

Restorative Justice Approaches in Addressing Children in Conflict with the Law: A Normative Analysis

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzes the implementation of restorative justice in handling children in conflict with the law based on Law Number 11 of 2012 concerning the Juvenile Criminal Justice System. Using a normative juridical research method with statutory and conceptual approaches, this study examines the effectiveness of the diversion mechanism as a transfer of child case resolution from formal justice to out-of-court processes. The results of the study indicate that restorative justice through diversion has successfully shifted the punitive paradigm toward a constructive rehabilitative approach by prioritizing relationship restoration, the best interests of the child, and the active participation of the perpetrator, victim, family, and community. However, its implementation faces challenges in the form of law enforcement officials' commitment, compliance with procedural deadlines, and social stigma against child perpetrators. This study recommends capacity building for human resources, enhancement of child-friendly mediation facilities, and socialization of restorative justice values to optimize child protection and prevent the recurrence of criminal offenses.

INTRODUCTION

Children are a fundamental asset as well as the future generation of the nation who possess the natural right to grow and develop in a safe and supportive environment. However, in social reality, not a few children fall into deviant behavior and must face the legal system due to alleged criminal acts. The conventional law enforcement paradigm, which tends to be punitive and destructive, often places children in conflict with the law in a position vulnerable to negative social stigmatization (Suciati & M.Hum, 2023). Social stigma can worsen stress in children by making them feel isolated and lack social support (Pakpahan et al., 2022). When a child enters the vortex of rigid formal justice, the resulting psychological and social impacts often actually damage their future, rather than providing educational guidance.

In response to the urgency of protecting children, criminal justice systems around the world, including Indonesia's, have begun shifting their orientation from retribution toward a constructive, rehabilitative approach. This paradigm shift places restorative justice as the main foundation for handling cases of children in conflict with the law. Restorative justice

offers a more humane approach that focuses on social recovery compared with the traditional retributive approach (Wijaya et al., 2022). This approach requires that the best interests of the child be the primary consideration in every decision (Fajar et al., 2021). Through Law Number 11 of 2012 concerning the Juvenile Criminal Justice System, restorative justice was normatively adopted as a process of resolving criminal cases that actively involves the offender, the victim, the families of both parties, and society (Saputra et al., 2024). While legal proceedings are underway, the child's right to education must still be fulfilled (Fajar et al., 2022). The main focus of this approach is to restore conditions to their original state for the best interests of the child, setting aside harmful elements of retribution.

The concrete implementation of restorative justice is realized through the diversion mechanism, namely the transfer of the settlement of a child's case from the formal criminal justice process to a process outside the court. The application of diversion in juvenile criminal justice in Indonesia aims to achieve a more humane form of justice and to provide optimal protection for children involved in criminal cases (Utama et al., 2024). Social stereotypes toward

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child offenders can narrow their opportunities in the future, which makes resolution outside the formal justice process important (Sajjapong et al., 2022). Under the mandate of the law, diversion must be pursued at every stage of examination, from investigation by the police and prosecution by the prosecutor's office to trial in court (Setyowati, 2020). Careful juridical analysis is needed so that the application of these rules remains consistent with the goal of protecting children (Yasif et al., 2024). This process prioritizes deliberation and consensus through a collaborative forum attended by all relevant parties, including community supervisors from the Correctional Center (Bapas) and professional social workers. Agreements are easier to accept and carry out when they align with local cultural values (Mardikaningsih & Darmawan, 2023). Nevertheless, the application of diversion is subject to strict limits: the mechanism applies only to criminal offenses punishable by imprisonment of less than seven years and that are not repeat offenses.

