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RESTORATIVE JUSTICE PARADIGM AS A HUMANISTIC SOLUTION TO YOUTH VIOLENCE IN INDONESIA

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ABSTRACT

Objective: This research aims to explore the application of restorative justice as an alternative approach to addressing child abuse in Indonesia, focusing on restoring relationships, reconciliation between victims and perpetrators, and rehabilitation of perpetrators, rather than simply emphasizing punishment.

Research Design & Methods: This research uses a qualitative approach with a normative juridical method. It involved analyzing laws, regulations, social norms, and other secondary legal materials, such as relevant legal journals, books, and scientific articles, that influence the implementation of restorative justice in Indonesia.

Findings: This research found that restorative justice has significant potential to create social harmony by facilitating reconciliation between victims and offenders, restoring harm, and rehabilitating offenders to prevent future violence. However, its implementation in Indonesia faces several challenges, including a lack of understanding among the public and law enforcement, as well as the cultural stigma surrounding juvenile offenders.

Implications & Recommendations: This study recommends a comprehensive strategy to optimize restorative justice in addressing youth violence through legal reform, community and law enforcement education, psychological support, and cultural adjustment to align with local values for long-term sustainability.

Contribution & Value Added: This research contributes to the understanding of restorative justice in the context of youth violence in Indonesia by identifying challenges and opportunities for its implementation and providing a basis for further research and juvenile justice policy development.

Keywords: Restorative Justice, Youth Violence, Juvenile Justice Policy

JEL codes: K14, K42, D73

Article type: research paper

INTRODUCTION

Violent crime involving youth is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon, with far-reaching implications for victims, perpetrators, and society. Youth are often in a vulnerable phase of emotional and social development, and are therefore more easily influenced by peer group pressure, childhood trauma, dysfunctional family environments, or structural violence in the neighborhoods in which they live (Hobson et al., 2022). These factors may encourage them to engage in violent behavior, either as a way to maintain social status, protect themselves, or as a response to their traumatic experiences.

Juvenile violent crime has become a growing global issue and has been the subject of much attention in recent studies. Research shows that these crimes can take the form of physical violence, the use of weapons, and sexual violence, which has a significant impact on both victims and

perpetrators. In Yogyakarta, for example, 77.5% of adolescents reported being involved in violence, with 68.4% experiencing physical violence, indicating a high prevalence among high school adolescents (Gustina et al., 2020). Internationally, for example, in the city of Indianapolis, the United States, there have been juvenile arrests for gun possession, and gun-related crimes have increased significantly in recent years. Data shows that 27.7 out of every 100,000 juvenile population arrested for gun crimes become repeat offenders, indicating an urgent need for more effective interventions (Magee et al., 2020).

This situation is exacerbated by the high level of exposure to violence within adolescent communities, which not only increases their risk of involvement in crime but also negatively impacts mental health, such as anxiety and depression, especially among teenage girls (Leibbrand et al., 2020). In Indonesia, data show that the rate of physical violence among adolescents is relatively high, with most cases occurring in school settings and in interactions with peers (Gustina et al., 2020). Overall, the current situation demands more serious attention through interventions focused on violence prevention, social environment improvement, and mental health support for adolescents.

Traditional criminal justice systems often provide retributive responses to juvenile offenders, such as detention and formal punishment. This approach, while aimed at providing a deterrent effect, usually does not consider the special needs of adolescents in a critical development phase. Research shows that incarcerated adolescents often face a high risk of re-offending (recidivism) upon release, as they are isolated from rehabilitative environments and exposed to a culture of violence in prison. In addition, implementing this approach can improve the psychological well-being of victims and offenders through active participation in the conflict resolution process (Koza et al., 2024; Mitova, 2020).

With growing concern about the long-term effects of youth violence, restorative justice has become an essential part of a multi-agency strategy to create a systemic approach that supports the rehabilitation of offenders while engaging communities as part of the recovery process. In the context of youth violence, this approach offers a more humane solution that emphasizes dialogue, responsibility, and social reintegration. It is also relevant to address structural issues, such as bias and inequality, which often exacerbate the situation of youth in the justice system (McMahon & Pederson, 2020).

Restorative justice, formulated by figures such as John Braithwaite, Howard Zehr, and Mark Umbreit, is an alternative approach to justice that emphasizes restoring relationships rather than punishment. The concept is based on the principle that crime violates the law and damages relationships between offenders, victims, and society (Kashyap, 2024; Wemmers, 2020). All three agree that restorative justice changes how we view justice and provides a new paradigm centered on healing, responsibility, and reconciliation. The active involvement of all parties can potentially create fairer and more sustainable outcomes than traditional retributive approaches that often fail to meet all parties' emotional and social needs.

