The importance of restorative leadership practices in organizations: a Delphi study

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ABSTRACT

The study aims to emphasize the significance of organizational leadership in creating effective restorative justice resolutions to replace punitive punishment in the workplace. This study was a qualitative E-Delphi study. Ten experts reached a consensus after three rounds of questions. Data were collected using questionnaires, a Likert scale survey, and a ranking survey sent via email in three rounds. Nine themes emerged: (a) soft leadership skills create effective restorative justice solutions, (b) effective restorative justice solutions create a safe working environment, (c) restorative justice is a collaborative practice between upper management and employees, (d) demonstrated awareness assists in defining restorative justice processes, (e) the self-aware harmer understands how other people, organizations, and society are affected by their actions, (f) creates an efficient work environment that induces teamwork which reduces the workload for employees and management, (g) creates a family unit of Oneness, either spiritual or scientific (or both) that recognizes everyone is connected, which reduces conflict, (h) focusing on repairing the harm committed to improve relationships, creates culture, forms unity, and transformation within the organization, and (i) demonstrating that repairing the harm committed provides more benefits than punitive punishment. This study offers insight into the role restorative justice and leadership can structure a transformative path for an organization that strengthens and advances it.

Keywords: Leadership, Delphi, restorative justice, punitive punishment, organizational justice, qualitative

INTRODUCTION

According to Hamilton et al. (1787), "justice is the end of government. [Justice] is the end of civil society. [Justice] ever has been and ever will be pursued until it [is] obtained, or until liberty [is] lost in the pursuit" (No. 51, para. 1). Leadership should recognize that the pursuit of organizational justice can end an organization by becoming trapped in a cycle of punishing employees without realizing how punitive punishment punishes the organization (Okimoto et al., 2022). Punitive punishment seeks an eye-for-eye mentality that perpetuates negativity (Kligman, 2023). Justice should seek to heal the parties involved instead of reverberating the negative effects (Dahiya, 2022; Tan, 2023).

Punitive punishment is a philosophical, ideological, and cultural norm society perceives as the correct path to provide justice for transgressions (Goshe, 2019). Many individuals who become managers, leaders, and executives tend to lose their empathy, become more impulsive, and develop a sense of superiority, which leads them to reject input from others (Kligman, 2023). The fear response activates the fight or flight response for survival, which, in turn, stops cellular growth except for the concept of survival (Chu et al., 2022). Punitive punishment creates a cloud of fear that permeates and dominates an organization, hindering its growth (Goshe, 2019).

Despite being the norm among leadership, scholarly research suggests that punitive punishment is ineffective (Goshe, 2019). Justice revolves around equaling the harm done to the victim; therefore, punitive punishment creates a loss of time and money, bad publicity, and shame on employees, managers, and the organization (Goshe, 2019). Hence, leaders must explore and adopt Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) systems like restorative justice resolutions that aim to unite the organization by promoting awareness, empathy, and responsibility (Ahsan, 2023; Dahiya, 2022).

Some leaders and managers within their organization continue to seek justice for workplace transgressions through means of control and oppression, causing harm to employees and the organization (Centre for Restorative Justice & Reconciliation, 2022; Goshe, 2019; Okimoto et al., 2022). Managers and leaders are not taking advantage of restorative justice solutions to heal conflict in the workplace to enhance positive expression (Abbassi & Belhadjali, 2025; Gran et al., 2025; Dahiya, 2022; Okimoto et al., 2022). Poor conflict management and resolution create negative outcomes that injure all parties involved (Centre for Restorative Justice and Reconciliation, 2022; Okimoto et al., 2022).

The study aims to emphasize the significance of organizational leadership in creating effective restorative justice resolutions to replace punitive punishment in the workplace. Restorative justice's primary focus is to heal and be inclusive (Kligman, 2023). For this qualitative E-Delphi Method, there was one research question: What is the consensus from a panel of organizational experts on effective restorative justice solutions in the workplace?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Search for Justice

About 2500 years ago, Plato (1901) contemplated the concept of justice in response to the injustice that Socrates experienced under Athenian democracy. Plato (1901) concluded that justice should heal the soul. Plato's response to Socrates's death echoed through time and

became a topic of debate among the Founding Fathers of the USA, leading them to establish a republic and not a democracy (Hamilton et al., 1787; Plato, 1901).