Although regulations have clearly set out these limits and procedures, challenges in the practice of juvenile criminal law enforcement in Indonesia are still frequently found. These include the synergy among judicial institutions, the understanding of law enforcement officers, and compliance with strict procedural deadlines, such as the obligation to report a diversion agreement to the District Court within three days, which demands high accuracy and commitment. Good coordination among institutions largely determines how effectively diversion is carried out (Darmawan, 2024). In addition, the complexity of the factors behind children's violations of the law, which often stem from failures in parenting and environmental pressure, requires integrated handling so that the restorative justice process does not become a mere administrative formality between the parties, but is genuinely able to heal the material and immaterial harm. Working parents often struggle to divide their time for raising children (Evendi et al., 2023), while parenting styles and school culture also shape children's discipline (Djazilan & Darmawan, 2021). Family support strengthens a child's resilience to recover (Evendi et al., 2024), and guidance that addresses the child's spiritual side can reinforce that recovery (Masfufah & Darmawan, 2023). Families of child offenders also need legal protection so that they are not burdened by stigma (Zahid et al., 2022).

Based on these normative and empirical dynamics, this study was conducted with the main objective of analyzing in depth the consistency and effectiveness of the implementation of restorative

justice within the framework of the Juvenile Criminal Justice System Law. This study intends to examine the extent to which the diversion mechanism can be optimized at every stage of formal examination in order to keep children from being deprived of their liberty. Through comprehensive legal analysis, this study also aims to map the strategic role and collaboration of various law enforcement institutions, community supervisors, and social workers in order to achieve humane justice.

This study aims to evaluate the implementation procedures of diversion agreements, including aspects of timeliness in reporting to the court, to guarantee legal certainty for all parties involved. Through a deep understanding of the boundaries of the application of restorative justice, this study is expected to provide conceptual recommendations that align with the values of Pancasila to protect the younger generation. The ultimate goal of this study is to contribute thoughts to the development of juvenile criminal justice that focuses on offender accountability, victim recovery, and the prevention of recidivism rates in Indonesia.

RESEARCH METHOD

This legal research is conducted using a normative juridical research method, often known as doctrinal legal research. The primary approach applied to dissect the problem is the statute approach combined with the conceptual approach. The statute approach is used to critically examine the consistency and relevance of applicable regulations, with a primary focus on Law Number 11 of 2012 concerning the Juvenile Criminal Justice System. Meanwhile, the conceptual approach is applied to examine legal doctrines, principles, and theories of restorative justice that serve as the soul in protecting the rights of children in conflict with the law.

All data used in this research are sourced from secondary data categorized into three main legal materials. Primary legal materials consist of binding formal regulations, namely the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia and the Juvenile Criminal Justice System Law. Secondary legal materials, which function to provide scientific explanation, are obtained through in-depth literature studies of legal textbooks, accredited scientific journals, legal articles, and reports of previous research relevant to diversion mechanisms and restorative justice. To complement and provide guidance on technical terms, tertiary legal materials are also utilized, which include legal dictionaries and encyclopedias (Kirana & Rahaditya, 2024).

The technique of collecting legal materials is carried out comprehensively through library

research. The researcher traces, collects, inventories, and records written legal materials, both in print and digital forms, to be subsequently classified based on the relevance of their topics.

Furthermore, the classified legal materials are analyzed using a qualitative analysis method through deductive reasoning techniques. This reasoning process begins with understanding general premises or propositions, namely the norms of macro-level child case handling and restorative justice theory. From this general foundation, the researcher draws specific conclusions regarding how the concrete implementation of diversion mechanisms, the synergy of roles among law enforcement institutions, and the effectiveness of protecting the welfare of the younger generation within the criminal justice system in Indonesia operate.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Juvenile justice has characteristics that are fundamentally different from general justice because its subjects are in a phase of psychological and moral development that is not yet mature. The difference in cognitive capacity between children and adults necessitates legal treatment that is adaptive to a child's level of understanding of the consequences of their actions. Children are more vulnerable to exploitation due to a lack of understanding of risks and limited ability to protect themselves (Lukmantara et al., 2022). The purpose of sentencing for children cannot be equated with the purpose of sentencing for adults because children still have greater opportunities for personality change through guidance. Juvenile justice is not merely an extension of general justice. Children possess characteristics, thinking capacities, and emotional maturity that differ from adults, so legal handling toward them requires a distinctive approach that favors the best interests of the child. A legal approach that ignores this fundamental difference has the potential to violate the basic rights of children protected by international conventions. Hitherto, a legal approach laden with values of retribution (retributive justice) actually has the potential to destroy a child's future, ignore the root of the social problems surrounding them, and sever the ties of relationship between the perpetrator and the victim (Widowati, 2024). It is the awareness of the weaknesses of this pure punishment system that subsequently drove legal reformers to seek a more humane and constructive judicial format. The reform of juvenile justice demands a shift in orientation from retribution toward the restoration of conditions. Protection of the best interests of the child must be the primary parameter in every law enforcement policy involving children.