In the context of youth violence, the implementation of Restorative Justice (RJ) provides space for dialogue and mediation that aims to repair social relationships and prevent juvenile offenders from falling into the justice system, which often damages their future. The Restorative Justice paradigm emerged as a response to dissatisfaction with the retributive and repressive nature of the criminal justice system. The application of restorative justice in Indonesia also aligns with Law No. 11/2012 on the Juvenile Justice System, which emphasizes the need for protection and rehabilitation for children in conflict with the law. This concept provides opportunities for adolescents to take responsibility for their actions without facing the negative stigma of the justice system (Iswari, 2020). Thus, restorative justice serves not only as a conflict resolution mechanism but also as a tool to prevent adolescents from being trapped in a cycle of violence and criminality.

Prosecutor's Regulation No. 15/2020 is an essential legal foundation for implementing restorative justice systems in Indonesia. This regulation allows for the discontinuation of prosecution based on restorative principles, particularly in cases involving juvenile offenders for minor crimes. The focus of this regulation is to encourage the restoration of relationships between offenders, victims, and the community through mediation, peace, and voluntary agreements. In practice, prosecutors act as facilitators to ensure the process is fair and benefits all parties involved

(Jamaludin, 2021). However, its implementation still faces problems, including the limited understanding of law enforcement officials who are not evenly distributed regarding the principles of restorative justice and the lack of supporting facilities to carry out mediation effectively (Runtunuwu & Fatimah, 2023).

The paradigm through the Prosecutor's Regulation that has been regulated represents a progressive approach to law enforcement in Indonesia, by integrating the philosophy and values of local Indonesian culture, and by prioritizing the spirit of gotong royong and deliberation in conflict resolution. This strategy not only prioritizes the restoration of social relations but also provides effective rehabilitation opportunities for juvenile offenders to create solutions that are more humanist, inclusive, and oriented towards substantive justice. With more consistent development and implementation, restorative justice can be a strategic solution to address the problem of juvenile crime and create a more inclusive and equitable justice system. However, its successful implementation requires full commitment from law enforcement officials, community socialization, and strengthening infrastructure to be implemented widely and consistently. Restorative justice can become a paradigm that builds a more equitable and sustainable criminal justice system.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Violent Crime in Youth

Violent behavior is defined as actions that involve the use of physical or verbal force with the intent to hurt, harm, or destroy another person, either physically or psychologically. This behavior is often associated with aggressive actions and can manifest in various forms, including verbal, physical, and aggression towards objects (Amore et al., 2008). According to Shifa and Safitri (2021), violent behavior often involves uncontrollable internal urges and is influenced by various factors, such as biological conditions, emotional disorders, or excessive social pressure. Studies suggest that these behaviors may result from interactions between biological factors, such as neurotransmitter imbalances, and social conditions, including authoritarian parenting or exposure to family violence. Meanwhile, Fransiska (2024) defines violent behavior as an expression of aggressiveness that arises from the inability to manage feelings and psychological pressure. These actions often occur in conflict situations or unhealthy interpersonal relationships.

Juvenile violent crime is often defined in relation to criminal acts committed by individuals under the age of majority, which involve physical or psychological violence against another person. Syzonenko (2021) emphasizes that the term "juvenile crime" is often used synonymously with "juvenile delinquency" in international contexts and covers various forms of offenses, including acts of violence, committed by adolescents. Bundz (2019) highlights that the structure of juvenile crime often includes violent crimes, such as homicides and beatings, which are usually committed in groups and influenced by factors such as family violence, alcoholism, or drug addiction. Kornakova and Koryagina (2023) added that media violence, social deviation, and weaknesses in recreational activities for adolescents are the main drivers of juvenile violent crime, with more aggressive behavior patterns than adult offenders.

In general, juvenile violent crime not only describes a violation of the law but also reflects profound social and psychological imbalances in the lives of adolescents. These definitions vary based on legal, social, and psychological approaches, with essential elements being the violence's nature, the perpetrator's age, and the underlying causal factors.

Adolescent violent behavior is a complex phenomenon involving multiple forms of aggressive acts that are often linked to genetic predisposition, childhood trauma, substance use disorders, and psychiatric conditions (Bevilacqua, 2012; Kolla & Bortolato, 2020; Schlüter et al., 2016). These factors do not stand alone, but rather interact within an adolescent's social ecosystem, including dysfunctional family environments or violent communities.

The forms of violence in adolescents are very diverse and involve physical, psychological, and sexual dimensions. Among them are as follows:

- a. **Physical Violence**
An action involving the use of body force to harm, injure, and endanger a person's life without the use of tools, such as wood, stone, iron, and other dangerous tools.
Examples: beating, kicking, or the use of weapons. In adolescents, physical violence often occurs in fights between peers, and can cause both bodily injury and emotional trauma ([Salo et al., 2022](#)).
- b. **Psychological Violence**
Psychological violence, often referred to as psychological abuse, is a form of violence that does not involve physical action, but can have a profound impact on the mental and emotional health of the victim.
Examples include humiliation, manipulation, intimidation, or other forms of emotional distress. Psychological violence in adolescents can occur in various forms, both in the family environment, friendships, and romantic relationships, such as unfavorable comparisons, parental emotional neglect, emotional abuse by partners, and bullying in the form of verbal, non-verbal, and through social media, or commonly referred to as cyberbullying ([Mudayana et al., 2023](#)).
- c. **Sex Violence**
It is an act committed without the consent or permission of the victimized party, which can degrade, humiliate, harass, and/or attack a person's body and reproductive functions. This action can occur in various forms, both physical and non-physical, and can have a profound impact on the physical and mental health of the victim. Sexual violence includes multiple forms of actions that fulfill the elements of a criminal offense.
Examples: rape, sexual harassment, sexual coercion, media sexualization. Adolescents who experience this violence are likely to experience deep trauma and risk future harmful behaviors ([Bentivegna & Patalay, 2022](#)).

Restorative Justice

Restorative justice is a concept that has gained significant attention in the criminal justice field as an alternative approach to traditional punitive methods. According to various scholars, restorative justice focuses on repairing damage, restoring relationships, and meeting the needs of victims, offenders, and communities affected by crime, and emphasizes healing, accountability, and restoration of relationships ([Bonta et al., 2002](#); [Camp, 2017](#)). The concept is seen as a social justice movement that aims to address the consequences of crime by repairing and restoring relationships among key stakeholders: victims, offenders, and communities ([Ward & Langlands, 2009](#)).

Restorative justice emerged as a response to the weaknesses in the traditional criminal justice system, which is often perceived as too focused on punishment without providing space for restoring relationships or resolving conflicts. Existing criminal justice systems frequently position crimes as offenses against the state, so the legal process only involves the state and the offender. In this approach, victims, who should be the main party affected, tend to be sidelined. This leads to dissatisfaction from many quarters as victims are deprived of the opportunity to voice their impact or to receive more meaningful forms of justice.

Restorative Justice aims to achieve peaceful conflict resolution outside the court process by involving the perpetrator, his family, and the victim. In this approach, legal issues between the offender and the victim can be resolved when both parties agree. This process allows perpetrators to take responsibility for their actions by compensating for the harm caused by their actions.

According to [Zhuang \(2023\)](#), restorative justice aims to reconcile offenders and victims by emphasizing restoration principles and mutual understanding, creating a fair solution for all parties. [Halim and Ismoyo \(2023\)](#) describe it as a framework in which offenders acknowledge their actions, take responsibility, and seek to restore victims and society while reducing recidivism and reintegration challenges. Whereas [Gultom & Flora \(2022\)](#) highlight the transformative potential of Restorative Justice (RJ) in reducing recidivism and increasing social cohesion, rooted in customary practices that contrast with retributive justice models.

Restorative justice has been shown to have significant psychological benefits, particularly in reducing the levels of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) often experienced by victims of crime. In contrast to the traditional justice system that tends to overlook the feelings and emotional needs of victims, restorative justice approaches provide space for victims to voice their experiences, convey the impact of the crime they have experienced, and receive direct acknowledgment from the perpetrator for the harm that has been caused.

Several experts have provided various definitions of the concept of restorative justice. According to [Lloyd and Borrill \(2020\)](#), restorative justice has the potential to effectively reduce symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), including feelings of intrusion, avoidance, and other emotional disturbances. Victims in this process report an increased sense of justice, which helps them feel more empowered and in control of their situation. In addition, [Nascimento et al., \(2023\)](#) highlighted that victims' participation in a direct dialogue with the offender can help them process negative emotions, such as resentment and fear, which often weigh on them after experiencing a crime. This process also provides an opportunity to get explanations and apologies from the offender, which can be an essential step in their psychological recovery.

The concept of restorative justice is developing internationally as an alternative to traditional criminal justice systems, focusing on reconciliation, reparation of harm, and rehabilitation rather than punishment. Globally, the approach was first implemented in juvenile justice systems and misdemeanor cases, which were later expanded to cover various forms of crime with significant results in reducing recidivism rates and increasing victim satisfaction. This success led to the adoption of restorative justice in different legal systems around the world, including in dealing with serious crimes such as domestic violence, sexual abuse, and even economic crime cases. Although its implementation still faces challenges, such as resistance from law enforcement and public stigma, the approach grows as awareness of the importance of more inclusive, humane, and sustainable justice increases.

In Indonesia, restorative justice has been adopted in response to criticism of the punishment-oriented justice system, emphasizing the importance of deliberation and restoration of social relations in accordance with the values of Pancasila ([Garcia, 2020](#)). In its implementation, it is supported by the recognition of customary law in the 1945 Constitution, which provides a basis for conflict resolution through mediation and deliberation. Various regions, such as Bali and Lampung, have used this practice to resolve customary cases, strengthening community harmony ([Rochaeti et al., 2023](#)).

