School Management Strategies for the Implementation of the MBG Government Program

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
	This study aims to analyze school management innovation in the implementation of the MBG Government Program at the secondary school level. The research employed a qualitative method with a case study approach using data triangulation techniques, including in-depth interviews, observations, and analysis of supporting documents. Data analysis was conducted using the Miles and Huberman model, which consists of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings indicate that the implementation of the MBG program was carried out through need-based planning and stakeholder collaboration, service distribution SOP innovations, and digital monitoring using barcode systems and data dashboards. The program has been proven to positively impact students' stamina, learning readiness, academic motivation, and the development of a collaborative and healthy school culture. However, challenges related to digital infrastructure, technological literacy, and funding sustainability remain. Overall, the study highlights that management innovation plays a crucial role in ensuring the effective implementation of the MBG program in schools.

Article Info	ABSTRAK
	Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis inovasi manajemen sekolah dalam implementasi Program Pemerintah Makan Bergizi Gratis (MBG) di tingkat sekolah menengah. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah kualitatif dengan pendekatan studi kasus melalui teknik triangulasi data, termasuk wawancara mendalam, observasi, dan analisis dokumen pendukung. Proses analisis menggunakan model Miles dan Huberman yang meliputi reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa implementasi MBG dilakukan melalui perencanaan berbasis analisis kebutuhan dan kolaborasi stakeholder, inovasi SOP distribusi layanan, dan digitalisasi monitoring menggunakan sistem barcode dan dashboard data. Program ini terbukti memberikan dampak positif terhadap stamina siswa, kesiapan belajar, motivasi akademik, dan pembentukan budaya sekolah yang kolaboratif dan sehat. Namun, tantangan terkait infrastruktur digital, literasi teknologi, dan keberlanjutan pendanaan masih ditemukan. Secara keseluruhan, penelitian ini menegaskan bahwa inovasi manajemen berperan penting dalam efektivitas pelaksanaan MBG di sekolah.

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Introduction

Education serves as the fundamental pillar of national development, where the quality of learning processes and the school environment significantly determine educational success (Saleh et al., 2025). However, student achievement is not solely influenced by teaching methods, teacher competence, or educational facilities; it is also strongly affected by students' physical health and fulfillment of basic needs (Kasanah et al., 2025; Widyastuti et al., 2024). Insufficient nutritional intake may lead to decreased concentration, reduced memory capacity, lower learning motivation, and various health issues that ultimately hinder academic performance (Efendi et al., 2025). Therefore, ensuring proper nutritional support for students has become a crucial component of a holistic modern education system.

In response to nutritional inequality and health-related challenges among students, the government introduced the MBG (Makan Bergizi Gratis) Program as part of its strategy to strengthen human resource development through integrated education and health interventions. The program aims to ensure that students particularly at the secondary school level receive regular access to balanced and nutritious meals (Alkhawaldeh & Saleem-Khasawneh, 2023; Putri & Siswanto, 2024). The MBG initiative is expected to help reduce cases of malnutrition, improve students' physical stamina, and enhance academic readiness, thereby supporting the achievement of national educational goals.

Despite its promising objectives, the successful implementation of MBG largely depends on effective school management. As the primary technical executor, schools are required to develop strategic planning, ensure coordination among stakeholders, and manage resources efficiently so that food distribution is timely, equitable, and aligned with nutritional standards (Sadiyah et al., 2025; Wardana, 2024). Integrating this program into existing school management structures requires managerial innovation in budgeting, collaboration with food suppliers, logistical distribution mechanisms, and continuous monitoring and evaluation frameworks.

Within the broader context of public policy implementation, management innovation plays a pivotal role in ensuring that MBG functions not merely as an administrative obligation but as a meaningful intervention with measurable impact on students. Schools must adopt innovative approaches such as digital tracking of meal consumption, partnerships with local food MSMEs or health agencies, and transparent, accountable Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to ensure program sustainability (Rahman et al., 2024; Ratna et al., 2024). These measures are essential for transforming MBG from a procedural program into a supportive school culture that prioritizes student welfare (Heenan et al., 2023).

Beyond health outcomes, the implementation of MBG also generates significant social benefits. Shared mealtimes foster positive peer interactions, strengthen school belongingness, build solidarity, and contribute to a more inclusive and supportive school climate (Nugroho et al., 2025; Parilah et al., 2024). The program also has the potential to improve attendance, academic performance, and both intrinsic and extrinsic learning motivation (Astiwi et al., 2024; Tarso et al., 2025). Thus, MBG is not merely a food distribution initiative; it represents a broader transformation of the school ecosystem toward a more humanistic, equitable, and student-centered educational experience.

Method

This research employs a qualitative approach using a case study design, focusing on the implementation of the Government's Program (MBG) in schools. The study aims to explore in depth the processes of planning, implementation, digital monitoring, and the program's impact on students' health and learning motivation. Data were collected using a triangulation strategy, including in-depth interviews with school principals, teachers, school health staff (UKS), catering providers, school committees, and student beneficiaries. In addition, direct observations were conducted on the distribution flow, service standard procedures, digitalized consumption attendance systems, and shared meal culture to obtain authentic data. Supporting documents such as school development plans (RKS), SOPs, student nutrition records, program evaluation reports, and digital monitoring dashboards were also analyzed to strengthen data validity.

