

# Implementation of Restorative Justice Principles in Resolving Juvenile Crimes in School Environments: A Case Study in Three Middle Schools in Central Lombok

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This study aims to analyze the implementation of restorative justice in resolving juvenile delinquency cases within school settings, particularly in three public junior secondary schools in Central Lombok, Indonesia. The research employs a qualitative approach with a multiple case study design, involving school counselors, principals, student offenders, victims, and parents. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis, and analyzed interactively through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings indicated that all cases were resolved through internal school mechanisms with a relatively low rate of recurrence. The implementation of restorative justice follows systematic stages, including case identification, information gathering, restorative dialogue, agreement formulation, and monitoring. A key finding reveals a hybrid model integrating formal institutional procedures with contextual socio-cultural practices. The success of implementation is strongly influenced by the role of school counselors as primary mediators and the active involvement of parents. This study confirms that restorative justice is an effective, adaptive, and relevant approach in fostering educational conflict resolution within schools. The findings contribute both theoretically and practically to the development of more humane and sustainable approaches to managing student misconduct.

**Keywords:** Restorative Justice, Child Crime, School Conflict, Mediation, Central Lombok

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## 1. Introduction

Children are the nation's future generation and have the right to grow and develop in a safe, healthy environment that supports character development [1]. In the realities of social life, children are not immune to the possibility of committing legal violations, including in the school environment [2]. Criminal acts involving children in schools, such as theft, fighting, minor assault, and bullying, are increasingly common. Schools, as educational institutions, serve not only as a place to transfer knowledge but also as a vehicle for the formation of students' morals and character [3]. Therefore, the approach to resolving legal violations in the school environment must be carried out wisely and educationally without neglecting children's rights. Repressive or retributive approaches to punishment often fail to provide a deterrent effect and can even potentially cause long-term psychological impacts on children. Children in conflict with the law often experience stigma, discrimination, and difficulties in social reintegration, including in school settings [4]. Criticism of this retributive approach has given rise to an alternative approach, *restorative justice*, which emphasizes the restoration of relationships and social responsibility over retribution [5], [6]. In the Indonesian context, the restorative justice approach was formalized through Law Number 11 of 2012 concerning the Juvenile Criminal Justice System, which emphasizes the importance of resolving juvenile cases by prioritizing restoration over punishment [4]. Restorative justice places perpetrators, victims, and the community in an equal dialogue space to resolve conflicts, restore relationships, and prevent recurrence

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of violations [6], [7]. This approach is not only oriented towards results, but also towards a participatory and inclusive process.

In the educational context, restorative justice has begun to be implemented through various strategies, such as peer mediation, family conferences, and dialogue between perpetrators and victims mediated by teachers or school officials [8]–[10]. Several studies have shown that this approach can create a more inclusive school environment and reduce conflict between students [11], [12]. However, the implementation of restorative justice at the school level, particularly in areas such as Central Lombok, has not been systematically documented in academic studies [13], [14].

The phenomenon of juvenile crime in the school environment is a serious concern because its impact is felt not only by the perpetrators and victims, but also by the wider social environment, including schools and families [2]. In this context, the conventional criminal justice system approach is often unable to provide justice that is educational and humane [15]. Therefore, the restorative justice approach is a more relevant alternative because it emphasizes the restoration of relationships, the responsibility of the perpetrator, and the voluntary recovery of the victim [11], [16]. Based on this description, this study aims to: (1) describe the form of implementation of the principles of restorative justice in resolving juvenile crime in three public junior high schools in Central Lombok; (2) analyze the effectiveness of the restorative approach in resolving cases; and (3) identify supporting and inhibiting factors in the implementation of this approach in the school environment.

## 2. Method

This research uses a qualitative approach with a multiple case study design to deeply understand the implementation of restorative justice in resolving juvenile crime in the school environment. This approach was chosen because it is able to capture the dynamics of the process, social interactions, and the meanings constructed by the parties in the practice of restorative-based conflict resolution. The research subjects were determined purposively based on their direct involvement in the case resolution process, including guidance and counseling (BK) teachers, school principals, student perpetrators, student victims, and parents/guardians of students. Additional informants such as homeroom teachers or school mediators were also involved to enrich the data perspective. The research was conducted in three public junior high schools in Central Lombok Regency, selected based on the criteria of having experience in handling student violations, having implemented mediation principles or a restorative approach, and providing access to relevant data.

Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews to explore the experiences and perceptions of informants, limited participant observation of the mediation or conflict resolution process, and documentation studies of case reports, mediation minutes, and peace agreement documents. The main research instrument was the researcher (*human instrument*) supported by semi-structured interview guidelines and observation sheets. Data analysis was conducted interactively using the Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña model through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing and verifying conclusions. The analysis focused on three main aspects: the form of implementation of the principles of restorative justice, the effectiveness of the restorative approach in resolving cases (reviewed from the perspective of relationship restoration, satisfaction of the parties involved, and prevention of recurrence), as well as supporting and inhibiting factors for its implementation. Data validity was maintained through triangulation of sources and methods, *member checking*, and *peer debriefing* to ensure the credibility and consistency of the research findings.

