus shows the necessity in dealing with their psychological distress in order to encourage the youths' successful adjustment to school. It additionally explores prejudices against the adolescents in school. Chapter 4 explains the methodological issues of this research to indicate the credibility of collected data and to show how I collected the data to answer the research question. Chapter 5 attempts to build the theoretical framework of this research. Chapter 6 carefully analyzes the data collected during the research in order to answer the research question. Lastly, chapter 7 summarizes the findings of this research, and gives concluding remarks.

Chapter 2. Who are the North Korean refugees?

This chapter explores the background of North Korean refugees. Even though refugees are somewhat known to the outside world through the media, detailed information about refugees is insufficient. This shortage of information may make it difficult to gain a full understanding of the thesis topic. Hence, by describing the background specifically, this chapter attempts to help readers grasp a better understanding of the research. Further, it provides information about the refugees' situations in South Korea. First, the chapter explains the common characteristics of early refugees¹². It shows resettlement conditions and general South Korean attitude towards early refugees, in turn. Following this, there is a summary of the resettlement environment of early refugees. The summary illustrates why the early refugees weren't problematic to South Korea.

Second, more importantly, the chapter examines current refugees'¹³ overall situation which has shown significant changes compared to early refugees' situation. In detail, the chapter discusses the causes of famine in North Korea which was the largest contributor to the change in the refugee's situation, and it explains the refugees' route to South Korea. Also, it details the changed features of current refugees and the ROK's resettlement program for current refugees. This second part gives an outline of current refugees' resettlement conditions in South Korea.

2.1 Early North Korean refugees

2.1.1 Number of early refugees and their social composition

After the Korean War, few North Koreans defected to South Korea due to the DPRK's very tight border security and restriction on travelling until the beginning of the 1990s (Lankov, 2006, p. 54). Most defections were through the air by fighter pilots, the sea by fishermen, the DMZ by senior soldiers who had confidential information about how to avoid the DMZ security or the third countries by high-ranking officials who could travel abroad and then defect to the South (ibid). According to the ROK Ministry of Unification (MOU), an average of 15 North Koreans defected

¹² Those are also called as defectors in South Korea, as explained in the introduction chapter.

¹³ The term, current refugee, means North Korean refugees who have arrived in South Korea since the early 1990s, as explained in the introduction chapter.

to the South per year until 1993 (as cited in Lankov, 2006, Table 1). In detail, only 59 in 1970s, 9 in 1990 and 8 defectors in 1992 arrived in the South. In comparison, after building the Berlin Wall in 1961, an average of 21,000 East Germans migrated to West Germany per year from 1962 to 1988 (Hirschman 1993, p. 179).

Most of the defectors were from highly educated elite groups in North Korea. Since the DPRK had a heavily secured border and restricted travel to other countries, only those with connections could defect, in other words, the elite (Lankov, 2006, p. 54). Their professions were mostly fighter pilots, senior soldiers, high-ranking officials, promising students sent to foreign countries to study by the DPRK, engineers, etc. A survey (Kim & Jeong, 1996, p. 27) on 209 defectors who arrived in the South between 1960 and 1995 shows that about 70 percent of them were soldiers, government officials, students, and engineers. 37 percent were university graduates and 83 percent were high school graduates or higher (ibid, p. 28). In other words, most of the defectors came from high-class groups and were well educated.

2.1.2 South Korea's treatment of early refugees

The South Korean government greatly welcomed defectors by providing generous legal, social and economic benefits. In effect, the ROK attracted North Koreans to defect to the South, largely because the defectors were of much value for propaganda and intelligence purposes (Lankov, 2006; ICG, 2011). The defectors were good sources in evidencing the ROK's claim on its superior ideology and its claim to legitimacy as sole government of the Korean peninsula (ibid). They also brought confidential information about the DPRK. For example, a defector who was a senior official in the North played a crucial role in discovering four tunnels under the DMZ for infiltrating into the South¹⁴.

Moreover, defectors became South Korean citizens right after arriving in the South based on the constitution stating that "*The territory of the Republic of Korea shall consist of the Korean*

¹⁴<http://newslibrary.naver.com/viewer/index.nhn?articleId=1990030500329214003&edtNo=3&printCount=1&publis hDate=1990-03-05&officeId=00032&pageNo=14&printNo=13673&publishType=00020>

peninsula and its adjacent islands” (Constitution of The Republic of Korea, 1988)¹⁵. According to the initial law in 1962 concerning North Korean refugees which was amended in a more welcoming direction in 1978, it granted them the same status and rewards as patriots recognized as “*human national treasures*” due to their sacrifices for South Korea (ICG, 2011, p. 3). Hence, they received big money, a house, basic commodities, appliances, etc. (Kim & Jeong, 1996, p. 29-30). In addition, they could get huge payments depending on intelligence and armament such as a fighter jet they brought to the South (Lankov, 2006, p. 55). Furthermore, the ROK arranged jobs for them and also gave them the favor to enter any university of their choice (ICG, 2011, p. 7; Lankov 2006, p. 55), even though they were already fairly capable of getting decent jobs in the South without the employment and education benefit considering their former high-class jobs and high education in the North. “Those elite defectors had education, social skills, and adaptability, and they could more easily find a place for themselves in South Korean society” (Lankov, 2006, p. 55). In comparison, West Germany provided East German migrants with 200 Deutsche Marks (around US\$ 120 in 1991), low interest government loans and job training (Kim & Jeong, 1996, p. 32-33).

The defectors were also greatly welcomed by the South Korean society, along with the ROK. They were often described as heroes by the mass media and the public (Kim & Jeong, 1996). They could even use special passages for VIPs in the airport when arriving, and had a press interview afterwards. Also, celebrations of welcoming defectors were often organized by local communities (ibid).

2.1.3 Summary

Early refugees were mostly from elite groups with high-level competence and education, and they were warmly welcomed by both the South Korean government and society. Thus, they were in a good condition for successful adjustment to South Korea. Also, given the society’s warm welcome, defectors would hardly experience prejudice or discrimination in the South, rather they seemed admired by South Koreans and the society at large. Further, defectors were still too small in number to provoke any bitter complaints from the public against the defectors’ great benefits from the ROK. Therefore, it can be said that early defectors wouldn’t suffer significant adjustment problems when

¹⁵ <http://www.law.go.kr/lsInfoP.do?lsiSeq=61603&urlMode=engLsInfoR&viewCls=engLsInfoR#0000>

resettling in South Korea, though they would likely undergo the difficulties all people have during resettlement period in a new society. Accordingly, the adjustment issue was not seriously considered by South Korea in the early decades. This corresponds with the academic trend that research or studies on adjustment of refugees have been mainly carried out since the mid-1990s.

2.2 Current North Korean refugees

Since the early 1990s, there have been remarkable changes around the issue of North Korean refugees in South Korea. The changes were caused mainly by North Korea's collapsed economy.

2.2.1 Severe famine in North Korea

North Korea's economic decline began around the 1990s. North Korea relied greatly on the Soviet Union in trade (more than 50 percent of its total trade) and supply of natural resources (Noland, 2003, p. 4). Hence, the disintegration of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s damaged the North Korean economy severely. For example, North Korea's total import in 1991 decreased by 40 percent with the decline of trade from Russia (Eberstadt, Rubin, & Tretyakova, 1995). A second factor in decline was that North Korean grain production declined significantly between 1993 and 1995 (Noland, 2003). According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), grain production sharply declined by more than 50 percent (ibid, Figure 1). After this, devastating floods hit North Korea in 1995 and 1996. According to a UN survey, 500,000 people were displaced by the flood in 1995 (Noland, 2003). Lastly, China replaced the Soviet Union as the main trading partner but reduced their exports to North Korea in 1994 - 1995 (ibid).

As a result, North Korea experienced severe food shortages from the early 1990s. The food shortages caused fatal consequences for North Koreans. Reportedly, between 600,000 and 1 million (about 3 to 5 percent of the North Korean population) died in the ensuing famine (Noland, 2003, p. 13). Another research by Robinson et al. (1999) estimated that between 1995 and 1997, nearly 245,000 people (12% of the overall population of the province) died of hunger in North Hamgyong, which is one out of nine provinces in North Korea. Not surprisingly, the great famine caused a number of North Koreans to flee their country to survive, even though they faced harsh

punishment if they were arrested. Those arrested were imprisoned in detention facilities, forced into labor and deprived of food and access to medical treatment (Noland & Haggard, 2011). They were tortured and often faced the death penalty (ibid). One refugee survivor from a prison camp said that “she had lived like a dog” (Lee, 2011)¹⁶.

2.2.2 The route from North Korea to South Korea

North Korea shares nearly all of its northern border with China (1,416 km) and a little with Russia (17 km) (ICG, 2006). The northern border is naturally formed by Tuman and Yalu rivers (ibid). Also, North Korea shares its southern border with South Korea (ibid). In comparison with extremely tight security in the southern border and “the strong currents of Tuman river delta” in the northern border with Russia, the northern border with China is relatively easier to cross (ibid). Hence, almost all North Koreans first escaped to China. But, thanks to the Chinese state’s denial of North Korean refugees legal status, they stay there in fear of the consequences from the Chinese state (Noland & Haggard, 2011). The consequences include repatriation to North Korea where they are faced with imprisonment and torture (ibid). Also, in China they are highly exposed to trafficking and exploitation due to their illegal status (ibid). After reaching China, with the help of brokers, NGOs or their relatives who defected to South Korea earlier, they take underground routes to reach South Korea. The defectors take flights with forged passports or seek asylum through incursions into the South Korean or foreign embassies (ICG, 2006). Also, as Chinese crackdowns have been tightened, they take long and dangerous journeys from China to other countries such as Mongolia, Laos, Vietnam and Thailand who have more tolerant policies on asylum seekers and do not tend to repatriate them to North Korea when they are arrested (ibid). From those countries, they are deported or sent to South Korea according to their choice, when arrested, surrendering themselves or becoming asylum seekers by entering the South Korean embassy, foreign embassies or the offices of the UNHCR (ibid).

2.2.3 Dramatic changes in refugee number and social composition

¹⁶ http://koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2011/11/113_99519.html

As a result of the severe famine in the North, South Korea has experienced a considerable increase in the numbers of North Korean refugees since the mid-1990s. With the sudden increase from 1994 to 1998 which is about 61 refugees per year, refugees increased dramatically every year from 1999, recording 148 in 1999, 583 in 2001, 2,028 in 2006 and 2,706 in 2011 (MOU, 2001; 2015). Likewise, the total number of refugees increased significantly: 1,095 by 1999, 6,315 by 2004, 12,281 by 2007, and 27,810 refugees in South Korea by March 2015 (ibid). Yet, the annual number of refugees decreased from 2,706 in 2011 to 1,502 in 2012 and 1,514 in 2013, even though the declined numbers of the two years were still much larger compared to before 1999. The decline is likely related to the North Korean new leader's tightened border security since his accession in December 2011 ("North Korean defectors", 2013)¹⁷ and the leader's request for China's collaboration with rigorous border control ("N. Korea struggles", 2013)¹⁸.

Also, there has been a marked change in the social composition of current refugees. Whilst most of the refugees in early years were from elite groups, only 6.5 percent of the total refugees¹⁹ who entered South Korea until October 2014 belonged to officials, soldiers and professionals (MOU, 2015). Most of them were laborers (38.3%) or unemployed (47.8), and the rest were involved in voluntary service (3.9), arts and sports (0.9) and others (2.6) (ibid). As to educational attainments, 16.3 percent of them were college and university graduates or higher, and about 70 percent completed secondary school (ibid). The later refugees have a lower level of education in comparison with the earlier arrivals. The changed composition of refugees is "starting to resemble more closely North Korean society as a whole" (Lankov, 2006, p. 56), as a majority of escapees consist of North Korean commoners after the severe famine.

Another noticeable change has occurred in the composition of women, family and children. First, women made up 12 percent of all refugees by 1998 (MOU, 2015). But, the number of women has exceeded the men since 2002. Women make up 70 percent of all refugees who entered South Korea until March 2015 (ibid). Second, refugees who entered South Korea in a family unit have increased rapidly. No one arrived in South Korea in a family unit between 1990 and 1993, whereas refugees entering in a family unit were 39.1 in 2002 and 39 percent in 2010 (Lee et al., 2003, p. 51; Lee,

¹⁷ <http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20131124000049>

¹⁸ <http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20131226000501>

¹⁹ Current refugees since 1993 account for about 97.5 percent of all refugees including the early refugees until March 2014. Hence, the MOU's statistics on total refugees are nearly identical to that on the current refugees.

2011, July 5). Lastly, the number of refugee children has also increased gradually. According to the MOE (2013), there were just 12 refugee children between the age of 6 and 20 in 1998, but 327 children on average came every year between 2002 and 2012. The total number of refugee children by 2012 was 3,823 (MOE, 2013).

2.2.4 South Korea's resettlement program for current refugees

When it comes to the legal status of current refugees, with the changed circumstance of refugees, the law on refugees was amended in 1993. The amended law reduced the status of refugees largely from the status of patriots to that of welfare dependents (MOU, 2014b). The current law²⁰ since 1997 which followed the amended law in 1993 focuses on enhancing refugees' capacity for self-sufficiency rather than just providing cash or materials (ibid). Thus, refugees' benefits declined greatly compared to those given to early refugees. The reasons for decreased benefits for refugees are the lesser value of defectors for propaganda and intelligence purposes in the post-Cold War environment. There was also a changing consensus that placed emphasis on refugee self-sufficiency, which resulted in legislation amendments (Kim & Jeong, 1996, p. 6-7).

Next, I will discuss the resettlement programs and what they currently consist of. The purpose of this is to understand the resettlement conditions of current refugees. Upon arrival, refugees move to Hanawon, which is a governmental institute providing basic education for social adjustment, after investigation by governmental agents for security reasons (MOU, 2014c). Considering the hostility between the two Korean governments, the investigation of refugees for security reasons is essential. For example, the ROK caught 49 North Korean spies who had entered South Korea while disguising themselves as refugees for the last 10 years ("North Korean defectors", 2013)²¹. The education in Hanawon includes: enhancing physical and psychological health, understanding South Korean society, providing information on initial resettlement support and job training and career counselling (MOU, 2014c). Although the contents seem well-planned (ibid), the period of the education is too short to produce effects of the education on refugees.

²⁰ It still keeps the same status as the previous law in 1993 and has had six times revision to date.

