



Policy analysis of the mbg program from the perspective of food security and nutrition for school children case study at senior high school 1 Pandeglang

Hasyim Adnan

Program Studi Administrasi Negara, STISIP Banten Raya, Indonesia. E-mail: joeadnan@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

The Free Nutritious Meal Program (MBG) is one of the government's strategic policies to improve the quality of human resources by fulfilling students' nutritional needs. This study aims to analyze the implementation of the MBG Program policy from the perspective of food security and nutrition for school children at Senior high school 1 Pandeglang. The research focuses on the effectiveness of program implementation, its contribution to fulfilling students' nutritional needs, and its impact on food security in the school environment. The research method used is a descriptive qualitative approach with data collection techniques through observation, interviews, and documentation. Research informants consisted of school officials, students, program implementers, and parents. The results show that the implementation of the MBG Program at Senior high school 1 Pandeglang has a positive impact on improving students' nutritional intake, improving learning concentration, and reducing unhealthy food consumption habits in the school environment. This program also supports food security efforts by providing affordable and sustainable nutritious food for students. However, the program implementation still faces several obstacles, such as budget limitations, menu variations, and suboptimal monitoring of food nutritional quality. Therefore, synergy between the government, schools, and the community is needed to increase the effectiveness of MBG policies so that the goal of improving the quality of student health and education can be optimally achieved. This research is expected to serve as a reference in developing food and nutrition policies for school children in Indonesia.

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Corresponding Author:

Hasyim Adnan,
Administrasi Negara,
STISIP Banten Raya,
Jl. Raya Rangkasbitung KM. 04 No. 3, Dusun Sabitangtu, Desa
Bangkonol, Kec. Koroncong, Kab. Pandeglang, Banten, 42212,
Indonesia
Email: joeadnan@gmail.com

1. Introduction

The Free Nutritious Meal Program (MBG) makes a significant contribution to addressing stunting, anemia, and unhealthy eating habits among adolescents by providing balanced, nutritious meals that meet students' daily nutritional needs. Regular intake of foods containing

protein, iron, vitamins, and minerals helps improve adolescents' nutritional status, enhances physical growth, and reduces the risk of anemia, which often occurs due to iron deficiency and irregular eating patterns. Furthermore, this program also plays a role in forming healthy eating habits, as students become accustomed to consuming nutritious menus rather than instant foods or snacks with low nutritional value. In the long term, MBG not only supports adolescents' health and endurance but also improves learning concentration, productivity, and the quality of the younger generation as part of developing healthier and more qualified human resources.

The Free Nutritional Meal Program (MBG) has high strategic value in reducing the gap in access to nutritious food for students from low-income families because this program directly ensures that children's daily nutritional needs are met without relying on the family's economic capacity. By providing healthy and nutritious food at school, MBG helps improve the quality of health, learning concentration, and endurance of students, so that they have more equal educational opportunities with children from wealthy families. In addition, this program also plays a role in reducing stunting, malnutrition, and food insecurity at school age, especially in areas with high poverty rates. From a social perspective, MBG strengthens the principles of social justice and equitable distribution of public services, because the state is present to ensure that every child has the basic right to adequate nutrition as a foundation for developing quality human resources. Improving the quality of human resources is one of the primary goals of national development in Indonesia. These efforts are not only carried out through strengthening the education sector but also through improving the quality of health and nutrition for the community, particularly school-age children (Zulaika et al., 2025). School children, as the nation's future generation, play a crucial role in determining the country's future progress. Therefore, meeting the needs for balanced food and nutrition is a fundamental factor in supporting physical growth, cognitive development, and improving student achievement. In this context, the Indonesian government continues to implement various policies oriented towards increasing food security and improving the nutritional status of school children, one of which is the Free Nutritious Meal Program (MBG) (Yusuf, 2025).