The transformation of the juvenile criminal justice system in Indonesia is a logical consequence of the demand to protect the human rights of vulnerable groups. The adoption of restorative justice principles reflects a legal awareness that conventional punishment is ineffective for children who commit criminal offenses. Changing the paradigm of the juvenile criminal justice system requires adjusting all legal instruments that regulate the procedures for handling children's cases. Legal rules must also adapt to social change to remain relevant and fair (Halizah & Mardikaningsih, 2022). Starting from this urgency, Indonesia's criminal justice system has been transformed by adopting restorative justice principles as its main spirit for handling legal conflicts involving children. This transformation is expressly regulated in Law Number 11 of 2012 concerning the Juvenile Criminal Justice System, which changed procedural rules and also changed the fundamental view of the purpose of punishment (Subroto, 2022). This regulation places the interest of rehabilitating children above the interest of punishment. Rather than prioritizing physical punishment or deprivation of liberty, the law encourages a mutual agreement that prioritizes restoring relationships between the parties and the social reintegration of the child. A mutual agreement in resolving children's cases reflects the recognition that resolving conflict through consensus is fairer than imposing a judge's ruling. Mediation preserves relationships between the parties better than an imposed ruling (Zahid et al., 2021). The social reintegration of child offenders is an indicator of the success of a restorative-oriented juvenile criminal justice system.

Restorative justice emphasizes the active involvement of all affected parties in resolving juvenile criminal cases. Resolving a criminal offense through restorative justice requires the willingness of the parties to engage in open and honest dialogue. The principle of restorative justice places the restoration of social relationships as a main goal that is no less important than the recovery of material losses. Restorative justice is the main foundation for handling cases of children in conflict with the law in Indonesia. Restorative justice prioritizes recovery over punishment in resolving criminal cases (Wijaya et al., 2022). Under Article 1 point 6 of Law Number 11 of 2012 concerning the Juvenile Criminal Justice System (the SPPA Law), restorative justice is defined as a process of resolving a criminal offense that involves the offender, the victim, the families of both parties, and other related parties in jointly seeking a fair resolution (Jaya & Prasetyo, 2023). Applying restorative justice can increase victim satisfaction by

actively involving them in resolving the case so that their interests and experiences are heard and taken into account in the recovery process (Udjari et al., 2022). The way society views victims also affects their recovery process (Issalillah & Khayru, 2021). Involving families and society in resolving children's cases strengthens the social bonds that form the basis of recovery. Parents play an important role in guiding children's behavior from an early age (Masfufah & Darmawan, 2023). This approach emphasizes restoring conditions to their original state and setting aside elements of retribution, so it is more consistent with the principle of child protection. Setting aside retribution in restorative justice does not mean ignoring the child's responsibility for their actions. Within the framework of restorative justice, a child's responsibility is fulfilled through admitting fault and committing to repair the impact of the act. The principle of child protection in restorative justice goes hand in hand with the principle of justice for victims.

All law enforcement officers have a constitutional obligation to make the best interests of the child the primary consideration at every stage of the legal process. Implementing restorative justice requires a uniform understanding among law enforcement institutions regarding the substance and purpose of the restorative approach. The personal character of officers affects how they work, so a shared understanding needs to be built (Darmawan, 2017). Each law enforcement institution must develop internal procedures that align with restorative justice principles without reducing its respective authority. Within the framework of the juvenile criminal justice system, restorative justice is a concept and a normative guideline that must be implemented by all law enforcement officers. The police, the prosecutor's office, the courts, community supervisors (Bapas), special child development institutions (LPKA), and advocates have a strategic role in ensuring that every stage of examination and legal process remains oriented toward the best interests of the child (Sirait & Cahyaningtyas, 2019). Coordination among law enforcement institutions is a determining factor in maintaining the consistent application of restorative justice from the investigation stage to the trial. This affirms that restorative justice is an integral part of the juvenile criminal justice system. The integration of roles among institutions ensures that children do not receive different treatment at each level of examination. Supervising the implementation of restorative justice by each institution requires a measurable and continuous evaluation mechanism.

