



The effectiveness of restorative justice youth camp in Thailand: A study of independent sample *t*-test

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Abstract

This study compared the restorative justice mindset and general knowledge scores before and after attending the youth camp, focusing on high school students from 11 schools affiliated with Saint Gabriel Foundation Thailand. Data were collected through an assessment of restorative justice in school knowledge and mindset and analyzed using descriptive and independent sample *t*-test statistics. Results showed that the mean score of the restorative justice mindset after attending restorative justice youth camp was significantly higher than before attending a camp in all aspects except Accountability. With a firm belief in the potency of experiential learning, the process must emphasize the active participation in practicing the fundamental skills necessary for continuing work with restorative justice. These skills include empathic communication, diversity, and deep listening. In addition, it is important to instill attitudes and mindsets on restorative practices followed by general restorative justice knowledge.

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Introduction

Restorative justice (RJ) is firmly rooted in the fundamental belief that active engagement from both the parties involved or affected by a criminal act is essential for reconciling the harm inflicted (Gavrielides, 2007). Its core objectives encompass alleviating suffering, preventing recurring harm, and fostering future harm prevention. Restorative justice functions as both a practical tool and a conceptual framework,

advancing principles of justice and inclusivity through the facilitation of truth-telling, peaceful expression, conflict resolution, and the cultivation of respect for diversity (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2020). Central to its mission is enhancing community involvement, disclosure, nonviolent communication, conflict resolution, and promoting responsible conduct toward the community (Thailand Institute of Justice, 2020).

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Opposite to punitive justice where the focus involves retribution and punishment of criminal offenders, restorative justice aims to reintegrate the offender into society as an accountable individual who assumes responsibility for the harm inflicted, thereby enabling their return to the community while acknowledging the consequences of their actions (Braithwaite, 2002). It is crucial to note that the restorative justice process transcends the sole focus on the victim, considering the impact on the families of both the victim and the offender, as well as the broader community and society. It recognizes the underlying factors contributing to the offense and endeavors to address the interests and needs of all affected parties (Braithwaite, 2002).

Restorative Justice in Schools

Restorative justice has expanded its practices to various contexts; one of which is schools. Conflicts within the school context encompass disputes between students, between students and teachers, and between students and school regulations. Schools hold accountability to address and resolve conflicts when they arise. Even though traditional approaches to discipline where power is exercised by school personnel have been widely practiced, a more contemporary, non-punitive approach is warranted (Lustick, 2022). In traditional disciplinary practices, students are placed at the bottom of the hierarchy whereas teachers have the authority to investigate and interpret wrongdoings, and make decisions about consequences (Velez & Butler, 2022). In most cases, punitive approaches are employed to “teach” lessons and disciplinary methods are manifested through such exclusionary practices as suspension, detention, and expulsion (Carroll et al., 2022). Studies have found detrimental effects of punitive discipline on students as well as on school climate, for examples, lowered academic achievement, negative attitudes towards school, heightened use of alcohol and drugs, and increased delinquent behaviors (Payne & Welch, 2022). Restorative justice approach in educational institutions was gradually perceived as an alternative approach to discipline and to create a culture of peace (Carroll et al., 2022). The objective of restorative justice extends beyond mitigating the harm caused by conflicts to foster a new culture that moves away from punitive measures or external rewards. The shift aims to promote appropriate behaviors, foster positive relationships, and cultivate a restorative culture within the school (Fronius et al., 2019; Morrison et al., 2005).

Existing literature has highlighted many positive impacts of implementing restorative practices in schools. First, it reduces violent behaviors among youths. Adopting restorative justice practices has been found to decrease physical violence among students and declined in harsh punishments between teachers and students (Carroll et al., 2022). Studies conducted in Hong Kong (e.g., Lewis, 2009) and the US (e.g., Wong et al., 2011) demonstrated its effectiveness in reducing peer conflicts and fostering empathy among students. Furthermore, McCold’s study (2008) found increases in self-esteem and pro-social attitudes among participants in a restorative justice program compared to non-participants. One of the common practices used in restorative justice approach is restorative circles where participants take turns speaking and sharing their perspectives on a matter (Lustick, 2022). It gives every stakeholder space to share dialogues, explore their emotional lives, voice their concerns, and offer alternative action (Recchia et al., 2022). Therefore, restorative circle formation encourages a sense of community and interpersonal responsibility regardless of the role the individual partakes in a dispute (Payne & Welch, 2022).