²¹ <http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20131124000049>

Second, after completing the education for 12 weeks in Hanawon, refugees begin to receive benefits from the central and local governments while moving to a house arranged by the governments in a region where they want to live (ibid). From then on, they receive practical benefits (ibid). They receive different amounts of cash based on the number of persons in a household. Single-person households receive approximately US\$ 6,900 in living allowance and US\$ 12,800 for housing. There are also two different types of cash additionally. One is an employment incentive with a maximum of around US\$ 24,000 per person, and the incentive depends on attending vocational training, gaining certificates and the length of employment. The other is a maximum of US\$ 15,100 and it is based on disabilities, the age of more than 59, and long-term illness. Aside from the above cash for refugees, they are eligible for cash assistance as a welfare dependent, receiving US\$ 410 monthly in the case of a single-person household.

Several benefits are offered for employment, medical cover and education (ibid). Along with employment incentives, the South Korean government gives subsidies to employers who hire refugees in order to promote refugees' employment. Refugees are also assigned to personal officials who assist them in finding work. As for medical support, they belong to the most advantaged class of national medical cover. Moreover, refugees can enter most of the high-ranked universities as a special admission without going through heavy competition. Clearly, it was of great benefit for refugees, considering South Korea's extremely high competition for entering the high-ranked universities (The Editorial Board, 2013)²² and the huge impact of academic background on employment and social activities in South Korea. The government also offers full university tuition fee payments. Given that education subsidies for university were one of the main commitments of candidates in the previous presidential elections in South Korea (Lee, 2012)²³, the support for tuition fees must be of great benefit to refugees.

Lastly, the government provides refugees with a variety of social programs for their successful resettlement through a network of governmental and non-governmental agencies (ibid). Local officials and police officers are allocated to refugees to help with necessary paper works and for

²² <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/11/07/opinion/asias-college-exam-mania.html?module=Search&mabReward=relbias%3Ar%2C%7B%22%22%3A%22RI%3A16%22%7D>

²³ <http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20121216000405>

counselling for security respectively. Volunteers from local communities help with local community resettlement. Also, many agencies²⁴ provide refugee services for employment, establishment of a small businesses, social adjustment, education and counselling on a professional and long-term basis. However, the social programs have attracted criticism over the serious shortage of allocated officials, ineffective cooperation between public and private agencies and no suitable measure of evaluating the program (ICG, 2011, p. 23-24).

2.2.5 Summary

To sum up, current refugees still receive significant financial and social benefits through public and private agencies, despite receiving less cash than early refugees. Employment and education support remains generous. Nevertheless, as mentioned in the introduction chapter, unemployment rates are still higher amongst this refugee group and they still have a high dependency upon public assistance (NKRF, 2013, p. 28; MOU, 2015). They haven't adapted to South Korean society successfully. Considering these circumstances, a more diverse approach to the adjustment problem of refugees is required to facilitate their integration into South Korea.

²⁴ Hana Centers and North Korean Refugees Foundation (NKRF) as South Korean governmental agencies, and local social welfare organizations, religious organizations, relevant NGOs, etc. as South Korean non-governmental agencies.

Chapter 3. Psychological distress of North Korean refugee adolescents

This chapter demonstrates the need for specialized educational programs to deal with adolescent mental health difficulties. It is in doing so, that this group will have more success in the process of school integration. To illustrate the necessity, the chapter first explores the degree to which psychological problems of the adolescents affect their lives or general satisfaction. I will then examine the influence of mental health issues on the adolescents' adjustment to school. Subsequently, the chapter examines the educational support provided by the South Korean government for refugee students. Lastly, the chapter shows why the specialized education program is necessary for the students' successful adaptation. In addition, the chapter describes the problem of prejudice against refugee adolescents in school. In turn, it highlights the negative effects of prejudice on refugee adolescents' mental health.

3.1 Severe traumatic experiences

Most refugee adolescents have experienced severe traumatic events in North Korea, whilst escaping and during their stay in third countries (mainly China). Many refugee adolescents suffered from very poor nutrition for years in North Korea because of severe famine when they were infants (Lee, 2006, p. 195). According to a study²⁵, more than 60 percent of all North Korean children who were eight years old or under went through chronic lack of nutrition and a state of being underweight (ibid). The severe malnutrition resulted in the adolescents' stunted physical growth. The adolescents around 16 years old were on average 15 cm smaller than their South Korean counterparts, according to a study of 283 refugee youths' height and weight (Park, 2005 as cited in Lee, 2006, p. 196). Also, many refugee youths have experienced family break-ups because of separation from their parents or death of a family member. 79 percent of refugee respondents in a survey said they had separated from their children (Noland & Haggard, 2011, p. 40). In addition, the survey indicates that more than 23 percent of male informants and 37 percent of females witnessed their family members dying of starvation when they were in North Korea (ibid). Another research paper shows that 87 percent of refugee informants had witnessed a public execution, and

²⁵ This study was conducted in 1998 by the European Union, the United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef) and the World Food Programme (WFP).

81 percent had seen the death of a family member, relative or close neighbor from starvation when they were in North Korea (Jeon, et al., 2005, p. 151). Most of the informants have suffered from the fear of “risks to life if discovered while in hiding”, and great anxieties over “border inspection” during escape (ibid). Furthermore, refugees have been greatly exposed to traumatic events in China. Their vulnerable status as an illegal migrant places them in exploitative circumstances such as low-income employment and/or human trafficking (Noland & Haggard, 2011). Also, they lived in great fear of the Chinese state’s crackdown on them. The penalty if found in China is repatriation to North Korea. As already mentioned, North Korea imposes “extremely harsh penalties” such as the death penalty upon the repatriated refugees (Kurlantzick, & Mason, 2006, p. 41).

Considering the above events, it is manifest that most refugee youths are traumatized by their extreme experiences, thereby suffering from psychological distress. A research paper conducted in China shows that most of the North Korean respondents largely underwent mental distress caused by their traumatic experiences and they also displayed signs of post-traumatic stress disorder²⁶ (PTSD)-identical symptoms (Chang, Noland, & Haggard, 2006, p. 25).

3.2 Psychological distress of refugee adolescents

Inadequate treatment for psychological distress

However, upon arrival in Hanawon, the mental health needs of this vulnerable group are apparently not addressed. Hanawon provides a program lasting 46 - 78 hours for the improvement of both physical and mental health during the period of education in the institute (MOU, 2014c). Technically, half of this time is allowed for mental health. The program may give refugee adolescents temporary stability, but it is a temporary solution to dealing with the complexity of trauma and integration amongst adolescents. In general, refugee adolescents are in need of mental health care through “a variety of different treatments, including individual, family, group, and school based interventions” (Fazel & Stein, 2002, p. 367). Because “traumatic events can have an

²⁶ Post-trauma stress disorder (PTSD) can “occur after you have been through a traumatic event” which is “something terrible and scary” such as “terrorist attack, sexual or physical assault, serious accident, and natural disasters” (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, n.d.). Its symptoms are having “bad memories or nightmares”, feeling “fear, guilt, or shame”, and having “trouble concentrating or sleeping” (ibid). It is often used as an indication of accessing psychological state of those who went through traumatic events.

effect on a child's emotional, cognitive, and moral development" (ibid). Even, the majority of refugees have been further stressed by different values and attitudes of the South Korean society such as individualism and money-orientation during the period of adaptation to the society (ICG, 2011; Lankov, 2006; Min, 2008; Suh 2002).

Harsh circumstances of school

After twelve weeks in Hanawon, refugee adolescents attend South Korean school. There are a number of problems to face as a refugee adolescent trying to integrate into the school environment in general. First, the South Korean education system is extremely competitive and score-oriented (Lau, 2012; The Editorial Board, 2013)²⁷, and it is also different from the North Korean one. Many students in South Korea study for thirteen hours a day, and indeed they attend private cram schools at night time to get higher grades (Koo, 2014)²⁸. Thus, many students have shown physical illness caused by academic stress (ibid). Further, academic stress has become one of the main reasons for students' suicidal thoughts (Koo, 2014). The education system is also very different from the North Korean system in terms of contents and curricula (Hong et al., 2010, p. 34). For these reasons, school courses are very difficult to keep up with for refugee students who have a lack of schooling due to their educational disruption in North Korea and the long journey as illegal migrants in third countries. Only 53.9 percent of the refugee students had attended school in the North and 83.8 percent of those had just attended middle school or lower (NKRF, 2012, p. 6). Indeed, only 11.4 percent of the respondents reported having attended school when they were in third countries (ibid, p. 7).

Secondly, most refugee youths are enrolled in junior classes with younger students because of the disparity of education level. This situation makes it difficult to befriend with South Korean classmates due to the hierarchical relationship between people based on age difference in Korean tradition (Hong et al., 2010, p. 33). Thirdly, refugee students experience difficulties in adjusting to school because of the high dependency on private tutoring (NKRF, 2012, p. 17) and individualistic orientation (Hong et al., 2010, p. 35). Receiving private tutoring has been nearly essential for all

²⁷ <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/11/07/opinion/asias-college-exam-mania.html>

<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/03/world/europe/two-opposite-education-systems-ranked-on-top.html?module=Search&mabReward=relbias%3Ar>

²⁸ <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/02/opinion/sunday/south-koreas-education-system-hurts-students.html>

students in South Korea to survive in an extremely competitive school environment. However, the high cost of the private tutoring is a heavy burden on shoulder of refugee families who belong to a low-economic class. Also, school life in an individualistic mood can be daunting for the students from a collectivist society.

Serious psychological sufferings and its negative influence upon school adaptation

Consequently, refugee adolescents' mental distress is worsened by the harsh circumstances of school. Some studies have demonstrated the serious psychological instability of the adolescents. A survey displays that mental health of refugee adolescents was considerably worse than that of ordinary adolescents in terms of depression/anxiety, social withdrawal and internalized problems (Lee et al., 2012). Further research on anxiety and depression among refugee youths between the age of 14 and 29 indicates that 53.7 percent of the respondents displayed higher anxiety status than average (Choi et al., 2011). Also, the research shows that 36.1 percent exhibited higher depression status than average (ibid). Moreover, two research papers show that refugee students are in a state of psychological instability and high stress in their daily lives (Yang, 2009; Jeong et al., 2006 as cited in Hong et al., 2010). These negative factors can contribute to impulsive actions, violent or self-harming behaviors, and trouble in building relationships (ibid).

As a result, it is expected that the serious psychological sufferings negatively affect refugee students' adjustment to school. A study on refugee students' adjustment problem reports that their psychological distress contributes to their poor adjustment to school (Han et al., 2013). Also, Kim (2009) states that the traumatic experiences of refugee adolescents cause them psychological sufferings by damaging their self-esteem. Further, mental distress can adversely affect refugee adolescents' academic functioning (Fox et al., 2004).

3.3 The necessity of specialized programs for psychological support

Educational support from the South Korean government

Despite the seriousness of psychological sufferings and their negative effects on school adjustment, attention to refugee students' psychological distress doesn't appear sufficient. Exploring the education plans of the main governmental agencies²⁹ working for refugee adolescents, the agencies,

²⁹ (MOE, 2014; Center of Educational Support for North Korean refugee adolescents; NKRF, n.d)

first, work on the development of textbooks that match the students' education level. Second, they provide the adolescents with vocational training, internship opportunities and scholarships. Third, they hold specialized workshops for school teachers on the educational issues of refugee students. Lastly, they organize mentoring programs for emotional support between refugee students and mentors, who consist of professionals, teachers and volunteers. In the mentoring programs, the role of the mentors is to advise on study, school life and careers, and also to be the students' friends who can give emotional support and do cultural activities such as watching movies together (MOE, 2014; MOE & Incheon Metropolitan City Office of Education, 2014, p. 19). Aside from this, the government provides refugee students with additional classes to enhance their academic level. The government increased its budget for refugee education by 40 percent in 2014, and the budget is approximately US\$ 382,000 (MOE, 2014).

The necessity of a particular education program

Clearly, the government has put considerable effort into the education of refugee students for their better adjustment to school. Academic and vocational support of the government is especially noteworthy, and financial support is fairly generous. Yet, in contrast to the active academic and vocational support, psychological support appears relatively insufficient. It is carefully expected that the mentoring programs would be helpful for refugee students in relieving psychological sufferings. In fact, getting counselling from and doing cultural activities with teachers or professionals would exert powerful influence upon school students, in general. But, in the case of refugee students who are traumatized by extreme experiences, the programs don't seem adequate. Refugee students need more systematic and effective programs specialized in handling psychological distress, which is more than counseling and advising can provide. Once the students' mental health issues are addressed, the government support will work better given the negative influence of mental problems on school adjustment and academic functioning (Han et al., 2013; Fox et al., 2004). As a result of these measures, the students' adaptation to school should improve. Therefore, for refugee students' successful adjustment to school, it is necessary to provide a specialized education program in addressing the students' psychological sufferings.

3.4 Prejudice against refugee adolescents in school.

In addition, the chapter pays a little attention to the issue of prejudice against refugee students, because the prejudice problem is largely involved in worsening the students' psychological distress. Also, the *Creative Theater Workshop* that this thesis investigates has an effect on reducing prejudice against refugee adolescents (S.Y. Park, personal communication, December 30, 2013).

Many refugee students encounter prejudice against them in school. Ryang (2012) states that refugee adolescents are "the victims of the most direct expressions of prejudice and ridicule at the schools they attend." Many youths reported having been discriminated and bullied ("Young N.Korean Defectors", 2012)³⁰. Also, according to a study, 36.9 percent of 287 refugee adolescents wanted to migrate to other countries mostly because of discrimination (Oh, 2013)³¹. Moreover, some reported that it hurt their pride to be ridiculed by their classmates when any topic related to North Korea occurred in class (Jeon & Jo, 2009 as cited in Ryang, 2012; "Young N.Korean Defectors", 2012)³². The above facts clearly show that refugee students go through psychological difficulties because of prejudice and discrimination against them, as well.

Even, the prejudice problem has produced a secondary trouble which is a confusion of identity. Many adolescents tend to hide their identities as North Koreans in school due to fear of bullying and discrimination (Kim et al., 2013, p.33). A refugee student said that if her classmates knew she was from North Korea, they would look down on her and will see me as a beggar ("Young N. Korean", 2004)³³. Thus, according to a survey, around 62 percent of refugee youth informants were unwilling to disclose their origins for "fear of discrimination from their classmates" ("We Must Do", 2010)³⁴. Also, another research paper shows that 54.4 percent of refugee adolescent respondents didn't reveal their identities as North Koreans even to those in close relationships mainly due to their fear of discrimination (NKRF, 2012, p. 11-12). Surely, this tendency can cause refugee adolescents to go through a confusion of identity. Some studies on refugee adolescents point out that many of the refugee adolescents went through an identity crisis. Maing (2013, p.5) states in his study that 26.9 percent of the adolescent respondents weren't sure if they were South Koreans or North Koreans. This identity confusion can provoke mental instability. Further, the

³⁰ http://english.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2012/01/12/2012011200656.html

³¹ <http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20130207000854>

³² http://english.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2012/01/12/2012011200656.html

³³ http://english.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2004/07/08/2004070861025.html

³⁴ http://english.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2010/10/08/2010100800922.html

confusion can cause negative consequences in the future. Because adolescent years play a crucial role in establishing one's identity in a society, and forming a sense of belonging to their community. In short, serious prejudice and discrimination against refugee students in school have caused psychological difficulties such as identity confusion. Accordingly, reducing prejudice would be helpful for the students in relieving their sufferings.

