



JOURNAL OF GOVERNANCE AND SOCIAL POLICY
DEPARTMENT OF GOVERNMENT STUDIES, UNIVERSITAS SYIAH KUALA
Jalan Tgk. Tanoh Abee, Kopelma Darussalam, Kota Banda Aceh 23111, Provinsi Aceh, Indonesia
Website: <http://jurnal.usk.ac.id/GASPOL/index> | Email: journal_gaspol@usk.ac.id

LETTER OF ACCEPTANCE

Number: 26/GASPOL/III/2026

Dear Authors,

Teuku Muhammad Adelio Adli, Rahmat Efendi Al Amin, and Novi Heryanti

We are pleased to inform you that your paper entitled "**The Effectiveness of Restorative Justice in Resolving Theft Criminal Act: A Case Study at the Banda Aceh Police Regency**" has been **accepted** for publication in the "Journal of Governance and Social Policy" managed by the Department of Government Studies, Faculty of Social and Political Science, Universitas Syiah Kuala.

Your paper will be published in Volume 7, Issue 1, which is scheduled for release in June 2026 as part of our regular issue.

We extend our gratitude for your valuable contribution to presenting this research. Your work has undergone evaluation and has been selected to proceed to the next stage, which involves the process of copyediting and publication.

Our editorial team will be in touch with you shortly to commence the copyediting process. We look forward to your cooperation in this process to ensure that your work is conveyed effectively and in accordance with our journal standards.

Once again, congratulations on your achievement, and thank you for your dedication to contributing to this field of knowledge.

Banda Aceh
March 3, 2026

Best regards,




Wais Alqarni, S.IP., M.A
Editor-in-Chief

The Effectiveness of Restorative Justice in Resolving Theft Crimes: A Case Study at the Banda Aceh Police Headquarters

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Received: ; Accepted: ; Published (12pt)

Abstract

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui dan menganalisis efektivitas penerapan restorative justice (keadilan restoratif) dalam penyelesaian tindak pidana pencurian di Polresta Banda Aceh. Latar belakang penelitian ini didasari oleh meningkatnya penggunaan pendekatan restorative justice sebagai alternatif penyelesaian perkara di luar pengadilan, terutama untuk tindak pidana ringan yang tidak menimbulkan kerugian besar. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah yuridis-empiris dengan pendekatan studi kasus. Data diperoleh melalui wawancara dengan penyidik, korban, pelaku, serta tokoh masyarakat yang terlibat dalam proses mediasi penal. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pelaksanaan restorative justice di Polresta Banda Aceh berjalan cukup efektif. Sebanyak 68% dari kasus pencurian ringan yang terjadi sepanjang tahun 2024–2025 dapat diselesaikan melalui mekanisme perdamaian antara pelaku dan korban dengan difasilitasi oleh penyidik serta perangkat gampong. Efektivitas pelaksanaan restorative justice ditunjang oleh adanya kesadaran hukum masyarakat, peran aktif Bhabinkamtibmas, serta penerapan Perpol Nomor 8 Tahun 2021 tentang Penanganan Tindak Pidana Berdasarkan Keadilan Restoratif. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa penerapan restorative justice dalam penyelesaian tindak pidana pencurian di Polresta Banda Aceh sudah efektif, namun perlu dilakukan pelatihan intensif bagi penyidik serta peningkatan sosialisasi hukum kepada masyarakat agar mekanisme ini dapat berjalan lebih optimal.

Kata Kunci: Restorative Justice, Pencurian, Efektivitas, Polresta Banda Aceh, Mediasi

Abstract

This study aims to determine and analyze the effectiveness of restorative justice implementation in resolving theft crimes at the Banda Aceh Police Department. The background of this study is based on the increasing use of the restorative justice approach as an alternative to resolving cases outside the courts, especially for minor crimes that do not cause significant losses. The research method used is a juridical-empirical case study approach. Data were obtained through interviews with investigators, victims, perpetrators, and community leaders involved in the penal mediation process. The research results show that the implementation of restorative justice at the Banda Aceh Police Department has been quite effective. As many as 68% of petty theft cases that occurred between 2024 and 2025 were resolved through a peace mechanism between the perpetrator and victim, facilitated by investigators and village officials. The effectiveness of restorative justice implementation is supported by public

legal awareness, the active role of Bhabinkamtibmas (community police officers), and the implementation of Police Regulation Number 8 of 2021 concerning the Handling of Criminal Acts Based on Restorative Justice. This study concludes that the application of restorative justice in resolving theft crimes at the Banda Aceh Police has been effective, but intensive training for investigators and increased legal outreach to the community are needed so that this mechanism can run more optimally.

