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School restorative justice, restorative discipline rather than punishment: a systematic review

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ABSTRACT

Restorative justice has become another alternative to do justice in society and its application is spreading outside the criminal field, although there are currently global proposals to apply it as restorative practices in the educational field with interesting results in relationships of coexistence, discipline, and confronting school violence, which impacts on the learning outcomes of students. The objective of this paper is to analyze the conditions of school discipline before the implementation of restorative practice strategies and the impact of their application as an alternative of damage restoration rather than punishment. The PRISMA methodology and the consultations of "Justice AND Restorative AND School" were carried out; also "Practices AND Restorative AND Students"; "Practices AND Restorative AND Violence"; "Justice AND Practices AND Restorative", 30 articles published in Scopus and EBSCO carried out between 2018-2022 were considered. The studies showed significant benefits in the improvement of school discipline, reduction of suspensions, increased communication, respect, trust between students and teachers, among others; In this regard, the evidence continues to be limited and new studies are needed.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Restorative justice (RJ) has been used in social practices by various peoples of the world; it emerged in the 70s in New Zealand based on the Maori indigenous traditions characterized by promoting a flexible justice focused on the population not repeating inappropriate behaviors and repairing the damage [1]. In addition, it has been and is frequently used in the judicial field to resolve conflicts in people who commit crimes. In the educational field, the RJ is constituted as an approach aimed at maintaining school discipline as an alternative to the traditional punitive approach [2]; as a pedagogical strategy for a healthy school coexistence, resolving conflicts and restoring broken relationships [3]; as a leadership approach, organized to improve school coexistence respecting races and customs [4].

On the other hand, restorative practices (RP) are experiences applied in schools that contribute to the prevention and response to situations of school conflict; they contribute to the construction of positive relationships and reduction of students involved in conflicts or violent behaviors promoting responsibility and repairing of the damage caused [5]. The RJ as an alternative to school violence has been adapted in its language to be applied in the school environment, calling it: restorative practices, restorative discipline, restorative approaches, restorative measures and restorative actions; as for the students involved in a conflict rather than calling them victim and aggressor, it prefers to call them students who harass and students who

have been harmed or harassed [6]. The aforementioned agrees with the International Institute of Restorative Practices (IIRP), based in Pennsylvania, United States, when it affirms that RP has its origin in RJ.

In the field of school discipline, the traditional school has made use of repressive and sanctioning models, applying zero tolerance policies to maintain control of behavior, and using punishment against acts of violence by students; this zero-tolerance brought negative reactions being the most affected the marginalized students [7]. The application of zero tolerance policies has not given the expected results; a study by the American Psychological Association (APA) concluded that zero-tolerance policies have not achieved the purpose for which they were created, they have not made schools safer, continuing with high rates of suspension and expulsion; this situation limits the participation of students to solve problems and damages the student-teacher relationship [8]. A case of high rates suspensions, inequality and disproportion could be identified between the years 2015-2016 at Meadowbrook school, US, which registered 365 suspensions, of which 36% corresponded to black males and 30% to black females, in contrast to white males suspended at 21% and white females at 15%; even though it meant a decrease in suspensions of 12% in the first year, the disproportion by race and gender remained, especially in black male students with a probability of 1.7 of being suspended [9]. This situation of inequitable and disproportionate exclusionary discipline also occurs in disabled students and in students with a different sexual orientation, who are suspended or sanctioned more often than other students [10]–[13]. In addition, the research identifies that many schools adopt dictatorial approaches with rules or treatments for managing discipline, establishing punitive sanctioning measures when the student develops a bad behavior; in this sense, in conflict situations, schools without RP act by pointing out the guilty party and punishing without repairing the damage [14]–[19].