3.5 Summary

Refugee adolescents went through several traumatic events at an early age, events that would be traumatic enough for adults, let alone youths who are a vulnerable group without fully formed identities. Thus, they have suffered from psychological distress. But, without sufficient treatment for the distress, they are placed in the South Korean education which has difficult system to adjust for vulnerable refugee students. As a result, mental health has been found to deteriorate. The deterioration of mental health amongst this group greatly interrupt the adolescents' successful adjustment to school. To improve refugee students' adaptation to school, the South Korean government focuses particularly on academic and vocational support. But, the government's psychological support doesn't seem adequate, considering the severity of the mental health problems facing the adolescents. Therefore, a specialized program is required for refugee students in order to deal with these complex problems. The specialized program allows other programs such as academic help to function more efficiently, and thus it contributes to the students' successful adaptation to school together with other support.

Additionally, many refugee students encounter prejudice and discrimination in school. The painful experiences have an adverse influence on the students' mental health. They can cause a confusion of identity. Thus, dealing with the problem of prejudice would be helpful in relieving the students' psychological distress.

Chapter 4. Methodology

This research seeks to find out whether or not *the Creative Theater Workshop* is effective in addressing refugee students' psychological sufferings. To answer the question faithfully, it is very important to collect credible data in the way tailored to answer the research question and sub-questions. Hence, this chapter attempts to show how I collected the data, how I selected the sources of data and why I chose such sources. More specifically, first, the chapter shows where the study area is and why the area was chosen. Next, it describes how informants were selected and how I gained access to the study area. Third, the chapter gives specific explanations of the methods used to collect data, *official documents* of the study area and *qualitative interviewing*. Lastly, the chapter discusses the insider/outsider problem of conducting fieldwork.

4.1 Study area

In many cases, research identifies a *study area* in a geographical sense. Yet, this research needs to recognize the *study area* in a contextual sense. Because this research explores the education program conducted in the Set-Net school, and hence the most relevant context of the research is the school itself, which operates the education program, rather than the city where the school is situated. Thus, this research identifies the school as the study area.

The Set-Net school is an alternative school in South Korea for refugee adolescents between the age of the late teens and the mid-20s. 'Set-Net' stands for an encouraging sound people cry out in marching, and the encouraging sound expresses the desire of the school, which becomes a stepping-stone to refugee adolescents' successful integration into South Korea (Set-Net School, n.d.³⁵). The school is located in Wonju city which is about 100 km away from Seoul, the capital of South Korea. It has been over 10 years since the foundation of the school in September, 2004 (ibid).

4.2 The reasons for choosing the Set-Net school as a study area

³⁵ The school's website: <http://34school.net/>

It is important to present the reasons why this research chose the Set-Net school as a study area among several alternative schools. Because the validity of choosing the school increases the credibility of this research, as the school is the area of research.

The first is about public recognition of the school. The school has been financially supported by the MOU and other governmental agencies, and it has also been officially acknowledged as an alternative school by the governmental institutes (ibid). Also, its education program has been introduced by the major national South Korean televisions³⁶ (ibid). These facts are noteworthy, because they show the credibility of the school as an appropriate research area for assessing their effectiveness in integrating refugee youths. This credibility is the first reason why I chose the Set-Net school as the study area.

Second, the school's philosophy is to encourage refugee students to build the capacity to be independent in their lives ("SetNet School," n.d.). The school underlines that wounds of refugee youths from their traumatic experiences in the past should be healed adequately through education (ibid). Hence, the school has designed a particular education program, which is one of the main programs, for addressing their wounds, thereby enhancing their capacity for independence in South Korean society. By contrast, although other alternative schools also have education programs for psychological troubles, the programs in the other schools don't seem to be as emphasized as the Set-Net school's. This is the second reason for choosing the Set-Net school as the study area. That is, considering refugee youths' psychological problems based on my work experience mentioned in chapter 1³⁷, I believe that the problems of the youths should be dealt with to facilitate their successful integration into South Korea. In this regard, the school has great awareness of addressing mental health problems of these youths, in comparison to the other schools.

The third reason for choosing the Set-Net school is that the school has a specialized education program for dealing with mental troubles, called the '*Creative Theater Workshop*' which borrows the form from drama therapy and has been carried out over eight years (Set-Net School, 2012).

³⁶ The Korean Broadcasting System (KBS), the Munhwa Broadcasting Corporation (MBC) and Educational Broadcasting System (EBS)

³⁷ I worked as a volunteer and a manager for eight years in a non-governmental organization for welfare of children from low-class families or one-parent families. Some of the children suffered from psychological difficulties caused by neglect from home.

Refugee adolescents suffered traumatic events when they were at an early age. Thus, the adolescents are in a very vulnerable condition. Hence, traditional counseling services could have the risk of hurting their emotions by reminding them about their painful memories. On the other hand, a self-healing process through self-expression in drama therapy appears to be more a desirable approach to psychological healing without touching upon their painful memories (Rousseau et al., 2005). Therefore, the drama therapy program of the Set-Net school can be effective in addressing the youths' mental distress. The next chapter closely explores what drama therapy is and how the therapy works on addressing refugee youths' mental troubles.

The fourth reason for choosing this school is because of the continuity and professionalism of the drama therapy program. The program has been in operation for over eight years with a well-organized schedule. Based on my work experience, psychological troubles should be handled step by step with a long-term and careful plan not to cause any negative impact. In this regard, the continuity of the program illustrated the reliability of the program. Also, the program mostly invites professional dancers and musicians to make a well-organized performance. Indeed, a teacher who is in charge of the program used to direct a variety of performances as well as to be the principal of an art school³⁸. This professionalism would help effective conduct of the drama therapy. These respects of the program impressed me, thereby making me choose this school as the appropriate study area.

Some criticize the school because the curriculum is fairly different from the mainstream curriculum in South Korea which focuses mainly on traditional subjects such as mathematics. The curriculum of the school is taken up by a large portion of cultural and artistic activities (Set-Net School, n.d.). But school is not only a place to gain knowledge. It is also a place to identify oneself in one's society and gain an overall understanding of society (Kia-Keating & Ellis, 2007, p. 30). Therefore, the school's distinct curriculum is not a cause for criticism, since the main purpose of the school is not grade-attainment.

4.3 Informants

High sensitivity of informants and official documents as data

³⁸ This information is from the collected data.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, most of refugee adolescents suffered several traumatic events in the past. Yet, the trauma hasn't been dealt with sufficiently, and on top of this, resettlement has been a huge stress in their lives. As a result, it is a very sensitive matter to interview refugee youths in the Set-Net school. The interview could harm the youths seriously by reminding them of their painful memories. In fact, according to a teacher in the school, many of the refugee youths were painfully hurt by an interview conducted by some researchers who didn't understand the youths' traumas. Most believe that any research which might damage informants is unacceptable (Bryman, 2012, p. 135). Hence, it wasn't possible for me to hold interviews with the students.

Nevertheless, the school has published many written and visual documents. They contain detailed contents of how the drama therapy program has been operated and what the students felt before, during the course and after the workshop. These materials are appropriate alternatives to the interview. In effect, the materials are better than the interview as research data, because analyzing the materials will not hurt the students' feelings. It is more ethical as a research strategy to have the published materials as data, rather than interviews. The students' statements in the documents are more natural and sincere than those gained in a structured environment such as an interview setting. This gives my research a significant advantage as stirring up uncomfortable memories from traumatized youths is not going to necessarily produce ethical or accurate data. This point is clearly demonstrated by an interview with the principal of the school. He said that the students are in an abnormal state because of their traumatic experiences and stress coming from a very different society (S.Y. Park, personal communication, December 30, 2013). Hence, they don't even understand what they say and what they feel in an interview (ibid). Besides, their statements are frequently changed depending on their moods (ibid). Thus, data collected from interviewing with the students would be highly unreliable (ibid).

Informant selection and size

This research targets at one particular education program, 'Creative Theater Workshop', in the Set-Net school. Hence, purposive sampling is appropriate as a sample strategy in this case, because the strategy is to sample informants based on particular purpose of the research (Cohen et al., 2000, p. 103). Also, the sampling strategy is "a more intellectual strategy than the simple demographic

stratification of epidemiological studies”, and the most competent informants are chosen to respond to the research question (Marshall, 1996, p. 523). For this reason, informants in this research are refugee students who took part in the therapy program and a teacher who led the program. They are the most suitable and relevant sample for this research.

When it comes to informant size, the research has seventeen refugee students who participated in the program and one teacher who was in the charge of the program. Proper informant size in qualitative research depends on whether or not size could answer research question adequately (ibid). This means how many informants are appropriate to investigate the effectivity of the therapy program, in the context of this research. Eighteen informants appears adequate to collect data. As to the size of the students, looking at the visual documents, which are part of the research data, all of the seventeen students participated in the therapy workshop fully. This means that the size is sufficient to operate the workshop, thereby showing the effectivity of the workshop. But a critical question of the size of the research informants can be raised in terms of only one teacher informant. By the time the research was conducted, the school was on winter vacation. Hence, I was only able to meet with one teacher. Thus, I ended up interviewing merely one teacher. This weakness can make the teacher’s comments about the program less credible. The teacher did not represent the opinions of all teachers involved in the therapy program. Nevertheless, he is a main teacher who project and operate the workshop. Indeed, he is a founder as well as a principal of the school. Thus, his comment is worthy of data.

Gaining access

As refugee youths have been the subjects of study before, there have reportedly been some researchers who did not have an ethical approach to their work. Hence, I was cautious in approaching the school, at first. A month before visiting the school, I informed the school of who I am, what the purpose of my research is and why I would like to do research on the school through email in order to give my credentials and thus to obtain their consent for my research. This procedure is crucial, because researchers don’t have the right to have access to any school without their permission and they need to prove their qualification as ‘researchers and human beings’ (Cohen et al., 2000, p. 53). More importantly, researchers should provide participants with sufficient information about research, so the participants can decide whether or not to take part in

the research (Bryman, 2012, p. 138). This is ‘the principle of informed consent’ for protecting and respecting ‘the subject’s right to freedom and self-determination’ (Cohen et al., 2000, p. 51).

Some days after the email, the school gave me consent to do my research. For the importance of ethical research, when I visited the school, I gave the principal the explanation of my research once more. But, the principal said that it was improbable to interview refugee students because of the high sensitivity of their past wounds. He suggested I do my research based on the visual and written documents made by the school which contains the students’ impressions of the workshop, instead. Thus, having the documents was the way to gain access to the student informants. However, the principal agreed to have an interview with me.

4.4 Data collection methods

The research method you choose depends upon “what you are trying to find out” (Silverman, 2006, p. 34). This research is to analyze whether or not the therapy program is effective in dealing with refugee youths’ psychological distress. That is, the research explores how the youths’ attitudes and behaviors have been changed and what they felt after the education program. Thus, the research chose a qualitative method, more specifically semi-structured interview and an analysis of official documents produced by the school. I chose qualitative methods because this research examines the words and feelings of the students and the teacher, and qualitative method focuses more on words than numbers (Bryman, 2012, p. 380). However, some criticize the qualitative method as too subjective and interpretative, because the method relies largely on the researchers’ views which can be different opinions from one another on the same topic (ibid, p. 405). Although data could be influenced by researchers’ personal views to a certain extent, this subjectivity could be, by contrast, one of the main strengths of qualitative method. Because attitudes, feelings and words are difficult to measure through numerical data, but they can be measured by researchers’ experiences, thoughts and emotions. Also, one of the main characteristics of qualitative research is that it is able to “study phenomena which are simply unavailable elsewhere” (Silverman, 2006, p. 43). Therefore, qualitative method is more appropriate for my research. Still, it is important to bear the shortcomings of qualitative method such as subjectivity in mind, in order to mitigate the problems in my research project.

4.4.1 Official documents produced by the Set-Net school

I wasn't allowed to hold interviews with the students because of the high sensitivity mentioned. Indeed, I did not get a chance to observe the therapy program either, due to winter vacation. For this reason, the main way to collect data is to make use of the official documents produced by the school. It is accurate and meaningful for researchers to have the documents produced by organization as data (Bryman, 2012, p. 551). The school has periodically produced the documents about the education program for the purposes of drawing attention of South Koreans to refugee adolescents' difficulties in adjusting to South Korea, thereby encouraging South Koreans to have better understanding of North Korean refugees (S.Y. Park, personal communication, December 30, 2013). Additionally, the school wants to document the process and the outcome of the program. The documents used as the data are comprised of:

1. Five video materials filmed by a professional film director which contain two documentaries about the process of the workshop, two performance records, and one travel record. The visual materials show the youths' statements on what they feel and think of the education program.
2. Eight written documents which are comprised of five leaflets of the five visual materials and two brochures and one booklet about the workshop.

The documents are well-made, and the school has been generous to me in providing all of the documents. Thanks to well-documented materials and the school's generosity to me, the documents from the school are of great usefulness as data for analyzing the education program. There are a number of advantages of using documents as data. Through the video materials, the researcher can observe refugee youths' attitudes and changes in detail and listen to their impressions of the program in the context of their natural settings. This is of great importance, because the changes in the youths' attitudes and their impressions appear more trustworthy when they are part of a natural environment rather than a structured setting such as an interview. Lincoln and Guba (1985) said that research should be conducted in "their natural settings as context is heavily implicated in meaning". Interviewing has the characteristic of interfering in participants' flow of activities (Bryman, 2012, p. 494).

The second advantage of the documents as data is that the data is relatively objective with regards to translation. As all informants speak in their mother tongue (Korean), the views of the translator, who is me in this context, can be included in the process of translating the informants' statements into English. As a result, my translation may negatively affect the objectivity of data by distorting them. But, nearly all of the documents from the school have English subtitles, and hence the analysis of data can be more objective. Third, the documents contain specific information on the whole period of the workshop. This is very helpful to observe relevant happenings in the period and context of the education program. It couldn't be gained by an interview which often entails very short contact with informants (ibid).

Lastly a document could be influenced by a writer's certain view of a topic, and thus the document couldn't be recognized as 'free from error and distortion' (Scott, 1990). Indeed, the document couldn't have sufficient objectivity of explaining a particular event (Bryman, 2012, p. 551). However, the documents produced by the school don't have one writer. Further, they naturally show the process and performance of the education program per se and the students' impressions of the program. Therefore, the documents seem to maintain objectivity to a large degree, thereby increasing the credibility of the documents.