Keywords: Restorative Justice, Theft, Effectiveness, Banda Aceh Police, Penal Mediation.

INTRODUCTION

The criminal justice system in Indonesia is still facing various structural problems that have been ongoing for decades. These problems include, among others, the high case load handled by law enforcement officers and judicial institutions, the long case settlement process, and the chronic overcapacity of corrections. These systemic problems not only reduce the effectiveness of law enforcement, but also weaken public confidence in the justice system as a whole. In practice, the criminal justice process often put more emphasis on procedural compliance than substantive justice, thus resulting in decisions that are legally valid, but socially seen as unfair or disproportional.

Based on the annual report of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Indonesia in 2024, the number of criminal cases received during the period from 2023 to 2024 showed a consistent increasing trend. In 2023 alone, more than 27,000 criminal cases were recorded, and this number increased again in 2024. Also, applications for cassation and review record reached around 13–15% of the total cases handled. This increase not only reflects a rise in crime rates, but also indicates public dissatisfaction with first-instance court decisions, which ultimately increasingly burdens the high-level court.

The accumulation of criminal cases directly hinders the realization of the principle of a fast, simple, and low-cost trial as mandated in Law Number 48 of 2009 concerning Judicial Power. In reality, long legal procedures and legalistic-formalistic approaches often slow down case settlement, increase costs of legal courts, and prolong legal uncertainty for both victims and perpetrators. As a result, the justice system becomes difficult to access for marginalized communities who do not have the financial or social resources to face complex legal procedures.

Public discourse on alternative criminal case settlements has increased following the 2009 case of "Grandma Minah," in which an elderly woman was criminally prosecuted for picking three cocoa fruits. This case was widely criticized by the public and became a

powerful symbol of the rigidity and insensitivity of the formal justice system. The prosecution of vulnerable individuals for such minor offences highlighted the gap between legal certainty and the public's sense of justice, thus triggering demands Criminal justice system reform.

The case of “grandma minah” shows that conventional criminal approaches are not always aligned with a sense of social justice, especially in minor cases involving vulnerable perpetrators and very small damages. Instead of restoring social harmony, the formal justice process in such cases actually exaggerates suffering and stigma. These incidents later became a catalyst for the increasing acceptance of restorative justice as a more humane and socially responsive approach to criminal case resolution in indonesia.

Restorative justice emerges as an alternative that emphasis accountability, repair, and reconciliation, not solely revenge. Zehr (2002) defines restorative justice as a paradigm that aimed at repairing the harm due to criminal acts through the active involvement of victims, perpetrators, and the community. This approach shift the focus from punishment towards recovery, with the goal of restoring social relationships that have been disturbed by criminal acts.

Conceptually, restorative justice prioritizes dialogue, deliberation, and agreement-based settlement. Through facilitated communication, victims are given space to express their losses and hope, while perpetrators are encouraged to recognize their actions and take responsibility through reasonable forms of recovery. Community also has a vital role in supporting social reintegration and preventing recurring conflicts, thus strengthening collective social values.

In indonesia, restorative justice has received formal legal recognition through the regulation of the chief of the republic of indonesia number 8 of 2021 concerning handling of crimes based on restorative justice. This regulation gives investigators the authority to terminate investigations in the interests of justice under certain conditions. These conditions include crimes that are threatened by prison sentence of under five years, the perpetrator is not a recidivist, the existence of a peace agreement, and considerations of humanity and social justice as regulated in article 5 paragraph (1).

The issuance of the chief of police regulation number 8 of 2021 marks a significant shift in law enforcement policy, giving investigators discretion to prioritize substantive justice over procedural rigidity. Through a restorative justice-based case termination mechanism, this regulation aimed to reduce criminalization. There is no need to encourage

conflict resolution from the early stage. This policy is also a strategic response to the high case burden in the criminal justice system.

At the regional level, aceh province is recognized as one of the regions actively implementing restorative justice. According to the 2023–2024 report of the national police commission (kopolnas), more than 70 cases within the aceh regional police jurisdiction were resolved through a restorative justice approach. These cases generally relate to minor crimes such as petty theft, minor assault, and social conflict between individuals.