Second, restorative practices help reduce absenteeism and increase school attendance rates. Studies have found that restorative practices are effective in reversing school dropouts via family group conferencing programs (Jain et al., 2014; McMorris et al., 2013). Restorative practices, such as circles and conferencing, have been linked to a reduction in both in-school and out-of-school suspensions (Armour, 2013; Augustine et al., 2018; Davis, 2014; Sumner et al., 2010). In contrast to the retributive disciplinary approach where exclusionary methods are placed onto the offender, restorative framework aims to include the offender in the school community and seek ways to repair damaged relationships. It therefore focuses on developing safe community within schools. With restorative circles, such provides stakeholders an opportunity to determine and make agreement on restitution of harm, such as apologies, financial reparation, or community services instead of expulsion or detention (Carroll et al., 2022).

Finally, restorative practices contribute to improvement in school climate. Restorative practices are regarded as a framework to promote peace and communal school climate where collaboration and supportive relationships between school members are emphasized (Payne & Welch, 2022). Schools that employ restorative framework deliberately foster the importance of peacebuilding and peacekeeping through socialization, learning, and character development. Teaching about peace,

gaining awareness of injustice, encouraging students' engagement in peace through conflict resolution, and exemplifying methods in generating an environment that nurtures the sense of community are examples of restorative approach in schools (Velez & Butler, 2022). With the emphasis on peace, students are drawn away from punitive measures, but are imparted the process in which accountability of wrongdoings are considered and perspectives of all involved are regarded equally (Payne & Welch, 2022). Restorative practices, such as restorative circles, have been found to positively relate to school safety, understanding of school policies regarding student conduct, perception of inclusivity in leadership, academic involvement and achievement, and problem-solving skills among students (Augustine et al., 2018; Lustick, 2022; McMorris et al., 2013).

Ryan and Ruddy (2015) emphasized the significance of restorative justice processes as a fundamental principle rather than a mere tool. In successfully implementing restorative justice processes in educational settings, it is advised to put an emphasis on fostering an appropriate culture and conducive environment. The shift from a punitive paradigm to restorative justice approach requires the intricate interplay of various components, such as effective interpersonal communication, the ambiance during meetings, and the management of pre-existing conflicts. School culture has been established as an integral part of success in promoting sustainable, restorative justice practices in schools. In a study that explored contexts contributing to the successful implementation of restorative justice processes in schools, Sandwick et al. (2019) found five practices that facilitate the transition to restorative justice approach. These include: (1) building community; (2) reducing hierarchy; (3) shifting perspectives on punishment; (4) institutionalizing restorative justice; and (5) addressing challenges and providing opportunities for student leadership.

Restorative Justice in Schools in Thailand

Existing literature demonstrates a growing interest in applying restorative justice approaches for managing conflicts among youth in Thailand. The prevailing discourse primarily concerns critical analyses and theoretical investigations of these principles. Nonetheless, some studies have emerged that specifically explore the practical implementation of restorative justice processes, particularly in engaging youth in conflict management. Thirasarichote and Soopunyo (2020) adopted a participatory research methodology

aimed at formulating comprehensive guidelines for the integration of restorative justice practices within youth groups residing in densely populated community settings. The research initiative involved various critical stakeholders associated with conflict management. Participants were young adults aged 18 to 25 years who were community leaders, community members, or those whose network organizations were actively involved in community-related endeavors. Using problem-based learning method, the study employed real-life case studies to facilitate a deep understanding of conflict management's intricate dynamics. Participants were encouraged to actively analyze pertinent issues, delve into the multifaceted repercussions of conflicts, and collectively seek viable solutions through an open and collaborative dialogue. The outcomes of the study revealed that participants showed heightened self-exploration, an improved grasp of the perspectives held by the opposing party, a more comprehensive understanding of the consequences associated with conflicts, and enhanced comprehension of conflict situations. This study underscored the significance of integrating youth as proactive participants within conflict management. In addition, it accentuated the value of transformative learning experiences in conflict management instead of solely relying on conventional conflict resolution strategies that prioritize adult authority or community leadership. One of the barriers that hinders the application of restorative justice practices is the use of authoritarian power to resolve conflicts. Teeraphan and Pankaew (2021) found a negative interplay between authorities and community engagement. Specifically, when state officials are involved in decision-making of wrongdoings, participation from community members are likely to be withdrawn. This prevailing dynamic has led to the underutilization and ineffectiveness of restorative justice principles.