4.4.2 Qualitative interviewing

To analyze the workshop, it is also important to listen to the opinion of the teacher who is in charge of the program. Through the teacher, the research can understand the characters, the necessity and the positive effects of the therapy program from the view of the teacher. To collect this data, qualitative interviewing is appropriate as a method. The method provides researchers with high flexibility in time and place (Bryman, 2012, p. 469). More importantly, qualitative interviewing is suitable for gaining insight into informants' own ideas and aspects (ibid, p. 470). For this reason, I focused on qualitative interviewing to gain the motivation and ideas from the teacher's perspective. More specifically, the research chose semi-structured interviewing, a method where researchers ask interviewees a list of certain pre-prepared questions on specific topics so interviewees have freedom to answer as they wish (Bryman, 2012, p. 471). Indeed, this enables the interviewer to ask spontaneous questions which may arise as a result of the semi-structured process (ibid). This

research desires the interviewee's views specific to the education program. At the same time, the research should be open to any questions coming up in the middle of interviewing, because the research can gain useful information through spontaneous questions.

When it comes to conducting interviewing, I contacted the teacher for the purpose of interviewing a month before doing research. I needed to provide him with enough time to consider whether to interview or not. My research period was just a month which was very short. Hence, to have the interview in his preferred setting, I had to schedule the interview early. It is the interviewee who does the favor, not the interviewer, so the interview setting should be up to the interviewee. My preparation began with an exploration of the school's website to get basic information about the interviewee's work and focus. This is helpful to have better understanding of his own terms and views used about the school (Bryman, 2012, p. 473). I then prepared some essential questions for the interview. The questions were made depending on "what I need to know in order to answer the research question" (ibid). When interviewing, I explained the purpose of the interview, and asked if I could tape-record the interview. An interviewer should always be sensitive to the interviewee for successful interviewing, and it is an ethical approach to research (Kvale, 1996). The interviewee allowed me to tape-record the interview. In the course of interviewing, I ensured that I was a good listener and I did not lose my focus on what I had to ask and find out.

Regarding the difficulties of interviewing, I found it hard to end the interview for I did not want to cut the interviewee off and be impolite. Hence, I couldn't first find the point of finishing the interview. But, after a while, I found that it was an adequate point to finish the interview when the interviewee looked tired and his comments were drifting away from the focus of the research. The interview lasted approximately an hour. The second difficulty pertains to spontaneous questions arising as a result of the semi-structure of the interviewing. Although it is one of the main characteristics of the semi-structured interview (Bryman, 2012), it was difficult to pick up questions to the interviewee's comments promptly, and also I was worried about interfering with what he was saying.

To sum up, despite some difficulties of managing the interviewing length and picking up immediate and additional questions, I dealt with them in a professional and ethical manner. Thus, the interviewing was well carried out in a friendly atmosphere to the interviewee,

4.5 Self-reflection: not either insider or outsider, but insider-outsider researcher

A main criticism of qualitative research is that the research is too subjective and interpretive (Bryman, 2012). Although any qualitative research cannot be free from its subjectivity, it is crucial to be aware of being less subjective in the course of researching. Hence, it is of help to carefully examine my subjectivity as a researcher in this context (Pillow, 2003, p. 178). Reflexivity can be considered a way to explore the researcher's subjectivity. It has been used as a methodological tool for showing legitimacy and validity of qualitative research (Pillow, 2003). Reflexivity is when a researcher becomes "critically conscious through personal accounting of how the researcher's self-location (for example, gender, race, class, sexuality, ethnicity and nationality), position and interests influence all stages of the research process" (ibid, p. 178). Therefore, my status as an insider as well as an outsider is explored here by being reflexive to the research context. More specifically, it indicates why I am identified as an insider and an outsider and then what the pros and cons of being the insider and outsider in this research are.

Being an insider researcher

An *insider* is a researcher who has common characteristics, language, and experiential basis as the subjects s/he is interviewing (Asselin, 2003 as cited in Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). According to the definition, I, a South Korean, am identified as an insider because I share the language, ethnicity, history and cultural heritage with the informants, even though I grew up in very different society from the student informants who grew up in North Korea.

Being an insider made it much easier to gain access to the Set-Net school. Despite the short relationship and contact through phone call and email, I earned the credibility of the informants quickly. It is probably influenced by my common identity as a Korean. The advantage of belonging to the same membership as the informants is to be accepted easily by giving the informants a certain level of credibility and honesty (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009, p. 58). Thus, the friendly situation allowed me to collect deeper data (ibid). Second, my insider status was also of much help in understanding

what the students were talking about when they described their feelings. Even though some criticize being insiders as being too involved in researching and analyzing data, it would likely be difficult to figure out the nuanced meanings of certain feelings and statements without having a common cultural background. Concerning the drawbacks of being an insider, it is that informants may not sufficiently explain their personal experiences because they assume insiders are too similar to them (ibid). But, I tried to resolve issues related to this by using the documents containing the students' statements in a natural setting instead of conducting interviews which would have been unethical and highly unreliable as data. Another cost is that my aspect as an insider could excessively influence analyzing data (ibid, p. 59). To avoid this drawback, I attempted to be aware of it all the time when analyzing collected data.

Being an outsider researcher

The *outsider* in research is defined as one who doesn't have "*a priori*" familiarity with the research places and participants (Hellawell, 2006, p. 485). I grew up in a greatly different society, which is the South Korean society, from the refugee students who grew up in North Korean society. Indeed, the students went through very different life experiences from me. The students lived illegally in China or another third countries under harsh and abusive circumstances before arriving in South Korea. Hence, it is difficult for me to understand North Korean society and the students' traumatic experiences fully. In other words, I appear to have a very different background and social attitude from the students. For this reason, I can also be regarded as an outsider to a certain extent. When I explored the student's impressions of the education program, I could create the distance required to be more objective in collecting and analyzing the data, thanks to my different background from the students. So, the data could be investigated in a wider and more comparative perspective, because outsiders could analyze participants' experiences more suitably in terms of theoretical framework (Fay, 1996). On the other hand, the main disadvantages of being an outsider are the difficulties of gaining enough trust to access fruitful data and having sufficient understanding of informants' experiences (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). However, in this research, the drawbacks were offset to some extent by the benefits of the insider status.

An insider-outsider researcher

It is unlikely that one is completely either an insider or an outsider in research. Because as qualitative researchers have understanding of ‘the fluidity and multilayered complexity of human experience’, being a member in a certain group doesn’t mean he or she is totally the same as other members in the group and likewise, not being a member in a group doesn’t mean he or she is completely different from other members (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009, p. 60). That is, it is too simplistic to completely separate the concept of the insider and outsider from each other (ibid). Given my status in this research, I can place myself in an insider position with regard to common ethnicity, language and cultural heritage, whereas I can also place myself in an outsider position concerning my different background and experiences. In other words, I may be identified as an insider-outsider researcher who is either closer to insider than outsider or outsider than insider, not recognized completely either insider or outsider (ibid). Therefore, what is more important is that researchers are carefully aware of the roles of both insiders and outsiders, when they collect and analyze data. Through taking advantage of both roles, researchers can seek more accurate and effective studies.

4.6 Summary

This chapter explores the methodological issue of this research. First, this research explains the reasons why the Set-Net school was chosen as a study area. The reasons are the credibility of the school, the school’s significant attention to refugee students’ mental sufferings, the particular education program of the school (the *Creative Theater Workshop*) and the continuity and professionalism of the education program. As to informants, they are seventeen refugee students and one teacher who took part in a workshop. To gain access to the Set-Net school, I informed the school of this research in advance. However, due to the high sensitivity of the students, I couldn’t interview them. Instead, access to the students is through gaining the official documents published by the school, which contain the students’ opinions and impressions of the workshop.

This research makes use of qualitative methods, because qualitative research is more appropriate for analyzing people’s words, feelings and thoughts. The methods are an analysis of the official documents from the school and semi-structured interviewing. More objective analysis is possible from the use of documents as data. They contain the students’ comments spoken in a natural setting,

have English subtitles which make more objective analysis possible with regards to the translation of the material, and store the information for the whole period of the workshop which is improbable for me to gain due to the short period of my research and the objectivity of the documents. The semi-structured interview was used for collecting data from the teacher. It was a suitable method to get the necessary data for the research question and simultaneously to be open to immediate questions for additional information. The difficulties in conducting the interview are to find the point of ending the interview and to pick up spontaneous questions.

Lastly, the chapter examines my status as an insider or an outsider in the context of this research. My status can be both the insider considering common ethnicity and cultural heritage and the outsider considering a different social background and life experiences. Therefore, rather than distinguishing between the insider and the outsider, it is more important to be conscious of what the benefits of my status as the insider and as the outsider are, and thus how my dual status affects the research.

Chapter 5. Conceptual framework

This chapter establishes the conceptual framework for this research. First, the chapter explores the theory of *drama therapy* which is the form of the education program, the '*Creative Theater Workshop*'. In detail, this part examines the basic nature of drama therapy and therapeutic principles of such therapy. Subsequently, the critical aspect of drama therapy is explored. Thus, the first part gives the theoretical idea of how the drama therapy can work on addressing North Korean refugee adolescents' psychological distress. Second, a classroom drama therapy program conducted in Canada is presented to observe its effectiveness. This can offer a comparative perspective to the theatre workshop this research analyzes. Lastly, the theory of the *parasocial interaction* is explored to understand how the education program can work towards reducing South Korean prejudices against refugee adolescents.

5.1 What is drama therapy?

Definition of drama therapy

Here, the basic components of drama therapy are described. Drama therapy is “one of the several expressive or creative arts therapies” (Landy, 2006, p. 135), which uses drama with “a healing intention” (Jones, 1996). The therapy encourages participants to experience change in the course of the drama (ibid). In detail, the therapy makes use of “the potential of drama to reflect and transform life experiences in order to enable clients to express and work on problems they are encountering or to maintain a client’s well-being and health” (ibid, p. 6). Clients make connections between their internal troubles and the drama performance through stories of and enacting in performance within “a therapeutic framework”, and through the connection they pursue to establish new relationship with their internal problems (ibid). Referring to another definition of drama therapy by the British Association of Drama Therapists (badth), drama therapy is “a form of psychological therapy in which all of the performance arts are utilized within the therapeutic relationship” (badth, 2014). Drama therapists try to offer clients an opportunity to be changed psychologically, emotionally and socially by arranging a variety of artistic methods such as “stories, myths, play texts, puppetry, masks and improvisation” (ibid). Thereby, clients look at their painful distress in an indirect sense (ibid). In other words, drama therapy seems to attempt to heal or

alleviate clients' psychological difficulties by providing them a chance to express their inner pains in an indirect manner using dramatic methods. Applying this concept to the education program studied here, the therapy program seems largely to be an appropriate method in healing refugee students' psychological distress.

The expressive forms of drama therapy

When it comes to ways to express in drama therapy, clients get a chance to explore their life experiences by acting characters in drama scripts who represent themselves (Jones, 1996, p. 8). Also, drama therapy makes use of particular objects such as toys and puppets to express "problematic feelings, relationships or experiences", and it also uses the body in the manners of "disguise, masking, mime or performance art to explore the self, image, relationship" (ibid). Drama therapy utilizes a variety of expressive forms to help clients explore their own troubles in a comfortable atmosphere. These forms appear much more friendly and natural for refugee students in expressing and exploring their own feelings and internal problems compared to the way of counseling which may encourage the students to speak explicitly about their painful memories.

The key ideas emphasized in drama therapy

It is necessary to look at the basic ideas of drama therapy in order to have better understanding of the effects of drama therapy. Drama therapy develops based on healing perspective of theatrical performances, healing perspective that arises from creativity and enactment in theatre (ibid). According to Klaesi and Müller-Thalheim (as cited in Jones, 1996), creativity "has within it inherent *self-healing process*". It is because creativity intrinsically entails "inspiration, change, new combinations, new actions" which are the most important parts of improving poor conditions of body or mind (Müller-Thalheim, 1975 as cited in Jones, 1996). That is, he stresses that arts and artistic processes involve high possibility to heal problems naturally (ibid). Additionally, he believes that when people express their emotions and problems using artistic methods they will build new relationships with their emotions and problems (ibid). This is a self-healing process using artistic tools, and it is the main idea of drama therapy. Self-healing could be a more recommendable way to heal psychological troubles in a long-term perspective. When people learn how to deal with troubles themselves, they could also manage other troubles they may face in the future. In the case of refugee adolescents, the youths may suffer other and further difficulties in adapting to new areas

such as a workplace or the university after graduation of school. A self-healing process could strengthen the youths' capacity to overcome other difficulties they will face.

5.2 Therapeutic factors of drama therapy

This section, more importantly, focuses on how drama therapy specifically works on clients in healing their mental distress. That is, this part explains the processes of how drama therapy becomes therapeutic and effective for clients.

Dramatic projection

The first element concerns *dramatic projection* which is the process where participants project “aspects of themselves or their experience into theatrical or dramatic materials or into enactment” (Jones, 1996, p. 101). Through this phase, the participants expose their internal problems from their inner space, and then they begin to build up a relationship between their internal issues and the dramatic materials (ibid). As the relationship develops, the participants experience a change through expressing their feelings with theatrical materials while getting a chance to explore and understand their troubles (ibid). Similarly, Wilshire (1982, p. 5) claims that dramatic projection is an essential way to observe and fully understand ourselves: “to come to see oneself is to effect change in oneself in the very act of seeing”. The dramatic projection makes it possible that conversation in a theatrical form takes place between participants' internal troubles and expression of their troubles (Jones, 1996, p. 101). Thus, this process can be crucial and effective for refugee students, who have experienced traumatic events, to connect their internal troubles to externalization without pressure and pain.

Transformation

The next section pertains to *transformation* which means that clients themselves and their real events can be transformed into the context of theatre. That is, theatrical language can transform normal ways of recognizing “the self and events” into different forms, as the self can be expressed through a puppet and the events can be re-played in a theatre performance (Jones, 1996, p. 121). As a result, through the transformation of the self and events, drama therapy can provide participants with “new possibilities of expression, feeling and association” upon the self and events

(ibid). Moreover, all the stages of making a performance can put transformational impacts on clients. During all the phases, participants get chances to think, feel and be creative in a mixed manner (ibid). These combinations of thoughts, feelings, and creativity can give possibility for transforming clients' usual views of themselves and of their experiences into new aspects (ibid). This is a very important aspect of drama therapy as being therapeutic on participants. In the context of the education program, refugee students and their experiences can be transformed into different characters or forms which could make it easier for them to express their emotions and trauma.