The involvement of various institutions in

applying restorative justice reflects the multidisciplinary approach needed to handle children's cases comprehensively. Resolving children's cases cannot be done partially because the root problems of children are multidimensional and interrelated. Each institution has a specific contribution that cannot be replaced by another institution in the child's recovery process. The involvement of various institutions in applying restorative justice is expected to create case resolutions that are more humane, balanced, and recovery-oriented. This principle affirms that children in conflict with the law must still be treated as subjects who have the right to grow and develop (Yulianto, 2023). Treating children as legal subjects requires space for their active participation in every decision-making process concerning them. Applying restorative justice is an important instrument for maintaining a balance among child protection, the interests of victims, and public order. This balance among the three interests can only be achieved if each institution performs its role proportionally and responsibly. Fulfilling a child's right to grow and develop cannot be sacrificed for mere procedural interests. Legal guarantees of children's rights must still be fulfilled while the judicial process is underway (Hariani et al., 2021). Restorative justice requires law enforcement institutions to be sensitive to the psychosocial impact of every legal decision on children.

The classification of Children in Contact with the Law in the juvenile criminal justice system shows a distinction in legal status based on the stage of the process the child is going through. A child in conflict with the law has a status that specifically distinguishes them from a child as a witness or a child as a victim of a crime. The clarity of a child's legal status determines the protection of rights they receive (Priyatama et al., 2022). The determination of the age limit of children in the SPPA Law is based on considerations of psychological development and the capacity for criminal responsibility. In the classification of Children in Contact with the Law, a child who is suspected or alleged to have committed a criminal offense is specifically defined as a Child in Conflict with the Law. Under Article 1 point 3 of the SPPA Law, they are children who have reached 12 years of age but are not yet 18 years old. The minimum age limit of 12 years shows that children below that age cannot be processed through the juvenile criminal justice system. Deviant behavior by children, such as violence, theft, drug abuse, or sexual harassment, often cannot be separated from failures in parenting and an unsupportive social environment (Rimbawa et al., 2023). The quality of parenting in the family greatly affects a child's

development (Fajar et al., 2025). External factors outside the child contribute significantly to the formation of deviant behavior in children. Ignoring environmental factors in the legal process reduces the effectiveness of guidance for child offenders. Understanding a child's social background is a prerequisite for law enforcement officers in determining the appropriate course of handling.

Social stigmatization of child offenders is a consequence that the juvenile criminal justice system must anticipate. Unwise handling of children in conflict with the law can worsen the child's psychological and social condition. The legal system has an obligation to protect children from the negative effects of a prolonged judicial process. If not handled wisely, these children will face social stigmatization that risks damaging their future. At the local and national levels, child protection still faces various obstacles in its application through the juvenile criminal justice system (Sugiono et al., 2023). Changes in family structure in society call for adequate legal protection for children (Aliyah & Mardikaningsih, 2023). Indonesia's legal system prioritizes a constructive rehabilitative approach over a destructive punitive approach. The rehabilitative approach places efforts to improve the child's behavior as the main goal, not merely the imposition of sanctions. Rehabilitation programs have the potential to reduce crime, but their effectiveness depends on strengthening regulation, supervision, and community involvement in preventing repeat offenses (Prabowo et al., 2024). The protection of children's rights and welfare remains the top priority in every juvenile criminal law policy. This priority must be reflected in all stages of the legal process, from investigation to post-verdict guidance. A juvenile criminal law policy that ignores the welfare of children cannot be said to fully meet child protection standards. The success of the juvenile criminal justice system is measured by its ability to prevent children from reoffending.

