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Diversion Policy for Children in Conflict with the Law: Evidence from Indonesia

法律冲突儿童的分流政策：来自印度尼西亚的经验

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Abstract:

This study evaluates the implementation of diversion policy for children in conflict with the law within the Indonesian juvenile justice system in the context of restorative justice. Diversion is intended to protect children from the negative consequences of formal criminal proceedings while promoting accountability, recovery, and social reintegration. This study employed a qualitative evaluative design based on Stake's Countenance Evaluation Model, which examines policy implementation through three dimensions: antecedents, transactions, and outcomes. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis related to diversion practices and were analyzed using thematic analysis involving coding, categorization, and theme development. The findings indicate that the legal framework and institutional structures supporting diversion have generally been established; however, limitations remain in terms of human resource capacity, competencies in facilitating restorative justice processes, and the

Keywords: Diversion; Restorative Justice; Juvenile Justice; Policy Evaluation; Children in Conflict with the Law.

关键词: 分流制度; 恢复性司法; 少年司法体系; 政策评估; 违法未成年人



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availability of supporting facilities and infrastructure. The implementation process generally follows the procedural stages required by existing regulations, although variations were identified in the quality of restorative dialogue, levels of participation, inter-agency coordination, and the consistency of implementation across cases. The findings further suggest that diversion has generated positive initial impacts by preventing children from entering formal judicial proceedings and creating opportunities for recovery and social reintegration. Nevertheless, the sustainability of these outcomes remains influenced by the quality of implementation, family support, post-diversion monitoring, and broader social acceptance. In addition, monitoring and follow-up mechanisms have not yet been implemented in a systematic and standardized manner. These findings highlight the importance of strengthening institutional capacity, enhancing restorative justice competencies among practitioners, improving cross-sector coordination, and developing sustainable monitoring mechanisms to improve the effectiveness of diversion implementation for children in conflict with the law.

摘要:

本研究旨在恢复性司法背景下，评估印度尼西亚少年司法体系中针对涉法未成年人实施转处政策的执行情况。转处制度旨在避免未成年人进入正式刑事司法程序所带来的负面影响，同时促进责任承担、关系修复以及社会再融入。本研究采用定性评估研究设计，并以Stake提出的情境评估模型作为分析框架，从初始条件、实施过程以及结果与影响三个维度对转处政策的实施进行评估。研究数据通过深度访谈、观察以及与转处实践相关的文件分析收集，并采用主题分析法进行处理，包括编码、分类及主题提炼等步骤。研究结果表明，支持转处实施的法律框架和制度结构总体上已经建立，但在人力资源能力、恢复性司法促进技能以及配套设施与基础条件方面仍存在一定限制。在实施过程维度中，转处协商总体上遵循了现行法规规定的程序要求，但恢复性对话质量、参与程度、跨机构协调以及实施一致性在不同案件之间仍存在差异。研究进一步表明，转处机制已产生初步积极成效，通过避免未成年人进入正式司法程序，为其恢复与社会再融入创造了机会。然而，这些成效的持续性仍受到实施质量、家庭支持、转处后的监督机制以及社会接纳程度等因素的影响。此外，转处后的监督与后续跟进机制尚未形成系统化和标准化的实施模式。本研究强调，有必要加强制度能力建设，提升执法人员和相关实践者的恢复性司法专业能力，强化跨部门协作，并建立可持续的监督机制，以提高涉法未成年人转处政策实施的整体有效性。

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1. Introduction

Diversion aims to achieve restorative justice by emphasizing the restoration of the original condition, the child's responsibility for their actions, and the creation of reconciliation between the child and the victim. The implementation of diversion prioritizes the best interests of the child by avoiding the negative consequences of formal judicial processes. Through diversion, children

are required to take responsibility without compromising their rights, dignity, and future prospects. This approach places recovery and rehabilitation as the primary objectives in handling juvenile cases (Munggardijaya et al., 2025).

However, several issues continue to emerge in the implementation of diversion, affecting the effectiveness of achieving restorative justice objectives. One of the key

challenges is the variation in understanding and commitment among law enforcement officials regarding the concept of diversion (Kurniawan & Puspa, 2025). These differences are reflected in varying perspectives and practices at each stage of the juvenile justice process. Some officials still perceive diversion merely as a procedural obligation rather than as a primary instrument of restorative justice (Pirlina et al., 2025). Consequently, diversion is often implemented in a manner that is neither optimal nor substantive. Differences in levels of understanding also influence the seriousness with which officials facilitate deliberations involving children, victims, and other relevant stakeholders (Panu et al., 2025). As a result, the diversion process may not fully reflect the principles of restorative justice and the best interests of the child (Ghifari et al., 2025). This situation also complicates the ability of probation officers to conduct effective cross-sector coordination with law enforcement agencies and related institutions (Musa et al., 2025).

Limitations in the role and capacity of probation officers also constitute a significant challenge in ensuring effective diversion implementation. The number of probation officers is often disproportionate to the caseload, resulting in limited capacity to provide intensive assistance to children (Virlando et al., 2025). Constraints related to time, supporting facilities, and opportunities for competency development also affect the quality of social inquiry reports and the facilitation of diversion deliberations. These conditions may hinder the comprehensive identification of the needs of children, victims, and families. Consequently, diversion processes may not fully embody restorative justice principles or adequately reflect the best interests of the child (Ghifari et al., 2025). Such circumstances further complicate cross-sector coordination between probation officers and other stakeholders involved in juvenile justice processes (Musa et al., 2025).

Another challenge arises from the relatively low level of participation of victims and families in diversion deliberations. The absence or minimal involvement of victims and their families often results in unbalanced dialogue during the deliberation process. This condition makes it difficult to reach agreements that adequately address the needs for victim recovery while also ensuring the child's accountability. Limited understanding of the objectives and benefits of diversion also contributes to this low level of participation. Consequently, the outcomes of diversion deliberations may lack sustainability and may be less effective in preventing recurring conflicts. Emotional factors, such as anger and a desire for punitive measures, often discourage victims from participating in deliberations. In addition, limited facilitation and guidance may affect the ability of families to engage actively in the process.