It is known that school is one of the spaces where indiscipline and violent acts occur, norms are broken and confronted, generating dissatisfaction to school coexistence [20]–[22]. In this circle harmful behaviors occur daily [6], [23]–[25]. For this reality, the RP propose restoration rather than punishment; the restoration mentions: “you are part of the community and we are not going to leave you aside, but this behavior is unacceptable, it harms all people, including you; we will hold you accountable while you repair the damage and restore the relational bonds of our community.” Contrary to the following punishment: “you have broken our rules and until you pay us you will receive a punishment, you are not welcome in our community.” In this case, until after the punishment is achieved, the student will continue to be labeled as “bad” [26]. The two situations make it possible to establish differences between punitive and restorative approaches. For the punitive approach rules are broken, in restorative approach rules are transgressed; the punitive one points out a guilty, the restorative one identifies needs and obligations; the punitive enforces a punishment, the restorative seeks to repair the damage and apologize; the punitive ignores the victim and focuses on the offender, for the restorative both are important; the punitive focuses on compliance with rules and results, the restorative one assigns responsibilities orienting to repair the damage in a positive way [27].

Regarding the types or elements of RP used in school conflicts situations, there is a wide range of interventions; from informal ones like restorative conversations, to formal ones like conferences and circles; these processes differ from classical methods in that they emphasize assuming responsibilities and reflections to repair the damage [5]. Restorative dialogues are used to solve discipline problems with the intervention of offending or affected students, involving a brief reflective dialogue between the teacher and the student who has violated a rule and may affect their classmates or others, in order to establish ways resolution [5]. Mediation is a popular process where a mediator (student or trained teacher) acts as a facilitator to express their feelings and thoughts directly and reach a consensual agreement adapted to their needs [6].

Restorative conferences are used by schools to address a variety of harmful behaviors related to bullying, assault, theft, threats, damage, and possession of weapons; it is also used to deal with disrespectful and defiant behaviors [6]. Restorative circles are used to resolve conflicts with the support of a facilitator who must prepare the circle for the participation of students, teachers or others; the circle involves dialogue processes rather than a topic of conversation, applies strategies for an orderly participation depending on the case; generally, the affected students speak first and then those who caused the harm, in order to establish agreements and actions to repair the damage [28]. Considering the research findings, this review article contributes to the study of school RP, since it is built on the bibliographical references consulted; it intends to have theoretical and practical implications in the context of the study of RP, relating it to coexistence, violence and school discipline. In addition, the study collects various concepts and definitions about PR from the last five years, the same ones that can be useful for future research and debates.

On the other hand, this article is methodologically and socially justified, since it uses scientific methodology allowing to know the reasons for effective or limited results regarding the treatment of school indiscipline. In addition, the article is guided by questions that orient the theoretical review, these are: What are the conceptual definitions of RP identified in the scientific research consulted? What are the conditions of school discipline before and after the application of RP? And what are the most commonly used PR in schools and how is it used to avoid punishment and repair school indiscipline actions?

The general objective of this review article is to analyze the conceptual approaches of RP and determine its impact on the school. In relation to the general objective, the specific objectives are: i) to determine which are the conceptual approaches of RP identified in scientific research; ii) to describe the situation of the school discipline before the application of RP; iii) to describe the most commonly used restorative practices in schools; and iv) to carry out a bibliographic review on the impact of RP as a way to avoid punishment and repairing school indiscipline. According to the review, it has been established that RP is being used more and more by schools globally; however, much more research is needed on this important approach to guarantee a healthy coexistence at school; this is evidenced when searching for information in the different databases or the internet used for this study, where various related studies and approaches were addressed.

2. RESERCH METHOD

The PRISMA methodology [29]–[31] applied in this research corresponds to a systematic review of academic articles carried out between 2018 and 2022 on RP in elementary, middle, and high school students. To collect the information, two databases were used: Scopus and EBSCO. In addition, search descriptors or keywords were used in this article, both in English and Spanish, such as: Justice AND Restorative AND School; Practices AND Restorative AND Students; Practices AND Restorative AND Violence; Justice AND Practices AND Restorative. The process is shown in Figure 1.