The banda aceh police in particular has demonstrated a strong commitment to implementing restorative justice. This approach is often used in cases involving minor damages and first-time offenders, where prison sentence has the potential to cause greater social impact than its benefits. Through dialogue-based settlements and compensation, the police endeavours to restore social harmony while maintaining public order.

Despite its increasingly widespread implementation, restorative justice at the police level still faces various challenges. Marlina (2023) notes that many investigators have not comprehensively understood restorative justice and tend to view it merely as a form of mediation or informal settlement. This misunderstanding weakens the philosophical foundation of restorative justice and causes inconsistent implementation across cases.

In addition, some victims still view restorative justice as a form of leniency or impunity for the perpetrator. Normatively, the implementation of restorative justice is also limited to certain categories of crimes, especially minor crimes that are threatened by a prison of under five years and with a loss of no more than rp2,500,000 as regulated in the chief of police regulation number 8 of 2021. This limitation, although necessary, also limits the scope of the implementation of restorative justice more widely.

Administrative obstacles also hinder the effectiveness of restorative justice implementation, including the lack of special restorative justice units in most police offices and the limitation of structured technical training. Consequently, investigations often rely on informal practices that are not systematically documented. This condition creates legal uncertainty and reduces the level of accountability in the restorative justice process.

Banda aceh police law. In 2024, for example, the criminal research unit of the krueng barona jaya police sub-section successfully resolved an iron table theft case through a restorative justice mechanism after the perpetrator made compensation and officially

apologized before community leaders. However, investigators acknowledge that such practices are not fully understood and institutionalized (interview with banda aceh police investigators, 2025).

Beyond institutional factors, socio-cultural aspects also play an important role in determining the success of restorative justice. Fauzi (2020) emphasizes that society's legal culture and the level of social acceptance strongly influence the outcomes of restorative settlement. In aceh, restorative justice has a strong alignment with customary legal traditions and the principle of *islah* in islamic law, which prioritizes peaceful dispute resolution. Rizki (2023) also states that restorative justice reflects the values of substantive justice in islamic law.

In the context of the criminal act of theft, restorative justice has high relevance considering the frequency of theft occurrences and its impact on social order. M. Muladi (2019) emphasizes that resolution of mild theft cases through restorative mechanisms provides double benefits, namely reducing the burden on the justice system and strengthening public trust in law enforcement officers. Thus, restorative justice does not only function as an alternative case settlement, but also as a strategic instrument in creating a criminal justice system that is more humane, efficient, and responsive to the needs of society.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a juridical-empirical method with a case study approach. This approach is used to assess the application of law in practice (law in action) against applicable formal provisions (law on the books). The data types consist of:

1. Primary data: results of interviews with investigators from the Banda Aceh Police Criminal Investigation Unit, victims, perpetrators, and village leaders.
2. Secondary data: primary legal materials (KUHP, Perpol No. 8 of 2021, Law No. 2 of 2002), as well as secondary materials in the form of legal books and journals. Data collection techniques were carried out through literature studies, interviews, and field observations.

Data analysis was carried out qualitatively by describing empirical facts and interpreting them based on relevant theories and laws and regulations.

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Theft Case Table: Successful & Unsuccessful Restorative Justice

Year	Number of Cases	Successful RJ (SP3)	RJ Failed (P21)
2023	81 cases	There is SP3 (number not listed)	There are P21 (number of not listed)
2024	68 cases	There is SP3	There is P21
2025	80 cases	There is SP3	There is P21
Total	229 cases	There is a RJ solution	Something didn't work

The table presents data on theft cases handled by the Banda Aceh Police Department between 2023 and 2025, illustrating the application of restorative justice (RJ) mechanisms in resolving criminal cases. During the three-year period, 229 theft cases were recorded, indicating a relatively high incidence of this crime within the Banda Aceh Police Department's jurisdiction. The table distinguishes between cases successfully resolved through restorative justice, as indicated by the issuance of an Investigation Termination Order (SP3), and cases that failed to reach a restorative agreement and were subsequently referred to the prosecutor's office in the form of a P21. This classification provides a comprehensive overview of the practice of restorative justice while also highlighting its potential and limitations.

In 2023, the Banda Aceh Police handled 81 theft cases. Some of these cases were successfully resolved through restorative justice mechanisms, as evidenced by the issuance of SP3 (Commitment Notices). This success indicates that victims and perpetrators were able to reach mutual agreements, which generally include compensation, an apology, or other forms of restitution. However, a number of cases remained processed through the formal criminal justice system and were transferred to the prosecutor's office (P21), indicating that restorative justice has not been applied evenly to all theft cases due to substantive and procedural constraints.

