# **Comparative Analysis of Written Investigations from Korea, Germany, and Spain of Traffic Accidents in Terms of Traffic Safety**

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**Abstract** : Traffic statistics have great importance in that they are utilized as the basis resources for phenomena analyses and model building and as indicators for setting policy directions. In this work, it is focused to compare and improve the steps involved in the collection and management of the traffic accident data. So, this paper presents a partial comparison of three different traffic accident data systems (Korea, Germany, and Spain) and finally discusses the implications of the findings and improvement method.

Keywords: Accident data, traffic accident written investigation, accident database

# **1. INTRODUCTION**

For those who write policy, traffic statistics are utilized as indicators for setting policy directions while in the research field they have great importance in that they are utilized as the basis resources for phenomena analyses and model building. In order to obtain meaningful results, feasible research and a proper decision-making process using traffic statistics are vital. Prior to this process, however, it is more important to ensure the accuracy and availability of the steps involved in the collection and management of these statistics.

This paper presents a partial comparison of three different traffic accident data systems (Korea, Germany, and Spain). Among traffic statistics, in Korea traffic accident statistics rely heavily on the Police Traffic Accident Database (Police DB) and what is referred to here as an integrated database (integrated DB), which is complementary and which is based on materials that are received and processed by insurers and mutual aid associations, among other organizations. Traffic accident statistics forms the basis of research and policymaking related to traffic safety and is the basic resource used essentially to determine the details, characteristics, and causes of traffic accidents; to identify problems in the transportation phase; and to derive improvement schemes. However, the fact that Korea's existing traffic accident statistics culminate in only simple numerical aggregation by item and lack general availability for research on traffic accident cause analysis and the formation of alternative plans have been pointed out as shortcomings.

Therefore, after comparing different systems and discussing the implications of the findings and eventually reorganizing the police-step traffic accident investigation items to gain a sense of hierarchy, this work presents how accident data compiled from an investigation can be used widely in the field of research and policymaking and how an efficient and consistent system for investigation items can be created.

#### 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The existing research was reviewed in order to identify how traffic accident data is being used. Yi et al. (2009) investigated the volume of traffic, the number of lanes, and the presence or absence of traffic islands as variables that affect whether an accident occurred. In research by Won et al. (2009), as significant variables that define the severity of accidents, accidents caused by speeding, vehicle defects, vehicle-vehicle accidents, vehicle-person accidents, the volume of traffic, the radius of the curve coefficient of variation, and the vertical grade coefficient of variation were found and presented. With the empirical Bayes method, Kang et al. (2009) developed a traffic accident prediction model that reflected the severity of accidents by applying the equivalent property-damage-only (EPDO) concept to account for the number of mortality accidents, the number of injury accidents, the number of damage-only accidents, and the average daily traffic (ADT). Using intersection accident data, Park et al. (2008) carried out a comparison analysis and developed a model of characteristics classified by accident type, including head-on collisions, rear collisions, side-perpendicular collisions, light contact, moderate contact (fender-bending), and lane-change contact. The explanatory variables were the average daily traffic (ADT), incidents involving only the right turn lane, the lane width of the main road, and the presence of a heavy vehicle rate. Park et al. (2007) analyzed of the severity and characteristic of traffic accidents at signalized intersections. They found that variables affecting the severity of accidents at signalized intersections were the average daily traffic, average lane width of the main road, the upward vertical grade, and the gaps between speed limits.

Through a review of the existing literature, we found the following:

(1) A large portion of the data used in studies was secondary data (i.e., obtained by reprocessing original accident data) or was gained by additional inquiries.

(2) The accident data is 'static'. However, the main characteristics of the traffic accidents are determined by the dynamic aspects of the accident.

#### **3. COMPARATIVE STUDY**

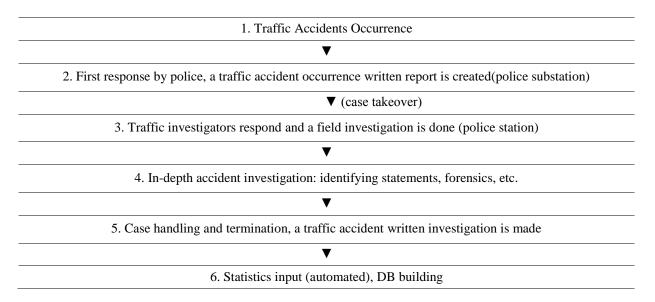
## 3.1 Korea

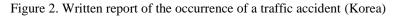
#### Current State of Police Traffic Accident Database Construction and Application