Another of the criteria considered in the methodology was the search for qualitative, quantitative, and mixed articles in several languages, which were collected and processed through an analysis matrix of articles that considered author, year, categories, country, type of study, population, sample, technique, instrument, and contribution to the study. On the other hand, it was considered to search in databases articles that were indexed to scientific journals. As a result of the compilation in Scopus, 1,966 articles were obtained, applying the screening process to 1,784 articles; 1,750 were selected in database with open access and full text option; then 34 articles selected by abstract reading and keywords were evaluated for eligibility; finally, after an exhaustive reading applying inclusion and exclusion criteria such as not meeting the objectives proposed in the research, 14 articles related to RP were obtained. In Figure 1, as a result of the collection in EBSCO and Scopus, 577,610 articles were found, applying the screening process, 566,999 were obtained; then 566,880 articles were selected in database with open access and full text options; subsequently, 119 articles selected by abstract reading and keywords were evaluated for eligibility; finally, after an exhaustive reading and applying the inclusion and exclusion criteria of the research, the result was of 30 articles, where 14 articles were selected from the Scopus database and 16 from EBSCO. From 30 articles selected in the chosen databases, 24 articles are qualitative, 5 of them are quantitative, and 1 is mixed.

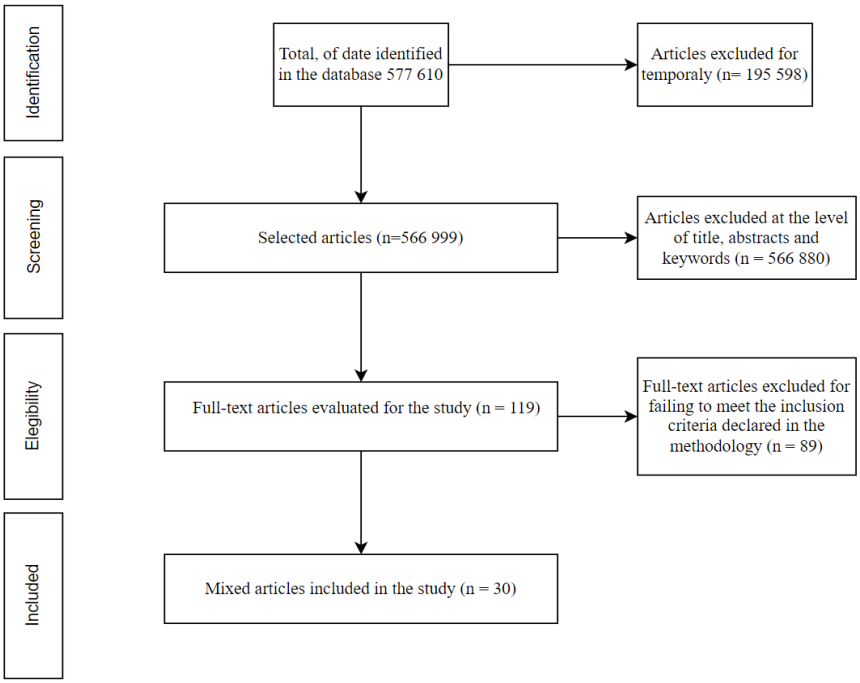

Figure 1. PRISMA flowchart for current research

3. RESULTS

In Table 1, the following descriptions correspond to the findings found in the 30 identified studies by various authors in this review, where the methodology, type of study, technique or instrument used, the categories found in each of the studies carried out are considered (Conference, Circles, Mediation, and Restorative dialogues). In the same way, within the qualitative investigations found, the compilation of several specific case studies for the present study can be appreciated. As can be seen, the information has been organized taking into account the constructs related to the categories; 14 have been found that belong to the Conference category, 25 that belong to circles, 7 that belong to meditation and 17 that belong to restorative dialogues [2], [9]–[19], [32]–[49].