Punitive punishment has historically led to negative consequences, ultimately threatening liberty (Goshe, 2019; Hamilton et al., 1787). Consciousness and leadership are intertwined, and the right kind of consciousness and leadership can bring organizations to their highest potential (Anderson & Adams, 2016). The stages of leadership development include egocentric, reactive, creative, integral, and unitive (Anderson & Adams, 2016).

Leadership and Consciousness

The universal model of leadership integrates leadership theories, organizational development, psychology, success literature, and human potential and is aligned with spirituality (Anderson & Adams, 2016). Transactional leadership relates to the reactive mind in that nothing is built, and relationships are not formed (Ahsan, 2023; Anderson & Adams, 2016). The aversive reinforcement of rewarding employees for accomplishments and punishing others creates a division within the organization that can manifest conflict (Ahsan, 2023; Reynolds et al., 2023).

Transformational leadership relates to the creative mind and indicates a visionary, charismatic individual who develops a unique perspective challenging employees to find growth through creativity (Ahsan, 2023; Anderson & Adams, 2016; Reynolds et al., 2023). Servant leadership, which relates to the integral mind, emphasizes the intuitive ability of a servant leader to drive change and transform consciousness (Dami et al., 2022). Servant leadership prioritizes employee growth by putting employees' needs above the organization (Giolito et al., 2021).

Quantum leadership is associated with the unitive mind (Anderson & Adams, 2016). Quantum leaders are equipped to guide the organization and its employees through challenging and chaotic times (Soh Wan Geok & Ali, 2021). Quantum leaders use their intuition to understand the necessary changes and empathize with employees' interactions to implement the required changes (Soh Wan Geok & Ali, 2021; Root et al., 2020). Quantum leaders foster unity by connecting employees with managers and leaders to promote mutual understanding and cooperation toward achieving the best possible outcomes (Soh Wan Geok & Ali, 2021; Root et al., 2020).

Conflict Resolution Theory

Conflict resolution theory is related to the study for two reasons: positive reinforcement and teamwork (Deutsch, 1983). Restorative justice is an effective process that promotes cooperation and fairness, resulting in positive outcomes (Babalola et al., 2018; Gran et al., 2025). Conflict resolution theory proved that the competition model is less effective than the cooperation model (Adamovic, 2022). The evidence suggested that punitive punishment creates division, while ADR systems, including restorative justice, promote unity (Babalola et al., 2018). The lack of research in this field disadvantages organizations due to the lack of guidance and direction provided (Babalola et al., 2018).

Strategic Conflict Management Theory

Sophisticated management comprehends how to utilize conflict to capitalize on constructive aspects (Lipsky & Avgard, 2008). According to the strategic conflict management theory, skilled managers can implement strategies that reduce employee turnover, litigation, and costs while promoting positivity and unity among employees and management (Abbassi & Belhadjali, 2025; Nash & Hann, 2020). Strategic conflict management systems are a proactive solution to prepare and foresee issues, reduce conflict, and create a positive work environment (Kligman, 2023; Gran et al., 2025). The strategic conflict management approach transforms conflict into settlements or cooperation within the organization (Nash & Hann, 2020). Strategic conflict management theory emphasizes flexible long-term strategies to solve organizational issues (Nash & Hann, 2020).

The Universal Model of Leadership

The universal leadership model provided evidence of a relationship between consciousness and leadership and its effects on individuals and organizations (Anderson & Adams, 2016; Hester, 2020). The negative expressions of leadership occurred in the egocentric and reactive stages (Anderson & Adams, 2016). The creative and integral stages demonstrate a mix of positive and negative expressions, with the unitive stage being the most positive and centered on care and love (Anderson & Adams, 2016).

About 5% of the population possesses an egocentric mind (Anderson & Adams, 2016). Humanity mostly resides with a reactive mind (75%) (Anderson & Adams, 2016). A smaller percentage of the population (20%) exhibit higher levels of consciousness, with 15% being creative and 5% integral, while unitive mindsets are exceptionally rare (Anderson & Adams, 2016; Hester, 2020).

The Theory of Individuation

The theory of individuation permeated all the conceptual frameworks in the study because the empirical notion of individuation correlated with quantum physics (Nicastro, 2021). The theory of individuation is the empirical psychological process through which the unconscious becomes conscious in humanity (Nicastro, 2021). The issue with punitive punishment was that lessons were not understood and incorporated into consciousness, preventing advancement and growth, and the theory of individuation emphasizes the importance of the unconscious in shaping our consciousness (Edinger, 1994).

