

IMPLEMENTATION OF RESTORATIVE JUSTICE IN THE SETTLEMENT OF CASES OF CHILDREN IN CONFLICT WITH THE LAW AT THE MADINA POLICE FROM AN ISLAMIC LAW PERSPECTIVE



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Abstract

This research is motivated by the need for a more humanistic approach toward children in conflict with the law compared to the conventional criminal justice system, which tends to be punitive. The main objective of this study is to examine the implementation of restorative justice at the Mandailing Natal Police, identify its supporting and inhibiting factors, and analyze it within the framework of Islamic law. This study employs a qualitative method with a juridical-sociological approach. Data were collected through interviews, observations, and documentation involving law enforcement officers and related parties. The findings reveal that restorative justice has been applied primarily to minor offenses such as theft and minor assault through penal mediation involving the offender, the victim, and their families. Supporting factors include a strong legal foundation and local cultural values that uphold peace and reconciliation, while inhibiting factors consist of limited investigative resources and a lack of public understanding. From the perspective of Islamic law, restorative justice aligns with the principles of *islah* (reconciliation), *afwu* (forgiveness), and *diyat* (compensation), which emphasize the restoration of social relationships and the achievement of communal welfare. Therefore, the implementation of restorative justice at the Mandailing Natal Police reflects a harmony between positive law and the moral values of justice in Islam.

Keywords: Restorative Justice, Children in Conflict with the Law, Mandailing Natal Police, Islamic Law

INTRODUCTION

The issue of children in conflict with the law is a complex legal and social problem in Indonesia. It is not merely a matter of criminal violation but also involves moral, psychological, social, and educational dimensions. Children who commit criminal acts are often not pure offenders but victims of unfavorable environmental conditions, poor parental supervision, or socio-economic instability (Santika et al, 2025). Therefore, handling juvenile cases requires a different approach from that applied to adults, since children are still in a stage of development and possess the potential to be guided and rehabilitated into responsible members of society.

The conventional criminal justice system, which focuses mainly on punishment, often fails to address the needs and best interests of children. Imprisonment may cause trauma, social stigma, and long-term psychological harm, rather than rehabilitation (Hidayat, 2024). Moreover, it does not adequately consider the needs of victims or the restoration of social harmony. Thus, an alternative approach that is more humane and justice-oriented is urgently needed one that restores relationships between victims, offenders, and the community rather than merely imposing punishment.

This approach is known as restorative justice. Restorative justice represents a paradigm shift in criminal law enforcement that emphasizes the restoration of the victim, offender, and community as a whole. Tony Marshall defines restorative justice as a process in which all parties involved in an offense come together to collectively resolve the consequences of the crime and find a constructive solution for the future. Howard Zehr, one of the leading pioneers of restorative justice, asserts that crime should not be viewed merely as a violation of the law but as a violation of human relationships. The focus, therefore, should not only be on punishing offenders but also on repairing the harm caused and rebuilding social trust through dialogue, mediation, and reconciliation.

In the context of juvenile justice, restorative justice is particularly relevant. Children in conflict with the law should be seen not only as perpetrators but also as individuals who require protection, education, and guidance. The primary goal of handling juvenile offenders is to rehabilitate and reintegrate them into society, not to isolate or stigmatize them. This principle aligns with the “best interests of the child” doctrine as stipulated in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified by Indonesia through Presidential Decree No. 36 of 1990.

The legal framework for restorative justice in Indonesia is clearly established in Law No. 11 of 2012 on the Juvenile Criminal Justice System (SPPA), which introduces the concept of diversion mechanism that allows cases involving children to be resolved outside the formal court system. The law requires law enforcement officers to prioritize restorative justice approaches that focus on reconciliation and rehabilitation. Furthermore, the Chief of Police Regulation No. 8 of 2021 on the Handling of Criminal Acts Based on Restorative Justice provides detailed guidelines for police investigators to apply mediation and peaceful settlement mechanisms during criminal investigations.

Through restorative justice, children can avoid lengthy judicial proceedings and imprisonment, allowing for peaceful resolutions that emphasize accountability, reconciliation, and reparation. Penal mediation, as one of its main forms, involves offenders, victims, families, and community leaders in reaching mutually beneficial agreements. Such processes strengthen community values, reduce recidivism, and promote sustainable peace.