Interactive audience and witnessing

The context of drama therapy provides participants with diverse interactions with other participants and the materials used. The interactions make therapeutic processes. The processes, in turn, produce theatrical functions in which participants become, within rehearsal and performance, audiences who witness other members' works and themselves projected onto materials (Jones, 1996, p. 109). The audience aspect allows participants to observe their life experiences in a different sense so that they can gain "the capability to engage differently with themselves and life events" (ibid, p. 111). In other words, the aspect of being part of the audience allows actors' life events or themselves to be projected onto other members. Witnessing the projected members enables the actors to explore their internal troubles in an indirect way (ibid). This exploration can generate a positive change in perceiving the nature of their troubles, as explained in the process of *drama projection*.

Dramatherapeutic distancing

In addition, another therapeutic process of drama therapy is *dramatherapeutic distancing*, which is about how clients approach theatre. Brecht (as cited in Jones, 1996) claims that performers don't let themselves be totally converted into characters in a play. Rather, they are requested to express their critical viewpoints on characters they act (Jones, 1996, p. 104). This is the distancing created between clients and characters, and the distancing allows clients to see themselves and their problems in perspective (ibid). The process of having a sense of perspective on their own troubles can be seen as therapeutic. The refugee students in the Set-Net school can recognize their current problems in perspective through the distancing process of the theater program.

Embodiment and playfulness

Embodiment refers to the idea that body and mind are connected to each other through using the body in a performance. Thus the body's engagement allows clients to encounter their internal troubles deeply (ibid, p. 113-114). Therefore, using the body is very important for clients to become involved in their problems deeply. Next, *playfulness* is concerned with having a "playful relationship with reality" during the period of drama therapy (ibid, p. 116). The playful relationship gives clients "more creative and flexible attitude" to happenings and results (ibid). That is, it allows clients to pose "a playful and experimental attitude towards themselves and their life experiences" (ibid). In short, *embodiment* and *playfulness* can be helpful for refugee students in exploring their internal troubles and in approaching these with a positive attitude.

To sum up, these processes of drama therapy take place in the course of the education program. Through the processes, refugee students can explore their traumatic events and resettlement stress in a harmless and playful atmosphere. Thus, their psychological distress would be expectedly addressed to a large extent. But, it is also very important to be aware of the main critical views of the drama therapy program, in order to make the program more effective. Hence, the critical view will now be discussed.

5.3 Critical view on drama therapy

Despite the gradual increase in using drama therapy as an education program for dealing with psychological troubles of children, there have been few critical reviews on creative art therapy such as drama therapy (Beauregard, 2014). More critical views on drama therapy would encourage the therapy to be more effective. Hence, this chapter shows some weaknesses of drama therapy discussed in some studies.

The first weakness of drama therapy is concerned with the difficulty of assessing a drama therapy program. To proceed to conduct an education program or to improve it, it is necessary to evaluate its effectiveness. However, it is very complicated to assess drama therapy, as it is controversial to evaluate the arts (Jones, 1996, p. 267). Many questions occur about how much an evaluation is credible, and much discussion has taken place regarding how art performance can be evaluated

(ibid). Especially, there has been strong arguments over criteria of the assessment, because “there can be no absolute criteria in artistic judgment and assessment and inevitably criteria are highly value laden and specific” (ibid, p. 268). For this reason, drama therapy programs are questioned with regard to its reliability and validity (ibid). Second, the result of a drama therapy program is influenced or differentiated by many variables. For example, on the one hand, one school-based drama therapy program produced a positive effect on addressing students’ emotional and behavioral issues, but on the other hand, the same program didn’t show any improvement on emotional and behavioral problems of a different group of students (Beauregard, 2014, p. 272). In other words, even though it is the same drama therapy program, the efficacy of the program can be different depending on participants and contexts. Thus, it is required we consider the characteristics of and cultural contexts of the participants when conducting a drama therapy program.

Lastly, it is that the effectivity of a drama therapy program can be, to some extent, dependent on a drama therapist. Drama therapists, using their “techniques, approaches, and theoretical frameworks”, help participants explore their own “temperaments, affective styles, personal strengths and weaknesses” by guiding the participants through drama therapy programs (Landy, 2006, p. 135). Therefore, to give effectivity to participants, it is very important to be aware of therapists’ abilities and knowledge about drama therapy programs. In other words, to produce better effects, drama therapy programs should be equipped with teachers who have expertise in drama therapy. Given the workshop teachers³⁹ expertise in operating the workshop, described in the methodology chapter, the therapy workshop has qualified drama therapists for becoming more effective drama therapy.

As follows, this chapter looks at the evaluation of one school drama therapy program for immigrant and refugee adolescents which was conducted in Canada in order to explore the effectiveness of drama therapy program in an empirical sense.

5.4 A classroom drama therapy program in Canada

³⁹ The teacher who is in charge of the workshop is a professional in directing a play, and other teachers who the workshop employs are also professional dancers or musicians.

Even though the context of the drama therapy program in Canada is different from the context of South Korea, the evaluation of the drama therapy program can show the effectivity of drama therapy in an empirical sense, to a certain extent.

Description of the drama therapy program

This program was conducted during school period between 2003 and 2004, and it was developed over years by the Transcultural Psychiatry Team at the Montreal Children's Hospital in cooperation with the Creative Arts Therapies program at Concordia University and the French-language ST. Luc High School in Montreal. Participants consisted of 136 refugee and immigrant youths in a school whose age was between 12 and 18, and teachers consisted of two men and four women who had expertise in psychology, creative arts therapies and arts (Rousseau et al., 2007). The program was carried out in a regular school once a week for nine weeks (ibid). The aim of the program was to provide participants with an opportunity to express and share their stories, thereby encouraging them to rediscover "meaning and identity" in their own stories and to build up a connection between the past and present (ibid, p. 454). The participants were expected to gain better social adaptation, to decrease the problems created by their emotions and behaviors and to enhance self-esteem and academic performance (ibid).

Concerning the contents of the program, teachers gave participants one topic involved in one of the participants' experiences every week. Then, the participants expressed "their experiences or concerns on the topic using fluid sculptures, rants, pairs and other reflective techniques" (ibid, p. 454). By making sound, moving the body and speaking some words, the participants became dependent on "image and work with metaphor" onto which their emotions and opinions were projected (ibid). These objects used by the participants enabled them to recognize a certain situation by symbolizing "a plurality of internal and external voices" (ibid). During the program, participants were encouraged to explore their emotions and thoughts related to their experiences. At the last session, the program dealt with "expectations of the future, hopes and dreams" and with "the worries that go along with them" (ibid, p. 455). This is a brief explanation of the program. To analyze the effectiveness of the program, the evaluative studies on the program were carried out in both quantitative and qualitative ways. Thus, the evaluation is explored next.

The evaluation of the drama therapy program

First, qualitative evaluation is presented. As data, the evaluation made use of the stories told by participants and the notes of teachers' assessment meetings and the participants' comments (Rousseau, et al., 2005). When it comes to the evaluation, the drama therapy supplied refugee youths with a secure environment to express their feelings (ibid). Through playing back their traumatic experiences and bright future of "resilience", the youths were encouraged to transform their difficult situations 'directly, indirectly, or metaphorically (ibid). As a result, the adolescents obtained the capacity to control their difficult situations using their strengths gained by their harsh experiences (ibid). They also got the chance to build up meaning and to express their sorrow over losses suffered before entering their new society (ibid). The qualitative evaluation also showed improvement in the adolescents' self-esteem (ibid). Therefore, the evaluation concluded that the drama therapy program helped the youths to better adjust to their new societies by shedding new light on their identity crisis involved in their positions as migrants and a minority (ibid, p. 25).

Next is about quantitative evaluation which used assessment questionnaires before and after the drama therapy program to collect data (Rousseau et al., 2007). Referring to the evaluation, the program puts great emphases on reducing refugee adolescents' emotional and behavioral symptoms and on reducing the symptoms' interference with "friendships, home life and leisure activities" (ibid, p. 458-460). Furthermore, it was shown that the program had a considerable effect on declining "perception of distress" and of interference with "home life, friendships and leisure activities" (ibid). Thus, Rousseau and his colleagues concluded that the program might facilitate the youths' adjustment to new environments and it might be an effective program to help them deal with the difficulties they confront in the new environment (ibid, p. 461). In addition, the program enhanced the academic performance of the adolescents, especially in the subjects of mathematics and French (ibid, p. 462). In conclusion, Rousseau and his colleagues said that the program seemed to be an effective method in working on the troubles of the adolescent who suffered severe traumatic events in preventive and non-stigmatizing ways by supplying them "a metaphorical space where trauma and loss can be expressed and transformed" (ibid).

As seen above, on an empirical basis, the drama therapy program appears effective in dealing with refugee adolescents' internal problems and also in encouraging their successful adjustment to a

new society. Considering the evaluation of the drama therapy program, drama therapy was found to be one of the promising ways to help North Korean refugee students adapt successfully to their environment.

5.5 Parasocial interaction

An additional aim of the Set-Net school is about reducing South Koreans' prejudices against North Korean refugees. Here, I will continue to describe how the theory of *parasocial interaction* can have a positive effect in reducing prejudice between the two groups.

Parasocial interaction

At first, to gain better understanding of *parasocial interaction*, it is necessary to briefly explain the *contact hypothesis* or *intergroup contact theory*, because the *parasocial interaction* is “a communication analogue” to the contact hypothesis (Schiappa et al., 2005, p. 92). The contact hypothesis is that “under appropriate conditions interpersonal contact is one of the most effective ways to reduce prejudice” between in-group and out-group (Allport, 1954).

Both the contact hypothesis and *parasocial interaction* assume that more contact between groups lessens prejudice but *parasocial interaction* has a different nature in terms of the way to contact. In the *parasocial interaction*, mass-mediated interaction is used as the way to communicate with other people, instead of person-to-person interaction. That is to say, the *parasocial interaction* means that “viewers feel and react toward people and characters on television just as they do in face-to-face interactions” (Kanazawa, 2002 as cited in Mutz & Goldman, 2010). In detail, some scholars state that the “*parasocial contact hypothesis*” implies when an in-group “get to know and like out-group members on television, then their attitudes toward the out-group as a whole will improve” (Schiappa et al., 2005 as cited in Mutz & Goldman, 2010). For this reason, mediated contact can be a feasible tactic for reducing negative perceptions, along with person-to-person contact (Mutz & Goldman, 2010, p. 248). Based on this theory, it is expected that South Korean audiences can gain a better understanding of refugees by watching the performances enacted by refugee youths, thereby reducing the audiences' negative perceptions of the refugees to a certain extent. In addition, the *parasocial interaction* can be beneficial to avoiding anxieties which often

arise from person-to-person contact (Dovidio et al., 2003; Greenland & Brown, 1999; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006; Stephan & Stephan, 1985). From time to time, the anxieties negatively affect intergroup contact (Paolini et al., 2004). In this regard, contact occurring through watching performances could be a better way for South Koreans, who may hesitate to meet refugees because of the particular circumstance between North Korea and South Korea, to interact with the refugees. Yet, some critics argue that to have an effect on reducing prejudice through *parasocial interaction*, it is required that viewers have “strong and positive emotional bonds with out-group characters” (Mutz & Goldman, 2010, p. 249). But, in a way, this obstacle appears to be solved in the context of drama therapy. One of the characteristics of drama therapy is to create an emotional bond between performers and audiences (Jones, 1996, p. 104).

To sum up, South Korean audiences can have a better understanding of refugees’ situations by watching a performance of the therapy program of the Set-Net school, and thereby developing empathy for the refugees. In other words, this interaction between refugee youths and the audiences can have a positive effect on reducing the audiences’ prejudices against the refugees.

5.6 Summary

This chapter contributes to framing the theoretical structure of this research. Drama therapy is designed to encourage participants to express their internal troubles in a comfortable atmosphere using theatrical methods. The expression enables them to build new relationships with their problems. Thus, participants enjoy a positive change or healing of their problems which would improve the quality of their lives. More specifically, the positive change or healing takes place through several therapeutic processes of drama therapy, which are drama projection, transformation, interactive audience and witnessing, dramatherapeutic distancing, embodiment and playfulness (Jones, 1996). Even though drama therapy shows a positive effect in dealing with psychological troubles, it has some drawbacks. It is difficult to evaluate, and its effectiveness may be affected by many variables. Also, it depends largely on therapist’s ability. These critical views are important to be aware to seek better effectiveness of drama therapy.

Next, a drama therapy program conducted in Canada for refugee and immigrant adolescents between 2003 and 2004 is explored to observe effectivity of drama therapy in an empirical sense. It was evaluated by both qualitative and quantitative methods. It was found that the program was effective in addressing the children's mental distress and in helping them adjust better to their new society. As a result, drama therapy can be seen as an effective way to deal with North Korean refugee adolescents' psychological problems as well. Lastly, the chapter explores the theory of *parasocial interaction*, which means viewers experience contact with characters on television. This contact can reduce viewers' prejudices against the characters. In other words, South Korean audiences will have a chance to reduce their negative perceptions of North Korean refugees by having contact with them through the performance of the therapy workshop. The theoretical concepts introduced in this chapter are re-visited in the next chapter, which is the data presentation and analysis chapter in order to support the data theoretically.

Chapter 6. Data presentation and analysis

This chapter presents and analyzes the data collected in my fieldwork. Thus, the chapter attempts to answer the research question, based on the findings of the analysis. First, the chapter presents information about the informants and the *Creative Theater Workshop*. Especially, the presentation of the workshop is focused on in order to see the reason why the Set-Net school believes that the workshop is a helpful program for integration of North Korean refugee adolescents into South Korea. Next, more importantly, the chapter analyzes the data to find out if therapeutic processes occur in the students over the course of the workshop referring to the theory of drama therapy shown in chapter 5. Lastly, the chapter investigates whether or not the workshop brings positive effects to the students in addressing their psychological sufferings. Through the analysis, the chapter answers the research question of this thesis. As to translation, the extracts from the interview with the main teacher and a few comments of the refugee students which don't have English subtitles are translated by me. The rest make use of English subtitles from the Set-Net school.

6.1 Informant presentation

6.1.1 A note on informant protection and anonymity

The purpose of social research is to provide insight into researched areas or issues. Social research shouldn't damage or have a negative impact on the areas or problems. In this regard, this research takes the protection of informants, who are the North Korean adolescents, into special consideration. Because, first, they are still in the middle of coping with their painful experiences and resettlement stress, and thus they are in a sensitive and vulnerable state to outside attention. Second, many of the adolescents have members of their families who still live in North Korea and in China whilst hiding. Under the circumstance that there has been conflict between the North and the South Korean regimes, the exposure of the adolescents' information could have dangerous consequences to their families remaining in North Korea and China. For this reason, even though the background of informants is important to have better understanding of the research environment,

this research provides only fictive names of the informants as background, apart from one informant who is the interviewee and the main teacher of the education program.