Procedural Justice Theory

The procedural justice theory is a well-established approach that provides a fair and transparent justice process, encompassing the stages of judgment and the outcome (Cenkci et al., 2020). Punitive punishment methods are often criticized for their inability to provide a fair and just process in the judgment, and the outcome often leads to various negative consequences that can be a waste of resources (Goshe, 2019). Individuals who perceive justice as a fair process allowing participants a voice in decision-making are more likely to accept change (Cenkci et al., 2020). Procedural justice theory provides a fair process for participants that respects sovereignty

and unalienable rights. Procedural justice theory allows participants to accept the outcome and integrate into the whole (organization) (Cenkci et al., 2020).

Procedural justice allows participants a voice in the decision-making process, demonstrates neutrality with a decision-making process that is transparent and free from personal bias, respectful outcomes that uphold an individual's unalienable rights and demonstrates trustworthiness through empathy (Fessinger et al., 2020; Venables & Healy, 2019). Numerous historical events have led to rebellions and wars because leaders fail to adhere to a fair approach to justice (Venables & Healy, 2019; Hamilton et al., 1787). In the corporate world, management's abuse of the organizational justice process can result in employee rebellion (Grote, 2006). Procedural justice theory provides a fair process for participants that respects sovereignty and unalienable rights, allowing participants to accept the outcome and integrate into the whole (organization) (Venables & Healy, 2019).

METHOD AND DESIGN

The study used a qualitative method. Through this method, the researchers perceived and understood the participants' experiences and perspectives (Whiffin et al., 2022). The method was appropriate because qualitative research allows researchers to delve into the participants' minds by interviewing, asking follow-up questions, listening, and analyzing the participants' stories (Chalmers & Cowdell, 2021).

The research design was the E-Delphi Method. Using the E-Delphi Method allowed the researchers to engage a panel of experts to provide their knowledge, experiences, and perspectives for effective restorative justice resolution strategies (Cohen & Marom, 2021). The E-Delphi Method was an appropriate design to form a consensus independently and objectively (Naisola-Ruiter, 2022).

Data Analysis

This E-Delphi Method used thematic analysis to interpret all collected data for Round 1 and ordinal data for rounds 2 and 3. The researchers prepared and organized all collected data. The researchers printed out responses to the questionnaire (Appendix), 5-point Likert scale survey, and ranking data, captured data analyzed using the QSR NVivo 12 software to code data collected from the participants, and captured data analyzed using Microsoft Forms. The analysis of the collected data focused on reviewing problems and solutions to identify emerging patterns and themes and to achieve a consensus among the organizational experts.

POPULATION AND SAMPLE

The population for this E-Delphi Method consisted of approximately 1,000 expert organizational business leaders and managers, researchers or theorists, and probation officers. The study utilized purposive sampling. The researchers based the selection of the participants on the following criteria: 1) five or more years of experience performing restorative justice solutions in the workplace, as a researcher or theorist, or a probation officer, 2) participants must have been in lower, middle, and upper management positions nationwide, or leaders in research or theory, or a leader as a probation officer, 3) have the willingness and time to participate in the E-Delphi Method, and 4) can communicate effectively.

The researchers posted recruitment announcements on profiles and in a group on LinkedIn. The group manager approved the posting. The researchers received replies from several respondents. Some respondents did not meet the eligibility to participate due to the mandated qualifications for the study.

The researchers selected 10 participants who met the mandated criteria to participate in the study. The study began with emailing the informed consent and then a demographic survey to the 10 participants. All 10 participants agreed, signed, and filled out the informed consent form and demographic information.

The researchers chose to utilize triangulation using data sources, and the participants represented a variety of fields. The fields that were represented were researchers or theorists, managers and leaders from business organizations, and probation officers. The three represented fields possessed three unique perspectives to form a consensus on effective restorative justice solutions in the workplace.

The study included four participants with management or leadership business experience, two researchers or theorists, and four participants who were probation officers. The occupations of the participants included—area and store management experience, a Correctional Counselor for the Department of Corrections, a restorative justice practices consultant, a web manager and consultant, a culture equity manager, a restorative practices practitioner, a pre-trial peer support coach, an executive director, and advocates. The years of restorative justice experience ranged from 5 to 26 years. The demographics are displayed in Tables I, II, and III (Appendix).

The age range of the individuals was 36 to 61, with one participant in their 30s, two participants in their 40s, five participants in their 50s, and two participants in their 60s. One participant resided in Arkansas, two participants resided in Illinois, one participant resided in Colorado, one participant resided in Georgia, four participants resided in California, and one participant lived in North Carolina. The participants included six males and four females. The ethnicity of the participants was eight Caucasians, one African American, and one Hebrew. The education of the participants: one had an associate degree, four had a bachelor's degree, three had a master's degree, and two had a doctorate.