Addressing these challenges requires the development of standardized frameworks for evaluating diversion processes in order to assess the alignment between legal norms and practical implementation at each stage. Such evaluation should encompass the roles of law enforcement officials, probation officers, and the involvement of victims and families, while also emphasizing the strengthening of human resource capacity, enhanced cross-sector coordination, and improvements in the quality of deliberation processes, monitoring mechanisms, and the implementation of diversion agreements. These efforts are necessary to ensure that diversion is implemented more substantively and consistently and in a manner that prioritizes the best interests of children in conflict with the law and the objectives of restorative justice.

The diversion process can be examined through a comprehensive and staged evaluation, beginning with initial conditions, followed by implementation processes, and concluding with the outcomes achieved (Stake, 1967). This approach helps identify gaps between the normative objectives of diversion and its practical implementation. At the antecedents stage (pre-implementation), the evaluation focuses on assessing the readiness of diversion implementation, including the understanding and commitment of law enforcement officials toward restorative justice, the capacity of probation officers, and institutional support and infrastructure. At the transaction stage (implementation), the evaluation focuses on the extent to which diversion deliberations align with the intended objectives, including the quality of facilitation, the participation of children, victims, and families, and the dynamics of interaction among stakeholders. At the outcomes stage (post-implementation), the evaluation assesses the changes and impacts resulting from diversion implementation, such as the sustainability of agreements, the restoration of social relationships, and the protection and reintegration of children.

Previous studies on diversion and restorative justice in Indonesia have generally focused on legal provisions, normative perspectives, and policy arrangements within the juvenile justice system (Ernis, 2016; F. Rahman, 2019; Supaat, 2022). Several studies have discussed the importance of diversion as a restorative justice mechanism and examined its legal implementation; however, limited attention has been given to evaluating diversion practices through a comprehensive evaluative framework that examines conditions before implementation, implementation processes, and resulting outcomes. In this regard, the present study adopts Stake's Countenance Evaluation Model to examine diversion implementation through antecedents, transactions, and outcomes. This perspective allows a more systematic assessment of institutional readiness,

implementation processes, and the outcomes of diversion practices, thereby providing an evaluative perspective that remains relatively limited in studies on children in conflict with the law in Indonesia. Therefore, this study aims to explore the implementation of diversion for Children in Conflict with the Law at the Class I Palembang Correctional Center, Indonesia.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Design

This study employs a qualitative evaluation research design within a constructivist paradigm. The qualitative approach was selected because the diversion process represents a social and policy phenomenon characterized by interactions among actors, values, perceptions, and institutional contexts that cannot be adequately measured through quantitative methods alone (Creswell, 2013). The constructivist paradigm views social reality as being jointly constructed by policy actors; therefore, understanding the practice of diversion requires exploration from the perspectives of implementers, children, and other stakeholders directly involved in the process. This approach aligns with the characteristics of public policy evaluation in complex contexts, where causal relationships are not linear and policy outcomes are strongly influenced by implementation processes as well as the dynamics of social and institutional environments.

2.2. Participants

The primary sampling technique employed in this study was purposive sampling, in which participants were selected based on specific criteria determined by the researchers in accordance with the research objectives. In qualitative research, purposive sampling is considered effective because it allows researchers to select individuals who possess the most relevant knowledge and direct involvement in the phenomenon under investigation, rather than relying on statistical representation (Ahmad & Wilkins, 2025). The purposive criteria applied in this study included the following:

- a. Direct involvement in the implementation of diversion for children in conflict with the law.
- b. Adequate understanding of diversion policies, procedures, and practices within the Juvenile Criminal Justice System.
- c. Practical experience in providing supervision, guidance, assistance, or decision-making related to diversion.
- d. Willingness to provide information openly and in depth.

Based on these criteria, the main participants in this study included probation officers, as well as supporting informants drawn from law enforcement agencies and other relevant stakeholders who interact with the Class I Palembang Correctional Center, Indonesia, in the

implementation of diversion.

The selection of participants was based on their specific roles and levels of involvement in the diversion process. The probation officer was designated as the key informant because of their central responsibility in conducting social inquiries, facilitating diversion deliberations, providing supervision, and monitoring the implementation of diversion agreements. Meanwhile, children in conflict with the law were included to provide direct perspectives regarding their experiences throughout the diversion process. The inclusion of participants from different institutional backgrounds was intended to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of diversion implementation from multiple perspectives within the juvenile justice system.

Given that this study involved participants directly engaged in the diversion process, particular attention was given to confidentiality and voluntary participation throughout the research. Prior to each interview, the researchers explained the purpose of the study, the scope of participation, and the intended use of the information to each participant. Participation was voluntary, and participants were free to decline answering any question during the interview process. To protect privacy and confidentiality, all identifying information was removed from the interview transcripts and replaced with participant codes during data analysis and reporting. The study focused on understanding institutional practices and participants' experiences in diversion implementation, and no personal information was disclosed in the publication of the findings.