Another approach to restorative justice training in educational institutions is the application of mediation in managing conflicts. Pratheuangrattana (2018) explored the significance of establishing a system that actively supports and promotes the adoption of peace-based conflict management approach. The study identified key elements for successful mediation, including training in mediation skills, fostering active listening abilities, and cultivating effective communication techniques. Additionally, knowledge transfer of mediation practices from older to younger generations is necessary to ensure the sustainable integration of restorative justice processes within educational institutions.

Despite the attempt to integrate restorative approach in schools, it is often accompanied by inherent challenges, mainly attributable to the familiarity with punitive approaches among all key stakeholders, including educators, students, and administrators. This deep-rooted familiarity engenders resistance to change and may lead to conflicts between the conventional justice paradigm and the restorative justice framework (Karp & Breslin, 2001). Furthermore, research investigating the design and implementation processes of restorative justice and their corresponding outcomes remains relatively limited and warrants further scholarly exploration and inquiry.

The present study aimed to study the effectiveness of the restorative justice youth camp to provide valuable insights for developing future programs. Its objectives were to compare the mean of the restorative justice mindset score before and after attending the youth camp and the mean of the general knowledge score before and after attending the camp. Findings from this research would provide an insight into the development of programs for enhancing and expanding restorative justice practices for youth.

Methodology

Population and Sample

This study focused on the youth population in senior high schools affiliated with the Saint Gabriel Foundation Thailand. It employed a purposive sampling technique to select representatives from this population. The sample consisted of 63 individuals from 11 schools, all of who were members of the Student Council. These students held a pivotal position in the school's policy-making process, actively collaborated with teachers, and served as representatives capable of effectively implementing restorative justice within their respective schools.

Restorative Justice Youth Camp Learning Design

The restorative justice youth camp was held at the Academic & Recreational Center St. Gabriel 2000, Nonthaburi, Thailand, where participants partook in activities and boarded together in the camp for three days and two nights. The program was designed for the participants to: (1) hold a basic understanding of the concept of restorative justice; (2) understand restorative justice as an alternative approach to dispute resolution;

(3) gain insights into taking perspectives of people involved in a dispute; and (4) devise a plan to implement restorative justice in their own schools.

The design of activities throughout the 3-day process is based on fundamental knowledge, skills, and mindset pertinent to restorative justice as well as the learning approach that facilitates transformative learning experiences. First, the design aims for the participants to hold a basic understanding of the concept of restorative justice and its function to conflict resolution. Restorative justice is based on the belief that parties or people affected by the crime should be proactively involved in the remedy for damages—mitigating suffering and preventing damage from recurring. It is both a tool and a means to promote fairness and participation. Disclosure of truth encourages and encourages peaceful expression and conflict resolution, strengthens respect for diversity, and promotes responsible practices in the community (Thailand Institute of Justice, 2020). Second, as restorative justice requires individuals to exercise empathy, it is crucial that student participants be exposed to empathic communication. Empathic communication is based on the belief that every human being has a seed of goodness within. Therefore, compassion is fundamental to human interaction; especially, it allows individuals to reach compassion and hear the needs behind actions or words (Rosenberg, 2003). The goal is to build positive relationships with others and turn conflicts or disputes into understanding. It seeks a conclusion that brings satisfaction to all parties, resolving conflicts peacefully and reaching the heart of the conflict (Rosenberg, 2003). Last, the learning design of the camp is based on experiential learning theory. Experiential learning is a process in which knowledge is generated from transforming experiences into understanding. Consequently, knowledge results from grasping experiences and transforming them into understanding (Kolb & Kolb, 2009). The experiential learning cycle encompasses four continuous, interrelated steps, each contributing to the learning in the subsequent stage. These include: (1) *Concrete Experience (CE)*: At this stage, the learner is open to participating in various experiences. The learner perceives, senses, and feels the experience in the present moment (here and now), such as real-world practice; (2) *Reflective Observation (RO)*: At this stage, the learner contemplates understanding and interprets the experienced events. For instance, the learner reflects on and interprets the experience, then communicates it through writing learning logs, discussions, or brainstorming sessions; (3) *Abstract Conceptualization (AC)*: In this phase, the learner analyses, synthesizes,

and compiles information to identify the connections of theories to reach a comprehensive conclusion to be used in the future. For example, summarizing learned materials from one's perspective through writing learning logs; and (4) *Active Experimentation (AE)*: At this stage, the learner applies the understandings concluded in stage three to actual practice to verify whether the understanding is correct. This phase emphasizes applying abstract concepts to practical use, such as creating a prototype and testing it in real-world applications (Kolb & Kolb, 2009).