To support this implementation, Indonesia has introduced regulations through law enforcement agencies, such as the Prosecutor's Regulation, which allows for case termination based on restorative justice approaches. However, specific rules in the Criminal Procedure Code are still needed to provide legal certainty and more detailed guidance ([Wangga, 2022](#)). With a holistic approach and integration of local values, restorative justice can be essential to create Indonesia's more humane and inclusive justice system.

Restorative justice in Indonesia has been regulated in various laws and regulations, including Law No. 11/2012 on the Juvenile Criminal Justice System, which contains provisions on resolving criminal acts through mechanisms involving perpetrators, victims, families of perpetrators/victims, and related parties to find fair solutions that emphasize restoration of conditions, not retaliation. In addition, the Regulation of the Attorney General of the Republic of Indonesia Number 15 of 2020 concerning Termination of Prosecution Based on Restorative Justice provides a legal basis for applying this approach in some instances, including minor offenses. Restorative justice is also emphasized in the new Draft Criminal Code, which aims to strengthen the values of rehabilitative justice and social recovery in Indonesia's criminal justice system ([Rohadi & Prasetyoningih, 2024](#); [Runtunuwu & Fatimah, 2023](#)).

METHODS

The research method used is qualitative with a normative juridical approach, which emphasizes analysis of legal rules, doctrines, and legal principles related to the application of restorative justice in violent crimes involving juveniles. The main data for this study included

primary legal materials, such as laws and regulations governing restorative justice and child protection, as well as secondary legal materials, such as relevant journals, books, and scientific articles. This approach allows the study to not only explain the substance of legal rules, but also examine how these legal norms support or hinder the application of restorative justice in the context of juvenile criminal justice. The analysis was conducted descriptively and analytically using qualitative methods, so that the results of the study did not stop at an explanation of the rules, but also included a critical interpretation of the effectiveness of their application.

This method was considered the most appropriate because the issues studied were rooted in normative aspects, namely applicable legal provisions and their underlying principles. The normative juridical approach allowed for an exploration of the consistency of legal norms, their compatibility with the principles of restorative justice, and the challenges faced in their implementation in the field. Through qualitative analysis, this study provides a comprehensive picture of the extent to which the legal system supports the application of a more humanistic approach to juvenile offenders. Furthermore, this method supports the research objective of not only describing but also providing applicable legal recommendations for the development of juvenile criminal justice policies in the future.

RESULT

Implementation of Restorative Justice in Juvenile Violence

The implementation of restorative justice in handling youth violence has shown positive results in various countries, including Indonesia. As a country with its diverse customary laws, Indonesia provides a strong foundation for implementing restorative justice, especially in customary offenses. Each region has a conflict resolution mechanism based on deliberation and consensus that has been part of the community's tradition for centuries. Values such as balance, harmony, and peace, which are at the core of customary law, align with restorative justice principles that aim to restore social relations rather than simply punishing the perpetrator. In the context of youth violence, these traditional values provide a humane approach to resolving conflicts by prioritizing the rehabilitation of perpetrators and the recovery of victims.

Restorative justice is an alternative approach in the criminal justice system that relies on formal resolution through the judicial process and emphasizes inclusive conflict resolution by involving offenders, victims, families, and communities. This concept aims to restore relationships damaged by criminal acts, restore the situation before the crime, and create deliberation-based justice (Hafrida, 2019). As a form of innovation in the legal system, restorative justice has excellent potential to reduce recidivism, improve the emotional recovery of victims, and provide rehabilitation opportunities for offenders. It has also been implemented in Indonesia's draft Criminal Code as part of national criminal law reform. At the global level, this approach has long been adopted in developed countries such as the Netherlands, the United States, and Malaysia, which have demonstrated its effectiveness in solving minor to moderate crimes with more humane and rehabilitative outcomes (Nasution et al., 2022).

The advantage of restorative justice lies in recognizing the victim's role in the resolution process, where the victim can convey the crime's impact and seek solutions with the perpetrator. In the context of Indonesian criminal law, the application of this approach is seen as a breakthrough that integrates traditional values of justice, such as deliberation and consensus, with modern practices that are more inclusive (Walim, 2024). This makes restorative justice relevant and applicable more broadly for juvenile cases and handling legal offenses involving the general public.

Based on the results of research and analysis, the implementation of restorative justice in cases of youth violence in Indonesia has been applied in various situations, especially in cases of light maltreatment, vandalism, and property damage. The resolution of these cases is carried out with reference to Attorney General Regulation No. 15/2020 and Juvenile Criminal Justice System Law No. 11/2012, which regulates the process of terminating prosecution through a restorative justice approach. Table 1 shows some of the histories of youth violence cases in Indonesia that were resolved through restorative justice efforts.