Table 1. Categories and Roles of Research Participants in the Diversion Process (Source: The authors, 2026)

Participant Category (Code)	Position/Role	Role in Diversion Process	Number
Key Informant (KI-01)	Probation Officer, Class I, Palembang Correctional Center	Conducts child supervision and guidance, facilitates diversion deliberations, and monitors post-diversion agreements	1
Supporting Informant (SI-01)	Coordinator/Structural Officer, Class I Palembang Correctional Center	Coordinates supervision activities and diversion policy implementation at the institutional level	1
Supporting Informant (SI-02)	Juvenile Investigator (Police)	Initiates diversion at the investigation stage and coordinates with the Correctional Center	1

Participant Category (Code)	Position/Role	Role in Diversion Process	Number
Supporting Informant (SI-03)	Juvenile Prosecutor (Prosecution Service)	Initiates diversion during the prosecution stage and facilitates inter-agency coordination	1
Supporting Informant (SI-04)	Juvenile Judge (Court)	Initiates diversion during the trial stage and determines diversion agreements	1
Supporting Informant (SI-05)	Social Worker / Child Support Organization	Provides psychosocial assistance and recovery support for the child	1
Additional Informant (AI-01)	Child's Family	Participates in diversion deliberations and supports the implementation of agreements	1
Additional Informant (AI-012-AI-04)	Children in Conflict with the Law	Primary subjects of the diversion process	3
Total Participants			10

Participant selection was based on the relevance of each individual's role in the diversion process. The probation officer was selected as the key informant because of their direct involvement in conducting community guidance, preparing social inquiry reports, facilitating diversion deliberations, and monitoring the implementation of diversion agreements. Meanwhile, children in conflict with the law were included to provide firsthand accounts of their experiences during the diversion process. The inclusion of participants from different institutional and social backgrounds was intended to capture diverse perspectives and obtain a broader understanding of how diversion was implemented within the juvenile justice system.

2.3. Data Collection

In-depth interviews were employed as the primary technique for obtaining primary data from key informants directly involved in the implementation of diversion. This method enabled the researchers to explore informants' perceptions, experiences, knowledge, and assessments regarding policy readiness, the quality of implementation, and the initial outcomes of diversion. The interviews were conducted in a semi-structured format, allowing the researchers to follow a systematic interview guide while still providing

sufficient flexibility for informants to express their views freely and in depth (Saunders et al., 2019).

Table 2. Sample questions for semi-structured interviews (Source: The authors, 2026)

No.	Research Guiding Questions
1	How prepared is the Class I Palembang Correctional Center (Balai Pemasyarakatan) to implement diversion for children in conflict with the law?
2	How do probation officers and law enforcement officials understand the concepts of diversion and restorative justice, and what level of competence do they possess in implementing them?
3	To what extent do technical guidelines, supporting regulations, and available facilities and infrastructure support the implementation of diversion?
4	To what extent does the implementation of diversion comply with existing legal provisions and the objectives of diversion policy?
5	How effective is the quality of diversion deliberation processes, including facilitation, dialogue, and the formulation of agreements?
6	What is the level of participation of children, victims, and families in the diversion process?
7	How do coordination mechanisms and interaction dynamics among law enforcement agencies and related institutions operate during the implementation of diversion?
8	What is the level of success and sustainability of diversion agreements?
9	How are post-diversion supervision and follow-up mechanisms carried out by probation officers?
10	To what extent do diversion outcomes contribute to child protection, rehabilitation, social reintegration, and the prevention of reoffending?

In addition to interviews, non-participant observations were conducted during the data collection process to obtain contextual understanding of diversion practices and institutional conditions. Observations were carried out at the Class I Palembang Correctional Center and focused on the implementation environment, coordination activities among relevant actors, institutional facilities supporting diversion, and the interactions that occurred during diversion-related activities. Field notes were recorded to support data interpretation and to complement information obtained through interviews.

Document analysis was also undertaken to strengthen data triangulation. The documents reviewed included regulations concerning the Juvenile Criminal Justice System, institutional guidelines related to diversion implementation, social inquiry reports, diversion-related administrative records, and other relevant documents associated with the implementation of diversion for children in conflict with the law. These documents were used to examine the consistency between regulatory provisions and implementation practices in the field.

All interviews were conducted face-to-face and were

audio-recorded with the participants' consent. The interview duration ranged from approximately 45 to 90 minutes, depending on the participant's role and level of involvement in the diversion process. Following data collection, the recordings were transcribed verbatim to facilitate systematic analysis and interpretation.

Data collection was conducted until sufficient information had been obtained to address the research objectives. The process was concluded when the information collected from participants became repetitive and no substantial new themes emerged from subsequent interviews, indicating that data saturation had been achieved.

2.4. Data Analysis

Ten individual interview transcripts were used as the units of analysis (cases). The researchers independently conducted repeated readings of the data to identify the meaning units embedded within the transcripts. Subsequently, the abstraction process was carried out through logical description and interpretation of the data (Saunders et al., 2019). The analytical procedure consisted of three main stages: coding, categorization, and theme development. Codes were assigned to label the abstracted meaning units. Codes that shared similar characteristics were then grouped into categories and subsequently formulated into broader themes (Saunders et al., 2019). Throughout this process, the researchers engaged in iterative discussions to reach consensus regarding the grouping and interpretation of the data.

3. Result and Discussion

3.1. Evaluation of the Antecedents Dimension

The evaluation of the antecedents dimension focuses on the initial conditions and the level of system readiness in supporting the implementation of diversion for children in conflict with the law. This dimension places institutional readiness, resources, regulatory frameworks, and actors' understanding as key prerequisites before the diversion process can be substantively implemented. Within the framework of Stake's Countenance Model, the evaluation of antecedents aims to identify the extent to which the existing initial conditions align with the objectives and requirements of diversion implementation oriented toward restorative justice.

The findings indicate that, structurally, the system has provided an institutional foundation that enables the implementation of diversion. The existence of the Correctional Center (Balai Pemasyarakatan) as a technical implementing unit with authority in the guidance and supervision of children represents an important element in the pre-implementation stage. The organizational structure and clear division of roles

provide formal legitimacy for probation officers to be involved from the early stages of handling juvenile cases. This condition suggests that, from the perspective of institutional structure, the intended antecedents have been established in accordance with policy planning.