Implementing restorative justice through diversion is a concrete manifestation of the state's commitment to protecting children from the harmful effects of formal justice. The diversion mechanism provides a more flexible alternative compared with the rigid conventional judicial route. Transferring a child's case out of court requires clear requirements and provisions so as not to create legal uncertainty. Clear rules provide legal certainty for all parties involved (Aliyah et al., 2023). The implementation of restorative justice in juvenile justice practice is realized through the diversion mechanism. Diversion is the transfer of the resolution of a child's case from the formal criminal

justice process to a process outside the court. The victim and the offender are involved together to determine a relevant and appropriate form of accountability in the diversion process (Rianto et al., 2023). The out-of-court process in diversion requires the active and equal participation of the child offender and the victim. The main purpose of this mechanism is to keep children from being deprived of their liberty and to minimize the negative effects of a lengthy legal process. Preventing deprivation of liberty through diversion does not diminish the essence of the child's responsibility for their actions. The negative impact of a lengthy legal process on a child's development is a primary consideration in regulating the diversion mechanism. Legal protection must remain available to injured parties throughout the process (Riyanto et al., 2023). Diversion is designed to ensure that children can continue to live normal lives while the case is being resolved.

The obligation to submit the diversion agreement minutes to the District Court within a three-day deadline shows that the diversion process has strict procedural standards. The three-day deadline in Article 12 of the SPPA Law demands administrative efficiency from the official responsible for diversion. Submitting the diversion minutes to the court aims to obtain legal ratification of the agreement reached by the parties. Under Article 12 paragraph (1) of the SPPA Law, the responsible official must submit the diversion agreement minutes to the Head of the District Court no later than three days after the agreement is reached in order to obtain a determination (Istiqomah et al., 2024). A court determination on the diversion minutes provides legal certainty that the child's case has been formally concluded. An agreement that is properly recorded and can be proven helps enforce the responsibilities of the parties (Sutanto et al., 2023). This provision shows a legal commitment to providing certainty and formal legality quickly in resolving cases outside the court. The formal legality of a court determination protects the child from the possibility of being prosecuted again in the future. Compliance with the three-day deadline is an indicator of the professionalism of law enforcement officers in handling children's cases. Neglecting the deadline for submitting the diversion minutes may strip the legal force from the agreement that has been reached.

Limiting the application of diversion to certain types of offenses is a recognition of the varying degrees of seriousness among criminal acts. Considering the seriousness of the act in diversion prevents restorative settlement of serious offenses.

The victim's need for recovery is a decisive factor that cannot be ignored in deciding whether diversion is appropriate. Its application must consider the seriousness of the act, the victim's need for recovery, and the child offender's motivation and ability to take responsibility and improve. The child offender's motivation to take responsibility is an important indicator of the success of the diversion process. By taking these aspects into account, diversion can be carried out proportionally while maintaining a balance between child protection and the interests of society. The impact of the act on family welfare also needs to be weighed in assessing this balance (Aliyah et al., 2023). Balance in diversion means that no party is disproportionately harmed compared with the others. Proportionality in applying diversion ensures that the child does not receive special treatment that is out of line with the weight of the act. The child's ability to improve is an anticipatory consideration for the future, not merely a response to past conduct.

The presence of diversion in the juvenile criminal justice system also answers the limitations of the conventional approach, which tends to emphasize punishment. Diversion gives offenders room to make amends while also providing acknowledgment and recovery for victims (Winarno et al., 2022). The ability to learn and adapt helps offenders improve their behavior, both personally and together with their surroundings (Kurniawan & Darmawan, 2021). With its orientation toward restorative justice, this mechanism aligns with the basic values of Pancasila and has the potential to reduce repeat offenses and protect young people from the negative effects of a stigmatizing justice system.

Nevertheless, the existence of regulations and an ideal concept alone is not enough to guarantee the success of diversion. The greatest challenge lies in the commitment and capacity of law enforcement officers to implement this mechanism at the lowest level, as well as the readiness of society to accept resolution outside the court. Society's acceptance of resolution outside the court is influenced by local socio-cultural values (Oluwatoyin & Mardikaningsih, 2022). Often, a punitive mentality still lingers among police officers, prosecutors, and judges, so diversion is treated as a mere procedural formality. Therefore, strengthening human resource capacity, improving child-friendly mediation facilities, and extensive public education ("masihif" in the original) are absolute prerequisites so that the noble purpose of diversion does not remain a utopia in the law but is truly realized in everyday judicial practice.

