

Applying the Restitution Triangle Strategy to Address Student Discipline Issues in Elementary Schools

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ABSTRACT

Student discipline issues remain a persistent challenge across educational levels, often disrupting the learning environment and student development. This study aims to investigate the application of the restitution triangle as an alternative strategy for addressing disciplinary problems among elementary school students. Developed by Diane Gossen, the restitution triangle offers a restorative framework consisting of three main stages: stabilizing identity, validating misbehavior, and seeking underlying beliefs. A descriptive qualitative method was employed, with data collected through observations, interviews, and documentation involving students and teachers at Gunungsimping 02 State Elementary School. The findings reveal that the implementation of the restitution triangle effectively reduced the frequency of disciplinary violations, enhanced students' self-awareness, and strengthened teacher-student relationships. These results suggest that the restitution triangle is a promising strategy for fostering a positive school culture grounded in self-discipline and personal responsibility.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Various problems arise in the learning process, one of which is student discipline. Student discipline remains a persistent issue of concern in the field of education. At all levels of education—especially at the elementary level—teachers often face challenges in enforcing rules and cultivating responsible behavior among students. Discipline is not only related to compliance with school rules, but also reflects the development of character and self-awareness in students as they navigate their social lives. It encompasses not only rule compliance but also responsibility and active engagement in academic activities¹.

In the *Merdeka Curriculum*, students are expected to become *Pancasila Students* who are faithful, devoted to God Almighty, noble in character, globally diverse, collaborative, independent, critical thinkers, and creative. These six dimensions of the *Pancasila Student Profile* can only be achieved if students possess strong self-discipline². So far, the approach used to address disciplinary violations has often been repressive and punitive,

¹ Lailatul Mukarromah and Ayu Wulandari, "Implementasi Segitiga Restitusi Terhadap Pembentukan Disiplin Positif Dan Kecerdasan Emosional" 8 (2025): 2232–35.

² Adlan Surya Saputra, "Menumbuhkan Disiplin Diri Melalui Disiplin Positif Restitusi," *Didaktik : Jurnal Ilmiah PGSD STKIP Subang* 9, no. 2 (2023): 5666–82, <https://doi.org/10.36989/didaktik.v9i2.1367>.

which can trigger resistance and damage the relationship between teachers and students. Therefore, a more humane and constructive strategy is needed in fostering student discipline.

One approach that is beginning to gain attention is the *restitution triangle*. The restitution triangle is a strategy that can be implemented as a process to create conditions that guide students to correct the mistakes they have made.³ According to Gossen, "Restitution restructuring is defined as the creation of conditions for individuals to correct their mistakes and return to the group strengthened." The opportunity given to individuals to correct their mistakes and return to the group in a stronger state is what restitution restructuring refers to. "There are three variables of restitution that have to be managed by the teacher or person implementing restitution.

First, the teacher needs to find out what the student wants to become by asking him or her. Second, there needs to be a social contract developed between the teacher and students in the class so that they feel like they belong to the group and want to stay in the group. Finally, the value or values that the teacher is trying to teach the student need to be considered." Restitution in education involves three essential steps for teachers: asking students what they aspire to become, creating a social contract in the classroom to enhance a sense of belonging, and considering the values that need to be taught to students⁴

This approach is grounded in restorative principles, aiming to guide students to understand their mistakes, repair damaged relationships, and return to positive values they believe in. The restitution triangle consists of three main stages: stabilizing identity, validating the misbehavior, and seeking the belief. The restitution triangle is also a strategy that can be applied as a process to create conditions that guide students to correct the mistakes they have made. With the application of the restitution triangle, students are expected to return to their group with stronger character and a willingness to correct their previous behavior⁵.

The restitution triangle is an approach to addressing student misbehavior not through punishment or coercion, but through inner awareness and self-directed change. This approach offers a new paradigm in addressing disciplinary violations by emphasizing the development of students' self-awareness and self-responsibility, rather than simply imposing punishment. The application of the restitution triangle can serve as a good initial step in fostering a positive culture in schools. The restitution triangle is also flexible and can be implemented in any environment⁶.