"In the diversion process, we at the Correctional Center have a role from the very beginning. We conduct assessments, accompany the child, facilitate diversion deliberations, and monitor the implementation of diversion agreements." (KI-01)

However, this structural readiness has not been fully accompanied by functional readiness. The findings indicate that although roles and authorities have been formally regulated, the implementation of these functions still faces various operational constraints. These limitations are primarily related to human resource capacity, the availability of applicable technical guidelines, and adequate infrastructure support (R. A. Rahman, 2025). His situation reflects a gap between the initial conditions envisioned in policy design and the actual conditions observed in practice.

From the human resource dimension, the evaluation of antecedents shows that probation officers hold a strategic role while simultaneously bearing substantial responsibilities in the implementation of diversion. The findings reveal that, qualitatively, probation officers demonstrate a relatively good normative understanding of diversion and restorative justice. This understanding is reflected in their recommendations, which tend to prioritize non-punitive solutions and the protection of the best interests of the child. Nevertheless, such capacity is not fully supported by an adequate number of personnel compared to the volume of juvenile cases that must be handled (Meru et al., 2025).

"Because the number of cases is quite high, we have to carefully adjust the handling of each child. Ideally, assessments should be conducted more comprehensively, but in practice time is often limited." (KI-01)

The limited number of probation officers affects the intensity and depth of initial assessments of children. Pre-diversion assessments are often conducted under time constraints, which limits the ability to comprehensively capture the psychosocial conditions of the child. This condition may influence the quality of recommendations regarding the feasibility of diversion and the most appropriate forms of intervention for the child (Sinaga, 2017). From the perspective of antecedents, human resource readiness remains partial and requires more systematic capacity strengthening.

The level of understanding among law enforcement officials regarding diversion and restorative justice also emerges as an important finding in the evaluation of

antecedents. The findings indicate that law enforcement officials' understanding is not uniform. Some officials view diversion as an alternative approach oriented toward recovery and child development, while others interpret diversion merely as a procedural obligation that must be fulfilled administratively (Wright & Levine, 2021). This variation suggests that system readiness has not yet been fully established at both the conceptual and cultural levels.

“One of the frequent obstacles is the difference in perspectives among institutions. Some see diversion as the best solution for the child, while others still tend to approach it in a more formalistic way.” (SI-03)

These differences in understanding influence the attitudes and initial decisions taken in handling juvenile cases. Officials with a restorative perspective tend to provide broader opportunities for diversion implementation, whereas those with a formalistic orientation tend to limit diversion to procedural compliance. This condition demonstrates that system readiness within the antecedents dimension is determined not only by structural and regulatory arrangements but also by the internalization of values and paradigms among implementing actors.

The availability of regulatory frameworks supporting diversion represents another important element in evaluating initial conditions. The findings show that, normatively, the regulatory framework provides a clear legal basis for diversion implementation. Laws and implementing regulations stipulate the obligation to pursue diversion, the objectives of diversion, and the roles of the respective actors. From the perspective of policy design, this condition indicates that the system has been structured to support diversion implementation comprehensively.

However, the evaluation of antecedents also reveals that these normative regulations have not been fully accompanied by detailed and operational technical guidelines. The absence of integrated inter-institutional standard operating procedures causes the pre-diversion process to depend heavily on the interpretation of individual actors. This condition creates variations in practice and inconsistencies in determining the readiness and eligibility of diversion. Regulatory readiness therefore still requires strengthening at the implementation level.

Infrastructure and facilities also influence system readiness within the antecedents dimension. The findings indicate that supporting facilities for initial assessments and diversion preparation remain limited. The lack of conducive counseling spaces, administrative facilities, and information technology support affects the efficiency and quality of probation officers' work. Although these limitations do not completely hinder

diversion implementation, they may reduce the quality of the process from the earliest stages (Asmara & Natalis, 2024).

Limited transportation facilities and logistical support also affect the reach of field assessments conducted by probation officers. Suboptimal assessments at the initial stage may result in incomplete understandings of the child's conditions and environment. This indicates that system readiness is not only administrative in nature but is also strongly influenced by the availability of facilities that enable effective task implementation.

The evaluation of antecedents also highlights the dimension of initial inter-institutional coordination as part of system readiness. The findings show that coordination in the pre-implementation stage of diversion has occurred but has not yet been fully institutionalized in a systematic manner.

“Institutionally, we already have a structure that supports diversion implementation. However, coordination across units is not always carried out on a regular basis, so further strengthening is needed to ensure more consistent implementation.” (SI-01)

Coordination often remains incidental and dependent on personal initiatives rather than on structured institutional mechanisms. This condition affects the consistency of the pre-diversion process and the quality of initial decision-making. Organizational culture and institutional orientation also influence system readiness in supporting diversion implementation.

“If the family is involved from the beginning, the child tends to feel more comfortable during the process. However, we still hope for clearer explanations from officers so that families better understand their role in the diversion process.” (AI-01)

The findings indicate that tensions still exist between formal legal approaches and restorative social approaches in the handling of juvenile cases. These tensions influence how actors interpret the readiness and urgency of diversion implementation (Forde, 2021). System readiness is therefore determined not only by technical dimensions but also by the alignment of values and orientations across institutions.

Overall, the evaluation of the antecedents dimension shows that the initial conditions and system readiness for diversion implementation are relatively adequate from structural and normative perspectives but still face various limitations at functional and cultural levels. The gap between planned initial conditions and actual field conditions indicates that improving diversion implementation requires comprehensive strengthening of system readiness, including human resource capacity,

operational technical guidelines, infrastructure support, and the harmonization of understanding among actors (Indradjaja & Nurhandy, 2024).

These findings emphasize that the evaluation of antecedents plays a strategic role in improving diversion implementation. Without strong initial conditions aligned with the objectives of restorative justice, the

quality of processes (transactions) and outcomes of diversion implementation will be difficult to optimize. Strengthening the antecedents dimension therefore constitutes a fundamental foundation for enhancing the effectiveness of diversion implementation for Children in Conflict with the Law.