The implementation of diversion through consensus reflects the recognition of local wisdom

values that form the basis of conflict resolution in Indonesia. The deliberation forum in diversion requires a neutral facilitator who understands the psychological dynamics of children. The presence of community advisors and professional social workers in the diversion deliberation ensures that social and psychological aspects are considered in every decision. Procedurally, the implementation of diversion is carried out through consensus as mandated in Article 8 paragraph (1) of the Juvenile Criminal Justice System Law. This deliberation forum brings together the victim and their parents/guardians, the child perpetrator and their parents/guardians, community advisors, and professional social workers (Samosir & Rahaditya, 2024). The involvement of parents or guardians in the diversion deliberation ensures the provision of companionship for the child during the case resolution process. Parental support and respect for the child's choices are important factors that need to be balanced (Fajar et al., 2021). This deliberation approach prioritizes a collaborative and consensus-based process that differs from the adjudicative nature of conventional judicial mechanisms. The collaborative process in diversion deliberations demands an equal position among the parties involved. Consensus in diversion is only valid if achieved without coercion from any party. The fundamental difference between diversion deliberations and conventional trials lies in the orientation of resolution, which is cooperative rather than competitive.

The diversion process in practice can take various forms according to the needs and readiness of the parties involved. Restorative conferencing as a form of diversion emphasizes face-to-face meetings between the perpetrator and the victim in a structured atmosphere. Mediation in diversion requires a mediator who possesses special competence in handling juvenile cases. In practice, the diversion process can take the form of restorative conferencing, mediation, or facilitative meetings. All of these forms aim to facilitate dialogue, identify shared interests, and build agreements that repair relationships and restore the impact of the losses incurred (Mustaf, 2024). The identification of shared interests in diversion serves as an initial step to find solutions acceptable to all parties. The restoration of loss impacts in diversion is not limited to material losses, but also encompasses immaterial losses such as psychological trauma. The principles of diversion and the protection of children's rights in the case resolution process can help reduce trauma and support the recovery of social relationships between the involved

parties (Al Haibah et al., 2024). Agreements in diversion must simultaneously reflect procedural justice and substantive justice. Dialogue in diversion functions as a means to uncover facts and feelings that cannot be expressed in formal court trials.

The results of diversion agreements have various forms tailored to the concrete conditions of each case. Returning the child to their parents or guardians in a diversion agreement demands a commitment from the parents to carry out supervision and guidance. Providing compensation to the victim in diversion is compensatory in nature and does not constitute a criminal sanction. The outcome of an agreement in the diversion process can take the form of returning the child to their parents or guardians, providing compensation to the victim if material losses arise, as well as the child's participation in community service or training at educational institutions or coaching institutions for a specific period (Winarno et al., 2022). Community service as a form of diversion agreement contains an element of character education for the child perpetrator. This form of agreement reflects the primary goal of diversion, which is to prioritize social recovery and the child's education over mere punishment. The child's education in the diversion agreement functions as a preventive instrument to prevent the recurrence of criminal offenses. Social recovery in diversion can only be achieved if the agreement is implemented earnestly by all parties. Supervision over the implementation of the diversion agreement becomes a shared responsibility between community advisors and other related parties.

The obligation to submit the diversion agreement minutes to the District Court within a three-day deadline shows that the diversion process has strict procedural standards. The three-day deadline in Article 12 of the SPPA Law demands administrative efficiency from the official responsible for diversion. Submitting the diversion minutes to the court aims to obtain legal ratification of the agreement reached by the parties. Under Article 12 paragraph (1) of the SPPA Law, the responsible official must submit the diversion agreement minutes to the Head of the District Court no later than three days after the agreement is reached in order to obtain a determination (Istiqomah et al., 2024). A court determination on the diversion minutes provides legal certainty that the child's case has been formally concluded. An agreement that is properly recorded and can be proven helps enforce the responsibilities of the parties (Sutanto et al., 2023). This provision shows a legal commitment to providing certainty and formal