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Data analysis was important in achieving the goals outlined in the research study. The experiences and perspectives shared by the participants were of significant importance. The researchers remained objective during the analysis. The qualitative data were collected with questionnaires, a Likert scale survey, and a ranking survey through email in three rounds, which was later arranged, organized, and themed with the help of QSR NVivo 12 software in the first round and Microsoft Forms and the researchers in the next two rounds.

Round 1

In Round 1, the QSR NVivo 12 software assisted in identifying the themes and patterns from the data collected. The data analysis encompassed the core steps of identifying themes and patterns, which emerged after the 10 participants completed the six-question questionnaire and shared their experience about restorative justice. The core steps of identifying themes and patterns were accomplished in three steps. Rounds 2 and 3 focused on eliminating themes

through a Likert scale survey and a ranking system to produce a consensus. Round 1 was divided into two steps.

Step 1: Examining Data

The researchers examined the data before analyzing the data in QSR NVivo 12 software. The researchers wrote notes for each participant 1-10 and then imported the questionnaire to QSR NVivo 12 software. Next, the researchers analyzed the data captured by the software. The researchers analyzed the participants' responses, identifying them by the pseudonyms P1 to P10. The QSR NVivo 12 software assisted with the navigation and analysis of the data.

Examining the Questionnaire

In Round 1, the final data consisted of the analysis of questionnaires and the notes of the researchers. The researchers were immersed in the information, repeatedly reading and comparing notes to information recorded by the QSR NVivo 12 set and taking notes; this entailed the researchers writing notes, summarizing, and sometimes paraphrasing the participants' thoughts and cross-referencing ideas. The QSR NVivo 12 was used for various types of exploration to uncover the meaning of the data. The researchers found it beneficial to visualize the data in different formats. The researchers used the word query functions in QSR NVivo 12 to determine word frequency. They also utilized auto code to perceive autocoded themes and several coding references. For example, they looked at word frequency charts, word clouds, and comparison diagrams for each participant individually.

Step 2: Generation of Initial Codes

Step two made sense of the collection of keywords, phrases, or quotes. The process is called coding, and it was a central part of the analysis because it entailed organizing the data into groups called codes. Starting with the collection of main points, keywords, and quotes generated in Step 1, the researchers began to produce initial codes from that collection of quotes. The researchers identified 252 initial codes and 1,099 references from the 10 interviews.

The researchers collapsed the 252 initial codes into 29 key codes. Step 2 was completed when the researchers realized that the list of codes did not need to be further collapsed. Once the 29 codes were identified, the researchers turned them into 29 themes. At this point, the researchers were no longer working with codes but with themes.

Round 2

In Round 2, the researchers utilized a 5-point Likert scale survey to distinguish possible divisions among themes and eliminate themes. The researchers developed a list of questions from the references provided by the participants. Some themes were divided; for example, on the theme of improving restorative justice, some participants elaborated that restorative justice did not need to be improved. Each question aligned with the context of certain themes. If a question did not achieve a median of 3.5, then that theme or context was eliminated to create the final list of themes for Round 3.

Process of Elimination

Round 2 consisted of 66 questions. Eight questions led to the elimination of seven contexts of certain themes and the elimination of one theme. For instance, in the theme of leadership traits, the context of facilitator and not coach creates a path for success was eliminated. Additionally, in the theme of understanding shame and guilt in restorative justice—utilizing shame and guilt to induce empathy, shame, and guilt should not be a part of the process, and the leader feels shame and guilt if the harmer does not put in the work were eliminated.

Round 3

In Round 3, the researchers utilized a ranking scale survey to reach a consensus. The participants were asked to list the themes in order of importance, with the first theme being the most important, the second theme being the second most important, and so forth to the fifth and least important. The first theme would receive five points, the second theme four points, the third theme three points, the second theme two points, and the last theme received one point. The researchers then assigned the numbers according to each participant's response and added the numbers per theme (Table IV, Appendix).