Table 3. The full codes, categories and themes (Source: The authors, 2026)

Dimension	Code	Category	Theme
Antecedents	Authority of the Correctional Center (Balai Pemasyarakatan) in supervising and guiding children	Institutional structure	System readiness in supporting diversion implementation
	Role of probation officers in pre-diversion social assessment	Institutional structure	
	Limited number of probation officers	Human resource capacity	
	High workload of probation officers	Human resource capacity	
	Uneven distribution of restorative justice training	Facilitation competency	
	Differences in law enforcement officers' understanding of diversion	Law enforcement paradigm	
	Diversion regulations are normatively available	Regulatory framework	
	Lack of integrated inter-agency standard operating procedures	Operational implementation guidelines	
	Limited counseling facilities and deliberation rooms	Infrastructure and facilities	
	Limited family and community support	Supportive social environment	
	Initial coordination among institutions remains incidental	Institutional coordination mechanism	
	Tension between formal legal approaches and restorative approaches	Organizational culture	
Transactions	Diversion deliberations conducted according to legal procedures	Procedural compliance	Variation in the quality of diversion implementation processes
	Probation officers act as primary facilitators	Facilitation competency	
	Restorative dialogue occurs participatively in some cases	Quality of restorative dialogue	
	Diversion deliberations sometimes become administrative formalities	Procedural orientation	
	Varying levels of child participation in dialogue	Child participation	
	Victim participation not always active	Victim participation	
	Family acts as either support or obstacle in dialogue	Family dynamics	
	Inconsistent coordination among law enforcement agencies	Inter-agency coordination	
	Limited time for deliberation processes	Operational constraints	
	Non-standardized documentation of deliberation outcomes	Administrative documentation system	
Outcomes	Diversion agreements achieved in most eligible cases	Successful case resolution	Initial success of diversion but not yet fully sustainable
	Children protected from formal judicial proceedings	Child protection	
	Agreements include apology or compensation.	Child accountability measures	
	Some agreements are minimalistic.	Quality of agreements	
	Varying levels of compliance by children	Compliance with agreements	
	Family support influences the success of agreements.	Family social support	
	Post-diversion supervision by probation officers is not yet optimal.	Post-diversion monitoring	
Rehabilitation conducted through non-institutional approaches	Social reintegration programs		

Dimension	Code	Category	Theme
	The risk of recidivism still exists. Lack of integrity	Long-term impacts	

3.2. Evaluation of the Transactions Dimension

The evaluation of the transactions dimension focuses on the quality and dynamics of the diversion implementation process in practice. At this stage, the focus of evaluation shifts from the system's initial readiness to how diversion is actually carried out by actors in the field. The transactions dimension assesses interactions among actors, the quality of facilitation, levels of participation, compliance with procedures, and the extent to which the process is oriented toward the principles of restorative justice. Within the framework of Stake's Countenance Model, this stage becomes a key determinant of whether the initial conditions available can be translated into a meaningful and effective implementation process.

The findings indicate that, in general, the implementation of diversion has followed the procedural stages established by regulations. Law enforcement officials and probation officers, in principle, fulfill their obligation to pursue diversion at each stage of the juvenile justice process. Diversion deliberations are conducted by involving the relevant parties as required by normative provisions (Mogavero, 2025). This finding suggests that, from the perspective of formal compliance, diversion implementation has operated within the established legal framework.

“From a procedural perspective, diversion has generally followed the stages required by regulation. At each stage of handling juvenile cases, we continue to make efforts to pursue diversion whenever the legal requirements are met.” (SI-03)

However, the quality of diversion implementation shows considerable variation across cases. These variations are influenced not only by the characteristics of individual cases but also by the dynamics of interaction among the actors involved. In some cases, diversion processes proceed in a dialogical, participatory, and recovery-oriented manner. In others, the process tends to be brief, formalistic, and oriented primarily toward procedural compliance. This condition indicates that the quality of the process does not always align with procedural adherence. The quality of facilitation during diversion deliberations emerges as a central finding in the evaluation of the transactions dimension.

“As facilitators, we try to maintain a calm atmosphere during deliberations so that all parties feel comfortable expressing their views. When discussions are facilitated properly, children and other participants tend to be more open in sharing their perspectives.” (KI-01)

The study shows that probation officers play a dominant role as facilitators of the dialogue process. The facilitator's ability to manage the flow of discussion, balance power relations, and accommodate the interests of the involved parties greatly determines the direction and meaning of the diversion process. Empathetic and communicative facilitation has proven capable of creating a safe dialogue environment, enabling both children and victims to express their views and emotions more openly.

Conversely, facilitation that is merely procedural tends to produce superficial dialogue. Under such conditions, diversion deliberations focus more on achieving formal agreements than on restoring relationships and promoting social learning for the child. This finding indicates that the quality of facilitation is not solely a technical matter but is also closely related to the facilitator's value orientation and restorative understanding of the objectives of diversion (Herlambang, 2025).

The level of participation of children, victims, and families also serves as an important indicator in evaluating the transactions dimension. The findings show that the presence of the parties in diversion deliberations is generally fulfilled. However, substantive participation varies widely. Children who are facilitated empathetically and provided with adequate explanations tend to participate actively in dialogue and decision-making. Conversely, children who experience pressure or who do not fully understand the purpose of diversion tend to remain passive and merely follow the direction of adults.

“When children receive explanations in language they can easily understand, they are usually more confident to speak and participate during the deliberation process.” (AI-02)

Victim participation is also influenced by emotional readiness and perceptions of justice. Victims who understand the concept of restorative justice tend to be more open to dialogue and to seeking restorative solutions. However, in some cases, victims attend formally without actively participating in the formulation of agreements. This situation indicates that procedural participation is not always accompanied by meaningful participation, which is the core principle of restorative justice.