### 3. Results And Discussion

#### Results

##### Characteristics of Research Location

This research was conducted at three public junior high schools (SMPN) in Central Lombok Regency, each with distinct institutional and social characteristics. SMPN 1 Praya Timur has the largest student population (approximately 900 students) and is supported by a relatively comprehensive guidance and counseling (BK) structure. SMPN 2 Praya Timur accommodates approximately 650 students and has developed a Child-Friendly School program that influences its approach to student management. Meanwhile, SMPN 4 Praya Timur has a smaller student population (approximately 420 students) and is situated within a social environment closely connected to the Sasak indigenous community. These differences in institutional capacity and socio-cultural context shape the variation in case types as well as their resolution patterns across schools.

##### Distribution and Types of Child Crime Cases

Based on documentation and interview data, a total of 32 cases were identified over the past year across the three schools. These cases included minor theft, physical fights, bullying, property damage, and threats. The distribution of cases varied by school. SMPN 1 Praya Timur was predominantly characterized by cases of minor theft, student fights, and verbal bullying. SMPN 2 Praya Timur exhibited a broader and more complex range of cases, including systematic bullying, property damage, and minor moral violations. In contrast, SMPN 4 Praya Timur was dominated by group-based social conflicts, such as inter-village fights, threats, and petty theft, reflecting the influence of its surrounding socio-cultural environment.

##### Restorative Justice Implementation Pattern

The findings indicate that the implementation of restorative justice across the three schools followed relatively similar procedural stages: (1) case identification and referral to the guidance and counseling unit, (2) initial information gathering, (3) restorative meeting, (4) formulation of a recovery agreement, and (5) monitoring of agreement implementation.

In the initial stage, teachers or homeroom teachers referred cases to BK teachers for further handling. Subsequently, BK teachers collected data through interviews with perpetrators, victims, and witnesses, and assessed the severity of each case. The restorative meeting stage involved bringing together all relevant parties perpetrators, victims, parents, and school representatives into a dialogue forum. However, the structure and approach of these meetings varied among schools.

**Table 1.** Restorative Justice Implementation Model in Three Schools

School	Implementation Model	Characteristics
SMPN 1 Praya Timur	Formal restorative conference	Uses written guidelines and standard procedures
SMPN 2 Praya Timur	Restorative dialogue (circle)	Flexible, emphasizes emotional and relational aspects
SMPN 4 Praya Timur	Informal mediation	Influenced by local social and cultural approaches

The subsequent stage involved drafting a restitution agreement, typically including an apology, compensation, social responsibility, and a commitment not to repeat the violation. The final stage focused on monitoring to ensure compliance with the agreement.

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## Case Resolution Results

Of the 32 cases analyzed, all were resolved through internal school mechanisms without escalation to external legal institutions. Five cases (15.6%) experienced recurrence within six months, while the majority 27 cases (84.4%) showed no recurrence.

Interview data further revealed that victims received forms of restoration, including acknowledgment of wrongdoing, compensation, and opportunities to express their feelings. Perpetrators underwent social consequences and received guidance under school supervision. In most cases, relationships between perpetrators and victims were restored following the resolution process.

## Comparison of Implementation Between Schools

A comparative analysis across the three schools reveals variation in both institutional readiness and implementation practices. These differences are reflected in the availability of standard operating procedures (SOPs), the role of BK personnel, parental involvement, and monitoring systems.

**Table 2.** Comparison of Restorative Justice Implementation Between Schools

Aspect	SMPN 1 Praya Timur	SMPN 2 Praya Timur	SMPN 4 Praya Timur
Restorative SOP	Formal and documented	Simple	Not available
Role of BK	Very active	Active	Limited
Parental involvement	High	Moderate	Varied
Monitoring	Structured	Semi-structured	Unstructured

## Supporting and Inhibiting Factors

The study identified several factors influencing the implementation of restorative justice. Supporting factors include strong leadership commitment from principals, active involvement of BK teachers, availability of mediation mechanisms or SOPs, parental participation, a school culture supportive of peaceful conflict resolution, and broader social support.

Conversely, inhibiting factors include limited facilitator training, low parental participation in certain cases, lack of infrastructure such as mediation rooms, persistent stigma toward perpetrators, and varying levels of student understanding regarding restorative processes.

## Impact of Restorative Justice Implementation

The implementation of restorative justice generated observable changes among involved parties. Perpetrators demonstrated increased awareness of their actions and behavioral improvements in social interactions. Victims reported a sense of relief, safety, and recognition through the opportunity to express their experiences.

At the institutional level, schools experienced reduced conflict intensity and improved internal resolution capacity, indicating that restorative justice contributed positively to the overall school climate.