Data Collection

Data were collected using an assessment of restorative justice in school knowledge and mindset. This assessment aims to evaluate the participants' understanding of restorative justice processes before and after participating in these activities. The assessment is divided into two sections: (1) restorative justice mindset, and (2) restorative justice general knowledge.

Restorative justice mindset

Table 1 shows that this assessment instrument consists of 18 items systematically categorized based on applying restorative justice principles. The assessment is organized into five themes: (1) Empathic Understanding,

(2) Harm and Needs, (3) Restoration Processes, (4) Accountability, and (5) Community Engagement. This categorization offers a comprehensive framework for evaluating the implementation and effectiveness of restorative justice practices (Taylor & Bailey, 2022).

The assessment uses a 5-point rating scale, ranging from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'. It consists of a total of 18 items. Each item has 5 levels, rated from 1 to 5, where 1 represents the lowest score and 5 represents the highest score. The maximum total score is 90 points.

The score levels are assessed in two forms to measure the attitudes of the respondents to the evaluation.

1. Mean for each item, mean of the total for all items, and level of restorative justice mindset (Table 2).

2. Mean of the total for each theme and level of restorative justice mindset (Table 3).

Table 2 Mean for each item, mean of the total for all items, and level of restorative justice mindset

Mean for each item	Mean of the total for all items	Level of restorative justice mindset
4.21–5.00	72.01–90.00	Strongly agree
3.41–4.20	54.01–72.00	Agree
2.61–3.40	36.01–54.00	Neutral/Uncertain
1.81–2.60	18.01–36.00	Disagree
1.00–1.80	1.00–18.00	Strongly disagree

Table 1 Themes and statements of restorative justice mindset assessment

Item	Theme	Statement
**1	Community Engagement	The process of seeking justice for the victim is a matter between the victim and the offender. Others should not interfere.
2	Accountability	The offender must take responsibility for what they have done.
**3	Empathic Understanding	Showing support for the offender will further encourage the offender.
**4	Harm and Needs	The people who deserve to be healed are the victims, not the offender.
5	Harm and Needs	Understanding the needs of the victim is essential.
6	Empathic Understanding	We can empathize with the offender.
**7	Accountability	Offenders should not compensate their victims with money because in all cases, it is an insult to the victim.
8	Empathic Understanding	Showing support for the offender will help them take better responsibility for their actions.
9	Harm and Needs	We need to heal both the offender and the victim to have a good life.
10	Community Engagement	The victim receiving support for recovery from the community can lead to a better life.
**11	Restoration Processes	The offender and the victim should not confront each other.
**12	Empathic Understanding	Trying to understand the needs of the offender It is a waste of time seeking justice for the victims.
13	Restoration Processes	The offender should work to restore the relationship with the victim when they are ready.
14	Restoration Processes	Having the offender and the victim engage in a face-to-face dialogue is one option in the justice process.
15	Harm and Needs	Understanding the needs of the offender is essential.
16	Community Engagement	Members of the community should also participate in the process of establishing justice for the victim.
17	Accountability	The offender giving money to the victim is one form of compensation.
**18	Empathic Understanding	Showing empathy for the offender is re-victimizing the victim.

Note: (1) Items marked with ** indicate statements that received opposite scores. These are converted to standard scores before being used for statistics.

(2) Adapted from Taylor & Bailey (2022). The restorative justice attitudes scale: development and initial psychometric evaluation.

Table 3 Mean of the total for each theme and Level of restorative justice mindset

Community Engagement (15)	Accountability (15)	Range of mean			Level of restorative justice mindset
		Empathic Understanding (25)	Harm and Needs (20)	Restoration Processes (15)	
12.01–15.00	12.01–15.00	20.01–25.00	16.00–20.00	12.01–15.00	Strongly agree
9.01–12.00	9.01–12.00	15.01–20.00	12.01–16.00	9.01–12.00	Agree
6.01–9.00	6.01–9.00	10.01–15.00	8.01–12.00	6.01–9.00	Neutral/Uncertain
3.01–6.00	3.01–6.00	5.01–10.00	4.01–8.00	3.01–6.00	Disagree
0.00–3.00	0.00–3.00	0.00–5.00	0.00–4.00	0.00–3.00	Strongly disagree

Restorative justice general knowledge

The restorative justice general knowledge test uses a multiple-choice format, incorporating both closed-ended questions and scenario-based questions. It contains a total of 8 items, divided according to the main content areas that are intended to assess knowledge. These include 3 items on empathic communication and 5 items on restorative justice (Table 4).