Table 1. Examples of Youth Violence Cases

No.	Case	Chronology	Solution Restorative Justice
1.	Vandalism Cases in Pematangsiantar Year 2021 Girsang et al., (2021)	A group of teenagers vandalized public property in the Pematangsiantar area. This case is considered a minor criminal offense.	Settlement is conducted through mediation between the perpetrator and victim, facilitated by the prosecutor's office. Peace is reached, and prosecution is discontinued.
2.	Traffic Accident Cases in Samarinda Year 2020 Isak et al., (2023)	A teenager was involved in a traffic accident that caused minor injuries to the victim.	The judge decided to use a restorative justice approach. The perpetrator apologized, and the victim received compensation for losses through mediation.
3.	Cases of Light Maltreatment in Jambi Year 2023 Gani et al., (2023)	A teenager committed light maltreatment against his friend as a result of a minor conflict. This case is a misdemeanor.	The police carried out the mediation process. The perpetrator apologized and promised not to repeat his actions. The victim accepted the amicable settlement.
4.	Cases of Brutality in Tangerang Year 2019 Sarwadi & Bawono, (2021)	Four teenagers beat up another teenager due to a misunderstanding.	The mediation involved the families of both parties. The perpetrator apologized publicly, paid for the victim's treatment, and underwent social guidance in the community.
5.	Property Destruction by Students in Bandung Year 2021 Saefudin and Nasirudin, (2022)	A group of school students vandalized school facilities due to an internal conflict between students. The case was resolved at the local prosecutor's office.	The school, the perpetrator, and the victim's family dialogued. An amicable agreement was reached, and the perpetrator was given guidance without proceeding to court.

In practice, restorative justice is an important step in encouraging juvenile offenders to take responsibility for their actions while providing opportunities for rehabilitation and social reintegration, thereby creating a more constructive long-term impact on society in effectively resolving cases of juvenile violence. This model demonstrates how minor crimes committed by juveniles are handled through a mediation approach involving the perpetrator, victim, and relevant authorities. The process results in a peaceful agreement, whereby the perpetrator takes responsibility for their actions and the victim receives restitution. Ultimately, the successful implementation of restorative justice is marked by the termination of formal legal proceedings because the conflict has been resolved through non-litigation mechanisms. The following diagram shows the conceptual flow of the stages of restorative justice implementation:



Figure 1. Conceptual Model of Restorative Justice Implementation

The steps for implementing restorative justice in minor criminal cases involving juveniles can be explained systematically based on theory and legal principles. This process begins with the occurrence of a minor criminal offense, such as minor assault, vandalism, or destruction of public facilities committed by juveniles. In accordance with the provisions of Regulation of the Attorney General's Office of the Republic of Indonesia Number 15 of 2020 concerning Termination of Prosecution Based on Restorative Justice, law enforcement officials have the authority to prioritize penal mediation as an alternative means of resolving cases. During the mediation stage, the perpetrator, victim, and families of both parties are facilitated to engage in open dialogue, with the main objective of reaching a peaceful agreement and restoring the losses suffered by the victim.

The outcome of this mediation is manifested in the form of a peace agreement, which emphasizes the perpetrator's responsibility to acknowledge their wrongdoing, apologize, and

fulfill their obligations in the form of compensation or other corrective measures agreed upon by both parties. Furthermore, the victim receives compensation, both materially and psychologically, while the perpetrator is directed to undergo social guidance or rehabilitation so that they do not repeat their actions. The final stage of this process is the termination of prosecution or formal legal proceedings, given that the conflict has been resolved through a non-litigation mechanism oriented towards recovery rather than retribution. Thus, the implementation of restorative justice not only provides a practical solution in reducing the burden on the courts, but is also in line with the objectives of modern criminal law, which emphasizes a balance between the interests of the perpetrator, the victim, and society.

The international approach is in line with the principles outlined in the United Nations Basic Principles on the Use of Restorative Justice Programs in Criminal Matters (2002). These principles emphasize that restorative justice must prioritize the voluntary participation of perpetrators and victims, guarantee the protection of victims' rights, and encourage resolutions that focus on restoring social relationships. With reference to these international norms, the implementation of restorative justice in Indonesia can be seen as part of efforts to harmonize with global standards in the handling of criminal acts, particularly those involving children and adolescents. This mechanism not only serves to reduce the burden on the criminal justice system, but also reflects Indonesia's commitment to principles of justice that are more humane, inclusive, and oriented towards social rehabilitation.

DISCUSSION

The Effectiveness of Restorative Justice in Resolving Juvenile Violence Cases

The application of restorative justice in youth violence cases in Indonesia has yielded significant positive outcomes compared to the conventional criminal justice system (Camp, 2017). By emphasizing reconciliation, reparation, and rehabilitation, this approach helps prevent the negative impacts of formal legal processes that tend to focus on punishment. Mediation and discussion allow victims to make real recoveries, both materially and emotionally, while perpetrators have the opportunity to take responsibility for their actions without losing their future.

Restorative justice has emerged as a promising approach in the handling of youth violence cases. Its focus on rehabilitation and reintegration makes restorative justice useful for rehabilitating adolescent offenders (Priambada et al., 2023). This approach has been proven effective as an alternative approach in resolving youth violence cases with a focus on restoring relationships between perpetrators, victims, and the community. This concept prioritizes conflict resolution through mediation and dialogue to create understanding, responsibility, and reconciliation. Research by Irabiah et al., (2022) shows that Restorative Justice can reduce recidivism rates, provide a more humane deterrent effect, and encourage offenders to repair the damage caused by their actions.