Table 1. Matrix of the systematic review of school restorative justice practices, towards restorative discipline

No.	Ref.	Categories				Methodology	
		Co	Ci	M	RD	Type of study, population, and sample	Technique, instrument or method
1.	[32]		x		x	Qualitative research case studies 33 teachers from 04 schools' public middle schools 7/8.	Observation conversation circles interviews
2	[10]	x	x		x	Qualitative research triangulation of data from three sources. 1,400 high school students between 9 and 12 years of age High School Algonquin	Observation documentary analysis interviews field report
3.	[33]	x	x			Quasi-experimental research 3 elementary and 3 middle school (treatment) 2477 students. 6 primary and 2 middle school (comparison) 4483 students Jefferson County Schools	Comparison of results 1st group from years 2017-2018 (treatment schools) and 2nd group 2018-2019 (comparison schools). Surveys
4.	[14]		x	x	x	Qualitative comparative case study school in Scotland (600) and Canada (350) secondary school students between 10 and 13 years old (1st grade) RP application for 05 years	Questionnaire learning circles co-research activities. Documentary analysis interviews
5.	[2]			x	x	Qualitative case study 1000 6th and 8th grade middle school students Collection of information for 5 months (2018-2019)	Interviews observation documentary review
6.	[34]		x	x	x	Qualitative multivariate difference-in- difference approach (comparison between schools implementing PJR). Students from 05 high schools of Pacific City between 2008 and 2017. Comparative study.	Documentary analysis (demographic data, academic information, discipline data)
7.	[11]	x	x		x	Qualitative case study 200 students from 01 high school of different races (Indian, Asian, Black, Hispanic, White; 60% female and 40% male (Alliance School), application between 2011 - 2018.	Interviews observation documentary review
8.	[35]		x	x	x	Qualitative analysis multiple case studies in 05 middle and high schools 2016- 2017 from the city of New York	Interviews focus groups semi-structured observations.
9.	[36]		x		x	Qualitative case study 01 Canadian elementary school (Rocky Creek) 350 students in grades 5 and 6, 10 to 12 years old.	Questionnaires documentary analysis interviews
10.	[37]				x	Qualitative approach 05 participants (02 women and 03 men) Teachers between 30 and 56 years old. High school	Semi-structured interviews thematic analysis
11.	[38]		x	x	x	Quantitative Pilot study 1: 04 inclusive high schools. Study 2: 21 secondary schools, (12 inclusive schools), 04 inclusive schools' control. 531 students from 5th to 10th grade. Application for 05 months.	School climate questionnaire. Revised peer experience questionnaire inclusion perceptions questionnaire.
12.	[39]		x	x	x	Qualitative. Mixed method case study Algonquin secondary school with 1,400 students between 9 and 12 years old. 43 teachers.	Online Likert-type surveys Interviews
13.	[40]			x	x	Quasi-experimental research randomized controlled trial, 13 middle schools (07 for intervention and 06 control), 2824 students. Implementation 02 years	Surveys
14.	[41]					Qualitative. Action research study 06 high schools and 02 middle schools. 300 participating educators.	Surveys, data collection observation reflection action
15.	[42]					Qualitative empirical analysis public high schools in the state of Michigan 20 educators	Interviews
16.	[43]			x		Qualitative case studies 105 teachers in professional training secondary	Questionnaires surveys
17.	[15]		x	x	x	Qualitative. Method of analysis. Secondary EIs with zero tolerance and application of RP and SEL	Data analysis, data collection.
18.	[44]			x		Qualitative case study high school Story of 01 black student suspended at the age of 17 and 3rd year of high school.	Interviews questionnaires

Co= Conference, Ci= Circles, M= Mediation, RD= Restorative dialogues

Table 1. Matrix of the systematic review of school restorative justice practices, towards restorative discipline (*continued*)

