

Analysis of the Role of Nutritious Food Programs in Improving the Quality of Students

Nurlita Amelia^{1*}, Nisa Nur Fadillah², Rifki Nur Aziz³

^{1,2,3} Universitas Islam Negeri Saifuddin Zubri Purwokerto

Email: nrlitaamelia@gmail.com*

Submitted: 19-06-2026

Revised : 31-08-2026

Accepted: 02-09-2026

ABSTRACT: This study aims to analyze the role of the Nutritious Food Program (MBG) in improving the quality of students through the fulfillment of nutritional needs that support health and the learning process. The method used is library research by examining various scientific sources, such as journals, books, and documents related to school nutrition programs. The data obtained were analyzed descriptively to identify the relationship between nutritional fulfillment and student quality. The results of the study show that the Nutritious Food Program has a positive impact on students' health, especially in helping to meet daily energy and nutritional needs. Good nutritional conditions support increased concentration, memory, cognitive abilities, and student participation in learning activities. In addition, this program plays a role in reducing the risk of health problems, such as malnutrition, anemia, and stunting that can affect children's physical and intellectual development. The MBG program also encourages the formation of healthy living habits from school age through better food consumption patterns. Thus, the Nutritious Food Program is one of the effective strategies in supporting the improvement of the quality of students, both in terms of health and learning achievement, so that it can contribute to the creation of a healthy, intelligent, and quality generation.

Keywords: Nutritious Food Program (MBG), balanced nutrition, student health, learning concentration, quality of education

INTRODUCTION

The quality of human resources is an important factor in supporting national development, so it needs to be improved from school age. One of the aspects that affects the quality of students is the fulfillment of nutritional needs. Various studies show that good nutritional conditions are related to physical development, cognitive abilities, concentration, and student learning achievement. However, inadequate nourishment can impair learning, cause youngsters to lose attention, and have an impact on their intellectual growth. Given that stunting, anemia, and malnutrition are still prevalent among school-age children in Indonesia, particularly in low-income households, this issue is still a problem. School-age children's nutritional issues are still a concern that has to be solved. Although various health programs have been implemented, cases of malnutrition, anemia, and stunting are still found in various regions. This illness has an effect on children's cognitive development and preparedness to engage in learning in addition as their physical health. Several studies in the past decade have shown that students who get adequate nutritional intake tend to have better learning abilities compared to students who are malnourished. In addition, the program of providing healthy food in schools has been proven to be able to increase student attendance, improve study concentration, and encourage more active participation in learning activities. The findings show that the fulfillment of nutritional needs is closely related to improving the quality of students. Although various studies have addressed the relationship

between nutrition and student learning outcomes, most studies still focus on aspects of health or academic achievement separately. Research that specifically examines the implementation of the free nutritious meal (mbg) program as a relatively new national policy is still limited, especially at the elementary school level. In addition, there has not been much research that examines how this program can contribute to creating more equitable learning opportunities for all students regardless of their family's socioeconomic conditions. In fact, access to nutritious food that is provided evenly in schools has the potential to reduce the gap which has been one of the factors inhibiting student learning success. The limitations of the study show that there is a need to conduct more in-depth research on the implementation and impact of the MBG program in the basic education environment.

One government initiative to improve Indonesian children's nutritional quality is the free nutritious meal (MBG) program, which provides wholesome food in schools. It is anticipated that this program will assist kids in meeting their dietary needs so they can engage in educational activities in better physical shape. The MBG program is anticipated to improve students' focus, motivation to learn, and comprehension of the material in addition to offering health benefits. On the other hand, this program can be one of the efforts to support the realization of a more inclusive education by providing equal opportunities for all students to obtain healthy and decent food intake. Thus, the mbg program is not only oriented to health aspects, but also has a strategic role in supporting the improvement of the quality of education. This description serves as the basis for the study's analysis of the implementation and consequences of the free nutritious meal (MBG) program in raising the Caliber of pupils in Banda Aceh's primary schools. The implementation of the MBG program and its effects on student engagement, learning focus, and health are the main topics of this study. Students in primary schools who receive benefits from the MBG program serve as the study's unit of analysis. In addition, this study also examines the extent to which the program can support the creation of a more inclusive learning environment and provide equal opportunities for all students. Through this research, it is hoped that a more comprehensive picture can be obtained of the contribution of the MBG program to improving the quality of students and become a consideration in the development of education and health policies in the future.