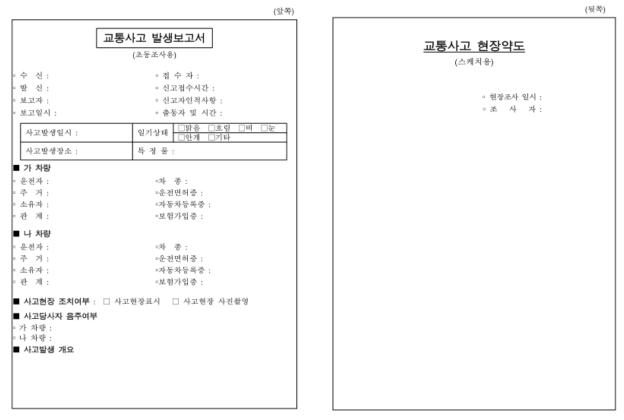
If a traffic accident occurs, the traffic accident is handled in accordance with the procedures set forth in the directive entitled 'Directive Traffic Accident Investigation Rules' (경찰청훈령 '교통사고조사규칙'), and as one outcome of these procedures, the traffic accident database is constructed. An illustration of the

#### procedure is given below.

Figure 1. Traffic accident management process







If a traffic accident occurs, first responders (the nearest police patrol officers) are dispatched to the scene. First, after controlling the traffic situation, they undertake casualty-relief measures and then preserve the scene and obtaining evidence.

After completing these on-site processes, they take a statement about the accident situation

from those involved in the accident, including the perpetrators, victims and witnesses, afterwards taking all of the statements and data pertaining to the case to the police department of transportation units to write a traffic accident occurrence written report. Through this procedure, the first response is complete. The traffic accident occurrence written report for the first response requires the recording of the pertinent information regarding the accident, including personal information, whether anyone was drinking, the vehicle directions, and other data.

Next, in the transportation department of the police station, according to the characteristics of the case, the subsequent in-depth accident investigation procedures, including an examination of the evidence, confirmations of statements, a site reaffirmation, a forensic science investigation and a commissioned professional investigation, are done based on the content of the first response. As a result of the in-depth accident investigation, the traffic accident written investigation and the inputting of statistics are completed.

Finally, the traffic accident investigation is finished and the police traffic accident database is thus constructed from this investigation process. This database is utilized by those who establish transportation policies such as improvement projects for locations with high accident-frequency rates.

Considering this procedure, the present study focuses on the structure of traffic accident written investigations.

#### Traffic Accident Written Investigations and Statistics

A traffic accident written investigation is conducted through an in-depth investigation which is carried out by transportation department of a police station. On the front of page 1, the basic items of the accident investigation (e.g., date, time, location, and acceptance number) and the type of accident, scale of the damage, identification of the accident-relevant vehicles are identified.

In Korea, there are five types of accidents: vehicle-to-person, vehicle-to-vehicle, vehicle alone, crossings, and 'other'. With regard of the items used to identify accident-relevant vehicles/persons and the scale of the damage, it the resolution of the accident and the law enforcement response to the accident are mainly emphasized.

The back of page 1 consists of the field situation (e.g., weather conditions, road conditions, operating signals, road type, road alignment, specific roads, lane number in which the accident occurred, the roadway width, field data, central separation facilities, road-sidewalk separation facilities, the speed limit, speed just before the accident, traffic interruption facts, whether anyone was driving under the influence of alcohol, and information about a special accident). The form also includes behaviors directly related to the accident (e.g., automobiles and pedestrians), the causes of the accident (e.g., human-induced factors, vehicle-induced factors, and road-environment-induced factors) as well as the situation in which the police were notified. Thus, the information which can be used for research and policymaking related to traffic safety are located on the back of page 1.

On the front of page 2, a map of the accident location is drawn and an outline of accident is

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## Figure 3. Traffic Accident Written Investigation(Korea, translated only to needed part)

described. On the back of page 2, violations of laws and regulations are listed along with the opinions of investigators. For comparing to German accident data managing method, following Table 1 present the investigation items related to the type of accident.

	Vehicle-to-person							
	Vehicle-to-vehicle							
Type of accident (five types)	Vehicle alone							
(live types)	Crossings							
	other							
	While going straight		While passing across a driveway					
	While passing		While passing down adriveway					
	While turning left/right	-	While crossing a crosswalk					
	While changing course		While crossing a crosswalk-neighboring part					
<b>Behavior type</b>	While making a U-turn	Behavior type	While crossing an overpass-neighboring part					
directly related to accidents	While parking	directly related to accidents	While crossing, etc.					
(Automobiles, etc.)	While departing	(Pedestrian)	While using the playing equipment					
	While reversing		While playing on the road, etc.					
			While working on the road					
	Other		While passing a roadside zone					
			While passing a sidewalk					
			Other					
Human-induced factors	Forward-looking neglect, delayed discovery due to environmental factors, incorrect judgment due to psychological factors, deliberately driving behavior, manipulating vehicles incorrectly, poor status of physical and mental health, careless pedestrians, no other human causes, other/unknown							
Vehicle-induced factors	Braking system defects, steering system defects, engine device defects, tire lighting system defects, illegal modifications, excessive tinting, poor safety mean loads, other vehicles causation, no vehicle causation, other/unknown							
Road environment- induced factors	environment- weather, road obstacles (construction, accidents, congestion, parked/stopped vehic							