## Synthesis of Research Results

Overall, the findings indicate that restorative justice implementation across the three schools followed a relatively consistent procedural pattern, albeit with variations in institutional structure and contextual adaptation. All cases were resolved internally with a low recurrence rate.

Variations in implementation were primarily influenced by institutional capacity, the effectiveness of guidance and counseling roles, and the availability of social support systems. These findings highlight that

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while restorative justice can be systematically applied, its effectiveness is highly dependent on contextual and institutional factors.

## Discussion

The results of this study indicate that the implementation of restorative justice in three public junior high schools in Central Lombok exhibits a relatively consistent pattern in case resolution stages, although it varies in approach and institutional capacity. Overall, this approach successfully resolved all cases through internal school mechanisms, with a relatively low recurrence rate and positive acceptance from all parties involved. These findings confirm that restorative justice functions not only as a conflict resolution mechanism but also as a social process that facilitates the restoration of relationships and the reintegration of perpetrators within the school environment.

The findings of this study align with the fundamental principles of restorative justice, which emphasize relationship restoration, accountability of perpetrators, and active involvement of victims in the resolution process [5], [6]. In the educational context, these results are also consistent with previous studies indicating that restorative approaches can reduce conflict and foster a more inclusive social climate within schools [11], [17]. However, this study extends these findings by demonstrating that the implementation of restorative justice in the local context particularly in Central Lombok is significantly influenced by socio-cultural dynamics.

One of the key findings of this study is the variation in restorative justice implementation models, which can be conceptualized as a hybrid between formal institutional approaches and culturally embedded practices. Schools with stronger institutional capacity tend to apply structured restorative mechanisms such as formal conferences or circle-based dialogues. In contrast, schools with limited resources adopt more flexible and context-sensitive approaches by integrating local socio-cultural values into mediation processes. This finding reinforces the argument that restorative justice is inherently adaptive and cannot be uniformly applied across different contexts [7], [16]. Thus, restorative practices in schools can be understood as *contextualized restorative practices*, where local norms and cultural frameworks shape conflict resolution dynamics.

The effectiveness of restorative justice in this study is reflected not only in the low rate of recidivism but also in the dialogical process that enables empathy, acknowledgment of wrongdoing, and participatory agreement-building. From a theoretical perspective, this aligns with the concept of *reintegrative shaming*, which emphasizes condemning the act without stigmatizing the individual [7]. Furthermore, the active involvement of victims in the dialogue process enhances the legitimacy of the resolution and strengthens the perception of justice among participants [8], [16]. Therefore, the effectiveness of restorative justice in the school setting is not merely instrumental but also relational and transformative.

This study also highlights the importance of actors within the restorative justice ecosystem in schools. Guidance and counseling (BK) teachers play a central role as mediators, while parents function as social reinforcers of agreements and behavioral change. This finding underscores that restorative justice is not an isolated mechanism but a collaborative system involving multiple stakeholders. This perspective aligns with the *positive youth justice* framework, which emphasizes the importance of social support structures in shaping youth behavior [1]. Accordingly, the success of restorative justice implementation is strongly influenced by the synergy between schools, families, and the broader social environment.

In terms of implications, this study contributes theoretically by reinforcing the understanding of restorative justice as a contextual and dynamic approach shaped by local socio-cultural conditions. Practically, the

findings highlight the need to strengthen the capacity of guidance and counseling teachers, develop standardized restorative procedures (SOPs), and enhance parental involvement in school-based conflict resolution. From a policy perspective, these results support the integration of restorative justice into the education system as part of broader child protection and juvenile justice frameworks.

However, several limitations should be acknowledged. This study was conducted in three schools within a single geographic area, which limits the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, the qualitative approach emphasizes depth over breadth, focusing on understanding processes and meanings rather than producing generalizable conclusions. Nevertheless, these limitations provide opportunities for future research, particularly comparative studies across regions or the application of mixed-method approaches to expand analytical scope.

#### 4. Conclusion

This study confirms that the implementation of restorative justice in three public junior high schools in Central Lombok Regency represents an effective, adaptive, and recovery-oriented mechanism for resolving juvenile delinquency. This is evidenced by the successful resolution of all cases through internal school mechanisms and the relatively low rate of recurrence.

The findings reveal the existence of a hybrid restorative justice model that integrates formal institutional procedures with local socio-cultural practices. Consequently, the effectiveness of restorative justice is determined not solely by procedural structures but by the ability to contextualize these practices within the specific social environment of the school. Furthermore, successful implementation is strongly influenced by the strategic role of guidance and counseling teachers as mediators and the active involvement of parents as sources of social legitimacy.

From a theoretical standpoint, this study contributes to expanding the understanding of restorative justice as a contextual and dynamic practice within educational settings. Practically and in terms of policy, the findings underscore the urgency of strengthening institutional capacity, standardizing restorative procedures, and integrating restorative approaches into education and child protection systems. Such integration is essential to fostering an inclusive, participatory, and sustainable school environment.

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