METHODS

This study employs a library research approach and a qualitative methodology. This strategy was used since the study focuses on reviewing different literature about how the Free Nutritious Meal Program (MBG) improves student quality. Based on numerous pertinent scientific sources, researchers can have a thorough grasp of the idea, execution, and effects of the MBG program on students' health and learning processes through literature reviews. In this study, the researcher plays the role of the main instrument in charge of collecting, selecting, reviewing, and analyzing data from various references used. The object of study in this study is the Free Nutritious Eating Program (MBG) and its implications on the quality of students, especially in aspects of health, learning concentration, participation in learning, and learning achievement. The research was carried out through the search of various literature sources carried out during the process of preparing the article. Because this study uses a literature study, the research is not conducted in a specific location or involves respondents directly, but focuses on analyzing data obtained from various written sources. Secondary data from national and international scientific journals, reference books, research papers, scientific publications, and government policy documents pertaining to student nutrition fulfillment and the execution of the Free Nutritious Meal Program were used in this study. These sources are selected based on the level of relevance to the research topic, the credibility of the author or publishing institution, and the year of publication so that the information obtained remains up-to-date and scientifically accountable.

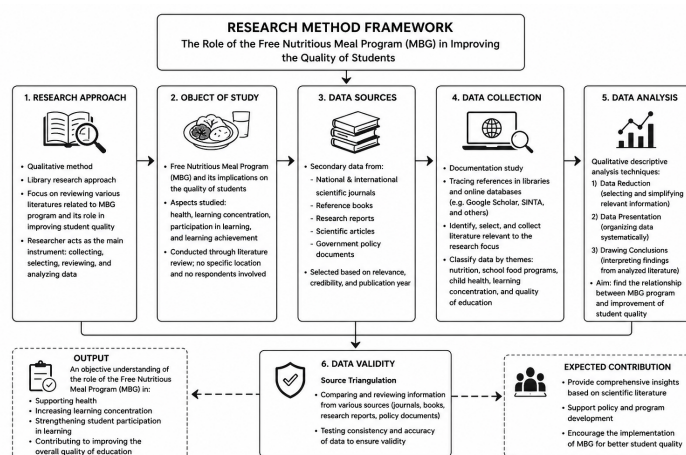


Figure 1. Methods

The data collection technique is carried out through documentation studies by tracing various references available in libraries and online journal databases, such as Google Scholar, SINTA, and other scientific sources. At this stage, the researcher identifies, selects, and collects various literature that is in accordance with the focus of the research. Furthermore, the data that has been collected is classified based on themes related to student nutrition, school food programs, child health, learning concentration, and quality of education. Qualitative descriptive analysis methods were used to analyze the data. Data reduction, or the selection and simplification of information pertinent to the study's goals, is the first step in the analytic process. The next stage is the presentation of data by organizing the results of the study systematically so that it is easy to understand. After that, conclusions are drawn through interpretation of various findings obtained from the literature that has been analyzed. The goal of this analysis is to determine whether the Free Nutritious Meal Program's adoption and the enhancement of students' quality from a variety of factors are related. This study employs a source triangulation technique to guarantee the legitimacy of the data. This method involves analyzing and comparing data from a range of sources, including books, journals, research papers, and policy documents. This procedure allows the data to be verified for accuracy and consistency, improving the validity of the research findings. Using this approach, it is anticipated that the study will be able to present an unbiased picture of how the Free Nutritious Meal Program (MBG) supports health, improves learning focus, increases student engagement in the classroom, and enhances the general quality of education.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Several conclusions on the Free Nutritious Meal Program's (MBG) implementation and its effects on primary school kids' quality were drawn from a review of numerous pertinent studies. The study's findings demonstrate that the MBG Program and meeting pupils' dietary needs are positively correlated. Numerous studies that have been examined indicate that giving kids access to wholesome food in the classroom helps to improve their health by providing them with the energy and nutrients they need to support their academic pursuits. This condition is one of the factors that supports the physical readiness of students in participating in the learning process. In addition to the health aspect, the results of the study also show that the implementation of the MBG Program has an effect on increasing student attendance and learning motivation. The literature reviewed shows that the availability of nutritious food in schools is able to encourage students to participate more regularly in learning activities, especially for students who come from families with economic limitations. With the increase in attendance at school, the opportunity for students to follow the learning process in a continuous manner is also increasing. Other findings

show that the fulfillment of nutritional needs through the MBG Program is related to increasing students' learning concentration. Some studies explain that adequate nutritional intake helps students maintain focus during learning so that they are better able to understand the material presented by the teacher. This condition also encourages increased student participation in learning activities, both in class discussions and the completion of academic tasks.