Nevertheless, implementing restorative justice in Indonesia still faces several challenges. Public awareness about restorative justice remains limited; many still perceive punishment as the only means of achieving justice. The lack of trained investigators capable of conducting penal mediation and the persistence of retributive legal culture also hinder its full application. Therefore, enhancing the capacity of law enforcement officers and educating the public about the importance of restorative justice are essential steps toward realizing a more humane and effective justice system.

From the perspective of Islamic law, restorative justice aligns with fundamental Islamic principles such as *islah* (reconciliation), *afwu* (forgiveness), and *diyat* (compensation). The Qur'an encourages peace, forgiveness, and the restoration of social relations, as reflected in Surah Asy-Syura (42:40) and Al-Hujurat (49:10). Islam emphasizes that true justice is achieved not merely through punishment but through the pursuit of harmony and the welfare of society (*maslahah*). These values demonstrate that restorative justice is not a foreign concept but rather a manifestation of the Islamic vision of justice that prioritizes mercy, balance, and social cohesion.

In practice, the Mandailing Natal Police (Polres Madina) have adopted restorative justice in resolving cases involving children, particularly in minor offenses such as petty theft, minor assault, and school fights. These cases are commonly settled through penal mediation, where both parties offender and victim along with their families and community representatives, reach an agreement based on peace and mutual understanding. This process not only restores harmony but also reflects the integration of state law and Islamic ethical values within local legal culture.

However, the implementation of restorative justice at the Mandailing Natal Police still encounters several obstacles, including limited public comprehension, resource constraints, and inconsistencies in applying restorative justice principles. Therefore, a comprehensive study on the implementation of restorative justice in resolving cases of children in conflict with the law at Mandailing Natal Police from the perspective of Islamic law is crucial.

This research aims to analyze how restorative justice is implemented within the Mandailing Natal Police jurisdiction, to identify supporting and inhibiting factors, and to examine its relevance to Islamic legal principles. By integrating the concept of restorative justice with Islamic teachings on reconciliation and forgiveness, this study seeks to demonstrate that justice in Islam emphasizes not only retribution but also compassion, balance, and collective well-being. Ultimately, the implementation of restorative justice reflects the harmony between positive law and Islamic law, creating a more humane, equitable, and peace-oriented justice system for children in conflict with the law.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Concept of Restorative Justice

Restorative Justice is a new paradigm in the criminal justice system that emphasizes the restoration of social harmony rather than the imposition of punishment. This approach aims to repair the harm caused by crime and restore relationships between the offender, the victim, and the community. Marshall (1999) defines Restorative Justice as a process in which

all parties affected by a crime work together to resolve the consequences of the offense and to promote healing, reconciliation, and social balance.

In the Indonesian context, the concept of Restorative Justice is legally regulated in Law No. 11 of 2012 concerning the Juvenile Criminal Justice System (SPPA). This law introduces the concept of diversion, which allows juvenile cases to be resolved outside of formal court processes. Moreover, Police Regulation No. 8 of 2021 provides detailed guidance for investigators in applying restorative justice during criminal proceedings. Through these regulations, the state demonstrates its commitment to child protection and to a more humane and socially just approach to law enforcement.

Philosophically, Restorative Justice is rooted in the belief that every individual has the capacity for moral transformation, and society has a responsibility to facilitate this process. Mediation between the offender and the victim is viewed as a more effective method for restoring social order than formal judicial proceedings, which often focus only on punishment. This approach fosters a sense of moral accountability in offenders while allowing victims to experience justice in a more meaningful and compassionate way.

Philosophical and Juridical Foundations of Restorative Justice

Philosophically, restorative justice is grounded in the idea that the law should serve humanity rather than merely enforce punishment. John Rawls (1971), in his book *A Theory of Justice*, asserts that justice is the first virtue of social institutions, emphasizing equality and fairness among individuals in society. His principles of justice the principle of equal liberty and the difference principle suggest that justice is realized not only through punishment but also through the restoration of rights and social welfare for all affected parties.

Juridically, restorative justice in Indonesia has strong legal foundations through several key instruments, including Law No. 11 of 2012, Regulation of the Attorney General No. 15 of 2020 on the Termination of Prosecution Based on Restorative Justice, and Police Regulation No. 8 of 2021. These legal frameworks provide room for law enforcement agencies to resolve criminal cases outside of formal trials if both parties have reached a legitimate and fair agreement. Consequently, the law functions not merely as an instrument of coercion but as a means of restoring moral and social equilibrium within society.