6.1.2 Background of an interviewee

This research has one interviewee who use the fictive name, *Dongman*, in this research. It is important to provide the background of the interviewee, because he plays a key role in organizing the therapy program as a main teacher as well as the Director of Performance. He is currently the Principal of the Set-Net school, which is an alternative school for refugee adolescents, and he has worked in education of the adolescents for over 14 years since 2001. Also, he used to be a member of the Education Committee of the MOU for five years. Second, regarding his career related to directing performance, he worked as a representative of a little theater for seven years as well as a principal of an art school for two years. Besides, he has directed several performances since 1991. The careers clearly shows that he has expertise in running the drama therapy program, *the Creative Theater Workshop*. His qualification addresses one of the critiques of drama therapy raised in the previous chapter, critique that the effectivity of a drama therapy program relies on a therapist to some degree.

6.1.3 Fictive names of informants

Apart from Dongman, who is only the interviewee of the research, all the informants are the refugee students who attend currently or have graduated from the Set-Net school. The fictive names of informants are presented in the table, below.

Table 1. Fictive names of informants

| | |
|----------|---------|
| Boyoung | Miseon |
| Dohee | Naeun |
| Hojun | Nara |
| Jaedong | Sangsu |
| Jaehye | Sinji |
| Jangmi | Soyoung |
| Jeongmin | Sujeong |

| | |
|---------|-------------------|
| Junho | Sumi |
| Miyoung | Dongman (teacher) |

6.2 The ‘Creative Theater Workshop’ presentation

Before looking at the students’ impressions and comments on the education program, it is necessary to present the program in order to give readers a good grasp of it. First, the chapter presents a brief introduction of the Creative Theater Workshop. Second, by looking at the purpose of one course of the Creative Theater Workshop that the informants participated in, the chapter shows what the school intends to provide the students through the workshop. Next, referring to the interview with Dongman, the chapter presents why the Set-Net school thinks that the education program is necessary for integration of the refugee adolescents into the South Korean society. Third, it observes the purpose and the effect of the workshop empirically by briefly exploring one of the workshops conducted.

6.2.1 The ‘Creative Theater Workshop’

The workshop has been operating for over eight years since 2007 while completing one course of workshop every year. It performed seven different plays made from seven courses by 2013. Three plays out of seven are used as the data. The scripts of the plays consist of the students’ *“beautiful childhood memories, experiences of pain and loss, adaptations to the unfamiliar South Korean society and their dreams”*, and the stories are *“expressed through a variety of [theatrical] ways.”* During the first period of the workshop from May to August every year, the school prepares a performance after inviting professionals such as a ballerina and a musician as instructors. During this period, the students have a chance to express and explore their feelings and internal troubles through rehearsals and interaction with other participants and teachers. After completing the performance, during the second period of the workshop from September to December the students visit several schools and universities to give their performance to them. Through the performance, the students attempt to communicate with South Korean audiences. The school believes that the performance functions as the medium to make conversation between the refugee students and

South Korean audiences. This is the brief outline of the workshop. Next, based on the interview with Dongman, the chapter explores the necessity of the workshop.

6.2.2 The necessity of the Creative Theater Workshop

The chapter attempts to show how necessary the workshop is to help the refugee adolescents better adjust to South Korea. According to Dongman's comments, two main reasons can be found out in terms of the necessity of the workshop. The first is concerned with the student's distress resulting in their traumatic experiences. He claimed that the students' psychological distress should be primarily healed through the workshop to promote their successful integration into South Korea because the sufferings adversely affect their integration process:

North Korean refugees lived in a dehumanized condition in North Korea, and they suffered the experiences of escaping North Korea and of being illegal sojourners in China or third country. As a result, they entered South Korea while having strong traumas and wounds. What we focus primarily on is to heal their psychological wounds, and further to enable them to look and understand their past experiences more positively. This process should be basic, and hence this is what we emphasize most. [...] Metaphorically saying, they are scarred and twisted [broken] plates, so the plates should be repaired to some extent. But they are nearly forced to accept it [South Korean culture] as soon as they entered. Therefore, the acceptance isn't viewed positively [by them]. They try unwillingly to accept it, so they feel uncomfortable largely.

Theatrical and artistic elements in the workshop are of much usefulness in dealing with their distress. For instance, one aspect of the workshop is to provide the students with a chance to express their pains without any pressure, as insisted in his comment: "we want to make them say their stories by themselves." This nature is helpful in addressing the students' distress. It is supported by the claims that drama therapy provides a secure environment to show their feelings (Rousseau, et al., 2005), thereby giving high probability to heal problems naturally (Jones, 1996).

Second, it is necessary to enhance the students' capacity to overcome difficulties in adjusting to South Korea. The workshop can be a suitable method to improve their capacity such as confidence. This is illustrated by Dongman:

Primarily, enhancing immigrants' [the refugees] capacity. It is helpless to say to them, "you, don't do anything, we will give you strength". At first, it is greatly important to strengthen their capacities to acknowledge the new culture of the host society in cross-cultural and positive aspects and to communicate with members of the host society in a more active attitude.

In brief, the school believes that it is primarily necessary to heal the adolescents' psychological wounds and to enhance their capacity to adjust to the South Korean society for their successful integration into the society. The workshop is an appropriate and effective program to achieve the objectives. As follows, the chapter looks briefly at one course of workshop completed, the title of which is '*Show Me The Way!*', in order to observe the purpose and the effect of the workshop empirically.

6.2.3 The workshop – '*Show Me The Way!*'

This workshop is one of the seven workshops and it was operated in 2007. This workshop allowed "25 North Korean youths to put together a group performance based on their experiences." One of the episodes in the performance is, using puppet, to show Jangmi's journey of escape from North Korea to South Korea passing through hiding in China. The purpose and the effect of this workshop are clearly described in the documentary which filmed the process of the workshop:

To adapt successfully to South Korean culture and start a new life, it is most important for North Korean defectors to form a wholesome self-identity. This documentary focuses on the musical performance produced by North Korean youths to heal their wounds and build positive self images. The performance also aims to bridge the gap between the South Korean audience and the North Korean performers. Through the documentary, we can see how well the youths were able to adapt to South Korean culture, build confidence, and forge a positive sense of self.

As seen above, the main purpose of this workshop is to address their psychological sufferings. Additionally, it attempts to give better understanding of refugee adolescents to South Korean audiences who may have misconceptions over refugees. As a result, the workshop produced the outcomes which are the youths' adjustment to South Korean culture, establishing their identities and enhancing their confidence. In short, healing their distress brings them the positive effects which can lead to successful integration into the South Korean society.

6.3 An analysis of effectiveness of the Creative Theater Workshop

Here, to give an answer to the research question of whether or not the education program is effective in dealing with refugee adolescents' psychological distress, the chapter presents and analyzes the comments of the refugee students and the main teacher shown in the data⁴⁰. The presentation and analysis of the comments are outlined through four phases. First, the chapter looks at the students' psychological distress or instability affected by their traumatic experiences and stress from adjustment process in South Korea. Second, it explores the feelings and the thoughts of the students displayed in the course of the program by referring to dramatherapeutic processes of the program, processes that are described in the theory chapter. Third, it examines what the students' impressions of the program were, and thus what the students acquired from the program after completing it. Fourth, the chapter analyzes South Korean audiences' impressions of performance to see if the workshop has a positive impact on reducing the audiences' prejudices against refugees. The four phases show whether or not the workshop is effective in healing the students' psychological distress. Further, the phases provide an insight into a specialized program in addressing psychological sufferings of refugee youths in public school.

6.3.1 Refugee adolescent's psychological distress

6.3.1.1 Traumatic memories from the past

It is widely known that traumatic experiences have an adverse impact on mental health of a refugee who resettle in a new society (Cardozo et al., 2000; Pumariega et al., 2005). Children and adolescents are more affected by traumatic events (Pumariega et al., 2005, p. 583). Based on the refugee students' comments, it is shown that many of the adolescents suffered several traumatic events, when they lived in North Korea, escaped and stayed in China illegally. The experiences stated by the students are surprisingly miserable. Hojun said about his fatal experience in North Korea when he was still a child:

⁴⁰ It is described in detail in the methodology chapter.

[...] Suddenly, the police surrounded us, and we were caught. [...] They [North Korean officers] took me into a cellar and tortured me. I escaped and decided to find my mother on my own. I ended up starving for six days. I kept on walking, but I collapsed in front of the Tumen River [...].

Another comment about starvation is mentioned by Jeongmin: “*I ate all kinds of grass to live, as long as the grass was not poisonous*”⁴¹ Many of the adolescents suffered from starvation in North Korea caused by severe famine described in chapter 2. Also, their stories of escaping North Korea were fearful enough to give them traumas. It is well shown in Miyoung’s story of crossing the border between North Korea and China:

[...] I didn’t succeed the first time, I tried to escape. [...] We escaped during autumn, so we were all wearing long sleeves. We kept blades in our sleeves, because we were planning to kill ourselves, if we were caught again. [...] The dogs were barking behind us, and the [North Korean] police were chasing us and shooting at us. Suddenly, my legs wouldn’t move. I was so scared.

As shown by Miyoung and Hojun’s stories, many of the adolescents had been arrested and thus detained in concentration camps with forced labor, violence, torture, death penalty and food deprivation (Noland & Haggard, 2011). As a result, it is obvious that the detention has resulted in trauma. In addition to the youths’ traumatic experiences when they were in North Korea and escaped, staying legally in China supplied them with even worse circumstances because of their vulnerable status. Soyoung and Jangmi illustrated their Chinese lives:

[...] So, we followed the woman. But she sold us off to a Chinese man. [...] It was very tough living in China. At first, I didn’t even know the language, and I always had to live in hiding. Even when I was sleeping, when I heard the [Chinese] police coming, I had to run away without even changing my clothes, I could never relax. I was always nervous and afraid. (Soyoung)

[...] fleeing North Korea by crossing the Tumen river when I was 14 years old, illegally staying in China for four years, the one that my boat was once broken in international waters on the way to South Korea, being arrested on the way to South Korea through Myanmar, and taking a plane four times in a day to cross borders of two countries to arrive in South Korea. (Jangmi)

⁴¹ My translation

Also, Dohee's response showed clearly how fearful they felt about the Chinese crackdown on illegal immigrants, the consequence of which was to deport them to North Korea: *"I will be shot, if I am arrested. It is execution. Probably 30 shots."* It is noteworthy that nearly all of the youths in the Set-Net school went through such traumatic events at least once.

The illustrations above of youths' extreme experiences are most likely to have traumatic impacts on their mental health, and this is evidenced by a study on North Korean refugees in China displaying that most of the respondents largely suffered mental distress caused by their traumatic experiences (Chang, Noland, & Haggard, 2006, p. 25). Judging from the severity of their traumatic experiences, it seems that more systematic and varied approaches are required to deal with their mental health. Next, more specifically, the chapter illustrates what psychological sufferings the adolescents went through.

6.3.1.2 Loneliness and missing family

As a survey (Noland & Haggard, 2011, p. 40) reported that about eight out of ten refugees separated from their children, which means that many refugee adolescents separated from their families. Thus, refugee youths often feel lonely themselves. The loneliness makes their psychological state instable, and in turn the instable state negatively affects their adaptation to South Korea. This is expressed in Junho's answer to the question, *"when the toughest time for him[Junho] is"*:

When I am at home. during New Year's, or during Chuseok [Korean thanksgiving]. During those times, everyone goes away somewhere. But I have nowhere to go. I can endure hard physical labor. But being lonely, that's really the hardest. When I lie down, my mother and father flicker in front of my eye. That's when it's the hardest. [...]

Also, Miseon's loneliness is illustrated by Jaehee's comment about her: *"She [...] feels the most loneliness, and has the most ups and downs. [...] there were changes in her environment, and she came here without parents. [...]"* As shown in Miseon's case, the refugee youths who entered South Korea alone especially felt more bitter loneliness than others who have family members. How lonely the adolescents feel is described indirectly by Dohee and Hojun's comments about their longing for their families: Dohee was asked *"Your dream is this, meeting your father?"* and she replied *"Yes, but do you think I will meet my father?"* Also, Hojun said that *"I'm seventeen*

years old now. Until now I've lived with my mom for only three or four years.” Given that they are still adolescents who need psychological support from their family and that they are placed in a different society from theirs, their loneliness seems too bitter and thus the loneliness disturbs their psychological stability.

6.3.1.3 Hiding identity and a confusion of identity

North Korean refugees become South Korean citizens right after completing the resettlement education in Hanawon⁴² for twelve weeks. The refugees speak the same language as South Koreans. But, they are easily recognized not to be born in the South because of their distinctive accents. This recognition has caused South Koreans' prejudices against them. Many refugees reported having been discriminated and treated like “second-class citizens” (Bae & Kim, 2014, March 17), because of prejudices against them in the South Korean society. For this reason, many refugee adolescents hide their identities as North Koreans to avoid discrimination over them, as shown in chapter 3. The hiding is displayed in Nara's experience of concealing her identity as a North Korean because of fear for being ridiculed by their peers:

Did you tell your friends that you were from North Korea? (Interviewer) I didn't tell them. (Nara) Why not? (Interviewer) When I was going to public school, I was two years older than my classmates. I thought I'd feel uncomfortable around my friends if I told them. And my older brother told me not to say anything to my friends, even though they might find out about it later. (Nara)

This hiding can negatively affect forming the refugee adolescents' new identities in the new society. In fact, many of them get confused of their identities as South Korean citizens from the North. Junho stated the confusion over his identity in the South:

I am experiencing identity crisis since I came to South Korea. I have a South Korean citizenship, so I thought I was South Korean, but South Koreans do not accept me as South Korean. But when I think [of] myself as North Korean, I have a South Korean citizenship, and I have to live in South Korea. Then I get confused. Am I really South Korean or North Korean?

⁴² Educational organization for newly arrived refugees, which is operated by the ROK. It is explained in the background chapter.

The confusion can have serious consequences to the adolescents. It is because the adolescents will live in the South Korean society and hence it is vital to identify *who you are* in the new society to have a decent life, as establishing identity is closely connected to a sense of belonging to their community. This significance of building identity is found out in the interview with Dongman:

[...] once they hid, they would be runaways forever. How they could find themselves anywhere, when they denied themselves? No matter whether or not wants, I should acknowledge my parents, because they are my root. Without the root, how could I be born? Am I a monster who was dropped from the sky? In that way, the refugee youths run away from themselves, and thus they are isolated from any group. When they enter university and are asked due to their distinctive accents where they are from, they hide by saying 'I come from China'. After that, they don't even hang out with other refugee youths, because their hiding is revealed when they hang out with the other refugee youths. Thus, they don't belong to any group, and all the time feel unease because of the hiding. They are always wearing masks, even in the workplace. It is horrible. Therefore, the youths should break the chain by themselves and get out of the chain. [...]