A study by Hofifah in 2023, titled "*The Implementation of the Restitution Triangle in Shaping Students' Noble Character*," stated that the application of the restitution triangle increased student discipline from 65% to 86%. This is supported by a study conducted by Ujang, whose findings showed a decrease in disciplinary violations from 35% to 14%⁷. These results demonstrate that classroom agreements can cultivate students' awareness of discipline, and that the implementation of restitution is effective in improving student discipline. Therefore, it can be concluded that the restitution triangle, when applied in the classroom, is capable of enhancing student discipline.⁸

Based on issues found in the field as well as previous research findings, this study was conducted to examine in depth how the application of the restitution triangle can serve as an effective strategy for addressing disciplinary problems among elementary school students. Restitution is a way to instill discipline in students by allowing them to resolve their problems on their own and act in accordance with ideal values based on classroom beliefs (Yasa, 2024).

This approach is believed to be capable of creating a more positive learning environment that supports the development of students' character, especially in the context of fostering sustainable discipline. Therefore, this study focuses on exploring the practical application of this strategy in elementary schools and analyzing its impact on student disciplinary behavior.

2. METHOD OF THE RESEARCH

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach to examine the application of the restitution triangle in addressing student disciplinary issues at Gunungsimping 02 State Elementary School. This approach

³ Heni Mulatsih and SMP Negeri, "Meningkatkan Kedisiplinan Peserta Didik Melalui Penerapan Segitiga Restitusi Di Kelas VII.1 SMP Negeri 51 Batam Tahun Pelajaran 2022/2023," *Biodidak* 2, no. 2 (2022): 77–86.

⁴ Adi Kusumardi, "Teknik Restitusi Dalam Menangani Pelaku Bullying , Perundungan Pada Kurikulum Merdeka" 5, no. 3 (2024): 286–98, <https://doi.org/10.32923/lentaltern.v5i3.5051>.

⁵ Maryanto Maryanto and Siti Fatimah, "Mengatasi Siswa Sekolah Dasar Yang Kesulitan Dalam Mengerjakan Soal Matematika Dengan Pendekatan Segitiga Restitusi," *LAMBDA: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan MIPA Dan Aplikasinya* 3, no. 3 (2023): 158–64, <https://doi.org/10.58218/lambda.v3i3.806>.

⁶ Mulatsih and Negeri, "Meningkatkan Kedisiplinan Peserta Didik Melalui Penerapan Segitiga Restitusi Di Kelas VII.1 SMP Negeri 51 Batam Tahun Pelajaran 2022/2023."

⁷ Zulfitria2 Ujang Miftahurrahman1, "EEFEKTIVITAS SEGITIGA RESTITUSI DALAM MENINGKATKAN DISIPLIN POSITIF DAN MENGURANGI PERILAKU NEGATIF SISWA DI SMA NEGERI 1 RUNDENG," *Juni* 6, no. 2 (2024): 343, <https://journalpedia.com/1/index.php/epi/index>.

⁸ Hofifah, "IMPLEMENTASI SEGITIGA RESTITUSI DALAM MEMBENTUK AKHLAKUL KARIMAH PESERTA DIDIK," *Nucl. Phys.* 13, no. 1 (2023): 104–16.

was chosen because it allows the researcher to gain a deep understanding of the processes, responses, and behavioral changes of students, as well as the dynamics of teacher-student interactions within the context of applying the restitution triangle strategy.

The research subjects consisted of students and teachers directly involved in the learning process and in the implementation of the discipline strategy. The subjects were selected using purposive sampling, by choosing students with a history of disciplinary violations and teachers who actively participated in fostering student discipline.

Data collection was carried out through three main techniques:

1. **Observation:** Conducted directly in the classroom and school environment to observe student behavior before and after the implementation of the restitution triangle.
2. **In-depth Interviews:** Conducted with teachers and students to explore their perspectives, experiences, and responses regarding the application of the restitution triangle.
3. **Document Study:** Included analysis of discipline records, teacher journals, and other supporting documents to obtain additional data on changes in student behavior before and after the implementation of the restitution triangle.