The Restorative Justice (RJ) approach in resolving cases of youth violence in several regions in Indonesia, such as Pematangsiantar, Samarinda, Jambi, and other areas in Indonesia, shows that mediation involving related parties, such as legal officials, families, and community leaders, can accelerate case resolution. This aligns with the principle of restorative justice, prioritizing preventing conflicts from continuing with quick, simple, and inexpensive settlements, and creating more inclusive justice for all parties. This approach also effectively reduces recidivism rates because offenders are punished, fostered, and supported to improve their behavior (Karjono et al., 2024).

The primary focus of Restorative Justice is to create healing relationships, both between offenders and victims and within the affected community. In cases of youth violence, Restorative Justice provides opportunities for perpetrators to take responsibility for their actions without having to go through formal punishment, which can exacerbate stigma and impede their rehabilitation. Several variations of Restorative Justice (RJ) programs have demonstrated significant effectiveness in resolving youth violence cases with approaches tailored to the specific needs of each case and the parties involved, including direct mediation, indirect mediation without direct victim/offender contact, and the use of community panels (Bouffard et al., 2017).

a. Direct Mediation

This program involves the perpetrator and victim meeting directly in a dialogue moderated by a mediator, such as a community leader or legal officer. This approach emphasizes the creation of mutual understanding and reconciliation, especially for cases with high emotional impact on victims.

b. Indirect Mediation

In this program, the perpetrator and victim do not meet directly. Communication is conducted through an intermediary, such as a mediator, to prevent potential trauma to the victim. This method provides a safe space for the victim to express her feelings without pressure and allows the perpetrator to take responsibility (Casesaria & Dey Ravena, 2023).

c. Use of Community Panels

Community panels involve community groups that serve as decision-makers in conflict resolution. This approach aims to balance the needs of victims and perpetrators and strengthen social relations within the community (Hartanto et al., 2023).

The effectiveness of Restorative Justice also lies in its ability to reduce recidivism rates by encouraging offenders to reflect on the impact of their actions, not only through punishment, but through dialogue that fosters empathy. It can also change the conflict resolution process from confrontational to collaborative, thus providing a more sustainable solution for all parties (Karjono et al., 2024). Community involvement in this process helps strengthen social ties, create a sense of collective responsibility, and facilitate the reintegration of offenders into society (Irabiah et al., 2022).

Challenges in the Implementation of Restorative Justice

Indonesia's criminal justice system has entered a new era by adopting restorative justice as part of national criminal law reform. This approach provides an alternative to retributive justice, which focuses on retribution, and restitutive justice, which emphasizes redress. Restorative justice is oriented towards restoring social relations, meeting the needs of victims, perpetrators, and communities involved in a crime, and creating reconciliation through a dialogical process. In the new Draft Criminal Code (RKUHP), the principles of restorative justice have been accommodated, offering an out-of-court solution to criminal cases that is more humane and prioritizes social harmony (Nasution et al., 2022).

In its implementation, restorative justice offers an alternative to the formal criminal system and revives the values of local wisdom that have long been practiced in Indonesian indigenous communities. The process involves perpetrators, victims, families, and communities to reach mutually beneficial solutions and create more inclusive justice (Wangga, 2022). In addition to strengthening the culture of teamwork, or in Indonesian terms, it is called "gotong royong", this approach also provides space for victims to recover emotionally and materially, while encouraging perpetrators to take responsibility for their actions. Restorative justice is thus capable of creating more inclusive and sustainable justice, in line with local values that respect the principles of deliberation and consensus as the core of conflict resolution. For example, mediation and deliberation are essential steps to resolving conflicts, with the ultimate goal of restoring balance and creating peace.

Restorative justice is indeed a promising alternative to resolving youth violence cases. It prioritizes the restoration of relationships and empowerment of all parties involved. Research shows that the restorative justice approach can potentially address this issue (Priambada et al., 2023). Still, its implementation is often hampered by various challenges that must be overcome.

One of the main challenges is determining which types of cases and offenders are appropriate for restorative justice processes. There is debate as to whether this approach is suitable for severe cases such as domestic violence or sexual abuse. Arguments against applying restorative justice to these "difficult" cases usually view it as a diversion, while proponents see it as an effective form of justice (Hudson, 2002). Opposing arguments generally view restorative justice as a form of "diversion" that can reduce justice for victims. In contrast, proponents of

restorative justice argue that this approach can provide more inclusive justice, focusing on victim recovery and offender rehabilitation.