No.	Ref.	Categories				Methodology	
		Co	Ci	M	RD	Type of study, population, and sample	Technique, instrument or method
19.	[16]			x		Qualitative Social constructionist perspective study 04 municipal schools, 9 educators. Secondary	Semi-structured interviews
20.	[17]		x		x	Quasi-experimental research. 03 high schools	Questionnaires
21.	[18]		x	x	x	Qualitative explanatory study school center managers (02), teachers (07) and students (300) of 01 secondary school.	Structured interview with open-ended questionnaire closed-ended questionnaire survey Search for documentary information
22.	[45]			x		Qualitative study. 03 secondary schools (directors, teachers and students)	Remarks documentary analysis interview
23.	[46]			x		Convergent mixed methods design. Quantitative and qualitative exploratory research 01 secondary school, 49 fifth-grade students and 41 eighth-grade students, ages 10 to 13 years. 63% black.	Survey Descriptive analysis
24.	[13]		x	x	x	Quantitative research 22 treatment schools and 22 control schools 02 years of RP secondary	Data collection surveys remarks interviews
25.	[9]			x	x	Qualitative mixed case study 01 high school (Meadowbrook) 05 teachers. Application 2015-2016	Observation semi-structured interviews focus groups
26.	[19]		x	x	x	Qualitative case study 01 secondary school during 04 years of PR. Managers, teacher students.	Research questions semi-structured interviews Focus group.
27.	[12]		x	x	x	Qualitative Mixed case study, 01 elementary school teachers (17) staff and parents.	Interviews Surveys
28.	[47]			x		Qualitative study. 06 Catholic schools (03 elementary - ages 5 to 12 and 03 secondary - ages 12 to 18 years), 04 years of PR implementation 14 teachers, 06 principals and 40 students (19 high school students)	In-depth interviews surveys Focus groups
29.	[48]		x	x	x	Qualitative study grounded theory approach 18 teachers and principals from 13 schools (03 high schools, 02 combined, 05 middle schools, 03 elementary schools) implementation of the 1-to-4-year RP (2017-2019).	Semi-structured interview
30.	[49]		x	x	x	Qualitative empirical and conceptual research 16 first-year elementary school teachers between 21 and 25 years old	Semi-written interviews

Co= Conference, Ci= Circles, M= Mediation, RD= Restorative dialogues

Likewise, from the qualitative analysis of the systematic review it can be indicated that use of informal and formal RP allows reducing conflicts related to personal interaction by acting proactively or reactively when damage has occurred. The consulted investigations affirm that the RP resolve situations of indiscipline without reaching punishment and prevents conflicts between students. In addition, improvement in the school climate and in interpersonal relationships is identified, most of the consulted investigations affirm that zero tolerance, suspensions and expulsions have not solved school indiscipline. The researchers agree on the positive effects of RP, mentioning that the results are obtained after a period of teaching implementation and a significant time of application, several of the investigations agree that there is a disproportion in terms of suspensions between black and white students, with black students being more suspended. In the application of RP types, research reports that the most used are restorative dialogues and circles and the least used are restorative conferences, the studies treated affirm that the application of RP allows students to participate in conflict resolution to avoid punishment, assume responsibilities and repair the damage caused.

The information provided in Table 2 shows that the highest percentage of scientific literature related to RP was produced in the United States (66.7%) and Canada (10%); while the lowest production occurred in Australia (6.8%) followed by England, Germany, Brazil, the United Kingdom, and El Salvador, each one with 3.3%. In addition, regarding the type of research, the greatest trend is related to qualitative (24), quantitative (5) and mixed (1) research. Regarding the instruments and techniques, it is observed that the researchers worked with a questionnaire (6), interviews (9), documentary analysis (2), interviews and questionnaires (7), documentary analysis and interviews (4), questionnaires, interviews, and analysis documentary (2), among others.

Table 2. Distribution of information by country

Country	Frequency	Percentage
United States	20	66.7
Canada	3	10
Australia	2	6.8
England	1	3.3
Germany	1	3.3
Brazil	1	3.3
United Kingdom	1	3.3
The Savior	1	3.3

4. DISCUSSION

A review of the 30 investigations related to RP in schools showed that three were implemented at the primary level [12], [36], [49], at the primary-intermediate levels, one was implemented [33] in the primary-secondary levels, one [47] was implemented in the middle grade, one [32] was implemented in the intermediate level, one [2] was implemented at the secondary level, eight were implemented [10], [11], [34], [36]–[39], [42]. Most articles related to RP correspond to the secondary-intermediate level in a number of 14 [9], [13], [15]–[19], [35], [40], [41], [43], [44], [46], [50]. Finally at the primary-intermediate-secondary level, one [44] was implemented. As a result of our research, we have been able to compare the impact of schools that implement RP or not in the school day. In this sense, several authors agree that schools that do not implement RP have a higher incidence of school violence in its different forms: aggression, harassment, intimidation, gangs, among others; which leads students to symptoms of anxiety and depression [32], [47].