A relatively similar pattern was also observed in 2024, with 68 theft cases recorded. As in the previous year, some cases were resolved through restorative justice, prompting investigators to discontinue investigations. However, several cases remained unresolved and had to proceed to prosecution. The decrease in the number of cases compared to 2023 was not necessarily accompanied by a proportional increase in the success of restorative justice, indicating that the effectiveness of restorative justice is not solely determined by the number of cases handled.

Other factors such as the characteristics of the crime, the extent of the harm caused, and the willingness of the perpetrator and victim to reconcile have been shown to have a more decisive influence. In some cases, despite meeting the formal requirements, the failure to reach an agreement between the parties renders restorative justice impossible. This emphasizes that restorative justice is highly dependent on the specific circumstances of each case and cannot be applied mechanically.

In 2025, the number of theft cases increased again to 80, demonstrating the fluctuating nature of crime rates over time. The Banda Aceh Police Department consistently implemented a restorative justice approach, as reflected in the number of cases resolved through the issuance of SP3 (Commission Orders). However, as in previous years, some cases were still referred to P21 due to the failure to reach a peace agreement. This pattern reinforces the view that restorative justice is an alternative mechanism that complements, rather than replaces, the formal criminal justice system.

Cumulatively, data from 2023–2025 shows that restorative justice has been consistently applied in handling theft cases at the Banda Aceh Police Department. The number of cases successfully resolved through RJ each year reflects the police's institutional commitment to prioritizing more humane and equitable resolution. However, the continued failure of restorative justice to resolve cases demonstrates the limitations of this approach.

Overall, these findings suggest that restorative justice has contribute to resolving some theft cases and reducing reliance on formal prosecution. However, its effectiveness is situational and heavily influenced by the dynamics of each case, including the perpetrator's willingness to take responsibility and the victim's openness to reconciliation. Therefore, restorative justice should be understood as a complementary mechanism within the criminal justice system that can increase flexibility and humanitarian values, without neglecting the

principles of law enforcement and legal certainty. (Interview with Banda Aceh Police Investigator, May 2025).

Analysis of the Effectiveness of Restorative Justice in Resolving Theft Crimes at the Banda Aceh Police Department

The implementation of restorative justice within the Banda Aceh Police jurisdiction has significantly strengthened since the enactment of Regulation of the Chief of the Indonesian National Police Number 8 of 2021. This regulation provides a clear normative basis for law enforcement officers to resolve certain criminal cases through non-litigation mechanisms that prioritize justice, humanity, and social harmony. In the context of theft, particularly petty theft, this policy opens up space for more flexible, proportional law enforcement that is not solely focused on punishment.

Based on data obtained from the Banda Aceh Police Criminal Investigation Unit (Reskrim), 28 cases of petty theft were recorded between January 2024 and July 2025. Of these, 19, or approximately 68 percent, were successfully resolved through restorative justice mechanisms. Meanwhile, the remaining nine cases proceeded to formal court proceedings because the parties were unable to reach an agreement. This data indicates that restorative justice has been implemented quite effectively in practice, especially when compared to conventional criminal justice procedures, which tend to be time-consuming and expensive.

The high proportion of cases successfully resolved through restorative justice indicates that this approach has become a realistic and acceptable alternative for handling petty theft. Furthermore, the data also reflects an increasing willingness of both perpetrators and victims to participate in the process. Dialogue and deliberation-based resolution. However, the continued presence of cases in court demonstrates that restorative justice cannot be applied universally and is highly dependent on the willingness of the parties and the characteristics of each case.

Procedurally, the implementation of restorative justice at the Banda Aceh Police Resort is carried out through a penal mediation mechanism. This process involves various parties, including the perpetrator, the victim, the investigator handling the case, and government officials at the village level. In practice, mediation is usually facilitated by the investigator concerned with the support of the Bhabinkamtibmas (community police

officer) and local community leaders. The involvement of these community members plays a crucial role in maintaining neutrality, building trust, and encouraging constructive dialogue between the perpetrator and victim.

If the mediation process results in an agreement, it is formalized in the form of a peace agreement. This document is jointly signed by the perpetrator and victim and then reported to the Banda Aceh Police Chief as the administrative basis for terminating the investigation. Under Article 12 of National Police Regulation Number 8 of 2021, investigators can issue an Investigation Termination Order (SP3) as a form of legal recognition of the restorative settlement.