FINDINGS

The results of this study included the discovery of multiple themes. This study concluded by discovering nine themes that support understanding the effectiveness of restorative justice resolutions. The themes were: (a) soft leadership skills create effective restorative justice solutions, (b) effective restorative justice solutions create a safe working environment, (c) restorative justice is a collaborative practice between upper management and employees, (d) demonstrated awareness assists in defining restorative justice processes, (e) the self-aware harmer understands how other people, organizations, and society are affected by his actions, (f) creates an efficient work environment induces teamwork which reduces the workload for employees and management, (g) creates a family unit of Oneness, either spiritual or scientific (or both) that recognizes everyone is connected, which reduces conflict, (h) focusing on repairing the harm committed to improve relationships, creates culture, forms unity, and transformation within the organization, and (i) demonstrating that repairing the harm committed provides more benefits than punitive punishment.

Theme 1: Soft leadership skills create effective restorative justice solutions

Leadership qualities that create effective restorative justice solutions are empathy, understanding, patience, communication, knowing thyself, flexibility, calmness, helpful, spaciousness, cultural humility, more listening and less talking, taking notes, self-awareness, open-mind, emotional intelligence, embracing diverse perspectives, committed, and creates a path for success. The participants' input led to a leader with a strong focus and vision to bring people together, knowing themselves and having a respectful understanding of others and situations. Soft leadership traits confirmed that the universal model of leadership theory should be integrated into the restorative justice model of leadership to aspire toward the higher mind

(Anderson & Adams, 2016). The success of restorative justice depends on leadership to create a transformative path from the reactive mind to the creative mind by enhancing the arts in the work environment to encourage creative expression (Ahsan, 2023; Anderson & Adams, 2016).

P1 stated:

Empathy, understanding, patience, and communication. You have to be able to empathize with what the associate is dealing with and understand their perception. You have to be patient in attempting to correct the behavior because it can take time due to the underlying issue. You have to be able to communicate with the associate so that it does not isolate them and engage them back in the workplace.

P7 added to the consensus by stating:

The leadership characteristics and traits that would create the best environment for RJ would be self-awareness. First, clear your lens and biases. Educate yourself about your own biases. Be open to feedback and embrace diverse perspectives. Being an effective communicator and having good active listening skills are also important. Listen before you speak. The researchers are focusing more on emotional intelligence, which means controlling emotions and handling interpersonal relationships well.

Theme 2: Effective restorative justice solutions create a safe working environment

The effectiveness of restorative justice solutions creates a safe working environment. For restorative justice to be victorious, employees and managers need to be able to express concerns freely. P2 believed "that restorative justice can be very effective with the right resources in the right environment." P2 stated that "due to lack of appropriate staffing, resources, and training, restorative justice often fails."

Theme 3: Restorative justice is a collaborative practice between upper management and employees

Theme three is that restorative justice depends on upper management. Upper management is responsible for creating the structures that induce company growth. P1 explained that "the number one reason associates leave is because they usually leave bosses and not companies."

P3 provided information on how top-down leadership creates success in restorative justice practices,

When a restorative culture is cultivated from leadership to line staff, there is a foundation for grace in conflict resolution. Leadership depends on working with upper management to create the parameters of restorative justice so that successful outcomes are achieved.

Theme 4: Demonstrated awareness assists in defining restorative justice processes

Theme 4 is compelling because it demonstrates awareness, which assists in defining restorative justice processes in education, training, literature, investing in training and resources, and clearly defining the restorative justice process. P2 stated, "invest[ing] in training and counseling staff and choosing the appropriate staff for each position." P7 supported the ideas of P1 and P2 by stating, "talking about it. They are used in schools, work, home life, etc. Doing the work in dissertations like I did…Keeping RJ alive is the key."

Theme 5: The self-aware Harmer understands how other people, organizations, and society are affected by his actions

Theme 5 is that the self-aware Harmer understands how their actions affect others, organizations, and society. The Harmer should become self-aware about how their actions affected the harmed person, others, organizations, and society. P10 stated, "The individual's realization of the personal scope of their offense needs awareness during the offender's pretrial stage for clarity. Reaching beyond the offender's reason for the offense." P6 aligned with P10 by stating, "Restorative justice emphasizes healing and rebuilding relationships, promoting accountability, and addressing the needs of all parties involved, including victims, offenders, and the community."

Theme 6: Creating an efficient work environment inducing teamwork, which reduces the workload for employees and management

Theme 6 is that restorative justice creates an efficient work environment, inducing teamwork, which reduces the workload for employees and management. P3 described that:

In my experience, staff were able to address struggles with each other and to use restorative approaches with me when there were difficulties or disagreements in my leadership choices. We conducted meetings in a restorative manner and worked to build continuous relationships with each other.