Several authors considered in our research and mentioned that unequal and disproportionate exclusionary discipline practices are developed in many schools, especially with black students, who are suspended and expelled in a higher proportion than white students [9], [12], [13], [33], [39], [43], [44], [46], [48], this situation creates strong probability that suspended students repeat the grade or drop out of school, since black students are suspended two to three times more often than white students [10], [34]. The application of RP has shown effective results in reducing suspensions and racial disparity between black and white students, improving academic performance [44]; such as the case of Jefferson County Public Schools, where black students who participated in RP in 02 years experienced less suspension of classes compared to those who participated in 01 year [33]; implementation of RP for five years (2010-2015) at Algonquin High School reduced school suspensions from 19% to 7%; being the black students more suspended than the white students, the same remaining constant [39]. In this sense, the results of the improvement of school discipline are in relation to the time of implementation of RP.

On the other hand, our research has identified multiple benefits resulting from the application of RP; among these benefits, we can mention the increase in respect and trust between students and teachers, as in the case of the Canadian Rocky Creek elementary school, where 87% of students stated that teachers respect them, 74% said that it was easy to talk to them; 34% expressed that they could resolve the conflict by themselves and 79% trusted that the school would help resolve their conflicts [36]. Another of the identified benefits is that RPs increase communication skills, peace dialogue, empathic communication, respect and non-confrontational language [19], [32], [37], [47], increases emotional state through self-regulation, confidence in themselves and their teachers [31]; improves active participation and the school climate based on norms, respect and the practice of values [11], [37], [41], [42]. RP application time is an important factor in improving school discipline, the longer the application time, the better the results. In the last 4 years of applying RP at Algonquin High School, the references decreased from 3000 to 500, which means 80% [10]. In terms of suspensions in schools with RP, 2.5% of students were suspended and in schools without RP, 5.1% [34]. There is also evidence of a decrease in suspension rates in 03 schools in New York that implemented RP for 05 years: first school 19% 2010 - 1% 2014; second school 21% 2010 - 4% 2014 and third school 34% 2010 - 2% 2014 [35].

The impact of RP to repair harm and improve discipline presents a weakness due to the short time of teaching implementation; at the end of the academic year and the application of RP programs aimed at teachers in their first year of work, only 30% clearly understood the usefulness of RP [43]. Five years of RP application must pass to see changes [47]. The application of RP for more than three consecutive years reduces referrals for indiscipline to management; this time generates better personal relationships between students and teachers [49]. This situation of short time in the application of RP limits effective results in improving school discipline, so victimization and exclusion continue. The intervention of 05 months of RP did not produce significant changes in school climate, more time is recommended to see positive results [38]; the application of RP influences the reduction of bullying among students and improves school climate;

however, the intervened schools do not show significant differences with the control schools in terms of school climate, victimization, among others [40].

On the other hand, our research findings show that RP intervention in schools included four main restorative elements: conferences, circles, mediation, and restorative dialogues, which have been used to address harm and offenses among schoolchildren [41]; the choice of use of the restorative elements was made taking into account the severity of the harm; the use of restorative conferences as an alternative to suspension is used for more serious damage [48]; restorative circles are used for moderate or serious offenses [18]. The research makes it clear that the frequency of use of the types of RP is due to the complexity of the case, with restorative circles and dialogues being the most used. The least used were the restorative conferences, according to the researchers due to lack of time for planning, changes of directors and because the intervention requires several people and family members [33]; even when teachers were trained in restorative conferences through information modules, their application was limited [38]; restorative conferences were rarely used [39]; minimal application of conferences did not result in lasting changes in school culture, even when it was aimed at repairing damaged relationships, results are limited if they are isolated from other RP [17]; the quality of conferences is affected by turnover, faculty resistance, and funding [10].