From 8 questions 1–6, 1 point each, and 7–8, 5 points each, a total score of 16 points, 3 points for the empathic communication theme, and 13 points for the restorative justice theme (Table 5).

Analysis

Data used for analysis obtained from the assessment of restorative justice in school knowledge and mindset. Participants were asked to complete the assessment twice. Pre-test scores were obtained on day one of the youth camp and post-test scores were obtained on the final day of the youth camp. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including mean and standard deviation (*SD*), and inferential statistics. Independent sample *t*-test was used to compare the average score between before and after the overall participation.

Results

The majority of the participants were male. The highest proportion of student participants was in grade 11. The largest number of participants was from Mathematics, Science, Technology, and Health Program (Table 6).

The total mean score of the restorative justice mindset after attending restorative justice youth camp was 67.94, in the agree level, which was higher than the score before attending a camp, which was 58.83, in agree level. The difference was statistically significant at .05 ($t = 6.03$, $p < .05$).

Table 5 Total score, score of empathic communication, score of restorative justice, and level of restorative justice knowledge

Total score (16 points)	Score of empathic communication (3 points)	Score of restorative justice (13 points)	Level of restorative justice knowledge
12.81–16.00	2.41–3.00	10.41–13.00	Excellent
9.61–12.80	1.81–2.40	7.81–10.40	Very Good
6.41–9.60	1.21–1.80	5.21–7.80	Good
3.21–6.40	0.61–1.20	2.61–5.20	Fair
0.00–3.20	0.00–0.60	0.00–2.60	Insufficient

Table 4 Themes, questions, and score of the restorative justice general knowledge test

Item	Theme	Question	Score
1	Empathic Communication	Which choice is communication to express feelings?	1
2	Empathic Communication	In empathic communication, what should we prioritize first?	1
3	Empathic Communication	Which of the following process would solve the above problem using the concept of Empathic Communication?	1
4	Restorative justice	What is the restorative justice?	1
5	Restorative justice	How can damage be remedied?	1
6	Restorative justice	What is most necessary for restorative justice processes practice in schools?	1
7	Restorative justice	What is violence against children and young people (more than one option can be selected)?	5
8	Restorative justice	Who should have the authority to manage conflicts in the school (more than one option can be selected)?	5

Table 6 Frequency and percentage of participants classified by characteristic.

Characteristics	(N = 60)		(N = 63)	
	Pre-test		Post-test	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Sex				
Male	40	66.67	42	66.67
Female	18	30.00	20	31.75
Prefer not to answer	2	3.33	1	1.59
Total	60	100.00	63	100.00
Level				
Grade 10	4	6.67	5	7.94
Grade 11	29	48.33	31	49.21
Grade 12	27	45.00	27	42.86
Total	60	100.00	63	100.00
Program				
Social Sciences, Humanities, and Linguistics Program	9	15.00	9	14.29
Mathematics, Science, Technology, and Health Program	44	73.33	46	73.02
Others	7	11.67	8	12.70
Total	60	100.00	63	100.00

The mean score of the *Community Engagement Mindset* after attending a camp was 11.33, in the agree level, which was higher than the score before attending a camp, which was 10.52, in the agree level. The difference was statistically significant at the level of .05 ($t = 2.13$, $p < .05$).

The mean score of the *Accountability Mindset* after attending a camp was 11.54, in the agree level, which was higher than the score before attending a camp, which was 11.27, in the agree level. The difference was not statistically significant at the level of .05 ($t = 0.71$, $p > .05$).

The mean score of the *Empathic Understanding Mindset* after attending a camp was 17.33, in the agree level, which was higher than the score before attending a camp, which was 14.10, in the neutral level. The difference was statistically significant at the level of .05 ($t = 5.65$, $p < .05$).

The mean score of the *Harm and Needs Mindset* after attending a camp was 15.89, in the agree level, which was higher than the score before attending a camp, which was 14.10, in the agree level. The difference was statistically significant at the level of .05 ($t = 3.38$, $p < .05$).

The mean score of the *Restoration Processes Mindset* after attending a camp was 11.84, in the agree level, which was higher than the score before attending a camp, which was 9.75, in the agree level. The difference was statistically significant at the level of .05 ($t = 5.32$, $p < .05$).