The MBG Program is a policy designed to provide access to healthy and nutritious food for students in the school environment. This program is part of the national strategy to address nutritional issues such as stunting, anemia, chronic energy deficiency, and unhealthy eating patterns among adolescents. Furthermore, this program is also expected to support improving the quality of education by improving the physical and mental health of students (Forrestal et al., 2022). The availability of nutritious food in schools is believed to improve concentration, student attendance, and motivation to participate in the learning process. Food security is closely linked to the nutritional quality of the community (Harper et al., 2023). Food security is not only defined as the availability of sufficient food but also encompasses the accessibility, quality, safety, and sustainability of food for the entire community. From an educational perspective, food security in the school environment is crucial because students require adequate nutritional intake to support their daily learning activities. Inadequate nutritional intake can impact concentration, decreased academic performance, and even disrupt physical growth and mental development (Saxena et al., 2022).

The nutritional problems of school children in Indonesia remain a serious challenge. Various studies and national reports indicate cases of malnutrition, anemia, and the habit of consuming fast food with low nutritional value among students (Jessiman et al., 2023). These conditions are influenced by various factors, such as low levels of nutritional knowledge, family economic constraints, unhealthy consumption patterns, and minimal supervision of food sold in the school environment. Furthermore, changes in modern lifestyles have contributed to the increased consumption of instant foods and high-sugar drinks among school youth (Spence et al., 2024). As a region in Banten Province, Pandeglang Regency also faces challenges in improving the health and nutrition of students. Some communities still experience relatively low levels of economic well-being, affecting families' ability to meet their children's nutritional

needs (Stahacz et al., 2024). This situation can impact students' health and learning abilities at school. Therefore, implementing the MBG Program at Senior high school 1 Pandeglang is a strategic step in supporting the fulfillment of students' nutritional needs while strengthening food security in the educational environment. Senior high school 1 Pandeglang was chosen as the research location because it is one of the senior high schools with a relatively large student population and represents public schools in Pandeglang Regency (Spill et al., 2024). The implementation of the MBG Program at this school is interesting to study because it involves various parties, including the government, schools, implementing staff, and the surrounding community. Furthermore, the successes and challenges in program implementation can provide insight into the effectiveness of MBG policies in supporting student health and education (Kevin Andreas Halomoan Tambunan et al., 2025).

From a public policy perspective, program implementation depends not only on sound planning but also on the readiness of resources, inter-agency coordination, oversight, and community participation. A good policy must be able to address real community needs and have a sustainable positive impact. Therefore, an analysis of the implementation of the MBG Program is important to determine the extent to which the policy is running according to its stated objectives (Firmansyah, Ricky;Hamzah, 2025). Evaluation of program implementation is also necessary to identify various obstacles and challenges that arise during implementation. Research on the MBG Program from the perspective of food security and nutrition for school children has high relevance to current social conditions. This program is not only related to health aspects, but also touches on the educational, social, and economic dimensions of society (Hastuti & Hariyadi, 2026). The provision of nutritious food in schools can help reduce the economic burden on families, improve the quality of life of students, and encourage the creation of a healthy and productive young generation. In addition, This program also has the potential to support local economic empowerment if the food used is sourced from agricultural products from the surrounding community (Utama et al., 2025).

Several previous studies have shown that school feeding programs have a positive impact on improving student nutritional status and academic achievement. Other research also explains that the success of school feeding programs is strongly influenced by the quality of management, budget availability, menu variety, and the involvement of various parties in program oversight. However, various challenges remain in its implementation, such as limited facilities and infrastructure, uneven food distribution, and a lack of nutrition education for students (Achmad et al., 2025). Therefore, this study has novel value because it specifically examines the implementation of the MBG Program at Senior high school 1 Pandeglang from the perspective of food security and nutrition for schoolchildren. Based on this description, this study aims to analyze the implementation of the MBG Program policy from the perspective of food security and nutrition for schoolchildren at Senior high school 1 Pandeglang (Napiyah et al., 2026). This research is expected to provide an overview of the program's effectiveness, its impact on student health and learning quality, and various factors influencing the successful implementation of the policy. Furthermore, the results of this study are expected to serve as evaluation material and recommendations for the government, schools, and relevant parties to improve the quality of MBG Program implementation in the future. Thus, this program can run optimally in supporting the creation of a healthy, intelligent, and quality young generation of Indonesia (Agustini, 2025).