However, the study's findings indicate that there are still a number of challenges facing the MBG Program's implementation. The distribution of food, the monitoring of food quality, the availability of facilities for support, and the coordination of agencies participating in the program's implementation are all problems that have been identified in a number of publications. These challenges demonstrate that the MBG Program's efficacy is impacted by sound program governance in addition to the policy of providing wholesome food. Overall, the study's findings indicate that the Free Nutritious Meal Program has a lot of potential to assist students' improved nutritional status and overall quality, increasing motivation and attendance, strengthening study concentration, and increasing student participation in the learning process. However, optimizing program implementation still requires continuous management and supervision support so that program goals can be achieved optimally.

Table 1. The Impact of the Free Nutritious Meal Program (MBG) on Students

Aspects Examined	Research Findings
Nutritional status and health of students	The results of the study show that the implementation of the MBG Program helps meet the energy and nutritional needs of students, so that the health condition of students becomes better and they are better prepared to participate in learning activities at school.
Student attendance	This study found that the MBG Program contributes to increasing student attendance rates in schools because of the motivation to get nutritious food, especially for students who come from families with low economic conditions.
Learning motivation	It was found that the MBG program was able to increase student learning motivation, as shown by the increased enthusiasm of students in participating in learning activities in the classroom.
Student learning concentration	The results of this study also show that the fulfillment of nutrition through the MBG Program has an impact on increasing students' learning concentration, so that they are more focused on receiving the material delivered by the teacher.
Learning participation	This study found that there was an increase in student participation in learning, such as being more active in asking questions, discussing, and completing tasks given by teachers.
Program implementation constraints (MBG)	The results of the study also show that there are still several obstacles in the implementation of the MBG Program, including food distribution that is not optimal, limited school facilities, food quality supervision that needs to be improved, and coordination between parties that has not been maximized.

The study's findings indicate that the Free Nutritious Eating Program (MBG) improves elementary school kids' academic performance. This program helps meet the nutritional needs of students so that their health condition becomes better and better prepared to take part in learning. In addition, MBG also contributes to increasing attendance, learning motivation, concentration, and student participation during the learning process. Students become more active and focused in receiving the material taught. However, the implementation of the program still faces several

obstacles, such as suboptimal food distribution, limited supporting facilities, and the need for increased supervision and coordination between related parties. Therefore, better management is needed so that the benefits of the MBG Program can be felt optimally by all students.

Discussion

The Free Nutritious Meal Program's (MBG) Contribution to Raising Student Quality

The study's findings demonstrate that the Free Nutritious Meal Program (MBG) significantly enhances students' quality by meeting their nutritional needs. Students who eat healthily have better physical health, more consistent energy levels, and are more prepared for studying. These results are consistent with the research. (Wang & Fawzi, 2020), who explained that school feeding programs provide benefits to the physical, mental, and educational development of school-age children, especially in developing countries. From the perspective of *Human Capital* theory, investment in health and nutrition is an important part of developing the quality of human resources. The MBG policy is seen as a long-term investment that not only aims to improve the nutritional status of students, but also improve the quality of education and productivity of future generations. The study (Yuliani et al., 2025) shows that the MBG policy has strategic implications for human resource development and the national education system.

The Impact of the MBG Program on Student Motivation and Attendance

The findings of the study show that the MBG program is able to increase students' motivation to attend school. For students who come from families with economic limitations, the existence of nutritious food at school is one of the factors that encourage them to participate in learning activities more regularly. These results are in line with a study (Hanasi et al., 2025) that found that the implementation of MBG has an effect on increasing student attendance and participation in learning. Increased student attendance is closely related to improved learning quality. The higher the student's attendance rate, the better their chances of obtaining an optimal learning experience. Thus, the MBG program not only meets the basic needs of students, but also contributes to reducing educational barriers derived from economic and social factors.

The Impact of the MBG Program on Concentration and Learning Achievement

The results of the study also showed that students who received nutritious food had better concentration skills than before participating in the program. A met energy need allows students to focus more on receiving learning materials and completing academic assignments. Research (Zaenudin, 2025) shows that the MBG program has a positive impact on students' physical health and learning concentration, which is characterized by increased focus on learning and reduced fatigue during the learning process. These findings reinforce the view that nutritional quality has a direct relationship with students' cognitive function. When nutritional needs are met, the brain's ability to process information and store memories becomes more optimal. Therefore, the MBG program can be seen as one of the strategies that supports improving the quality of learning in schools.