The role of the family in the diversion process also influences the dynamics of implementation. The findings show that the child's family often serves as the primary supporting factor encouraging the child to participate in diversion. However, there are also situations in which families adopt a defensive stance and overly protect the

child, thereby hindering dialogue and acknowledgment of responsibility. On the other hand, the victim's family may act as an emotional support system but can also intensify negative emotions if not properly managed. These findings indicate that family dynamics constitute an important variable affecting the quality of the diversion process.

Coordination among law enforcement agencies and related institutions represents another prominent aspect in the evaluation of the transactions dimension. The findings indicate that coordination during diversion implementation exists but is not yet fully structured or consistent. Coordination often depends on personal relationships and individual initiatives rather than on formal institutional mechanisms. This situation leads to differences in approaches to diversion implementation and affects the consistency of process quality across cases (Dixon, 2025).

“Coordination among institutions does exist, but it is not always carried out in a systematic manner. In many situations, the process still depends heavily on personal communication between actors.” (SI-01)

In several cases, effective coordination among law enforcement officials and probation officers results in more structured and participatory diversion processes. Conversely, weak coordination leads to fragmented and less integrated processes. These findings indicate that the quality of diversion implementation is influenced not only by individual competencies but also by the effectiveness of cross-sector collaboration.

The orientation of diversion processes toward restoration, accountability, and the best interests of the child constitutes a substantive indicator in evaluating the transactions dimension. The findings show that, normatively, these orientations are acknowledged and used as references by the actors involved. However, in practice, such orientations are not always consistently internalized. In some cases, diversion processes encourage children to understand the consequences of their actions and foster a sense of responsibility. In others, the process focuses primarily on rapid case resolution without deeper exploration of restorative values.

“Ideally, diversion should not stop at reaching an agreement. The process should help children understand the consequences of their actions and encourage them to take responsibility for what they have done.” (SI-04)

Time constraints and administrative burdens also influence the quality of diversion implementation. The findings indicate that limited time often results in diversion deliberations being conducted briefly. This situation reduces opportunities for meaningful dialogue and potentially diminishes the quality of the process (Salindri & Hapsari, 2025; Susila & Yonar, 2024). Administrative pressures also affect the focus of actors,

directing them more toward meeting deadlines and fulfilling documentation requirements rather than toward the quality of interpersonal interaction.

“One of the biggest challenges is time. Because schedules are often crowded, deliberations sometimes need to be completed within a limited period. At the same time, administrative requirements must also be fulfilled.” (KI-01)

Documentation of diversion implementation is another component of the transaction evaluation. The findings indicate that records of the deliberation process and outcomes are maintained, but they are not standardized uniformly. Variations in the format and completeness of documentation affect accountability and the ease of process evaluation. Although documentation is not the core of restorative processes, the quality of record-keeping remains important for supporting oversight and institutional learning.

Overall, the evaluation of the transactions dimension shows that diversion implementation has generally followed the established procedural framework, yet the quality and dynamics of the process vary considerably. The quality of facilitation, meaningful participation of the involved parties, effectiveness of coordination, and the restorative orientation of the process emerge as the primary determinants of diversion implementation quality. These findings emphasize that improving diversion implementation cannot rely solely on strengthening regulatory frameworks but also requires interventions aimed at enhancing process quality and the dynamics of interaction among actors (Yulia et al., 2024).

The evaluation of the transactions dimension also indicates that the diversion implementation process represents a crucial link between system readiness (antecedents) and achieved outcomes. When the process is conducted in a substantive and restorative manner, diversion outcomes tend to be more meaningful and sustainable. Conversely, processes that are purely formalistic may produce fragile outcomes with limited impact. Strengthening the quality and dynamics of diversion implementation processes therefore becomes a key strategy for enhancing the overall effectiveness of the diversion system for children in conflict with the law.

3.3. Evaluation of the Outcomes Dimension

The evaluation of the outcomes dimension is directed at assessing the results and initial impacts of diversion implementation for children in conflict with the law after the deliberation process has been completed and a diversion agreement has been established. At this stage, the focus of evaluation is no longer on system readiness or the quality of the implementation process but rather on the tangible outcomes produced by diversion, including the success of agreements, the level of compliance among the parties involved, the sustainability of the results, and the initial impacts on the

child's behavior as well as social relations with the victim and the surrounding community. In Stake's Countenance Model, the outcomes dimension serves as an indicator of whether the diversion process generates changes that are consistent with the objectives of restorative justice.

The findings indicate that, in general, the implementation of diversion has resulted in agreements between children and victims in most cases that meet the criteria for diversion. These agreements reflect the acceptance of the involved parties toward mechanisms of dispute resolution outside formal judicial proceedings. The successful achievement of an agreement serves as an initial indicator that diversion deliberations can function as a socially and legally acceptable forum for conflict resolution (Sahay & Pramita, 2025). However, this success must still be examined more closely in terms of the quality and substantive significance of the agreements produced.

"In many cases, diversion can lead to an agreement between the child and the victim. When all parties are willing to sit together and discuss the issue, a mutually acceptable solution can usually be found." (SI-04)

In terms of substance, diversion agreements typically contain obligations requiring the child to take responsibility for their actions, such as offering an apology, providing compensation, or fulfilling certain social obligations. The findings suggest that agreements formulated clearly and proportionally tend to be more easily accepted and understood by children. In such cases, the agreement is not only perceived as a legal obligation but also as a form of social learning that encourages children to understand the consequences of their actions for the victim and the surrounding community (Magaña et al., 2022).

The study also found that not all diversion agreements demonstrate the same level of quality. In some cases, the agreements are minimalistic and primarily oriented toward fulfilling administrative requirements so that the case can be terminated. Such agreements tend to lack rehabilitative programs or concrete measures that support behavioral change in children. This condition indicates that formal success in reaching an agreement does not necessarily correspond to substantive success in achieving the goals of recovery and child rehabilitation.