Theme 7: creates a family unit of Oneness, either spiritual or scientific (or both) that recognizes everyone is connected, which reduces conflict

Restorative justice creates a family unit of Oneness, either spiritual or scientific (or both), that recognizes everyone is connected, which reduces conflict (Tutar & Oruç, 2020). P10 stated "family unit" and continued with "awareness from friends, family, or a high power." The study suggested that quantum leadership and a unitive mind provide the best solution for an effective restorative justice resolution. Quantum leadership and a unitive mind perceive everything as one—Oneness (Anderson & Adams, 2016; Simionescu et al., 2021). These concepts inspire managers and employees to increase their consciousness, induce growth and transformation within individuals, and guide organizations through challenging times (Anderson & Adams, 2016; Tutar & Oruç, 2020). The Cosmic Web demonstrates that all celestial bodies are connected, and this reflects the interconnectedness of brain cells, stars, and even forests, which

are connected through fungi and bacteria (Patra, 2021; Sharifi & Rye, 2021; Simionescu et al., 2021).

Theme 8: Focusing on repairing the harm committed to improve relationships, creates culture, forms unity, and transformation within the organization

Theme 8 describes that restorative justice focuses on repairing the harm committed to improve relationships, creates culture, and forms unity and transformation within the organization. P7 demonstrated how the harm is repaired by stating, "This is where restorative justice plays its part in repairing the harm of the shame or guilt that one feels after acknowledging that their behavior has harmed someone." P7 stated that "positive transformation occurs during the process of restorative justice by helping to build stronger interpersonal relationships between parties that help, of course, individuals, as well as employees collectively as the larger social transformation."

Theme 9: Demonstrating that repairing the harm committed provides more benefits than punitive punishment

Theme 9 demonstrates that repairing the harm committed provides more benefits than punitive punishment. Restorative justice allows the damage to be repaired, breaking the negative punishment cycle. P6 elaborated that the focus of restorative justice is not just repairing the harm or punishing the Harmer but creating something positive from the negative experience.
P5 compared restorative justice to punitive punishment demonstrating how society utilizes punishment to continue the punishment after the crime, while restorative justice provides growth opportunities. P2 described that restorative justice is currently being utilized in a punitive punishment system that needs to be changed to create the right environment for restorative justice.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study included the discovery of multiple themes. The thematic analysis for this study concluded by discovering nine themes that support understanding the effectiveness of restorative justice resolutions. The themes were: (a) soft leadership skills create effective restorative justice solutions, (b) effective restorative justice solutions create a safe working environment, (c) restorative justice is a collaborative practice between upper management and employees, (d) demonstrated awareness assists in defining restorative justice processes, (e) the self-aware harmer understands how other people, organizations, and society are affected by his actions, (f) creates an efficient work environment induces teamwork which reduces the workload for employees and management, (g) creates a family unit of Oneness, either spiritual or scientific (or both) that recognizes everyone is connected, which reduces conflict, (h) focusing on repairing the harm committed to improve relationships, creates culture, forms unity, and transformation within the organization, and (i) demonstrating that repairing the harm committed provides more benefits than punitive punishment.
Soft leadership traits confirmed that the universal model of leadership theory should be integrated into the restorative justice model of leadership to aspire toward the higher mind (Anderson & Adams, 2016). The participants agreed that leaders should aspire to have a higher

mind. The participants' experiences and perspectives aligned with the literature background, and a problem is the lack of individuals in the higher mind category (Anderson & Adams, 2016; Clute, 2010; Grote, 2006).

Most individuals are in the lower mindset with an egotistical and reactive mind (80%), while the creative, integral, and unitive minds are 20% of the population, with hardly any individual obtaining an integral (5%) or unitive mind (extremely rare) (Anderson & Adams, 2016). The success of restorative justice depends on leadership to create a transformative path from the reactive mind to the creative mind by enhancing the arts in the work environment to encourage creative expression (Anderson & Adams, 2016). Another gateway to the creative mind is guiding the Harmer, the affected person, society, and organization through fear since fear traps expression (Anderson & Adams, 2016; Tan, 2023).

A safe environment is aligned with procedural justice theory, which explains that participants are more likely to accept the outcome if they are given a voice in the process (Cenkci et al., 2020; Fessinger et al., 2020). Participant involvement in decision-making leads to fair and respectful outcomes that uphold individual rights. (Cenkci et al., 2020; Fessinger et al., 2020). Procedural justice theory promotes a fair process that upholds individual rights and allows for participant acceptance and integration. (Fessinger et al., 2020).