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Limiting the application of diversion to certain types of offenses is a recognition of the varying degrees of seriousness among criminal acts. Considering the seriousness of the act in diversion prevents restorative settlement of serious offenses. The victim's need for recovery is a decisive factor that cannot be ignored in deciding whether diversion is appropriate. Its application must consider the seriousness of the act, the victim's need for recovery, and the child offender's motivation and ability to take responsibility and improve. The child offender's motivation to take responsibility is an important indicator of the success of the diversion process. By taking these aspects into account, diversion can be carried out proportionally while maintaining a balance between child protection and the interests of society. The impact of the act on family welfare also needs to be weighed in assessing this balance (Aliyah et al., 2023). Balance in diversion means that no party is disproportionately harmed compared with the others. Proportionality in applying diversion ensures that the child does not receive special treatment that is out of line with the weight of the act. The child's ability to improve is an anticipatory consideration for the future, not merely a response to past conduct.

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Nevertheless, the existence of regulations and an ideal concept alone is not enough to guarantee the success of diversion. The greatest challenge lies in the commitment and capacity of law enforcement officers to implement this mechanism at the lowest level, as well as the readiness of society to accept resolution

outside the court. Society's acceptance of resolution outside the court is influenced by local socio-cultural values (Oluwatoyin & Mardikaningsih, 2022). Often, a punitive mentality still lingers among police officers, prosecutors, and judges, so diversion is treated as a mere procedural formality. Therefore, strengthening human resource capacity, improving child-friendly mediation facilities, and extensive public education ("masihif" in the original) are absolute prerequisites so that the noble purpose of diversion does not remain a utopia in the law but is truly realized in everyday judicial practice.

The success of diversion implementation reflects the civilizational maturity of a nation in treating its children who are in trouble with the law. When diversion is carried out earnestly, its impact is felt by both perpetrators and victims individually, as well as by the wider community through declining recidivism rates and the erosion of negative stigma against former child offenders. By making the values of deliberation, kinship, and restoration the main axis, the juvenile criminal justice system in Indonesia has a great opportunity to transform into an institution that builds the future rather than destroying it. Therefore, it has become the collective responsibility of all elements of the nation law enforcement officers, social workers, academics, and the general public to oversee and ensure that every child facing the law receives a proper second chance, for the sake of a more empowered and civilized Indonesian generation.

CONCLUSION

Restorative justice implemented through the diversion mechanism based on Law Number 11 of 2012 concerning the Juvenile Criminal Justice System (UU SPPA) has proven to be an essential legal instrument to protect the future of children in conflict with the law in Indonesia. This approach has successfully shifted the penal paradigm, which was originally punitive-destructive, into rehabilitative-constructive by prioritizing the restoration of conditions and the best interests of the child. Normatively, the limitation of diversion requirements namely for criminal offenses with a threat of under seven years and not being a repeat offense has provided clear legal boundaries so that justice as a whole continues to align with legal certainty. The success of the diversion deliberation forum involving children, victims, community advisors, and professional social workers confirms that the resolution of juvenile criminal cases can be achieved collaboratively through consensus outside the formal judicial path.

However, the effectiveness of this law enforcement highly depends on compliance with procedural law and strong synergy among law enforcement institutions. The procedural obligation to submit the record of the diversion agreement to the Chairman of the District Court within a maximum of three days from the achievement of the agreement is a cruciality that must not be ignored in order to obtain valid and prompt legal determination. The handling of child cases must not be viewed merely as administrative formality, but rather must touch the root of problems such as parenting failure and social environmental factors.

Socialization and education regarding the values of restorative justice must also be continuously improved, both within the internal environment of law enforcement and among the wider community, in order to erode social stigmatization against children who have committed offenses. The government and elements of society need to expand the availability of child-friendly job training implementation institutions or community services as alternative diversion sanctions. With strict procedural supervision and inclusive social environmental support, the juvenile criminal justice system in Indonesia is expected to operate optimally to instill a sense of responsibility in the younger generation while fully restoring the rights of victims.

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