The level of children's compliance with diversion agreements is an important indicator in the evaluation of outcomes. The findings reveal that compliance varies significantly and is influenced by several key factors. Children who actively participate in the deliberation process and understand the meaning of the agreement tend to demonstrate higher levels of compliance. Conversely, children who undergo the process passively or fail to understand the implications of the agreement

tend to fulfill their obligations only partially or merely in a formal manner.

"When children actively participate from the beginning and understand the content of the agreement, they are usually more willing to comply with what has been agreed upon." (KI-01)

The role of the family emerges as a determining factor in maintaining compliance and the sustainability of diversion outcomes. The findings indicate that families that provide consistent support, supervision, and guidance significantly contribute to the successful implementation of diversion agreements. In this context, the family functions as the primary social environment, ensuring that children carry out their obligations in their daily lives (Wright & Levine, 2021). Conversely, limited family support whether due to economic conditions, relational challenges, or lack of understanding may weaken children's compliance with the agreement.

"Family support is extremely important. When parents continue to supervise and remind the child, it becomes easier for the child to carry out the obligations contained in the diversion agreement." (AI-01)

From the perspective of victims, the outcomes and initial impacts of diversion are strongly influenced by the extent to which victims' needs are accommodated in both the agreement and its implementation. The findings show that victims who observe the fulfillment of the child's obligations tend to evaluate the diversion process positively and show greater acceptance of the resolution. In contrast, when agreements are not implemented consistently, victims may experience disappointment and lose trust in the diversion mechanism.

The evaluation of outcomes also includes the monitoring and follow-up mechanisms after diversion. The findings indicate that probation officers play a crucial role in monitoring the implementation of agreements and providing continued guidance to children. Monitoring conducted through communicative and persuasive approaches helps maintain children's compliance and allows early intervention when challenges arise. However, the intensity and quality of monitoring remain influenced by limited resources and the workload of probation officers.

"After the agreement is reached, we continue to monitor the child to ensure that the agreed obligations are implemented. We also try to provide guidance whenever difficulties arise during the process." (KI-01)

The absence of standardized monitoring mechanisms contributes to variations in the quality of post-diversion follow-up. In some cases, monitoring is conducted regularly and systematically, while in others

it remains sporadic and administrative in nature. This situation suggests that successful outcomes depend largely on individual capacity and institutional support rather than on a consistently institutionalized monitoring system. Support for child rehabilitation and social reintegration represents another important dimension in evaluating the outcomes and initial impacts of diversion. The findings indicate that post-diversion rehabilitation is generally carried out through non-institutional approaches, such as guidance provided by probation officers and supervision by families.

“Our expectation is that, after diversion, children can return to their families and social environment without experiencing severe stigma. We want them to continue their education, develop positively, and live their lives as normally as possible.” (SI-05)

This approach aligns with the principles of child protection by avoiding stigmatization and social isolation (Munggardijaya et al., 2025). Nevertheless, such rehabilitation efforts remain limited and have not yet been systematically programmed. Children’s social reintegration also faces particular challenges, especially related to community acceptance and stigma. The findings reveal that although diversion aims to protect children from negative labeling, societal perceptions toward children who have previously been in conflict with the law do not automatically change. These barriers may affect children’s self-confidence and hinder their social adjustment, particularly within school environments and peer interactions.

Regarding the initial impacts of diversion, the findings suggest that children who receive guidance, family support, and a supportive social environment may experience positive behavioral adjustment following the diversion process. Participants perceived that diversion provided opportunities for reflection and learning, which may contribute to children’s understanding of responsibility and encourage more constructive behavior during the initial post-diversion period. However, these observations should be interpreted cautiously, as the present study did not include long-term follow-up or quantitative recidivism data.

However, the study also shows that the impact of diversion on preventing reoffending is neither automatic nor uniform. Diversion implemented in a formalistic manner with minimal follow-up tends to produce limited behavioral change. This finding indicates that diversion outcomes depend heavily on the quality of the preceding process as well as sustained post-diversion support. Although several participants reported positive behavioral changes following diversion, the findings should be understood as reflecting initial and perceived impacts rather than conclusive evidence of long-term effectiveness. Further research involving longitudinal

observation and recidivism data is needed to assess the sustainability of diversion outcomes over time.

The evaluation of the outcomes dimension also reveals limitations in the system’s ability to measure the impacts of diversion quantitatively and over the long term. The absence of an integrated data system for tracking compliance and recidivism among children following diversion complicates comprehensive impact assessment. As a result, the evaluation of success still relies largely on qualitative observations and the practical experiences of practitioners, particularly probation officers.

Overall, the evaluation of the outcomes dimension suggests that diversion implementation has generated positive initial impacts, particularly by preventing children from entering formal judicial processes and creating opportunities for recovery and social reintegration. However, these outcomes remain variable and their long-term sustainability requires further examination. The quality of agreements, the level of compliance, the effectiveness of monitoring, and support for rehabilitation and social reintegration emerge as the main determinants of successful outcomes.

“Overall, diversion provides positive initial benefits because children do not immediately enter the formal justice process. However, sustaining these benefits requires continued support from families, probation officers, and the broader social environment.” (SI-01)

These findings emphasize that the evaluation of outcomes cannot be separated from the evaluation of antecedents and transactions. Weaknesses in initial conditions and process quality will directly influence the results achieved. Improving the implementation of diversion therefore requires a comprehensive and continuous evaluative approach that positions outcomes as the ultimate indicator of the effectiveness of the diversion system for children in conflict with the law.