2. Method

The indicators used to assess the effectiveness of the Free Nutritious Meal Program (MBG) encompass several key aspects, namely the level of fulfillment of students' nutritional needs, improvements in student health, attendance and concentration levels, and changes in academic achievement after the program's implementation. Furthermore, program effectiveness can be measured through the quality and suitability of the food provided, the accuracy of food distribution, student and parent satisfaction with the program, and the consistency of program

implementation according to established standards. Another indicator considered is the reduction in cases of anemia, malnutrition, or specific health complaints within the school environment, as a direct impact of the regular provision of nutritious meals. These indicators include the regular availability of nutritious food for students, the sustainability of food distribution within the school environment, and the program's ability to ensure access to healthy food for all students, especially those from low-income families. Additionally, other indicators include the involvement of local food sources in the provision of food ingredients, the stability of food supplies during the program, and increased student awareness of healthy consumption patterns and balanced nutrition.

Contributions to food security can also be seen from reduced student food insecurity during school hours, increased community or local business participation in supporting the program, and the creation of a school environment that better supports the sustainable fulfillment of nutritional needs. Indicators used to assess the MBG Program's contribution to school food security The criteria for selecting informants in the MBG Program implementation research were based on the informant's level of involvement, knowledge, and experience in program implementation in the school environment. Informants were selected purposively, taking into account parties who directly understand the planning, implementation, and evaluation processes of the program, such as principals, teachers, canteen managers or food providers, beneficiary students, and parents. The purpose of selecting informants was to ensure that the data obtained could describe the overall implementation of the MBG Program, both from the policy aspect, technical implementation, and its impact on students' nutritional needs and learning activities. The selection of SMA Negeri 1 Pandeglang as the research location was based on the consideration that the school is one of the public high schools with a large student population and represents a diverse socioeconomic community, including students from low-income families. Furthermore, this school is considered relevant for studying the implementation of the Free Nutritious Meal Program (MBG) due to its active educational activities, adequate school management support, and direct involvement in the implementation of student service programs. Therefore, SMA Negeri 1 Pandeglang is considered capable of providing representative empirical data regarding the effectiveness, challenges, and impact of the MBG Program on meeting students' nutritional needs.

This study uses a qualitative approach with descriptive methods to analyze the implementation of the Free Nutritious Meal Program (MBG) policy from the perspective of food security and nutrition for school children at Senior high school 1 Pandeglang. The qualitative approach was chosen because this study aims to understand in depth the program implementation process, the involvement of policy implementers, and the program's impact on students. The descriptive method is used to describe the actual conditions of the MBG Program implementation based on facts and data found in the field. The focus of the study is directed at the effectiveness of program implementation, meeting students' nutritional needs, and the program's contribution to food security in the school environment. Data collection techniques are carried out through observation, interviews, and documentation. Observations are made by directly observing the MBG Program implementation process in schools, from food provision to distribution to students. In-depth interviews are conducted with school officials, program implementers, students, and parents to obtain information regarding program implementation and obstacles encountered. Meanwhile, documentation is carried out by collecting data in the form of activity photos, program reports, and other supporting documents related to the research. The data obtained were analyzed using qualitative data analysis techniques through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions so that a systematic picture was obtained regarding the implementation of the MBG Program policy at Senior high school 1 Pandeglang (Rahayu, 2025).

3. Analysis and Results

Utilizing local products as food supplies for the Free Nutritious Meal Program (MBG) can generate significant economic benefits for the surrounding community because this program is able to create a sustainable local economic cycle. The involvement of farmers, livestock breeders, fishermen, MSMEs, and local traders in food supply will increase demand for local products, thereby impacting community income and the creation of new jobs. In addition, the use of local products can reduce distribution costs and dependence on supplies from outside the region, thus making the program more efficient and stable. Other impacts include the growth of community economic independence, strengthening the small business sector, and the creation of synergy between schools, the government, and local economic actors in supporting food security and sustainable regional economic development. Suboptimal monitoring of food quality can have serious implications for the success of the Free Nutritional Meal Program (MBG), as poor food quality can potentially reduce nutritional value, hygiene, and safety for students. This condition can lead to a decline in student and parent confidence in the program, and even risk health problems such as food poisoning or malnutrition if serving standards are not met. Furthermore, weak supervision can also hinder the achievement of the program's goals of improving health, learning concentration, and the quality of human resources, thus reducing the program's effectiveness as an instrument for equitable social welfare.