The research identified that schools applied different types of restorative conferences, being the most used small conferences [39] impromptu conferences [13], formal and informal conferences [50]; among the benefits, several researchers agree that the restorative conferences served to resolve conflicts between students and repair the harm; restorative conferences allowed addressing harm and offenses among schoolchildren [41]; they allowed to resolve conflicts with the contribution of facilitators, where the victim mentions the desired result and the aggressor proposes the solution to the conflict [42]; they made it possible to discuss actions of indiscipline in order to understand what skills students lack and what lessons should be applied to develop those skills [15]; they allowed to repair offenses through the acceptance of the offender and offended in the participation of the fault and the approach of reparative alternatives [18], they allowed to restore relations with the intervention of the community in such a way that the harm caused is repaired [19].

Regarding restorative circles, different types were also applied: peace circles [32]; harm repair, reintegration and individualized support circles [11]; damage circles [35]; small improvised circles, proactive and responsive circles [39]; proactive circles [15]; community building circles [48], [50]; preventive and additional circles [48]; receptive and additional circles [9], [12]. Researchers agree that restorative circles benefited students by facilitating the use of dialogue, conflict management, fostering empathy, self-awareness, and inclusion, especially in students who feel marginalized [32]; they facilitated making the student understand about the consequences of their behaviors [14]; they facilitated putting into practice social communication and relational skills [36]; and also the improvement of self-knowledge and relationships between students [40]; making possible the improvement of communication, empathy and emotion management [40]; they made it easier to explore successful ways of managing anger or stress [15]; they facilitated equal voice, promoting active listening and horizontal treatment [17]; and they constituted an opportunity to learn from others through trust, emotional self-regulation and the recognition of anti-racial facts [50]. As for mediation, few authors refer to it as a restorative action of permanent application; they agree that its purpose is to address and resolve conflicts, having the teacher or trained staff as a neutral mediator, in order to arrive at a constructive retribution with an apology [2], [18], [35]; the purpose of mediation is aimed at repairing the harm, improving interpersonal relationships and resolving conflicts [34]. Regarding restorative dialogues, it is mentioned that it is a strategy with a high range of use to generate dialogue and resolve conflicts between students [35]; it is the RP method most used by teachers in the classroom [38], its use allows the opening of dialogue and favors better human relations [32], it uses improvised restorative conversations that help improve behavior and order in the classroom [14]; it is oriented to inclusion, to share ideas, to disagree, to practice respect among peers and to repair the damage avoiding its recurrence [2]. This type of RP has as its main characteristic the formulation of affective statements [39], [40]; and restorative questions to provide emotional support or resolve conflicts: What happened? What were you thinking? Who was affected? How to act correctly? [36]; What happened? Why did it happen? And how else could I have acted? [38].

5. CONCLUSION

The research shows that the restorative approach is constituted as an alternative to repair the damage rather than the sanction or punishment and as an action to prevent and intervene in broken relationships and restore them in school community. The review of qualitative, quantitative, and mixed scientific research describes the application of repressive, sanctioning, unequal and disproportionate models, especially in black students; they describe the application of zero tolerance policies, which have not given the expected results. In contrast to the RP that propose a healthy coexistence and improvement of school discipline, based on the resolution of conflicts in a restorative non-punitive manner, where students are subjects of rights and practice

restoration and reconciliation with the support of facilitating teachers. The review of the studies shows that the positive results of the application of RP depend on: the relationship between students and teachers, the teacher's level of mastery, school support, teaching implementation and application time in the classroom; in this situation, if the application is for a short time, the results are limited; implementation makes it easier for the educator to choose the most appropriate strategies to resolve conflicts or sanctions.

In addition, studies show that the most used RPs are the informal ones such as restorative dialogues, followed by formal ones such as restorative circles and conferences, which are the least used. Undoubtedly, this article leans towards the school implements RP, since the results are encouraging; as they significantly reduce suspensions and expulsions, improve school discipline, and increase communication, respect and trust in the school community, among others. The increase in research on this topic shows that there is interest in this alternative; however, this research is still limited and new research with innovative proposals is needed. Of the research reviewed, some show limited effectiveness of RP, so there is a gap between implementation, application and research in schools that apply this approach, so new rigorous research is necessary to evaluate this limited impact.

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