In other words, more attention should be paid to the identity confusion which could bring negative consequences to them, thereby helping relieve their psychological problems.

6.3.1.4 Depressed feeling and unease

Most of the adolescents went through painful events in the past, and have been still struggling for resettling in the new society which is greatly different from the North Korean society. The difference is expressed by Junho: “[...] *Inside the communist system, someone made all the choices for you, and all you needed to do was following the decisions. Here, I have to make all the decisions for myself, and that's the heaviest burden for me. [...]*” Thus, the painful memories and stress from resettlement appear to often cause them depression and unease, as a study (Kim, 2009, p. 194) indicates that family separation and traumatic events in the period of child and adolescent were main causes for refugee adolescents' psychological problems such as depression and unease. Jangmi illustrated her depression at the beginning of the resettlement period:

[...] I suddenly felt detached from the world. So a few days ago, I just started crying alone. [...] I used to cry in the morning when waking up, after dreaming of fleeing North Korea, especially when I dreamed of my friends in North Korea who were still 14 years old in my dream. I got depressed after dreaming of it. [...]

Also, Miseon's emotional unease is described by Jaehee's comment about her: *"When she's at a high, she can sing 24/7. When she's at a low, you can't hear her voice anywhere. Is that girl even at school, is she in the room? – she becomes that quiet. Her moods swing from an extreme low to a sudden high"* Indeed, one South Korean student who attended the Set-Net school with the refugee students commented on the students: *"The setnet [Set-Net school] older sisters and brothers⁴³ seem to have it rough [the students' life looks tough]. They look insecure. I hope they can adapt well. [...]"* In short, many of the students are in a state of depression or unease. The distress seems to adversely affect their adjustment to the new society.

6.3.1.5 Prejudice and discrimination

As explored in chapter 3, refugee youths have encountered prejudice and discrimination against them. Some of the students describe their experiences about prejudice:

There were a lot of Yanbian people [Korean ethnic group in China] and Chinese Koreans. All of a sudden, that man started cursing [by saying], "why the hell are those things [Yanbian people and Chinese Koreans] in our country, strange words like that. (Sangsu)

When I try to find a part-time job, people ask me where I'm from, because I have a North Korean accent. When I say I'm from North Korea, they look at me differently. They say "oh, you're from that place." (Sujeong)

No doubt, such experiences badly hurt the students' self-worth. Thus, the experiences put a negative impact on the students' psychological state.

To sum up, as seen in the students' comments, many of the students suffered traumatic events when they were vulnerable children. Before their traumas are dealt with sufficiently, they have confronted new difficulties caused by resettlement in a new society. Hence, as said, many of the

⁴³ In this context, older sisters and brothers mean female and male friends who are older than her.

students underwent some psychological problems such as loneliness, a confusion of identity and feelings of depression and unease. The following chapter explores two documentaries filming the processes of two courses of the workshops conducted in order to analyze what the students thought and felt during the period of the education programs, thereby what therapeutic processes took place among the students. The analysis is supported by therapeutic factors of drama therapy explained in chapter 5.

6.3.2 Therapeutic functions of the workshop

6.3.2.1 Dramatic projection

As described in chapter 5, the process of dramatic projection is that participants get a chance to explore and understand their internal troubles by projecting their troubles into dramatic materials or enactment (Jones, 1996). Thus, the chance allows them to experience a change in recognizing their problems (ibid). In the course of the education program, it was observed that many students who had painful memories experienced a change through the process of dramatic projection. Jangmi, who performed her painful stories in the past using dancing, singing and puppets, commented upon her change:

[...] I expressed through gestures the cow that helped my sisters plow the field from my childhood memory, the memory of my heartbeat when I crossed the Tumen river, and the sorrow I had when I was living away from home. While I prepared for the performance, I found myself long for the home town that I had been denying. The biggest change was that I did not hide or was not ashamed of my hometown to anyone. I learnt how to love myself and I started to realize how precious I was. [...]

I used to live with all my pains and sad memories. Through this performance, I wanted to express these pains and come to peace with it. And that's what happened.

She had a chance to look at her painful memories through puppets and acting. Thus, she has come to gain a different and positive attitude towards her past memories. Also, the process is displayed in Junho's comment about his changed attitude after performing:

[...] But when I look back into my past, rather than doing my best, I think I had been dragged around by other people. [...] I think I could look back on myself through this experience of acting. Now time to time, I have developed a habit of looking back to the times that I was not satisfied or things that I felt insufficient. [...]

Junho projected his past experiences into enactment. Through the process, he had a conversation with his experiences and then he achieved a positive change on viewing his trouble. As shown above, the drama projection occurred to the students participating in the workshop. The therapeutic process is particularly helpful for the students who have painful memories. This is shown in the interview with Dongman. He mentioned that although most of the youths suffered traumatic events which greatly trouble them, they avoided talking about their experiences probably because even just talking about the experiences is painful to them. For this reason, it is of much help to provide them with a comfortable way to express and explore their memories without feeling pains. In this regard, drama projection seems to be an effective process in expressing the students' feelings without any harm to them. This refers to self-healing process of drama therapy explained in chapter 5, self-healing process that arises from establishing new relationship between problems and changed feelings after expressing painful emotions using artistic tools (Müller-Thalheim, 1975 as cited in Jones, 1996).

6.3.2.2 Dramatherapeutic distancing

The process of distancing means that participants can make distance between themselves and characters they act by having critical views on the character. The distance enables the participants to see themselves or their troubles in perspective. Analyzing some comments of the students, it is shown that the process of distancing took place. That is, some of the students appeared to observe themselves and their problems in perspective or within a critical view. Miseon stated:

[...] I think our play is not as sophisticated as the South Korean plays, and its' very sentimental. People who are more educated will be understanding, and those who can't understand us will laugh at us. (Reporter: Won't you be disappointed if they can't understand?) No, we just have to do our own thing. It's like, not all South Koreans are understanding of us living here, you know?

If you keep thinking life[new life in South Korea] is bad, you will be disappointed by South Korean and eventually immigrate to another country. You leave because you couldn't adjust to this society. That's why a

lot of people leave to England. [...] Dreams don't end when you fail, dreams end when you give up. That's what I learned here.

Observing Miseon's comments, it is interesting to notice that she perceived her performance and South Korean audiences in an objective aspect rather than unilateral view. Indeed, she seemed to consider resettlement in realistic and positive perspectives, as she tried to overcome the difficulties she faces in the new society. Also, this process of distancing is clearly shown in Jeongmin and Jaehee's comments who joined more than two courses of the education program and thus performed in theatres several times:

I think you need to run into everything and get hurt, in order to grow up. It was also like that for me. Honestly, how can a North Korean come here and be perfectly adjusted from the beginning? That makes no sense. Make all sorts of mistakes, let time do its job, and before you know it you'll be [more] mature than before. Something like that. [...] (Jeongmin)

[...] Be sad when you're sad, be happy when you're happy. That way, you can eventually control and shape your own feelings. Everyone is going through a rough time. If you went to North Korea right now, you probably wouldn't know what a North Korean kid this size knows. That's only natural, and it's also natural to be mad because you don't know [something in the South Korean society] [...] (Jaehee)

In addition, a reporter in the documentary asked Jeongmin about how she felt about refugee youths who had left South Korea to go to other countries due to failed adjustment and then came back to South Korea because of failed adjustment in the other countries as well. She answered:

[...] I feel sad for them. You suffer wherever you are. If you're trying to go around your suffering. You'll go round and round, and you might die one day before making a full circle around the entire Earth [without resettling in any country]! Isn't it better to just stay true to the place you are in right now? You might adjust to it one day, before you know it.

They recognized their difficult situations in South Korea in a sensible way, and then they adopted a positive posture on the difficulties they confronted, rather than complaining about their tough circumstances as many refugee youths did. It seems that they analyzed their situation in a new perspective and found a way to obtain a better life in the new society. For the refugee students who underwent psychological pains and discrimination in the South Korean society, it is difficult to

look at their problems in a sensible and positive way. But, the distancing process provided them with the positive effects. Thus, they are on track for successful integration into the society.

6.3.2.3 Interactive audience and witnessing

This process implies that actors in rehearsal and performance also function as audiences by witnessing other actors or themselves represented by objects and other members. That is, the actors witnessed their own experiences and troubles as the audiences. In this situation, the effect of drama projection takes place among the audiences who are also actors. Hojun and Soyoung showed their feelings when they witnessed other performers: “[...] when Sumi sang a North Korean children’s song during the performance, I even cried. [...]” (Hojun) “While watching this performance, I felt really sad, especially while watching the puppet play. It was also very moving.” (Soyoung) These comments indicate that their experiences were projected onto other members or materials and in turn their feelings were expressed through the projection. Also, it is demonstrated by Miyoung’s comment that she became an audience to other performers as well as a performer:

With balloons and our gestures, we expressed our dreams. Everyone showed what they really wanted, and made it into one big picture. [Kook expressed he] wanted to live in a white house on a green field. [Gil expressed he] wanted to be a bird so she could visit North Korea again. [...]

The students went through similar traumatic events such as starvation and family separation. Hence, many of the students resonate with other member’s enactments, and thus expressed their internal feelings in an indirect way.

6.3.2.4 Transformation

Participants themselves and their experiences are transformed into the context of the theatre. This transformation gives the participants different ways to express, feel and connect with their events and themselves, thereby enabling them to have a new perspective on their experiences. It is the therapeutic process of the transformation. Analyzing collected data, it is easily observed that transformation process took place throughout the education program. Dongman’s description of how the program is created showed the transformation factor in the program:

[...] write the scripts for four or five months using the stories said by the students. Their childhood memories which are good, bad, missed or nightmare-like. The horrible stories or pains which happened when escaping their foreign and unfair experiences in South Korea. And 'what I would like to do here.' All the stories from each of the students collected become dramatized into theatre. [...]

These episodes expressed not in one form of play, but diverse forms of play. [...] so, the forms of shadow play, puppet play and mime are used. Through diverse forms of expression such as songs sung in a musical manner rather than just speaking lines, the students are encouraged to find their own comfortable ways to express. [...]

In the program, the student's painful memories were transformed into different forms of plays such as puppet play and mime. Their feelings or emotions were expressed in various forms of enactment. Miyoung's illustration showed the transformation of their stories into plays: *"In the scene where we're crossing the river, we make ourselves look like trees, then ran, then make ourselves look like trees again. We were expressing how we crossed the Tumen River [...]"* In short, a transformation process arose through the entire phases of the education program. The students enjoyed different ways to express their feelings, remembrances and pains. This experience would supply them with therapeutic function on their psychological distress.

6.3.2.5 Playfulness and embodiment

The participants of the education program enjoyed the process of playfulness which enabled them to pose playful attitudes towards their experiences. Besides, they enjoyed the process of embodiment which allowed them to explore their problems in more depth. Playfulness is found out in the comments of Sangsu, Jeongmin and Boyoung: *"I learned a lot of music, The ocarina, guitar, drums," (Sangsu) "Now, after one, two, three times [of performance], [...] Why shouldn't I do it? Why not? It's fun!" (Jeongmin) "we have toured schools [with our performance], performed, danced, sang and communicated with students here. It was really nice." (Boyoung)*

Also, the students made much use of their bodies for enactment, dancing, mime, singing and playing instruments during the rehearsal and performance. This embodiment made them deeply connected with their mind.

To sum up, analyzing the data, it can be said that the students experienced therapeutic processes in the course of the education program by doing rehearsals and giving performances. As their painful memories and experiences were projected onto their and other members' enactments or theatrical materials while going through the process of transformation, the students got a chance to externalize and explore their inner troubles in a non-intrusive way so that they gained the change which enabled them to see the problems in a different and positive perspective. In addition, the basic elements of theatre, which are playfulness and embodiment, help the therapeutic process work better on the students' mental health issues. That is, this chapter see that the education program had several therapeutic factors on the students' mental health problems. Thus, the factors would produce positive effects on the students. The effects are examined in the following section.

6.3.3 Positive effects of the workshop on refugee students

An analysis of the data showed that the students obtained positive effects from the education program. Specifically, the students displayed the enhancement of their self-worth and dignity as a whole. Thus, the improvement appears to bring them a meaningful change in their lives.

6.3.3.1 Restoring their dignity and thus identity

As described in Junho and Nara's comments before, the students were ashamed of their northern-identity and hence they hid the identities. As a result, they underwent a confusion of identity. In this regard, the workshop encouraged them to reveal their identities confidently by restoring their damaged dignity. Sumi and Miseon's impressions of the education program illustrated the effect:

[...] When I first defected to South Korea, somebody said angrily that my dialect was too strong and asked me where I was from. I used to run away from the stares that came when I spoke too loudly on the street or took a taxi. Encounters with others stressed me, but I pretended to be fine, and that made everyday life even harder. But now I can go up to even strangers and ask them, "I come from North Korea. Do you know about North Korea?" This theater performance gave me confidence and a sense of self-dignity. The more self-dignity you have, the more confident you become, and the more confidence you have, the less fear you have. [...] (Sumi)

[...] I also began to speak up more confidently about me being a North Korean defector. Before I thought, 'What would South Koreans think if I said I'm a North Korean defector?' But after theatre, I started to think differently. I gained the confidence to approach others first. [...] (Miseon)

They recovered their dignity, thereby becoming confident of their identities as North Koreans. The change is significantly important for them as the basis of successful integration into South Korea, because identifying who you are influences most parts of your life in a society. Hence, Dongman particularly emphasized the effect of the workshop:

The students visited the school to meet me after graduating, and saying "the education program was of much help for me. I became confident to myself. I used to hide and hide my identity, but now I am not any more. I am proud that I came from North Korea, and I am also proud of my distinction from others." This is huge change. [...] This change is shown among most of the student who attended the school for the last 10 years. [...]

Therefore, the education program showed the effectivity of helping the students establish their identities in the new society. The positive effect would be necessary for refugee adolescents in public school, who frequently hide their identities, to facilitate their better adaptation to the school.