The Free Nutritious Meals (MBG) program makes a significant contribution to strengthening food security in schools by creating a regular, secure, and sustainable food supply system for students. With the regular distribution of nutritious food, schools become spaces that support the daily fulfillment of students' nutritional needs, especially for children from economically vulnerable families. In addition to increasing access to healthy food, this program also encourages the use of local food products and collaboration with local businesses and farmers, thereby strengthening the regional food economic chain. Through this mechanism, MBG not only supports students' health and learning activities but also helps create food security and awareness of the importance of healthy eating patterns in the school environment. The implementation of the Free Nutritious Meal Program (MBG) at Senior high school 1 Pandeglang is a government policy aimed at improving the quality of student health and education by meeting food and nutritional needs. This program is implemented to support food security in the school environment while simultaneously encouraging the improvement of human resources from school age (Wahyuningsih & Dewi Herlisti, 2025).

Based on research conducted through observation, interviews, and documentation, the implementation of the MBG Program at Senior high school 1 Pandeglang has demonstrated a positive impact on student health, consumption patterns, and learning activities. The MBG Program at Senior high school 1 Pandeglang is implemented on a scheduled basis, providing nutritious meals to students at specific times within the school environment. The meals generally consist of rice, side dishes, vegetables, fruit, and mineral water tailored to the students' nutritional needs. The school collaborates with food providers and the local government to ensure the program adheres to established regulations. The program has received a positive response from most students, as it helps them access healthy and nutritious food while at school (Nissa et al., 2025).

Based on interviews with school officials, the MBG Program was deemed effective in improving student discipline and concentration. Prior to the program, some students came to school without breakfast or brought food that did not meet nutritional standards. This condition caused some students to experience fatigue, lack of focus in learning, and decreased enthusiasm for learning (Albaburrahim et al., 2025). After the MBG Program was implemented, these conditions began to decrease as students received more regular and nutritious meals during the learning process. From a food security perspective, the MBG Program plays a crucial role in ensuring food access for students. Food security is not only related to food availability but also encompasses aspects of affordability, quality, and sustainability. The MBG Program helps students, especially those from lower-middle-class families, maintain access to healthy and

edible food. This program reduces the financial burden on families in meeting their children's nutritional needs while at school (Auliawan & Harsiwi, 2025).

Furthermore, the implementation of the MBG Program has also impacted changes in student consumption patterns. Based on observations, prior to the program, many students still consumed fast food and unhealthy snacks within the school environment. This habit has the potential to lead to health problems, such as obesity, digestive disorders, and certain nutritional deficiencies (Aprianti et al., 2025). However, after the MBG Program was implemented, students began to become accustomed to consuming healthier and more balanced meals. This demonstrates that the program serves not only as food assistance but also as a means of nutrition education for students. From a health perspective, the MBG Program has had a positive impact on students' physical condition. Based on interviews with several students, they felt more energetic and were able to participate better in learning activities after receiving nutritious food at school. Teachers also reported that students' level of activeness in the learning process had increased compared to before the program was implemented. This condition Research shows that meeting nutritional needs is closely related to students' learning abilities and cognitive development (Jurnal et al., 2025). The successful implementation of the MBG Program at Senior high school 1 Pandeglang is also influenced by support from the school and government. The school plays an active role in overseeing the program's implementation to ensure it runs smoothly and meets students' needs (Ilmu et al., 2025). Furthermore, coordination between the school and the food provider is carried out regularly to maintain the quality of the food provided to students. The local government also provides funding and program oversight support to ensure its sustainable implementation. However, several obstacles remain in the implementation of the MBG Program, affecting its effectiveness. One major obstacle is budget constraints, which result in suboptimal menu variety. On several occasions, students have complained about the lack of menu variety, leading to boredom. However, food variety is crucial for meeting balanced nutritional needs and fostering student interest in healthy eating (Hakim et al., 2026).