It was found that every item had a higher score after attending the camp than before. However, items 10, 16, 7, 17, and 12 were not statistically significant at the level of .05 ($t = 1.34$, 1.24, 1.10, 1.22, and 1.18, respectively, $p > .05$). The exception was for item 2 (*The offender must take responsibility for what they have done.*). After attending a camp, the score was 4.05, in the agree level, less than the score before, which was 4.25. The difference was not statistically significant at the level of .05 ($t = -1.17$, $p > .05$), as shown in Table 7.

The mean score of the restorative justice general knowledge after attending restorative justice youth camp was at a good level of 8.78, which was higher than the score before attending a camp, which was at a good level with a mean of 7.22. The difference was statistically significant at .05 ($t = 2.24$, $p < .05$).

The mean score of the *Empathic Communication Knowledge* after attending a camp was 1.87, at a very good level, which was higher than the score before attending a camp, which was 1.70, at a good level. The difference was not statistically significant at the level of .05 ($t = 1.23$, $p > .05$).

The mean score of the *Restorative Justice Knowledge* after attending a camp was 6.90, at a good level, which was higher than the score before attending a camp, which was 5.52, at a good level. The difference was statistically significant at the level of .05 ($t = 2.08$, $p < .05$), as shown in Table 8.

Table 7 Mean, standard deviation (*SD*), and independent *t*-test statistic of restorative justice mindset's pre and post-test.

Theme	Restorative Justice Mindset	Pre-Post test	Mean	Level of restorative justice mindset	diff in mean	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Community Engagement	**1. The process of seeking justice for the victim is a matter between the victim and the offender. Others should not interfere.	Pre (5)	3.52	Agree	0.32	1.24	1.64	.05*
		Post (5)	3.84	Agree		0.94		
	10. The victim receiving support for recovery from the community can lead to a better life.	Pre (5)	3.87	Agree	0.21	0.93	1.34	.09
		Post (5)	4.08	Agree		0.83		
	16. Members of the community should also participate in the process of establishing justice for the victim.	Pre (5)	3.13	Neutral/ Uncertain	0.28	1.31	1.24	.11
		Post (5)	3.41	Agree		1.20		
Total Community Engagement	Pre (15)	10.52	Agree	0.82	2.24	2.13	.02*	
	Post (15)	11.33	Agree		2.02			
Accountability	2. The offender must take responsibility for what they have done.	Pre (5)	4.25	Strongly agree	-0.20	0.99	-1.17	.12
		Post (5)	4.05	Agree		0.94		
	**7. Offenders should not compensate their victims with money because in all cases, it is an insult to the victim.	Pre (5)	3.40	Neutral/ Uncertain	0.22	1.12	1.10	.14
		Post (5)	3.62	Agree		1.08		
	17. The offender giving money to the victim is one form of compensation.	Pre (5)	3.62	Agree	0.26	1.18	1.22	.11
		Post (5)	3.87	Agree		1.16		
Total Accountability	Pre (15)	11.27	Agree	0.27	2.14	0.71	.24	
	Post (15)	11.54	Agree		2.13			
Empathic Understanding	**3. Showing support for the offender will further encourage the offender.	Pre (5)	2.02	Disagree	0.82	1.10	3.86	.00*
		Post (5)	2.84	Neutral/ Uncertain		1.26		
	6. We can empathize with the offender.	Pre (5)	2.92	Neutral/ Uncertain	0.81	1.00	4.71	.00*
		Post (5)	3.73	Agree		0.92		
	8. Showing support for the offender will help them take better responsibility for their actions.	Pre (5)	2.28	Disagree	0.81	1.22	3.87	.00*
		Post (5)	3.10	Neutral/ Uncertain		1.10		
	**12. Trying to understand the needs of the offender It is a waste of time seeking justice for the victims.	Pre (5)	3.80	Agree	0.25	1.22	1.18	.12
		Post (5)	4.05	Agree		1.10		
	**18. Showing empathy for the offender is re-victimizing the victim.	Pre (5)	3.08	Neutral/ Uncertain	0.54	1.21	2.65	.00*
		Post (5)	3.62	Agree		1.02		
Total Empathic Understanding	Pre (25)	14.10	Neutral/ Uncertain	3.23	3.14	5.65	.00*	
	Post (25)	17.33	Agree		3.20			
Harm and Needs	**4. The people who deserve to be healed are the victims, not the offender.	Pre (5)	2.37	Disagree	0.89	1.25	4.20	.00*
		Post (5)	3.25	Neutral/ Uncertain		1.09		
	5. Understanding the needs of the victim is essential.	Pre (5)	3.87	Agree	0.47	1.14	2.51	.01*
		Post (5)	4.33	Strongly agree		0.92		
	9. We need to heal both the offender and the victim to have a good life.	Pre (5)	3.28	Neutral/ Uncertain	0.72	1.25	3.37	.00*
		Post (5)	4.00	Agree		1.11		