Research shows that restorative justice can provide significant benefits to victims of sexual abuse if the process is victim-centered, conducted with appropriate facilitation, and prioritizes victim safety and recovery. For example, in cases of intrafamilial sexual violence, it has been shown to help repair family relationships and support the healing process of the victim and other family members (Klar-Chalamish & Peleg-Koriat, 2021). However, other research suggests that there is a risk of revictimization and a need for evaluation, especially in the context of domestic and sexual violence cases (Jeffries et al., 2021; Schmidt, 2023).

The lack of understanding and awareness of the public and law enforcement officials regarding the concept and procedures of restorative justice is a significant challenge in its implementation, especially in cases of youth violence. At the community level, this approach is often misunderstood as a form of leniency for the perpetrator without considering justice for the victim. This is influenced by a retributive culture that emphasizes punishment as a means of providing a deterrent effect. This stigma arises from a societal view that tends to judge offenders based on their criminal acts, without considering their background or potential for rehabilitation. As a result, victims' families or communities often reject mediation or other non-litigation solutions because they are perceived as not providing appropriate justice (Clifford & Arief, 2018). In addition, the lack of socialization about restorative justice means that people do not understand its main benefits, such as restoring relationships between offenders, victims, and communities. For example, in some cases, victims or their families reject mediation mechanisms for fear that the offender will reoffend, highlighting the need for further education to build trust in this approach (Eliza et al., 2023).

On the other side, law enforcement officials such as police, prosecutors, and judges often have a limited understanding of restorative justice, which results in inconsistent application. Many legal officers still view this approach as only suitable for minor cases, even though restorative justice principles can be applied in a variety of case severities, including youth violence, provided the conditions are met (Anisah & Hastarini, 2023). In addition, the lack of training, technical guidance, and resources, such as competent mediators and supporting infrastructure, makes it difficult for legal officials to integrate this approach into the justice system. Regulations such as Law No. 11/2012 on the Juvenile Criminal Justice System do regulate restorative justice-based diversion mechanisms. However, implementation is still hampered by limited resources and a lack of in-depth understanding (Karjono et al., 2024).

These challenges show that restorative justice implementation is not just an alternative approach in the legal system but also reflects complexities involving legal, social, cultural, and psychological aspects. This complexity suggests that restorative justice implementation in cases of youth violence requires not only structural reforms but also a profound change in the way society and the legal system view it.

Strategies for Optimizing Restorative Justice

The importance of restorative justice strategies is seen in their contribution to the de-escalation of social stigma against adolescent offenders. The process promotes social reintegration that strengthens community support, allowing offenders to return to productive lives without facing discrimination. On the other hand, this approach also helps to reduce the burden on the criminal justice system, which is often not ideally suited to handle cases of minor or non-severe violence. By prioritizing out-of-court dialogue and mediation, restorative justice creates efficiency and provides more sustainable outcomes for all parties involved (Fakih et al., 2020).

Furthermore, this approach instills justice values oriented towards restoration rather than punishment. This is relevant to creating a cultural change in society, where restorative justice is not only considered an alternative method but also the main effective solution to build a more inclusive and just society (Eliza et al., 2023). Thus, the implementation of restorative justice optimization strategies is a critical step to dealing with youth violence cases effectively and sustainably.

The restorative justice approach in youth violence cases offers a different paradigm from the traditional retributive approach. Restorative justice emphasizes restoring relationships between perpetrators, victims, and affected communities. In the context of youth violence, this is a challenge because it involves multidimensional factors that influence youth behavior, including psychological conditions, family environment, peer influence, and media. Optimizing restorative justice in cases of youth violence requires a strategic approach that includes legal, social and cultural, educational, and psychological aspects to ensure restorative justice can be applied effectively.

a. Legal Aspects

The legal approach in restorative justice provides a strong basis for resolving youth violence cases. The Juvenile Criminal Justice System Law No. 11/2012 and Attorney General Regulation No. 15/2020 have provided an essential foundation for restorative justice-based prosecution discontinuation. These regulations allow prosecutors to discontinue prosecution in favor of substantive justice. This regulation has established special treatment for juvenile offenders, focusing on rehabilitation and recovery. Resolution through mediation or diversion involves the victim, offender, family, and legal officials to find a mutually beneficial solution, without having to proceed to formal court, which can worsen the condition of the juvenile offender. This process can minimize the impact of stigmatization on offenders, especially in the context of their psychological development.

Legal officers such as police, prosecutors, and judges require intensive training to understand the principles and benefits of restorative justice. This training program should include real case simulations to ensure they can integrate this approach into their daily practice. Research by [Halim et al., \(2024\)](#) shows that differences often hamper the implementation of restorative justice in Indonesia in perceptions between law enforcement agencies so that coordinated training can harmonize their views and practices. Training must also integrate the restorative justice philosophy as a social engineering tool to improve relationships between offenders, victims, and communities ([Aruan, 2024](#)). Such an effort would increase the effectiveness of legal officers in practicing this approach and strengthen victim recovery and offender reintegration into society.

b. Social and Cultural Aspect

Restorative justice emphasizes community participation in resolving conflicts. In the social context, involving the local community as a facilitator of case resolution can strengthen social relations and provide a sense of collective responsibility to prevent future violence ([Sebayang et al., 2021](#)). Community support also provides victims a sense of security and helps perpetrators reintegrate into society without the burden of heavy stigma. In addition, it creates ongoing support for victims and perpetrators, including programs to reintegrate perpetrators into society to reduce stigma.