In addition to budget constraints, another obstacle identified is suboptimal monitoring of food quality. Research shows that several students believe that the taste and presentation of food still need improvement. Therefore, stricter monitoring of food processing and distribution is needed to maintain nutritional quality and food hygiene. This supervision is crucial to ensure that the food provided truly meets health and food safety standards. Another challenge is the low awareness among some students about the importance of a healthy diet. Although the MBG Program provides nutritious food, some students still choose to purchase snacks or sweet drinks outside of school. This situation indicates that the program's success depends not only on the provision of food but also requires ongoing nutrition education for students. Schools need to provide an understanding of the importance of a healthy diet so that students can adopt good eating habits in their daily lives (Andini, 2025). From a public policy perspective, the implementation of the MBG Program at Senior high school 1 Pandeglang can be considered quite effective because it provides tangible benefits to students. This program not only supports improving student health but also strengthens food security within the school environment. Furthermore, the program has a positive social impact by helping to reduce the gap in food access for students from low-income families (Barr-Porter et al., 2024). The results of this study also indicate that the success of the MBG Program requires synergy between the government, schools, communities, and food providers. The government needs to ensure sustainable funding and program oversight, while schools must actively evaluate program implementation in the field. On the other hand, parents also play a crucial role in supporting their children's healthy eating habits at home so that the program's benefits can be maximized.

Overall, the MBG Program at Senior high school 1 Pandeglang has made a positive contribution to improving the nutritional quality and food security of students. This program is a strategic step in supporting the development of healthy and high-quality human resources. However, improvements in management, menu variety, and supervision are needed. Food quality and

nutritional education still need to be carried out so that policy implementation can run more optimally and sustainably in the future.

4. Conclusion

Research findings on the implementation of the Free Nutritious Meal Program (MBG) have important implications for the development of school food security policies in Indonesia, as they demonstrate that the provision of structured nutritious meals can improve access to healthy food, student health, and the quality of learning processes in educational environments. These research findings can serve as a basis for the government to strengthen school food security policies by developing national nutrition standards, food quality monitoring systems, and more equitable and sustainable food distribution mechanisms. Furthermore, these findings also encourage the integration of the education, health, agriculture, and local economic sectors in the implementation of school food programs, ensuring they are not only oriented towards meeting students' nutritional needs but also supporting community empowerment and regional food stability. Thus, school food security policies can be developed into strategic instruments for improving the quality of human resources and reducing social disparities in Indonesia. Further research needed to more comprehensively measure the impact of the Free Nutritional Meals Program (MBG) includes longitudinal studies that monitor changes in students' nutritional status over the long term through indicators such as body mass index, anemia levels, and physical growth. Furthermore, research should integrate academic achievement analysis by examining the relationship between nutritional needs, learning concentration levels, student attendance, and academic achievement before and after program implementation. From a food security perspective, further research could be directed at the MBG's impact on family food consumption stability, reducing household economic burdens, and the involvement of the local food sector in providing school meals.

A multidisciplinary approach that combines health, education, economics, and public policy perspectives is also needed so that the MBG Program evaluation can produce more accurate, sustainable, and relevant recommendations for improving the quality of human resources in Indonesia. Based on research results, the implementation of the Free Nutritious Meal Program (MBG) at Senior high school 1 Pandeglang shows that this program has a positive contribution in improving food security and nutritional quality of school children. The MBG program is able to help students gain access to healthy and nutritious food, resulting in improved learning concentration, physical health, and better food consumption habits. In addition, this program also helps reduce the economic burden on families in meeting children's food needs while at school. However, the program implementation still faces several obstacles, such as budget limitations, suboptimal food menu variations, and food quality supervision that still needs to be improved. Therefore, ongoing cooperation is needed between the government, schools, communities, and related parties so that the implementation of the MBG Program can run more effectively, with quality, and sustainably in supporting the creation of a healthy, intelligent, and qualified young generation.

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