Implementation of the MBG Program and the Challenges of Its Implementation

Overall, the MBG Program's implementation had favorable outcomes. Students' health, attendance, focus, and involvement in the classroom can all be enhanced by this approach. Research (Wahyuniar & Pustakasari, 2025) demonstrates that the MBG program is successful in raising primary school pupils' attendance rates, learning focus, and nutritional status. However, various studies also show that program implementation still faces a number of challenges. (Ardhana, 2025) explained that the main obstacles to the program include food quality monitoring, food distribution, readiness of supporting facilities, and coordination between stakeholders. In addition, several studies show that the success of the program is greatly influenced by the quality of governance and the monitoring system implemented. Agustini and Mulyani (2025) emphasized that the effectiveness of

the MBG program requires good management support, strict food quality supervision, and evaluation that is carried out on an ongoing basis so that the benefits of the program can be felt optimally by all students.

MBG Program's Contribution to Inclusive Education

One of the important findings of this study is that the MBG program not only contributes to student health and learning outcomes, but also supports the creation of a more inclusive education. The provision of equal food for all students regardless of socioeconomic background creates a sense of justice and togetherness in the school environment. These findings expand on the results of previous research that focused more on health and academic achievement aspects. Thus, this study shows that the MBG program can also function as an instrument for equitable distribution of learning opportunities for all students.

CONCLUSION

The Free Nutritious Meal (MBG) Program is a significant program that aims to improve the quality of elementary school pupils by providing nutritious meals, according to the study's findings and the discussion that followed. In addition to meeting children's dietary needs, this program helps them become healthier, more physically active, and more prepared to engage in educational activities. The results show that the MBG program's adoption improves learning because students become more attentive, motivated, and engaged in class activities. Additionally, by guaranteeing that all students receive equal chances regardless of their socioeconomic background, the initiative boosts students' motivation to attend school and encourages the development of a more egalitarian learning environment. Notwithstanding these advantages, a number of obstacles still exist, such as a lack of facilities, a lack of menu diversity, food distribution delays in some areas, and the requirement for improved stakeholder collaboration. Therefore, to guarantee that the program runs smoothly and achieves its goals, more efficient administration and supervision are needed. All things considered, the MBG program contributes significantly to improving educational quality by meeting kids' nutritional needs. Its effects go beyond enhancing health to include promoting improved educational involvement and learning results. It is anticipated that the program will continue to grow and contribute to the development of healthy, intelligent, and academically successful students with equal learning opportunities with improved administration and more support from a variety of partners. In order to provide comparative insights and expand the understanding of the MBG program's efficacy, future study is advised to examine its implementation in various locations and educational levels.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We, the authors, send thanks and praise to Allah swt for his grace and bounties, which allowed us to finish this scholarly article. The author acknowledges that assistance, support, and direction from a variety of sources were essential to the creation of this article. As a result, the author would like to extend his sincere gratitude to the supervisor who helped with this article's creation by offering direction, advice, and suggestions. Additionally, the author thanked the school and everyone else who contributed the data and references required for this research. Not to mention, the author expresses gratitude to family and friends for their prayers, encouragement, and spiritual support in order to finish this post. Since the author is aware that this article is far from flawless, comments and constructive criticism are greatly appreciated in order to make future