Table 7 Continued

Theme	Restorative Justice Mindset	Pre-Post test	Mean	Level of restorative justice mindset	diff in mean	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	15. Understanding the needs of the offender is essential.	Pre (5)	3.78	Agree	0.52	1.22	2.76	.00*
		Post (5)	4.30	Strongly agree		0.84		
Total Harm and Needs		Pre (20)	14.10	Agree	1.79	3.14	3.38	.00*
		Post (20)	15.89	Agree		2.72		
Restoration Processes	**11. The offender and the victim should not confront each other.	Pre (5)	3.27	Neutral/Uncertain	0.77	1.21	3.84	.00*
		Post (5)	4.03	Agree		1.00		
	13. The offender should work to restore the relationship with the victim when they are ready.	Pre (5)	2.87	Neutral/Uncertain	0.77	1.14	3.86	.00*
		Post (5)	3.63	Agree		1.07		
	14. Having the offender and the victim engage in a face-to-face dialogue is one option in the justice process.	Pre (5)	3.52	Agree	0.66	1.19	3.32	.00*
		Post (5)	4.17	Agree		1.01		
Total Restoration Processes		Pre (15)	9.75	Agree	2.09	2.04	5.32	.00*
		Post (15)	11.84	Agree		2.30		
Total restorative justice mindset		Pre (90)	58.83	Agree	9.10	8.10	6.03	.00*
		Post (90)	67.94	Agree		8.63		

Note: (1) * Statistical significance at the level of .05 ($p < .05$).

(2) ** Indicate statements that received opposite scores. These are converted to standard scores before being used for statistics.

Table 8 Mean, standard deviation (*SD*), and independent *t*-test statistic of restorative justice general knowledge pre and post-test

Restorative Justice General Knowledge	Pre-Post test	Mean	Level of restorative justice knowledge	diff in mean	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Empathic Communication	Pre (3)	1.70	Good	0.17	0.72	1.23	.11
	Post (3)	1.87	Very Good		0.83		
Restorative Justice	Pre (13)	5.52	Good	1.39	3.69	2.08	.02*
	Post (13)	6.90	Good		3.71		
Total of Restorative Justice General Knowledge	Pre (16)	7.22	Good	1.56	3.78	2.24	.01*
	Post (16)	8.78	Good		3.96		

Note: * Statistical significance at the level of .05 ($p < .05$).

Discussion and Conclusion

This research explored the effectiveness of a restorative justice youth camp to provide insights into developing and designing future camp programs on restorative justice. Mean scores from the assessment of restorative justice in school knowledge and mindset were used to compare the effect of the restorative justice youth camp. In terms of restorative justice mindset, there was a significant difference in the mean of the total restorative justice mindset score, $t = 6.03$, $p < .05$. The mean score after attending the restorative justice youth camp ($M = 67.94$, $SD = 8.63$) was significantly higher than the mean score before attending the camp ($M = 58.83$, $SD = 8.10$) in all aspects, except for Accountability.

In terms of restorative justice knowledge, there was a significant difference in the mean of the total restorative justice mindset score, $t = 2.24$, $p < .05$. The mean score after attending the restorative justice youth camp ($M = 8.78$, $SD = 3.96$) was significantly higher than the mean score before attending the camp ($M = 7.22$, $SD = 3.78$) in all aspects, except for Empathic Communication. These results showed that participation in the youth camp yielded satisfactory outcomes in both restorative justice knowledge and mindset. One of the possible factors that influenced the growth in restorative justice knowledge and mindset is the overarching learning design. Based on the experiential learning theory, activities were designed for the participants to be exposed to new experiences, leading them to reflect on their experiences, revisit their pre-existing beliefs, conceptualize new knowledge,

and seek ways to implement their learning in real life (Kolb & Kolb, 2009). In teaching restorative justice, it is suggested that programs be carried out through experience-based curriculum rather than lecture-based learning (Lustick, 2022). This way, students are allowed to exercise restorative practices in real life situations, such as building positive student-student and teacher-student interactions, engaging in conflict resolution rooted on peace, and creating a school climate that is respectful for diversity (Carroll et al., 2022).