6.3.3.2 Having self-worth and confidence

This change were mentioned by nearly all of the students who joined the education program. The refugee adolescents went through traumatic events. Indeed, they are placed in the competition-oriented environment of South Korea, and occasionally encounter prejudices against them. Thus, it is manifest that the adolescents were seriously damaged in their self-worth, as shown in Kim (2009)'s study showing that refugee adolescents' past experiences and new environment around them adversely influenced their self-esteem. But, after the participation of the workshop, many of the students reported having enhanced their self-worth and built confidence. Dohee, Jaedong and Miyoung's impressions exhibited the change:

Acting gave me courage and strength. I say this often during interviews, but I lack confidence. I think I gained some of it back through the theater experience. (Dohee)

[...] I felt dumber as I put myself down and became less confident. [...] but now I'm more confident [after the education program] and I really enjoy attuning to other students acting. There were some difficulties, but because of those difficulties I was able to find my true self and confidence. (Jaedong)

At first, I didn't know how it would go. I didn't know why we had to do this. But after the performance, I felt that I could do anything in the world. (Miyoung)

Also, Hojun, Junho and Jaehee showed their improvement of self-worth: *"Through theater I became more confident and social in front of others."* (Hojun): *"I am proud of myself and seem to get more confidence."*⁴⁴ (Junho): *"It was great! There were some hard times when we were practicing, and sometimes I wanted to give up. But when it was over, I felt proud of myself."* (Jaehee) Preserving self-worth is an essential condition for all people to seek a healthy life. Hence, enhancing self-worth is a crucial process for the students to equip them with capacity to overcome difficulties they face. In this regard, the workshop is effective. The effect is also an essential factor for refugee youths in public school, whose self-worth is damaged considerably by the harsh conditions of the school, in order to build their capacity to break through the difficulties they face in school.

6.3.3.3 Finding meaning and dreams

It is crucial for refugee youths to find their meanings in the South Korean society in order to seek a decent life in the society. To find out their quality of life in the new society would encourage them to pay more effort on being integrated into the society. According to some students' comments, the education program provided them with a chance to explore their meanings and dreams in the new society. Miyoung said:

[...] But North Koreans feel a lot of discrimination in South Korea, whether it's subtle or blunt. I think we have to find the strength to overcome this in ourselves. As I said, my dream is to become a stewardess and serve passengers. I know that it may be an unrealistic dream. Some people tell me that a North Korean defector can never become a stewardess in South Korea. But still, I'm the first one to attempt it. I want to prove that I can do it.

⁴⁴ My translation

As she participated in the education program, she found out that what she would like to do. At the same time, she had a positive attitude towards her dream, even though she was aware of the difficulty in coming true the dream. What matters most to see in her comment is the fact that she was exploring the meaning in her new life and she took an attitude to confront and overcome obstacles to the dream, rather than being overwhelmed, thereby giving up the dream. Naeun and Sinji's comments also exhibited this effect of the workshop.

[...] Without the theater experience, I wouldn't have been able to present [make a presentation] in university or finish assignments properly. Through the Setnet performances, I came to believe in an education where I wasn't following someone else, but being a leader bringing people together. Also, my theater experience is helping me in my current major, Social Welfare. It gave me the wings to fly confidently while trying to create my life and my dreams. (Naeun)

my dream is to be a hairdresser and a cook. I enjoy cooking. I also want to show people how well I can cook. I want to be a hairdresser, because I want to make people look beautiful. (Sinji)

It seems remarkable to see this change in comparison with their previous state where they hid their identity and felt a sense of unease and depression.

In short, after the education program, many of the students restored their self-worth and dignity, thereby being confident of who they are and overcoming something difficult. In turn, the improvement leads them to seek their meanings and dreams in the South Korean society. This is a significant effect on the refugee students who went through psychological distress. Therefore, it can be said that the education program produced considerable effects which help the students adjust successfully to the South Korean society. It seems that the effects of the workshop would be also of much help for refugee youths in public school in adjusting to the school successfully.

6.3.4 An additional effect of the workshop on reducing prejudice

The workshop attempts to make contact between South Korean audiences and North Korean refugee adolescents by giving the students' performance. Through the contact, the workshop expects the audiences to have better understanding of the refugee students, thereby reducing the

audiences' negative perceptions of refugees. Examining the audiences' impressions of the students' performance, the chapter could observe the effect of the workshop in reducing prejudice against the refugees. Two audiences, namely Audience 1 and Audience 2, who showed up in the data of the documentaries, described their impressions after performance:

*It is my second time to watch the performance. Every time when I watched the performance, I felt moved in my heart and had tears in my eyes. I hope that more people will watch the performance so that they will feel moved in their hearts.*⁴⁵ (Audience 1)

The scene where the siblings talk over the wall, and say they miss each other... that was quite moving. (Audience 2)

Considering the two comments, the audiences experienced the contact with the refugee students by watching the performance. This contact is explained by the *parasocial interaction* shown in chapter 5 that viewers interact with characters on television as if they do with people in person (Kanazawa, 2002 as cited in Mutz & Goldman, 2010), even though *actors in performance* replace *characters on television* in the context of this research. Further, it is observed that the audiences seemed to feel an emotional bond with the performers. The formation of the emotional bond met a prerequisite to achieving the effect of the *parasocial interaction* (Mutz & Goldman, 2010). As a result, the contact reduced the audiences' prejudices over the refugee students, as the interaction between in-group and out-group can reduce in-group's negative perceptions of the out-group (Schiappa et al., 2005 as cited in Mutz & Goldman, 2010). This effect is shown in the comments of another audiences, named Audience 3 and Audience 4: "*Their faces show how much they're enjoying it. I hope they can always be that happy.* (Audience 3), "*I hope things [the students] will get brighter and brighter.* (Audience 4)." Although it is hard to see the extent to which the audiences break their prejudices against the refugees, it can be surely said that the performance provided the audiences with a positive perception and image of the refugees. In other words, giving the performance made from the workshop generated a positive effect on reducing South Korean audiences' prejudices against the refugees.

6.4 Summary

⁴⁵ My translation

This chapter has focused on presenting and analyzing the data collected in my fieldwork. First of all, the information about informants and the workshop is presented to provide better understanding of the analysis of the workshop. Although it is important to see the background of informants because the background contains informants' characteristics, merely fictive names are provided as the background, besides Dongman. It is because the informants are still in vulnerable state and the exposure of the informants could cause serious consequences for their families' security. In the presentation of the workshop, the chapter analyzes the necessity of the workshop which is to address refugee adolescents' psychological distress and to enhance the youths' capacity to break through the difficulties they confront. Also, the chapter observes the effectiveness of the previous workshop, 'Show Me The Way!', empirically. The previous workshop had positive effects on relieving mental sufferings, improving their confidence and building identity in a new society. Therefore, the chapter sees that the workshop has been effective in dealing with the refugee students' mental sufferings, thereby producing positive changes on them which helped them adapt successfully to the South Korean society.

Next, to demonstrate whether or not the workshop is effective in addressing the students' distress, the chapter has analyzed the comments of the students and the teacher in the data. Many of the students went through traumatic events in the past such as starvation, detention and torture, high anxiety and fear for being caught and human trafficking. Indeed, they were stressed out by resettlement in the South Korean society. As a result, many of the students reported that they suffered from identity confusion, loneliness, depression and unease. The distress greatly hindered them from better adaptation to South Korea, given the correlation between psychological distress and adjustment which is explained in chapter 3. But, as seen in the data, the students enjoyed therapeutic processes in the course of the education program. The students went through the processes of dramatic projection, dramatherapeutic distancing, interactive audience and witnessing, transformation, playfulness and embodiment. These processes enabled them to get a chance to express their internal feelings by themselves and to look back on their painful memories in a different aspect. Also, the processes made them recognize their current positions in the new society in a sensible view rather than a biased view in favor of them.

As a result, the chapter finds that the students achieved the improvement of their self-worth and dignity. In turn, the improvement led them to be proud of their northern identity and to increase capacity to break through something difficult. They began to pursue their meanings and dreams in the new society. Therefore, the data concluded that the education program is effective in addressing the refugee students' psychological distress, thereby promoting their successful adaptation to the South Korean society. Additionally, the program provided South Korean audiences with at least better understanding of and positive perceptions of the refugees. Likewise, it is expected that the education program would be effective in dealing with psychological distress of refugee adolescents in public school. Thus, the program would be very helpful in allowing them to achieve successful adjustment to the school. Accordingly, the education program is recommended highly.

Chapter 7. Summary and concluding remarks

Introduction

This thesis has attempted to answer the question of whether or not the education program of the Set-Net school, the *Creative Theater Workshop*, is effective in dealing with refugee adolescents' psychological distress. To reply to the question, the research has analyzed the contents and the outcomes of the education program in addressing refugee youths' psychological problems. The research has made use of two qualitative methods, *an analysis of official documents* and *semi-structured interview*, to collect adequate data. It has also explored the theory of *drama therapy* to build the theoretical framework of this research. Additionally, the thesis has paid minor attention to the effect of the education program on reducing South Koreans' prejudices of North Korean refugees.

Findings

First, the thesis has examined the idea of the school for the necessity and purpose of the education program. The school believes that refugee adolescents' mental sufferings should be, at first, addressed to encourage the youths' successful adjustment to the South Korean society. Hence, it has sought to heal the adolescents' distress and thus to increase capacity for breaking through difficulties they confront in resettling in the new society. Therefore, the school has produced positive effects, which are adapting to South Korean culture, raising their confidence and establishing their identities in the new society, on the refugee students participating. Accordingly, the education program has demonstrated its effectivity on an empirical basis.

Second, the research has investigated the adolescents' traumatic experiences and their psychological troubles to see how serious their mental sufferings are. Most of the youths went through traumatic events such as torture, starvation, human trafficking and great fear for being caught. Thus, many of the youths showed mental health problems. First, the thesis has found that the youths longed for their families and often felt painfully lonely. Also, the adolescents hid their identities as North Koreans to avoid prejudice and discrimination against them. As a consequence, the youths became confused about their identities as South Korean citizens but North Koreans.

Furthermore, the adolescents often felt depression and unease in a daily life. That is, the research has discovered that the youths' mental sufferings were fairly serious.

Third, the thesis has analyzed the comments of the adolescents and the main teacher to observe if the youths experienced therapeutic processes in the course of the therapy program. The research has found out that several therapeutic processes occurred to the adolescents. First is the process of dramatic projection. The youths could project their painful memories onto dramatic materials and enactment in a comfortable atmosphere. The projection, in turn, gave them a chance to explore their memories in a positive attitude. Second is about dramatherapeutic distancing which created distance between the students and the characters they acted. The distancing process allowed the students to have critical thoughts of the characters which represented themselves or their problems. Thus, they could see themselves or their troubles in perspective. Third, the adolescents played as not only actors in rehearsal and performance, but also audiences who witnessed other actors. The process of being audiences made the youths project their painful experiences onto other actors by witnessing enactment of the other performers. Thus, the effect of projection took place to the youths. Fourth is concerned with the process of transformation. Throughout the education program, the students' painful experiences were transformed into a variety of theatrical forms such as puppet and shadow play. As a result, the students could express their internal emotions or pains in a diverse manner. Lastly, the processes of playfulness and embodiment occurred to the adolescents. The youths often showed their enjoyment of the theater program. The enjoyment allowed them to approach their painful memories more easily. Also, they used their bodies constantly in the program. The use of bodies made an expressive connection with their internal troubles. In brief, the students enjoyed the several therapeutic processes through the education program. As a result, the processes brought significant effects to the students. The effects are described as follows.

Fourth, the thesis has discovered that the students achieved positive changes from the education program. The adolescents restored their hurt dignity, and thus they became proud of their identities as North Koreans. They didn't hide their identities any longer. Also, the program improved the youths' self-worth. Thus, the youths gained confidence which is a necessity for overcoming difficulties they confront. More importantly, the enhancements led the adolescents to seek their

dreams and meanings in the South Korean society. It is a considerable change considering the students' previous state of loneliness, unease and depression.

In conclusion, the thesis has demonstrated that the education program was effective in dealing with the youths' psychological distress whilst bringing positive changes to the youths. Accordingly, it is expected that the program was of much help for the adolescents in adjusting to the South Korean society. In addition, the thesis has analyzed South Korean audiences' impressions of the youths' performance to see if the education program has an effect on reducing South Koreans' prejudices towards refugees. The data showed that the audiences gained positive perceptions of the refugee youths from the performance. That is, the education program has a certain effect on reducing the prejudice against the refugees.

Concluding remarks

With a gradual increase of refugee adolescents, many refugee youths have reported that they suffered serious difficulties in adjusting to South Korean school. The youths' poor adaptation to school could cause negative consequences for the youths' integration into the South Korean society, because school is a crucial stage in the whole adaptation of refugees to the society (Kia-Keating & Ellis, 2007). Hence, many studies have been carried out to tackle the adjustment problem of the adolescents. In turn, the South Korean government has provided considerable educational support for the youths' successful adjustment to school. Nevertheless, the youths' difficult situations haven't been improved markedly. That is, the government's support has appeared inefficient in handling the adjustment problem of the adolescents. For this reason, a different approach should be considered to raise the efficiency of the government's support and simultaneously to facilitate the youths' successful adaptation to school.

One of the different approaches can be concerning refugee adolescents' psychological troubles. As seen in chapter 3, most of the refugee adolescents went through traumatic events, and further they were painfully stressed out by harsh circumstances of South Korean school. But, the government's support has been focused mainly on academic improvement and vocational training. Its support for mental sufferings doesn't seem as adequate as fully addressing the youths' serious distress. In consequence, they have still suffered from psychological distress, and in turn the distress has

greatly bothered their academic functioning and adjustment to school. Accordingly, it is required to pay more attention to dealing with the adolescents' mental distress by providing a specialized program in handling the trouble. The specialized program can contribute to the youths' better adjustment to school while raising the efficiency of the government's education support for refugee students. The Set-Net school has operated an education program, '*Creative Theater Workshop*', for addressing refugee adolescents' mental distress over eight years. Hence, the thesis attempts to give an insight into the specialized program by analyzing *the Creative Theater Workshop*.

Looking at the theater workshop, refugee adolescents enjoyed several therapeutic processes in the course of the workshop. Through the processes, the adolescents could explore their painful memories and, in turn, express their internal feelings in a comfortable environment. Indeed, they could see their problems and conditions in perspective. They went through a self-healing process. As a result, the workshop significantly alleviated the adolescents' distress whilst bringing them positive changes such as improvement of self-worth. That is, the thesis has observed that the workshop was effective in addressing the youths' psychological sufferings.

Therefore, the above analysis suggests that the theater workshop could be an appropriate program for dealing with psychological distress of refugee adolescents who attend South Korean school. Once the adolescents in school participate in the theater workshop, it is expected that the workshop alleviates their sufferings greatly and simultaneously produce positive effects in them such as being proud of their northern-identities and being confident in overcoming their difficulties. Furthermore, the government's educational support would function more efficiently in the changed adolescents. Therefore, the adolescents' situations of adjustment would improve immeasurably. Finally, they would achieve successful adjustment to school environment.

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