Additionally, restorative justice aligns with the humanistic values enshrined in Pancasila the Indonesian philosophical foundation particularly the second and fifth principles, which emphasize human dignity and social justice. Thus, restorative justice can be seen as a practical manifestation of Indonesia's legal ideals that integrate humanity and fairness.

Restorative Justice in the Perspective of Islamic Law

In Islamic law, restorative justice corresponds to the principles of *al-islah* (reconciliation), *al-afwu* (forgiveness), and *maslahah mursalah* (public welfare). Islam teaches that true justice is not limited to retribution but extends to reconciliation and the restoration of social harmony. The Qur'an in Surah Ash-Shura (42:40) states: "The recompense for an injury is an injury equal thereto, but if a person forgives and makes reconciliation, his reward is with Allah." This verse reflects that Islam prioritizes forgiveness and peace over retaliation.

Hosen (2015) argues that Islamic criminal law is deeply moral in nature because it seeks to uphold justice as a fundamental value in social life. The objective of Islamic law, as

reflected in the theory of *maqasid al-shari'ah*, is to protect five essential aspects of human existence: religion (*ad-din*), life (*an-nafs*), intellect (*al-'aql*), lineage (*an-nasl*), and property (*al-mal*). The implementation of restorative justice aligns with these objectives because it safeguards human life, dignity, and communal welfare through peaceful resolution and moral accountability.

Furthermore, Islam recognizes the concepts of *diyat* (compensation) and *sulh* (amicable settlement), both of which embody restorative principles. These mechanisms allow offenders to atone for their wrongdoing by compensating victims and restoring social relationships. Hence, restorative justice in Islamic law not only achieves justice for victims but also provides an opportunity for offenders to reform and reintegrate into society as morally responsible individuals.

The Theory of Child Protection in the Legal System

The theory of child protection emphasizes that children have the right to grow and develop in a safe and nurturing environment, free from discrimination and violence. The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC, 1989) affirms that every child is entitled to legal protection and to the best possible conditions for physical, emotional, and moral development. In Indonesian law, these principles are embodied in Law No. 11 of 2012 on the Juvenile Criminal Justice System and Law No. 23 of 2002 on Child Protection.

Marlina (2009) asserts that restorative justice in juvenile cases represents a tangible form of child protection. It allows children to take responsibility for their actions without losing their fundamental rights as developing human beings. This approach prevents children from being subjected to formal criminal procedures that could cause trauma, stigma, or long-term psychological harm.

In practice, restorative justice for juveniles must prioritize the principle of the best interests of the child. Therefore, the process of diversion and mediation between offenders and victims should be conducted in a humane, educational, and rehabilitative manner rather than punitive. Through this approach, law becomes not only a mechanism for control but also an instrument of education and moral restoration that upholds justice and human dignity.

Factors Affecting the Effectiveness of Restorative Justice

The effectiveness of restorative justice is influenced by several factors, including legal, social, and cultural aspects. The legal factor involves the existence of clear regulations that authorize the implementation of restorative mechanisms. The social factor relates to public awareness and the active participation of law enforcement, communities, and social institutions in supporting mediation and reconciliation. The cultural factor includes local wisdom and traditions that promote forgiveness and collective harmony, such as the Mandailing concept of *marsialap ari* (mutual forgiveness), which aligns with restorative values.

Nevertheless, certain challenges persist, such as the lack of child-friendly facilities, the shortage of professionals like psychologists and social workers, and limited public understanding of restorative justice. Coordination among legal institutions police, prosecutors, and courts also needs improvement to ensure consistency in implementation. Therefore, inter-agency collaboration and capacity building for law enforcement officers are essential to ensure that restorative justice truly fulfills its goals of fairness, humanity, and peace.