A concrete example of the successful implementation of restorative justice can be seen in the case of electrical cable theft that occurred in Meuraxa District in March 2025. In this case, a 22-year-old perpetrator stole electrical cables, causing a loss of Rp 600,000 due to economic pressure. Rather than immediately bringing the case to the prosecution stage, the police facilitated a settlement through mediation involving the perpetrator, the victim, and community representatives.

During the mediation process, the perpetrator admitted his actions, fully compensated the victim, and publicly apologized before community leaders. The victim accepted the settlement, emphasizing the importance of social restoration over punishment. Based on this agreement, the case was officially dismissed with the issuance of a Notice of Indictment (SP3). Shows that restorative justice is able to provide a sense of justice and satisfaction for both parties while maintaining social harmony (Interview with Banda Aceh Police Investigator, May 2025).

Overall, the implementation of restorative justice in resolving theft crimes at the Banda Aceh Police Resort can be considered effective, particularly in cases involving small losses and first-time offenders. This approach not only reduces the burden on the formal justice system but also encourages faster case resolution, increases victim satisfaction, and fosters a sense of responsibility in perpetrators. However, the effectiveness of restorative justice remains highly dependent on the willingness of the parties to cooperate and the ability of law enforcement officials to facilitate the mediation process professionally and consistently.

Analysis of Factors Supporting the Effectiveness of Restorative Justice

Based on the results of interviews and field observations, there are four main factors that support the successful implementation of restorative justice at the Banda Aceh Police:

1. Lack of Understanding among Law Enforcement Officers

A Clear Legal Basis: Regulations such as National Police Chief Regulation No. 8 of 2021 provide formal legitimacy for police officers to implement out-of-court settlements. Previously, peaceful settlements were often considered contrary to the principle of legality in criminal law. However, with this regulation, investigators have a strong legal basis to terminate investigations based on a peaceful agreement between the perpetrator and victim (Indonesia, 2021).

2. The Active Role of Bhabinkamtibmas and Village Leaders

Bhabinkamtibmas (Community Security and Order Officers) play a central role in detecting potential social conflicts and mediating them early. In many cases, they are the first to bring perpetrators and victims together. Lestari (2021) emphasized that the success of restorative justice at the police level depends heavily on the communication skills and social sensitivity of police officers at the village or gampong level.

3. Community Awareness and Support

Acehnese society has culturally recognized the concept of peace (islah) in dispute resolution. These values strengthen acceptance of the restorative justice approach. Based on an interview with a community leader in Kuta Alam District, most residents consider peaceful resolution far more beneficial than lengthy legal processes that can lead to hostility between parties.

4. Efficiency of Time and Cost of Case Handling

Case resolution using the RJ mechanism only takes an average of 7–14 days, while litigation can take months. In terms of costs, both authorities and litigants experience significant economic benefits, as they eliminate the need to cover court costs, witness costs, and legal representation. This aligns with Ramadhani's (2023) findings, which suggest that restorative justice can save up to 60% of the police budget.

Obstacles in the Implementation of Restorative Justice at the Banda Aceh Police

Despite having many advantages, the implementation of restorative justice at the Banda Aceh Police still faces a number of significant obstacles, both from the institutional aspect, human resources, and the legal culture of the community:

1. **Lack of Understanding among Law Enforcement Officials**

Several investigators admitted to not having received specific training on mediation administrative procedures. This led to differing interpretations regarding the implementation and reporting of mediation results. In practice, some investigators remain hesitant to terminate an investigation for fear of violating the principle of legal certainty (Marlina, 2023).

2. **The Absence of a Special Restorative Justice Unit at the Banda Aceh Police**

There is no official unit responsible for documenting and evaluating restorative justice implementation. Consequently, data on peaceful case resolutions is not systematically documented. This makes quantitative evaluation of restorative justice performance difficult (Kompolnas, 2023).

3. **Negative Views from Some Members of Society**

Some victims or their families still believe that reconciliation means the perpetrators didn't receive the punishment they deserve. This view stems from a lack of legal awareness. As explained by Fauzi (2020), the main challenge in implementing restorative justice in Indonesia is convincing the public that The goal of RJ is not to erase the punishment, but to restore substantive justice for both parties.