Table 1. Items Related to the Type of Accident on a Traffic Accident Written Investigation (Korea)

# 3.2 Germany

## German accident data managing method

Kim (2008) investigated the German method of accident typology and applied that typology

to a practical accident data set. By applying the German typology method to Korean traffic accident data, she re-arranged traffic accident types depending on the actual conditions of our country. Then, she chose study areas and, based on actual data, distinguished the type of each accident using the German valuation method, finally creating an accident display map using the German display style.

The core of the German method involves its use of seven 'sub-specialized accident types' for categorizing accidents regarding the cause of the accident and the attributes of the accident location/situation to be included in each type. The seven sub-specialized accident types are road accidents, rotation accidents, rotation/cross accidents, pedestrian accidents, accidents with parked vehicles, accidents in the same direction, and other accidents. Therefore, this method has the advantage of being useful for analyzing and implementing an improvement plan depending on the specific type of accident or the cause of the accident. Moreover, it is easy for a person who looks up the data to understand the overall flow, as it is possible to consider intuitive logical linkages from higher types to detailed types.

Another point is that there is consistency between collecting and classifying the accident data frame and utilizing the accident data frame.

Collecting/classifying accident data: an accident investigation step and an accident data classification step (for each type)

Utilizing the accident data: creating an accident display map, creating an accident systemic analysis graph, and creating an accident diagram

Number	Type of accident	Contents
1	Driving accidents (Green)	Caused by losing the vehicle control ability
2	Rotation accidents (Red)	Collision between rotating vehicle and same/opposite directional vehicle
3	Rotation/cross accidents (Yellow)	Collision with vehicle which has duty to yield when rotating/crossing
4	Pedestrian accidents (White)	Collision between vehicle and pedestrian
5	Accidents involving a parked vehicle (Blue)	Collision caused by parked vehicle
6	Straight line accidents (Orange)	Collision with same/opposite directional vehicle in Straight line
7	Etc. (Black)	The other accident

Figure 4.Division and Expression Method Related to the Type of Accident(Germany)

1. Classification of Accident Type						
Type of accident	Color	Type of accident	Color			
Driving accidents	•	Cross accidents	$\bigcirc$			
Rotation accidents	•	Pedestrian accidents				
Accidents involving a parked vehicle		Straight line accidents	•			
Etc.						

	2. Classification of	f Accident Severity	
Mortality accidents White : 8mm Rectangle : 10mm	Serious injury accidents 8mm	Minor injury accidents 6mm	Damage only accidents 4mm
		•	•

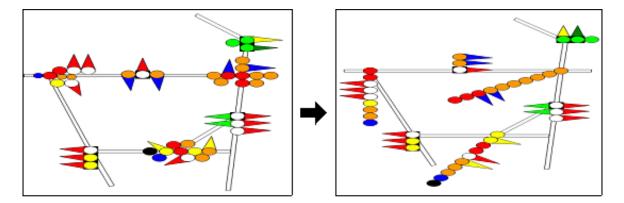
3. Classification of Accident Situation					
Accident	Situation				
Pedestrian(red)	Alcohol(bright blue)				
Bicycle(bright green)	Passing(purple)				
Motorcycle(Yellow)	Animal(brown)				
Tree(dark green)	Height 15mm Bottom 6mm				

Table 2. Items Related to the Type of Accident on a Traffic Accident Written Investigation (Germany)

Illustration (Example)	Type of accident (7)	Detailed type
Aerschwenkter Pahrbahn	Driving accidents	Curved sections, main road: left turn, entering an intersection or a sub-road, linear variation, effect by vertical grade or cross grade

Nachfolgender	Rotation accidents	Collision with a vehicle coming in the same direction while turning; collision with a vehicle coming in the opposite direction while turning; collision with a pedestrian (same/opposite direction) while turning
von links	Rotation/cross accidents	Collision between vehicle on the left side and a stopped vehicle, collision between a vehicle overtaking on the left side and a yielding vehicle
auf Strecke 40 von links ohne Sichtbehinderung	Pedestrian accidents	Left-side vehicle collision with a pedestrian (bike) with sight restrictions
50	Accidents involving a parked vehicle	Rear vehicle collision with a parked vehicle; collision between vehicles avoiding a parked vehicle and a vehicle in another lane
<ul> <li>61</li> <li>1</li> <li>1</li> <li>5tau</li> </ul>	Straight line accidents	Rear vehicle collision with a vehicle in front, rear vehicle collision in vehicle traffic congestion
C Wenden	Etc.	Accident while parking, accident while reversing vehicle, accident involving a vehicle making a U-turn