RESEARCH METHOD

The research method used in this study is a qualitative descriptive approach aimed at gaining an in-depth understanding of the implementation of restorative justice in resolving cases involving children in conflict with the law at the Mandailing Natal Police from the perspective of Islamic law. This study combines normative and empirical approaches, in which the normative approach examines legislation, literature, and Islamic legal principles related to restorative justice, while the empirical approach involves field research to observe its practical application. The data consist of primary data obtained through interviews with investigators, victims, offenders, and community leaders, and secondary data collected from official documents, books, journals, and regulations such as Law No. 11 of 2012 on the Juvenile Criminal Justice System and Police Regulation No. 8 of 2021. Data collection techniques include observation, interviews, and documentation, while data analysis employs the Miles and Huberman interactive model, consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. To ensure the validity of the data, triangulation of sources and methods was applied. This method allows for a comprehensive understanding of how restorative justice is implemented at the Mandailing Natal Police in alignment with Islamic legal values that emphasize reconciliation, forgiveness, and social welfare.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

General Overview of Restorative Justice Implementation at the Mandailing Natal Police

Restorative justice represents a paradigm shift in the modern criminal justice system that emphasizes restoration and reconciliation rather than retribution. This approach has emerged as an alternative solution to the weaknesses of conventional criminal law, which focuses primarily on punishment without prioritizing rehabilitation or recovery for both victims and offenders, especially in cases involving children. In Indonesia, restorative justice finds its legal basis in Law No. 11 of 2012 on the Juvenile Criminal Justice System (SPPA).

At the Mandailing Natal Police, restorative justice has been implemented following the issuance of Police Regulation No. 8 of 2021, which provides technical guidelines for law enforcement officers in handling criminal cases using restorative mechanisms. According to interviews with the Head of the Criminal Investigation Unit, the main objective of restorative justice is to create a fair, humane, and educational resolution for children in conflict with the law. The principle underlying this approach is to restore social relationships between the offender and the victim and to prevent the child from entering formal judicial processes that could cause psychological trauma or social stigma.

The Women and Child Protection Unit (Unit PPA) serves as the main facilitator in implementing this approach. Investigators act as mediators who bring together the offender, the victim, their families, and community or religious leaders in a dialogue to reach a peaceful settlement. This process promotes moral responsibility, compensation, and rehabilitation rather than punishment, reflecting the belief that children are capable of change and moral improvement.

Procedures for the Implementation of Restorative Justice at the Mandailing Natal Police

The procedures for implementing restorative justice at the Mandailing Natal Police are guided by Article 7, paragraph (1) of Law No. 11 of 2012, which stipulates that diversion can be conducted during investigation, prosecution, or trial stages if the offense is punishable by less than seven years and the offender is not a repeat offender.

Based on interviews with officers from the Criminal Investigation Division and the PPA Unit, the process begins with identifying cases eligible for restorative settlement. Once the case qualifies, the investigator organizes a mediation session involving both parties. During this session, the investigator acts as a neutral facilitator. If an agreement is reached, it is formalized in a written peace agreement signed by both parties and witnessed by community representatives. The agreement then serves as the legal basis for the termination of the investigation.

The process often involves cooperation with correctional institutions (Bapas) and local community figures to strengthen the social legitimacy of the settlement. The integration of cultural and legal approaches demonstrates that restorative justice in Mandailing Natal reflects not only legal compliance but also the local values of kinship, deliberation, and peace known as *marsialap ari*.

Juvenile Cases Resolved Through Restorative Justice

According to data from the Mandailing Natal Police, the number of juvenile cases resolved through restorative justice continues to increase. In 2023, nine cases were handled through this mechanism, and the number rose to eleven in 2024. Most cases involved minor offenses such as petty theft, embezzlement, and light assault.

One case involved a 15 year old student who stole a mobile phone. Through mediation facilitated by the PPA Unit, the child admitted the wrongdoing, apologized, and returned the stolen item. The victim accepted the apology, and both parties agreed to reconcile. The investigation was then terminated, and the child was placed under community supervision for social rehabilitation. This case demonstrates that restorative justice effectively prevents children from entering the formal justice system while fostering moral awareness and accountability.

The increasing number of cases resolved through this approach indicates that law enforcement officers are becoming more aware of the importance of restorative methods in achieving justice that educates rather than punishes.

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors of Restorative Justice Implementation

Several factors support the success of restorative justice implementation at the Mandailing Natal Police. The first is the presence of a strong legal foundation through Law No. 11 of 2012 and Police Regulation No. 8 of 2021, which authorize the use of non-litigation mechanisms in criminal resolution. The second is local cultural support, as the Mandailing Natal community highly values kinship, dialogue, and reconciliation values that align with restorative principles. The third factor is the professionalism of PPA investigators, who conduct mediation with empathy and fairness.