4. **Limited Coordination Between Law Enforcement Agencies**

In some cases, police case resolution is not always in sync with prosecutorial policy. Although a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the National Police Chief, the Attorney General, and the Chief Justice (2020) regarding the implementation of RJ (Regional Criminal Procedure), its implementation at the regional level is not yet uniform. As a result, some cases resolved at the police level are continued by the prosecutor's office due to differing legal interpretations.

Despite its many advantages, the implementation of restorative justice at the Banda Aceh Police Department still faces a number of significant obstacles, both institutionally

and through human resources, and in the community's legal culture. In terms of officer understanding, some investigators have not received specific training on RJ administrative procedures, resulting in frequent differences in interpretations of the implementation and reporting of the mediation process. This situation makes some investigators hesitant to stop investigations for fear of violating the principle of legal certainty (Marlina, 2023). Furthermore, the Banda Aceh Police Department does not yet have a dedicated unit to handle data collection and evaluation of RJ implementation, resulting in a lack of systematic documentation. This lack of institutional structure makes it difficult to conduct quantitative evaluations of RJ performance (Kompolnas, 2023). Another obstacle comes from the community, where some victims or their families still view peaceful resolution as the absence of appropriate punishment for the perpetrator. This lack of legal understanding often leads to RJ being misinterpreted as a form of impunity (Fauzi, 2020). Furthermore, coordination between law enforcement agencies is also not fully aligned. Despite a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Chief of Police, the Attorney General, and the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court in 2020, the implementation of RJ at the regional level is still not uniform, resulting in cases that have been resolved peacefully by the police but are still continued by the prosecutor's office due to differences in legal interpretation.

Analysis of the Effectiveness of Restorative Justice at the Banda Aceh Police

The effectiveness of restorative justice can be measured based on three main indicators: legal aspects, social aspects, and substantive justice aspects (Zehr, 2002; Muladi, 2019).

1. Legal Aspects

From a formal legal perspective, the implementation of restorative justice at the Banda Aceh Police Department complies with the provisions of Police Regulation No. 8 of 2021. Investigators implement the procedure for terminating an investigation based on written agreement and supervision from superiors. However, the legal aspect still needs to be strengthened by developing an internal Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) to avoid discrepancies in implementation between units.

2. Social Aspects

The success of RJ is evident in the increased community participation in conflict resolution. Based on field observations, communities involved in the RJ process perceived this method as more rehabilitative than formal punishment. Most perpetrators who reconciled also re-engaged in community activities without negative social stigma. This demonstrates the achievement of the social reintegration function as outlined by Putri & Hidayat (2022).

3. Substantive Justice Aspects

Of the 19 cases successfully resolved through RJ, 15 victims (79%) expressed satisfaction with the mediation outcome, as losses were reimbursed and a public apology was made. The perpetrators also felt more responsible because they were given the opportunity to correct their mistakes without facing imprisonment. Thus, the principle of restorative justice has proven more effective in achieving substantive justice than mere retributive justice (Ningsih & Harahap, 2022).

Theoretical Discussion

The successful implementation of restorative justice within the Banda Aceh Police Department demonstrates a paradigm shift in law enforcement from a retributive approach focused on retribution to a restorative approach that emphasizes restoration. This paradigm shift reflects a shift in perspective on crime, which is no longer understood solely as a violation of state legal norms, but also as a social event that disrupts interpersonal relationships and social balance. Therefore, resolving criminal cases requires more than just punishment; comprehensive reparation efforts are required.

Theoretically, this paradigm shift is in line with the view of M. Muladi (2019) who emphasized that the modern criminal justice system must pay attention greater impact on victims and social balance. Within this framework, justice is no longer defined narrowly as imposing sanctions on perpetrators, but rather as a process of redressing victims' losses and restoring harmony within society. The implementation of restorative justice in Banda Aceh demonstrates that this concept can be effectively applied in law enforcement practices without compromising legal certainty.

The implementation of restorative justice by the Banda Aceh Police also reflects a participatory and inclusive legal approach. The case resolution process through penal mediation involves the perpetrator, victim, law enforcement officers, and community members, ensuring that decisions are not unilateral. This reinforces the theoretical view that ideal justice should be built through dialogue and mutual agreement, not solely through the imposition of state authority.

Furthermore, the implementation of restorative justice in Aceh demonstrates a harmonious integration between positive law and local legal values derived from Islamic tradition and Acehese customs. The concept of *islah*, or peacemaking, recognized in Acehese customary law, shares principles with restorative justice, emphasizing conflict resolution through peace, restoration of relationships, and social balance following violations.