Data analysis was conducted through data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Data validity was strengthened through triangulation of sources and techniques by comparing the results of observations, interviews, and documentation to obtain more accurate and reliable findings. This methodology is expected to provide a comprehensive and in-depth picture of the effectiveness of the restitution triangle as a strategy for building a positive discipline culture in elementary school settings.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This study aims to examine the application of the restitution triangle as a strategy for addressing student disciplinary issues. The subjects in this research were all students from grades IV to VI at Gunungsimping 02 State Elementary School, Central Cilacap, totaling 17 students. The data collection techniques used in this study included observation, interviews, and document analysis. All data obtained were analyzed using descriptive qualitative methods to illustrate the implementation of the restitution triangle in addressing student discipline problems. The implementation of the restitution triangle strategy at Gunungsimping 02 Elementary School has shown significant and positive results in shaping more disciplined and responsible student behavior.

This strategy focuses on three main aspects: restoring self-control, strengthening students' internal values, and repairing social relationships disrupted by inappropriate behavior. Based on the results of observations, interviews, and document analysis with school personnel, including teachers and students, it was revealed that this approach can facilitate gradual but consistent behavioral changes. Students began to demonstrate improved attitudes in responding to their mistakes, not only by acknowledging their faults but also by actively seeking ways to correct them. This indicates an increase in self-awareness and a stronger sense of personal responsibility. In addition, students became more skilled at managing their emotions, especially in situations that have the potential to cause conflict.

The restitution triangle approach, which emphasizes dialogue and reflection, encourages students to understand the impact of their actions on others—without feeling threatened by punitive or fear-based discipline. They feel more valued as individuals who are capable of change and learning from their mistakes. Overall, the implementation of the restitution triangle at Gunungsimping 02 Elementary School has made a significant contribution to creating a more positive school climate and supporting the learning process. This approach emphasizes the importance of active engagement between teachers and students in building discipline that is grounded in values rather than merely enforcing rules.

The close collaboration established between educators and learners helps foster mutual trust and open communication. Thus, this approach demonstrates that discipline does not always have to be synonymous with punishment, but can instead be developed through a process of understanding, reflection, and humane restoration. As a result, the school environment becomes more conducive not only to academic activities but also to the holistic development of students' character.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Student discipline issues are a complex and significant challenge, particularly in elementary school settings, where the process of character formation and the development of fundamental social values takes place. The high number of disciplinary violations in schools indicates the need for an approach that not only focuses on rule compliance but also addresses aspects of self-awareness, responsibility, and understanding of the consequences of one's actions. In this context, a more humane, educational, and constructive strategy is needed—one that not only punishes students but also guides them in improving their behavior through reflective processes.

This study demonstrates that the implementation of the restitution triangle strategy, which is based on restorative principles, can serve as an effective and applicable alternative solution for fostering student discipline in elementary schools. This strategy is designed to help students recognize their mistakes without fear and to encourage them to take responsibility for their actions. The restitution triangle involves three main stages: stabilizing the student's identity so they continue to feel valued despite their mistakes, validating the wrongdoing as a form of acknowledging reality, and seeking the student's belief to redirect their actions toward the positive values upheld by the class or school.

Through these stages, students are supported in engaging in self-reflection and behavioral change from within, rather than as a result of external pressure. Findings from the descriptive qualitative research conducted through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation of teachers and students from grades IV to VI at Gunungsimping 02 State Elementary School show that the restitution triangle approach can produce real and positive impacts.

Students began to demonstrate consistent behavioral improvements, such as better emotional regulation in conflict situations, increased honesty and openness in admitting mistakes, and greater initiative in correcting their wrongdoings. Additionally, this approach contributed to strengthening social relationships between teachers and students, built on trust, open dialogue, and collaboration in creating a safe and comfortable learning environment.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the restitution triangle is not only effective in reducing the number of disciplinary violations but also significantly contributes to the formation of students' character based on positive values such as responsibility, empathy, and moral awareness. This strategy aligns with the goals of the *Merdeka Curriculum*, which emphasizes the importance of the *Pancasila Student Profile*—learners who are faithful and devoted to God Almighty, independent, critical thinkers, creative, collaborative, and globally minded.

Hence, the application of the restitution triangle is highly recommended as a relevant and adaptive disciplinary strategy that can be more broadly implemented across various levels of basic education, in order to foster a sustainable discipline culture rooted in student self-awareness.

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