Communities can also serve as advocates that allow victims to feel heard and valued, and help them restore their social standing. This approach will enable perpetrators to reduce the stigma, which is often a barrier to reintegration into society. Offenders can make amends through positive contributions, such as community work or skills training, allowing them to return to being productive members of society. Ongoing support programs, including psychological therapy, community mediation, and skills reinforcement, are essential to ensure a smooth reintegration. This approach helps resolve conflicts and builds solidarity and social harmony, creating more inclusive and resilient communities.

In some countries, restorative justice is adapted to local cultural values such as deliberation and peace-respecting communities. Such a model has been applied successfully in Indonesia in the context of a customary legal system that can be realized by integrating local wisdom values such as deliberation, mufakat, and teamwork or “gotong royong.” Local cultural values, such as deliberation and consensus in accordance with Pancasila, have great potential in creating a more effective and fair justice system ([Karjono et al., 2024](#)).

c. Education Aspect

Optimizing restorative justice in youth violence cases from an educational aspect requires a comprehensive education-based approach to support victim recovery and offender rehabilitation. This strategy could include providing legal education to youth and communities to increase understanding of the legal consequences of violence and the importance of resolving conflicts peacefully. This program can be integrated into the school curriculum to include training in conflict resolution skills and emotional management so that adolescents can avoid violence and resolve disputes constructively.

Restorative justice has been a practical approach in preventing and addressing violence in schools through practices such as dialogue circles. Dialogue circles provide a space for students, teachers, and related parties to talk openly about conflicts, discuss their impact, and find fair solutions. This approach aims to improve behaviour and build healthier social relationships in the school environment. Studies show that this practice significantly reduces suspensions and improves communication and trust between students and teachers, ultimately strengthening relationships within the school community (Katic et al., 2020).

Dialogue circles also contribute to developing students' social and emotional skills, helping them constructively manage conflict and emotions (Lodi et al., 2021). Restorative justice has also been shown to be effective in reducing inequalities in discipline, especially for students from minority groups, and creating a more inclusive environment (Cantera-Rios et al., 2024). Promoting community-based discussions and empathy builds a sense of collective responsibility to prevent future violence.

d. Psychological Aspect

Psychological approaches play an important role in optimizing restorative justice in youth violence cases, focusing on trauma recovery, offender rehabilitation, and strengthening social relationships. Adolescents involved in violent acts, whether as victims or perpetrators, often face profound psychological impacts such as anxiety, depression, or guilt. By using a trauma-informed approach, perpetrators can understand the emotional consequences of their actions on victims. In contrast, victims have the space to voice their experiences in a safe and supportive environment (Spacey & Thompson, 2022).

Psychologically-based programs, such as group therapy, individual counseling, and social skills training, have also proven effective in rebuilding adolescents' self-confidence and strengthening their self-control over violent impulses. In some instances, such as sexual violence-based offenses by adolescents, the involvement of professional mediators to integrate restorative and rehabilitative approaches helps to create a balanced solution between offender responsibility and victim recovery (Alhakim et al., 2023).

Restorative justice, coupled with psychological education for families and communities, can help create stronger support systems so that adolescents can return to society without stigma and with a better chance of a positive future (Lloyd, 2020). This approach makes restorative justice not only a conflict resolution tool but also a character-building and social development strategy.

CONCLUSION

Violent crime involving adolescents is a complex phenomenon that affects various aspects of life, both for victims, perpetrators, and the wider community. The psychological and social impacts are often protracted, creating a cycle of violence that is difficult to stop. In this context, the restorative justice approach comes as an alternative that is oriented towards restoring relationships and improving conditions, instead of focusing solely on punishment. In Indonesia, the application of restorative justice in cases of youth violence shows great potential in creating social harmony through reconciliation between victims and perpetrators, recovery of losses, and rehabilitation of perpetrators to prevent violent behavior in the future. This effort is supported by a legal framework that allows for peaceful resolution, involving the community as part of the solution.

Implementing restorative justice in Indonesia still faces various challenges that require serious attention. One of the main obstacles is the lack of understanding of restorative justice concepts and mechanisms among the public and law enforcement officials. In addition, social and cultural barriers, such as the stigmatization of juvenile offenders, often hinder the reconciliation process. To optimize its implementation, a holistic strategy is needed, including legal reforms that support restorative justice, education to the community and law enforcement officials, and psychological approaches to deal with the trauma experienced by victims and perpetrators. This approach must also be adapted to the local cultural context, so restorative justice can be effectively and sustainably applied in handling cases of youth violence.

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