These findings reinforce Rizki's (2023) argument that restorative justice reflects Islamic legal values oriented toward *maslahah* or the public good. From an Islamic legal perspective, the primary goal of law is to maintain social harmony, prevent harm, and create substantive justice. The practice of restorative justice in Banda Aceh, particularly in cases of minor crimes, demonstrates the application of these values contextually and relevant to community needs. Normatively, the alignment between restorative justice and Islamic values and Acehese customs strengthens the social legitimacy of this approach. Because the concept of restorative justice does not conflict with the cultural and religious values held by the community, its acceptance has become broader and community participation in the legal process has increased. This contributes to the sustainability of conflict resolution and prevents further conflict from arising in the future.

Furthermore, restorative justice also represents a philosophical approach that places humans at the center of the legal system. This approach recognizes the dignity, feelings, and social circumstances of both victims and perpetrators, so that the law is not enforced mechanically and rigidly. Thus, the goal of justice is not directed at retribution, but rather at restoration and social learning to prevent similar violations from recurring.

Thus, theoretically, the implementation of restorative justice in the Banda Aceh Police Department serves not only as a technical solution to the high criminal caseload, but also as a philosophical approach that integrates legal reform, local values, and humanitarian principles. This success demonstrates the significant potential of restorative

justice as a national model based on local wisdom in efforts to realize a more just, humane, and socially welfare-oriented criminal justice system.

CLOSING

Conclusion

Based on research findings and analysis of the effectiveness of restorative justice implementation in handling theft crimes within the Banda Aceh Police jurisdiction, it can be concluded that restorative justice mechanisms have been implemented with a relatively high level of success, particularly in minor theft cases. This is evident in the predominance of case resolutions through peace, amounting to 68 percent of the 28 cases studied from 2024 to 2025.

The implementation of restorative justice within the Banda Aceh Police Department reflects a shift in law enforcement, from a model focused on punishment to an approach that places greater emphasis on substantive justice restoration. This approach not only seeks to repair the losses suffered by victims but also aims to improve social relations between perpetrators and victims. The agreements reached in this process generally satisfy the parties' sense of justice, which realized through compensation, delivery of an apology, and the perpetrator's commitment not to repeat similar actions.

The effectiveness of restorative justice implementation is supported by a clear legal basis, namely Regulation of the Chief of the Indonesian National Police Number 8 of 2021. Furthermore, the active involvement of Bhabinkamtibmas (community police officers), village officials, and community leaders plays a crucial role in supporting and facilitating the implementation of penal mediation. The social and religious values inherent in Acehese society, particularly the principle of *islah* (peace), contribute to strengthening public acceptance of restorative justice and increasing its success in the local context.

However, this study also identified several obstacles to the implementation of restorative justice, including differences in perception and understanding among investigators, suboptimal administrative systems and evaluation mechanisms, and the persistence of negative views among some members of the public who view reconciliation as a form of eliminating criminal sanctions. These conditions indicate that the implementation of restorative justice still requires institutional strengthening and

improvements in the quality of human resources for consistent and sustainable implementation.

Suggestion

Based on the research findings, the Banda Aceh Police Department is recommended to strengthen investigators' understanding and competency regarding restorative justice, including its basic concepts, procedures, and underlying philosophical values. This strengthening can be achieved through ongoing technical training programs and outreach activities. A uniform understanding is expected to minimize differences in interpretation among investigators and ensure consistent application of restorative justice in cases that meet the requirements.

Furthermore, the Banda Aceh Police need to optimize the governance of restorative justice implementation by establishing or strengthening a unit specifically responsible for administration, documentation, and evaluation. A structured and integrated administrative system will support oversight, facilitate measurement of effectiveness, and serve as a foundation for formulating future restorative justice policies.

At the community level, a more systematic education and outreach strategy is needed regarding the goals, principles, and benefits of restorative justice. This effort is crucial to reduce the misperception that peace mechanisms mean the elimination of criminal liability. Increasing public understanding is expected to strengthen social legitimacy and support the continued implementation of restorative justice.

For future research, it is recommended to broaden the scope of the study by examining the application of restorative justice to other types of crimes or in different jurisdictions. A more diverse methodological approach should also be considered to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of restorative justice in the Indonesian criminal justice system.

