# Restorative Justice in Education as a Framework for Student Mental Health: A Contextualized Model for Asian Higher Education

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## Abstract

In East Asian higher education contexts, particularly in Chinese universities, student mental health concerns are increasingly urgent yet remain inadequately addressed by traditional treatment-centered approaches. These systems often struggle with challenges such as stigma, low help-seeking behavior, and insufficient institutional resources. This study introduces **Restorative Justice in Education (RJE)** as a culturally sensitive, relationship-oriented framework for campus mental health support. Drawing on survey data collected from Chinese university students, and informed by RJE practices in Hong Kong, the study proposes a localized intervention model grounded in the Chinese sociocultural environment.

The model is structured around three pillars: academic departments, counselors, and students. A phased implementation strategy is recommended, beginning with pilot programs in departments with positive climates or existing mental health infrastructure. Tools such as circle dialogues, peer support networks, and faculty communication training are adapted to foster trust, early intervention, and a supportive campus culture. Additionally, a standardized, low-threshold toolkit is developed to facilitate practical application.

Findings suggest that RJE offers significant potential in East Asian university settings by enhancing interpersonal trust, reducing student isolation, and promoting a relational approach to well-being. This study contributes a culturally informed, practice-oriented framework for advancing mental health support in Asian higher education.

**Keywords:** Restorative Justice in Education (RJE) ,  Student Mental Health,  Higher Education in Asia, Culturally Responsive Intervention,  Relational Pedagogy