Upper management is part of the systems that a leader should create that aligns with the leader's perspective (Adams & Anderson, 2016). Leaders in a restorative justice system should be of a higher mind (creative, integral, and unitive) (Anderson & Adams, 2016; Clute, 2010). Management should embody the leader's values because management is the leader's representative to create the desired outcome. As P1 elaborated, individuals leave managers and not companies. Upper management is the glue keeping the organization together.

Strategic management theory began as a system to reduce expenditures on litigation and raise the consciousness levels of employees in an organization (Nash & Hann, 2020). Managers and leaders can implement strategies that reduce employee turnover, reduce litigation, save money, promote positivity, and unite employees and management (Nash & Hann, 2020). Leaders should focus on a proactive solution to prepare and foresee issues, reduce conflict, and create a positive work environment (Deutsch, 1983; Nash & Hann, 2020). Strategic conflict management theory emphasizes flexible long-term strategies to solve organizational issues (Nash & Hann, 2020).

Humanity learns from imitation (Farmer et al., 2018). Strategic management theory implements steps such as law, policy, and verbal and written discussions to direct future development (Nash & Hann, 2020). The new ideas implemented are meant to be repeated and passed along throughout the organization to perceive their continual effects and transformational qualities (Nash & Hann, 2020).

The theory of individuation advances restorative justice by developing and advancing consciousness (Thanissaro, 2021). Restorative justice brings individuals and organizations to the moment of ego death, where positive transformation occurs (Edinger, 1994). The Harmer becoming self-aware of the harmer's wrongdoing completes the process of living from the unconscious to the conscious, which should bring about an epiphany (Nicastro, 2021).

Deutsch's (1983) conflict resolution theory stemmed from his research on cooperation and competition. The more positive the individuals were, the more likely they were to work together in harmony and justice. In contrast, if individuals were negative, they would be more likely to work against one another and create injustice (Babalola et al., 2018). The study's outcome suggested that creating an engaging, fair, and positive work environment allows

employees, managers, and leaders together to create an efficient and positive work environment that induces teamwork.

The study suggested that quantum leadership and unitive mind provide the overall best solution for an effective restorative justice resolution. Quantum leadership and a unitive mind perceive that everything is one—Oneness (Anderson & Adams, 2016; Simionescu et al., 2021). These concepts inspire managers and employees to increase their consciousness, induce growth and transformation within individuals, and guide organizations through challenging times (Anderson & Adams, 2016; Simionescu et al., 2021). The Cosmic Web demonstrates that all celestial bodies are connected, and this reflects the interconnectedness of brain cells, stars, and even forests, which are connected through fungi and bacteria (Patra, 2021; Sharifi & Rye, 2021; Simionescu et al., 2021).

In conflict resolution, it is crucial to adopt an effective style that aims to heal and transform the opposition into a new bond. Positive attitudes and thinking are more likely to foster harmony and justice, while negative attitudes tend to promote opposition and injustice (Deutsch, 1983). Deutsch (1983) revealed that successful groups exhibit effective communication, positive thinking, and attitudes, as well as cooperative problem-solving, agreement, and alignment of values and beliefs (Babalola et al., 2018). A competitive environment tends to create a less productive response to conflict resolution (Deutsch, 1983).

The restorative justice process is one approach that has been found to be effective in creating solutions through a fair approach that encourages collaboration between participants (Babalola et al., 2018). Justice is a crucial element of society, and it is essential to ensure that it strengthens the soul both at the individual and collective levels (Clute, 2010; Plato, 1901). Virtuous justice is an essential aspect of achieving this goal, as it reflects the character and structure of society (Clute, 2006; Plato, 1901). Punitive justice tends to instill fear in society, which can lead to a fight-or-flight response and hinder growth and progress (Goshe, 2019).

CONCLUSION

The study explored effective alternative restorative justice solutions in the workplace to replace the use of control and oppression that some managers and leaders use in the United States. The main objective of research for this study was to provide solutions to improve organizational justice by comprehending effective restorative justice resolutions. The leadership traits that the participants agreed upon are empathy, understanding, patience, communication, knowing thyself, flexibility, calmness, helpful, spaciousness, cultural humility, more listening and less talking, taking notes, self-awareness, an open mind, emotional intelligence, no reactive mind, embrace diverse perspectives, and committed. Participants agreed that people in the restorative justice process need to be able to speak freely in a safe, non-judgmental environment for restorative justice to create the desired outcome.