A comprehensive review of literature regarding approaches for implementing restorative practices in schools by Carroll et al. (2022) proposed fundamental skills and mindsets that enable restorative practices. These included, but were not limited to, empathic communication, awareness and tolerance of diversity, and deep listening, all of which were incorporated in the design of the restorative justice youth camp. In addition, as this research adopted experiential learning theory in designing learning activities to promote restorative justice knowledge and mindset, it put an emphasis on providing the participants a platform to actively practice fundamental skills necessary for continuing with restorative practices. After learning about restorative justice principles and practicing empathic communication and deep listening skills in day one and two, participants worked in groups in the final day to develop prototypes based on restorative practices. Given that every participant was a member of the Student Council, it was expected that their prototypes would be subsequently carried out in their respective schools. Apart from knowledge and skill readiness, students reflected that for restorative practices to gain success in schools, considerations must be given to the school culture, especially one that is based on trust, fairness, and equity. The environment within the school that facilitates the shift from a punitive perspective that relies on severe punishment to a perspective that accepts the path of restorative justice is challenging. However, its manifestation is viable through the collaboration of various stakeholders. Carroll et al. (2022) delineated three approaches in which restorative practices can be implemented in schools. First, teacher-targeted approach focuses on training teachers the restorative practice principles. Teachers are guided through the concept of positive relationship building, specifically, creating supportive school communities, focusing on accountability rather than on rule infractions, fostering collaborative problem-solving skills, and empathic understanding of human behaviors and needs. It also provides a teacher with a set of skills necessary for restorative practices, such as conflict

resolution, facilitation of restorative circles, and affective questioning skills. Second, a restorative practices course that introduces students to the core concept of restorative principles and values. The curriculum is devised to promote social-emotional learning, such as building trust and relationship in the classroom, emotional awareness and management, collaborative leadership, and social justice. Students are encouraged to practice problem-solving skills together with social and emotional strengths to create peaceful and equitable communities. Last, the whole-school approach takes into account multiple elements that act as building blocks for restorative practice implementation. It leads towards creating positive relationships among students, teachers, and school staff; embracing diversity; improving school climate; and enhancing social and emotional assets. Therefore, it requires total commitment from school leadership and every stakeholder to progress through restorative mindset and practices sustainably. In line with Carroll et al. (2022), the current research focused on the first and second approaches. Apart from the youth camp, there was a parallel camp carried out for teachers of the participating students. Teacher participants were trained specifically on restorative justice principles and empathic communication skills. They also participated as an audience when students presented their prototypes. When key school members (i.e. teachers and students) shared common goals, implementation of restorative practices are likely to be more successful and sustainable (Carroll et al., 2022).

The analysis yielded an interesting finding on the effect of restorative justice youth camp on the understanding of accountability. Even though there was a significant difference in the mean of the total restorative justice mindset score, in which the mean score after attending a restorative justice youth camp was significantly higher than the mean score before attending a camp, the differences were not statistically significant on the Accountability sub-score. One item in particular, "*The offender must take responsibility for what they have done.*", showed a startling result where the mean score after attending the camp was lower than that before attending the camp, though not statistically significant. This might reflect the participants' increased empathy for the offender, hence agreeing less with the statement after attending the camp. Given that the design aimed to instil the concept of empathy and empathic communication, it is likely that it was overinterpreted leading to a misconception regarding accountability among the participants. Therefore, it is crucial to clarify the fundamental principles and core values of restorative

justice that highlight the sense of responsibility and accountability of the offender (Gavrielides, 2007). Essentially, restorative justice not only focuses on acknowledging the consequences of wrongdoing from the offender to the victim, but also reconciling between the victim and the offender using peaceful measures (Thailand Institute of Justice, 2020).

One of the limitations of this study is that it made use of quantitative data to investigate the effectiveness of the youth camp exclusively. The findings may not reflect those generally obtained from qualitative research methodology, such as participants' insights, attitudes, and perceptions on their experiences. Nonetheless, it presented the effectiveness of a 3-day youth camp designed to enhance knowledge and mindset on restorative justice. It is therefore advised that further studies use a mixed methods research design to gain in-depth understandings into the impact of intervention programs. Also, follow-up studies on the implementation of restorative practices in schools after attending the program are warranted.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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