However, some obstacles hinder full implementation. Limited infrastructure, such as the lack of child-friendly mediation spaces and a shortage of professional mediators, psychologists, and social workers, poses significant challenges. Additionally, public understanding of restorative justice remains low; some people still perceive that offenders

must be punished to serve justice. Administrative coordination between the police, prosecutors, and courts also needs improvement. These challenges must be addressed through enhanced training, community education, and inter-agency collaboration.

Restorative Justice in the Perspective of Islamic Law

From the perspective of Islamic law, restorative justice aligns with the core principles of *maqasid al-shari'ah*, which emphasize justice, compassion, and the restoration of social harmony. Islamic teachings uphold *al-islah* (reconciliation), *al-afwu* (forgiveness), and *maslahah mursalah* (public welfare) as guiding principles for achieving equitable and peaceful resolutions.

The Qur'an states in Surah Ash-Shura (42:40): "The recompense for an injury is an injury equal thereto, but if a person forgives and makes reconciliation, his reward is with Allah." Similarly, Surah Al-Hujurat (49:10) commands believers to "make peace between your brothers." These verses indicate that Islam prioritizes peace and reconciliation over retaliation.

The concepts of *diyat* (compensation) and *sulh* (amicable settlement) in Islamic jurisprudence share the same essence as restorative justice emphasizing restoration, forgiveness, and social balance. Hence, the application of restorative justice at the Mandailing Natal Police reflects not only compliance with state law but also the realization of Islamic legal and ethical principles in contemporary practice.

The Effectiveness of Restorative Justice for Child Protection

The implementation of restorative justice at the Mandailing Natal Police has shown significant positive impacts on child protection from legal, social, and psychological perspectives. Legally, it prevents children from going through prolonged and traumatizing judicial procedures. Socially, it allows them to acknowledge mistakes, rebuild relationships, and reintegrate into society. Psychologically, it reduces the negative stigma and trauma that often accompany criminal proceedings.

This process also provides a more human-centered form of justice for victims, allowing them to express their feelings, receive restitution, and attain emotional closure. In the broader context, restorative justice encourages stronger community involvement in maintaining social harmony and reinforces traditional values of empathy and collective responsibility.

Overall, restorative justice at the Mandailing Natal Police represents a convergence between legal modernity, local culture, and Islamic ethics. It embodies a justice system that not only enforces the law but also educates, heals, and restores social balance in accordance with human dignity and moral responsibility.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings on the implementation of restorative justice in resolving cases involving children in conflict with the law at the Mandailing Natal Police, it can be concluded that the application of restorative justice has been quite effective and aligns with both positive law and the principles of Islamic law. Restorative justice serves as an alternative approach within the juvenile justice system that focuses on restoring social relationships, forgiveness, and reconciliation between offenders, victims, and the community.

The implementation of restorative justice at the Mandailing Natal Police has been carried out in accordance with Law No. 11 of 2012 on the Juvenile Criminal Justice System and Police Regulation No. 8 of 2021, which position children not as criminals to be punished but as individuals who must be guided, rehabilitated, and socially restored. The diversion process through mediation between offenders, victims, families, and community leaders has proven effective in reducing the burden of formal legal proceedings while reinforcing humanitarian and moral values in the resolution of juvenile criminal cases.

Empirically, the increase in the number of cases resolved through restorative justice from nine cases in 2023 to eleven cases in 2024 indicates growing awareness among law enforcement and the public toward a more humane and reconciliatory approach to justice. Furthermore, the local culture of Mandailing Natal, which highly values deliberation and peace (*marsialap ari*), plays a vital role in supporting the success of restorative practices.

From the perspective of Islamic law, restorative justice is in harmony with the principles of *al-islah* (reconciliation), *al-afwu* (forgiveness), and *maslahah mursalah* (public welfare), all of which emphasize the resolution of conflicts through peace, compassion, and social harmony. Therefore, the implementation of restorative justice at the Mandailing Natal Police not only ensures the protection of children's rights but also reflects the integration of positive law and Islamic legal values aimed at achieving justice, humanity, and social well-being.

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