One recommendation for future research is to study geographical regional areas to understand the context of restorative justice on cultural differences. A second recommendation is to discuss the role of guilt and shame to understand how emotions play a role in transforming consciousness in restorative justice. A third recommendation is that focusing on the themes identified in this research may lead to areas that need further research to help understand the effectiveness of restorative justice in more detail.

Upper management is part of the systems a leader should create that align with the leader's perspective (Adams & Anderson, 2016). Leaders in a restorative justice system should

be of the higher mind (creative, integral, and unitive); therefore, upper management should follow suit (Anderson & Adams, 2016; Clute, 2010; Grote, 2006). Participants agreed that by spreading the knowledge in education, business training, literature, and internet discussions— bringing restorative justice to the home—investing in training and resources will aid the success of restorative justice efforts. The Harmer should become self-aware about how their actions affected the person harmed, other people, organizations, and society.

The effectiveness of restorative justice brings employees, management, and leadership together to induce teamwork and reduce the workload. The participants perceived that effective restorative justice solutions occur within a community setting, a family connection, and a spiritual or scientific understanding of Oneness. The success of restorative justice should focus on integrating and transforming the company to transform employees, leaders, and managers to repair the harm to build society or create a culture to create unity, which improves relationships. Conflict resolution should seek to heal the actions of the Harmer instead of punishing the Harmer. Justice should seek to heal the soul and not continue the catastrophic effects of fear (Chu, 2022; Clute, 2010; Plato, 1901).

The researchers would like to note two things that they found interesting about the study: guilt and shame should be included in the restorative justice process, and fear traps expression. Carl Jung noted that individuation occurs because of a hate/love duality relationship, and in the same sense, the guilt/shame relationship occurs between the Harmer and the affected person (Clute, 2010; Edinger, 1994). A key observation in the study discusses how, in the beginning, the harmer feels guilt, and the affected person feels shame.

The next thing we realized in the guilt/shame relationship is that fear traps expression, and people have difficulty expressing these emotions. Possibly, the individuals have a hard time processing emotions in general. Leadership and research should focus on how fear traps expression in restorative justice. If participants in restorative justice release hidden emotions to free themselves from trapping their expression, then success and integration should occur. To be clear, guilt and shame should only be felt by the Harmer and the affected person and should not be used against them (Dahiya, 2022). The Harmer and the affected person need a safe environment to release guilt and shame before the emotions turn negative and increase the chance for revenge.

Maslow (1966) warned that if the only tool an individual has is a hammer, the person will treat everything as if it were a nail. I hope that the knowledge of this study provides academia, leaders, managers, organizations, and individuals to have an epiphany that there are more tools in the toolbox than a hammer and to explore and create new ideas that transform society away from a state of fear. Growth requires love and positive expressions (Ahsan, 2023; Dahiya, 2022; Shahid & Muchiri, 2019). I hope and believe that the new paradigm shift, or any paradigm shift, should focus on growth and positive expression rather than the continuous cycle of negativity, injustice, and fear (Shahid & Muchiri, 2019).

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APPENDIX

Field Test Round 1 Questions

What is the consensus of opinion from a panel of organizational experts on effective restorative justice solutions in the workplace?

1. *From your experience, please elaborate on the effectiveness of restorative justice.*

2. *What leadership characteristics, traits, and qualities create the best environment for restorative justice?*

3. *Elaborate on if shame or guilt should be a part of the restorative justice process.*

4. *Describe a positive transformation that occurs during the restorative justice process that improves employees individually and collectively.*

5. *What are the optimal strategies for beginning and ending the restorative justice process?*

6. *How would you improve the restorative justice process?*

Table I
Summary of Education Level

Education Level	Number of Participants
Associate degree	1
Bachelor's degree	4
Master's degree	3
Doctoral degree	2
Total Participants	10

Table II
Average Age of Study Participants

Gender	Age
Male	53
Female	49.5

Table III
Average Restorative Justice Experience of Study Participants

Gender	Experience
Male	14.83
Female	15.25

Table 4
Participants Responses for Round 3

Participant	1st Choice	2nd Choice	3rd Choice	4th Choice	5th Choice
P1	2	26	8	3	5
P2	6	3	28	10	25
P3	3	22	17	14	10
P4	28	20	25	14	6
P5	1	3	9	11	25
P6	24	4	22	7	16
P7	14	6	3	10	8
P8	3	7	14	10	15
P9	1	3	5	7	24
P10	3	5	11	21	27