THANK-YOU NOTE

1. **TO ALLAH SWT. WHO HAS GIVEN THE WRITER THE BLESSING OF HEALTH AND FORCE, SO THAT HE HAS SUCCESSFULLY COMPILED THIS THESIS;**
2. **MY PARENTS, MR. TEUKU RIZAL AND MR. NANA YOANNA, ARE TWO PEOPLE WHO HAVE VERY IMPORTANT IN THE AUTHOR'S LIFE, WHO ALWAYS TRIED FOR THEIR FIRST CHILD TO OBTAIN THE HIGHEST EDUCATION POSSIBLE. THANK YOU FOR ALL THE LOVE, SUPPORT AND PRAYERS THAT ARE ALWAYS SUPPORTED;**
3. **PROF. DR. Mujiburrahman, M.Ag. AS THE RECTOR OF AR-RANIRY STATE ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY WHO HAS PROVIDED THE OPPORTUNITY AND FACILITIES TO CONDUCT LECTURES AT AR-RANIRY STATE ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY;**
4. **PROF. DR. KAMARUZZAMAN, M. SH. DEAN OF THE FACULTY OF SHARIA AND LAW, STATE ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY OF AR-RANIRY;**
5. **SITTI MAWAR, S,AG., MH HEAD OF THE LAW AND CITIZENSHIP STUDY PROGRAM, STATE ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY OF AR-RANIRY;**
6. **Mr. Rahmad Efendy Al Amin, S.Ag., M.H., and Mrs. Novi Heryanti, S.H.I., M.A., as the author's supervisors. Thank you for all the guidance given, so that the author can complete the article;**
7. **ALL LECTURERS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF LAW AND THE FACULTY OF SHARIA AND LAW, STATE ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY OF AR-RANIRY HO HAVE PROVIDED KNOWLEDGE DURING THE LECTURE;**
8. **THE AUTHOR SAY THANKS TO BANG DR. IR. IRVANIZAM, S.SI., M.SC., IPM., ASEAN ENG., WHO HAS HELPED THE AUTHOR SINCE THE EARLY STAGE OF PREPARING THIS ARTICLE, WAS WILLING TO TAKE TIME TO GUIDE, LISTEN TO THE AUTHOR'S COMPLAINTS, AND PROVIDE MOTIVATION AND ENTRANCE UNTIL THIS ARTICLE CAN BE COMPLETED;**
9. **MUHAMMAD JAIZ, COUSIN OF THE BRAMA FAMILY, ESPECIALLY MUADHAM YUZRI WHO ALWAYS PROVIDES MOTIVATION AND HELP TO COMPLETE THE ARTICLE;**
10. **FROM THE BRAMA FAMILY WHO HAS BEEN A PART OF THE AUTHOR'S LIFE, FROM THE START OF COLLEGE UNTIL NOW;**
11. **THE AUTHOR'S CLOSE FRIENDS YAHYA FUAD WITH NIM 2201060097, ATTAR FARIS MAULANA WITH NIM 220106046,**

RAFIKA NABILLA WITH NIM 220106110, QANA SAPUTRI WITH NIM 210102212 AND DIYAN PUTRI SALSABILA WITH NIM 220106002, WHO HAVE HELPED THE AUTHOR WHEN WORKING ON THIS ARTICLE UNTIL FINISHED;

12. *Last but not least*, TO OLIVIA KASIH WARDANA WITH NIM 2024810014 FROM UNIVERSITAS INDO GLOBAL MANDIRI. THANK YOU FOR YOUR TOGETHERNESS, PRESENCE, AND WILLINGNESS TO ACCOMPANY THE AUTHOR DURING THE PROCESS OF PREPARING THIS ARTICLE. THE SUPPORT GIVEN IS NOT ONLY IN THE ACADEMIC CONTEXT, BUT ESPECIALLY IN THE ASPECT OF MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL SUPPORT, WITH THE WILLINGNESS TO LISTEN TO THE AUTHOR'S COMPLAINTS IN THE MIDST OF A PRESSUREFUL PROCESS. "OLIVIA KASIH WARDANA, THANK YOU, YOUR PRESENCE, EMPATHY, AND SUPPORT ARE A CONSTANT SOURCE OF MOTIVATION FOR THE AUTHOR TO KEEP PERSISTENT AND FINISH THIS ARTICLE WELL. THEREFORE, THE AUTHOR EXPRESSES HER SINCERE THANK YOU FOR THE ATTENTION, TOGETHERNESS, AND SUPPORT THAT HAVE BEEN GIVEN DURING THE PROCESS OF COMPILING THIS ARTICLE."

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