changes. It is hoped that this article can help readers and advance science, particularly in the area of education.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Agustini, U., & Mulyani, S. (2025). Efektivitas dan tantangan kebijakan program makan bergizi gratis sebagai intervensi pendidikan di Indonesia. *Jurnal Kiprah Pendidikan*, 4(3), 362–368. <https://doi.org/10.33578/kpd.v4i3.p362-368>
- Akmalia, I., Atika, D., Rahmatika, E., Zulva, A. A., Safitri, I. A. N., Princessa, R. A. R., Sabila, R. F., & Fatmawati, A. (2025). Analisis dampak program makan bergizi gratis (MBG) terhadap konsentrasi dan kedisiplinan belajar siswa SD *JIPSD: Jurnal Inovasi Pendidikan Sekolah Dasar*, 2(2), 125–137. <https://journal.innoscientia.org/index.php/jipsd/article/view/279>
- Ardhana, H. F., Putra, A. R., & Nugroho, D. (2025). Analisis implementasi dan dampak program makanan bergizi gratis (MBG): Studi pendekatan transdisipliner. *Jurnal Jendela Pendidikan*, 5(2), 145–158. <https://doi.org/10.57008/jip.v6i02.2239>
- Fitri, Y., & Ernawati, F. (2018). Hubungan asupan gizi dengan konsentrasi belajar siswa sekolah dasar. *Jurnal Gizi Indonesia*, 6(2), 123–130.
- Furkan, I. M., Sari, R. A., Eliza, M. F., Nofrizal, D., Junva, F., Gistituati, N., & Anisah. (2025). Mewujudkan makan bergizi gratis: Perspektif guru SD dalam implementasi kebijakan. *Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan* 10.3 (2025): 919-927. <https://doi.org/10.34125/jmp.v10i3.678>
- Hanasi, R. A., Rahman, M., & Suryani, N. (2025). Analisis efektivitas program makan bergizi gratis di Indonesia sebagai instrumen kebijakan pemerintah. *Jurnal Pendidikan Tambusai*, 9(1), 112–124. <https://jptam.org/index.php/jptam/article/view/34647>
- Hastuti, R., Mahardika Hariyadi, A., & Hariyadi. (2025). Implementasi program makan bergizi gratis di sekolah (literature review). *Pro Health: Jurnal Ilmiah Kesehatan*. 8.1 (2026): 16-21. <https://jurnal.unw.ac.id/index.php/PJ/article/view/4731/3000>
- Herdiana, D. (2025). Implementasi kebijakan makan bergizi gratis (MBG): Faktor-faktor pendorong dan penghambat. *Madani: Jurnal Ilmiah Multidisiplin*, 3(2), 470–478.
- Irawan, M. F. (2025). Dampak program makanan bergizi gratis (MBG) terhadap konsentrasi dan motivasi belajar peserta didik sekolah dasar. *Mentari: Journal of Islamic Primary School*, 3(4).
- Kiftiyah, A., Hidayat, R., & Maulana, F. (2025). Program makan bergizi gratis dalam perspektif keadilan sosial dan dinamika sosial politik. *Pancasila: Jurnal Keindonesiaan*, 5(1), 101–112. <https://doi.org/10.52738/pjk.v5i1.726>
- Ngoba, P. R. P., Nenabu, J., Maing, M. A. M., Ametuke, G. S., Benu, A. B. N., & Musa, H. (2025). Hubungan program makan bergizi gratis (MBG) dengan tingkat kehadiran siswa sekolah dasar. *Pendas: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Dasar*, 11(01), 166–176. <https://doi.org/10.23969/ip.v11i01.40654>
- Notha, M., Sari, S. M., & Zahraini. (2025). Penerapan implikasi MBG (makan bergizi gratis) di sekolah dasar. *Edu Society: Jurnal Pendidikan, Ilmu Sosial, dan Pengabdian kepada Masyarakat*, 5(3), 1302–1310. <https://doi.org/10.56832/edu.v5i3.2344>
- Ratih, A., & Maria, G. A. R. (2025). Program Makan Bergizi Gratis (MBG): Kebijakan Pendukung Pendidikan dan Pembangunan Sumber Daya Manusia. (2025). *Jurnal Ekspos*, 3(2), 80–88. <https://ejurnal.kuduskab.go.id/index.php/ekspos/article/view/83>
- Tambunan, K. A. H., Nababan, R., Siagian, R. A., Naiboru, R., Harianti, S., & Jamaludin, J. (2025). Tinjauan kritis tentang program makan bergizi gratis terhadap produktivitas belajar siswa. *Katalis Pendidikan: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan dan Matematika*, 2(2), 21–31. <https://doi.org/10.62383/katalis.v2i2.1428>
- Wahyuniar, L., & Pustakasari, E. N. I. (2025). Effectiveness of the free nutritious meal program on nutritional status, learning concentration, and student attendance. *Medisci Journal*, 3(1), 22–31. <https://doi.org/10.62885/medisci.v3i3.973>

- Wahyuningsih, E., & Herlisti, R. D. (2025). Implementasi dan dampak program makan bergizi gratis (MBG) terhadap motivasi siswa. *Jurnal Tumbuh Kembang Anak Usia Dini*, 3(2), 80–84. <https://journal.unupurwokerto.ac.id/index.php/tumbang/article/view/575/375>
- Wang, D., & Fawzi, W. W. (2020). Impacts of school feeding on educational and health outcomes of school-age children and adolescents in low- and middle-income countries: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Systematic Reviews*, 9(1), 55. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13643-020-01317-6>
- Yuliani, F., Hasanah, R., & Putri, M. (2025). Kebijakan makan bergizi gratis di Indonesia: Analisis implementasi, dampak terhadap sumber daya manusia, dan implikasinya pada kebijakan sistem pendidikan nasional. *Pendas: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Dasar*, 10(2), 210–225. <https://doi.org/10.23969/jp.v11i02.46281>
- Zaenudin, D. (2025). Manfaat program pemberian makan bergizi gratis terhadap kesehatan dan konsentrasi belajar siswa. *Jurnal Pendidikan Tambusai*, 9(2), 456–468. <https://jptam.org/index.php/jptam/article/view/28617>