#### Figure 5.Expression examples



# 3.3 Spain

# Method of Spain: MATRAS

In a study by Tormo et al. (2009) in Spain, METRAS (the Measuring and Recording Traffic Accident Sequence) is presented as a key element of the traffic accident data collecting process. The core contents of the METRAS method are as follows: first, accident data is gathered in two parts. In the first part (the 'prior' stage, before the collision), all of the statistical information pertaining to the accident (e.g., the accident location, related parties, behaviors before the accident, violations, defects of the vehicle, and the psychophysical states of those involved) is described. In the second part (the 'conflict' stage, collision step), the

accident occurrence situation is presented in three to four divided steps and the detailed process and cause/effect are explained so that an intuitive understanding is possible.

Second, to link the separate steps of the second part (the conflict stage, collision step) and the information associated with the accident occurrence itself in the first part (the prior stage) is created. This can be done using code numbers for each individual step in the second part.

Lastly, I found that the scheme of coding used in the MATRAS method includes codes for accident type and accident cause. Therefore, is easy and intuitive to use (i.e., for searches or analyses).

#### Implications

The findings presented above have important implications for those who seek to improve the domestic methodology. Domestic accident data recording is somewhat similar in that the method of Korea is also a two-level system involving Traffic Accident Written Investigation (1), which describes all of the static information prior to the accident, and Traffic Accident Written Investigation (2), which presents a map of the accident location. Regarding the dynamic information pertaining to the occurrence of an accident, after the creation of the accident location map, an accident outline is given as a narration of the occurrence outlines in the traffic accident written investigation (step 2). However, in the 'conflict' stage of the METRAS method, as previously explained, by dividing the accident sequence into detailed steps, it is possible to analyze the specific process, with a linkage made by recording a code pertaining to each detailed step with the information of the 'prior' stage. This style is beneficial because it offers a rapid and intuitively understanding of the accident and a means with which to study or analyze the accident.

Consequently, the METRAS method gives us an idea regarding integrating or connecting traffic accident written investigations (similar to steps 1 and 2 above). In other words, if, as part of the accident location map during the traffic accident written investigation (step 2), a detailed accident process by steps is presented, as in the 'conflict' stage of METRAS, if the information about the accident-relevant information of the traffic accident written investigation (step 1) is described, and lastly if all of the static information about the accident is listed, such a process will make the traffic accident written investigation coherent to those who must use accident situations in their work.

# 4. IMPROVMENT METHOD

Based on the contents of the previous chapter, this chapter suggests a way to improve the overall data management system.

1. To reflect the dynamic aspects of the accident, traffic accident reports (2) should be improved as follows:

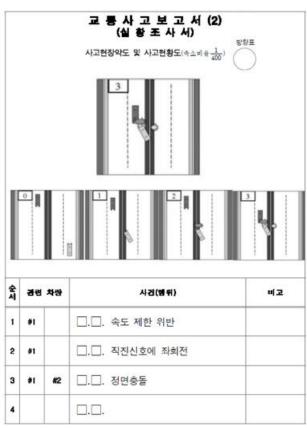


Figure 6. Example : Improvement Method

2. Reorganize items on the traffic accident written investigation depending on the type of accident into seven types:

Sub-specialized seven accident types:

Road accidents, rotation accidents, rotation/cross accidents, pedestrian accidents, accidents with parked vehicles, accidents in the same direction, other accidents

This gives us the advantage of being useful for analyzing and implementing an improvement plan depending on the specific type of accident or the cause of the accident. Moreover, it is easy for a person who looks up the data to understand the overall flow, as it is possible to consider intuitive logical linkages from higher types to detailed types.

3. Use a display technique of traffic accident management guidelines to draw a diagram of the scene of the accident.

# **5. CONCLUSION**

This work presents an initial analysis of the current state of police traffic accident data management and studies related literature to find what is being well done and what are problems to be improved. Through a comparative analysis of existing domestic law and policy and foreign data management approaches (Germany, Spain), specific points which can

be improved are found. Lastly, A broad and rough improvement method is presented.

Furthermore, through user (researcher) / administrator (practitioner) interviews or surveys regarding improvements and additional items, an alternative to meet current needs should be offered. By applying these ideas to the set of actual accident cases and through feedback, the adequacy of the improvements can be reviewed and enhanced if necessary.

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