4. Conclusion

4.1. Summary of the Result

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that the implementation of diversion in practice still faces several limitations across the dimensions of initial readiness (antecedents), quality of implementation processes (transactions), and post-diversion outcomes and impacts (outcomes). Within the antecedents dimension, although the legal framework and institutional structure of the Correctional Center (Balai Pemasyarakatan) are relatively well established, the readiness of human resources and competencies in facilitating restorative justice remain insufficient. The limited number of probation officers, high workloads, and uneven distribution of restorative justice training affect the quality of social assessments and recommendations regarding the feasibility of diversion.

In addition, child-friendly facilities and infrastructure, as well as support from families and communities as a conducive environment for rehabilitation, have not yet been fully optimized.

Within the transactions dimension, the implementation of diversion deliberations generally follows the procedures stipulated in legislation and technical guidelines. Coordination among law enforcement agencies has been carried out, and the deliberation mechanism has involved children, parents, victims, probation officers, and other relevant stakeholders. Nevertheless, the quality and consistency of the process vary across cases. In some instances, diversion deliberations tend to function merely as administrative formalities aimed at fulfilling procedural requirements, thus failing to fully reflect a restorative dialogue that is meaningful and recovery-oriented (Simanjuntak et al., 2025). Uneven facilitation competencies and limited time allocation also influence the overall quality of the diversion deliberation process.

Meanwhile, within the outcomes dimension, diversion has demonstrated tangible benefits, particularly in protecting children from formal punishment and preventing the negative psychological impacts of the criminal justice system on child development. Children who successfully undergo diversion are generally able to return to their family and social environments without having to proceed through formal judicial processes. However, the findings also indicate that post-diversion monitoring and evaluation mechanisms have not yet been systematically standardized. Oversight of diversion agreements still relies heavily on manual reporting by probation officers, while follow-up rehabilitation programs remain insufficiently integrated. As a result, the risk of reoffending (recidivism) persists, particularly for children who return to social environments that are less supportive of their rehabilitation and reintegration.

4.2. Recommendations based on the research finding

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations can be proposed to enhance the effectiveness of diversion implementation for children in conflict with the law.

First, within the antecedents dimension, it is necessary to strengthen institutional capacity and human resources involved in the diversion process. The government, through the Directorate General of Corrections, should increase both the number and competence of probation officers through proportional recruitment and continuous training in restorative justice facilitation, mediation techniques, and social assessment of children. Probation officers play a strategic role in conducting assessments, facilitating dialogue between offenders and victims, and supervising the implementation of child rehabilitation programs; therefore, the quality of human resources becomes a

critical factor in the success of diversion. In addition, improvements in child-friendly infrastructure are needed, such as conducive deliberation spaces, counseling facilities, and supportive social environments involving families and communities as part of the child's social reintegration process.

Second, within the transactions dimension, efforts are required to improve the quality of diversion deliberation processes so that they do not merely fulfill administrative requirements but genuinely reflect the principles of restorative justice. This can be achieved through the development of more operational guidelines for restorative dialogue facilitation, enhancement of facilitation skills among probation officers and law enforcement officials, and strengthened inter-agency coordination within the juvenile justice system. Furthermore, sufficient time allocation for diversion deliberations should be ensured to allow meaningful dialogue and active participation from children, victims, and their families. The involvement of community leaders or social workers may also be considered to strengthen mediation processes and promote more sustainable resolutions.

Third, within the outcomes dimension, it is necessary to strengthen post-diversion monitoring and evaluation systems in a more structured and integrated manner. The government should develop standardized data collection and reporting systems to monitor the implementation of diversion agreements, children's compliance levels, and the progress of their social rehabilitation after the diversion process. In addition, follow-up rehabilitation programs integrated with educational institutions, social services, and community organizations should be developed to support children's effective social reintegration. Strengthening family and community support systems is also essential to prevent recidivism and to ensure that diversion functions as a sustainable mechanism for recovery and reintegration for children.

5. Limitations and Further Study

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting its findings. First, the research employed a qualitative approach focused on the implementation of diversion within a specific institutional context, so the findings are context-bound and have limited generalizability to other regions or institutions with different characteristics. This is consistent with the nature of qualitative inquiry, which prioritizes in-depth understanding of social phenomena within particular contexts but typically relies on a limited number of participants, constraining broad generalization. Moreover, the study primarily explored the perspectives of law enforcement officials and probation officers as the principal actors in diversion implementation, meaning that the subjective experiences of children, victims, and affected communities were not fully captured. The research also did not integrate

quantitative analyses or longitudinal data that could provide a more systematic assessment of compliance with diversion agreements, trajectories of youth behavior, and long-term recidivism patterns. Accordingly, future research should adopt mixed-methods designs, expand the geographic and institutional scope, and develop longitudinal studies to more comprehensively evaluate diversion effectiveness, particularly with respect to the sustainability of social reintegration and the prevention of reoffending.

Author Contributions

The following statements should be used: conceptualization, A.A. and A.; methodology, A.A. and M.H.T.; software, not applicable; validation, A.A., A., M.H.T., and A.L.; formal analysis, A.A.; investigation, A.A.; resources, A. and M.H.T.; data curation, A.A.; writing original draft preparation, A.A.; writing review and editing, A., M.H.T., and A.L.; visualization, A.A.; supervision, A., M.H.T., and A.L.; project administration, A.A.; funding acquisition, not applicable. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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Institutional Review Board Statement

Institutional ethical approval was not required for this study because it involved a qualitative evaluation of public policy implementation and did not include medical procedures, clinical interventions, or experimental treatment of participants. The study was conducted in accordance with applicable ethical principles for social research, including voluntary participation, confidentiality, and the protection of participants identities.

Informed Consent Statement

All participants were informed about the purpose of the study and the intended use of the information provided. Participation was voluntary, and all data were anonymized during analysis and reporting to protect participant confidentiality.

Data Availability Statement

The data presented in this study are available on request from the corresponding author.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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