Data analysis was conducted using Miles & Huberman (1994) interactive model, consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The validity of the findings was reinforced through member checking, peer debriefing, and triangulation of sources and methods to ensure the credibility of the study. The analytical process was directed toward identifying patterns, relationships among variables, innovative practices, and stakeholder engagement dynamics in the MBG program. The results were then presented in a descriptive-analytical format to provide a comprehensive overview of implementation strategies, challenges, and program impacts on the school ecosystem Naufal et al. (2025).

Results

1. Need-Based Planning and Stakeholder Participation in the MBG Government Program

The findings indicate that the planning stage of the MBG in schools was carried out using a need-based analysis and stakeholder participation approach. Schools conducted a mapping process to assess student conditions, including nutritional status, eating habits, and family socioeconomic background through surveys, direct observations, and School Health Unit (UKS) records. This needs assessment served as the basis for determining priority beneficiaries and identifying appropriate meal types that aligned with nutritional standards and students' food preferences. This approach ensured that planning was not uniform but responsive to the real needs of students in the field.

In addition, planning was strengthened through multi-stakeholder engagement involving teachers, school committees, parents, catering providers, and health officers from local clinics (Puskesmas) as part of a collaborative coordination mechanism. Discussion forums and scheduled coordination meetings were used to align objectives, implementation strategies, and role distribution across stakeholders. This participatory process fostered a sense of ownership, making the MBG program not merely a government policy but a shared school movement to improve student well-being and learning readiness. Such stakeholder involvement also cultivated collective responsibility in ensuring effective program implementation.

The research also revealed that schools developed technical planning documents such as food distribution Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), implementation schedules, monitoring mechanisms, and alternative funding plans to ensure program sustainability. The MBG program was gradually integrated into the School Work Plan (RKS), supported by the adoption of digital systems such as consumption attendance applications to facilitate accurate monitoring. Thus, planning served not only as an administrative requirement but also as a managerial innovation foundation to

support effective, transparent, and sustainable implementation (Shigematsu et al., 2025).

2. Innovation in Service Governance and Operational Standards for Program Implementation

The findings demonstrate that the implementation of the MBG program has undergone significant innovation in service delivery through structured SOPs for food distribution. These SOPs outlined service flow, roles of personnel, hygiene standards, serving timeframes, and food safety protocols. Strategies such as independent queuing, zoned dining areas, and class-based scheduling were applied to minimize overcrowding and ensure orderly service. This reflects a transition from traditional distribution practices toward modern governance models emphasizing efficiency, timeliness, and student comfort (Sutarto, 2021).

Innovation was also evident through the digitalization of service mechanisms, including the use of barcodes or QR codes for attendance and tracking food distribution. This system accelerated beneficiary verification and reduced administrative errors. Service managers reported a noticeable decrease in average student waiting time after adopting digital tools. Digital data also facilitated daily evaluation, periodic reporting, and oversight by school committees, thereby improving accountability and transparency in MBG implementation.

Quality assurance mechanisms were implemented through regular evaluations and hygiene audits conducted by teachers, UKS staff, and school food safety teams. Evaluations occurred through both formal coordination meetings and informal observations or feedback from students. These internal audits helped identify operational barriers such as long queues, logistical errors, or dissatisfaction with food quality and enabled corrective action. With this structured governance approach, the MBG program became more standardized, consistent, and able to provide a dignified service experience for student beneficiaries.

3. Utilization of Digital Technology for Monitoring the MBG Program

The integration of digital technology in the MBG program has significantly improved monitoring effectiveness and administrative accountability. Schools used digital platforms such as Google Forms, QR code-based attendance applications, and automated spreadsheets to record the number of beneficiaries, daily menus, and meal distribution status. These systems enabled real-time tracking of meal allocation, student participation, and program compliance. The shift from manual to digital administration reduced errors and simplified operational procedures.

The findings also reveal that digital dashboards supported decision-making processes at various levels principals, teachers, UKS officers, and school committees. Visual features such as consumption graphs, satisfaction trends, and complaint records enabled data-driven decision-making. Digital archiving made it possible to track program history, including weekly consumption, operational expenses, and documented concerns, which strengthened transparency, particularly regarding government funding use. This system also facilitated reporting to education offices and auditing institutions requiring verifiable administrative evidence.

However, the implementation of digital monitoring faced several technical and non-technical challenges, including limited digital literacy among staff, insufficient digital devices, inconsistent internet connectivity, and data privacy concerns regarding student information. To address these issues, schools conducted internal training, established SOPs for system use, and provided backup manual record-keeping mechanisms when needed. Despite these challenges, digitalization notably improved MBG program

governance quality and strengthened its long-term sustainability.

4. Impact of the MBG Program on Students' Physical Health and Learning Readiness

The implementation of the MBG program has had a positive impact on students' physical well-being. Observations and interview responses showed that students who regularly participated in the program experienced improved energy levels, concentration, and endurance during learning activities. Teachers noted decreased complaints of dizziness, fatigue, and drowsiness during morning lessons. The UKS also reported a reduction in student visits related to low blood sugar or skipping breakfast, which were previously common before the program began. These outcomes suggest that nutritional fulfillment significantly contributes to students' physical health.

The program also demonstrated positive effects on learning readiness, as reflected in improved focus, motivation, and classroom participation. Teachers observed that students became more responsive, engaged in classroom discussions, and showed greater persistence in completing assignments. Survey data on learning motivation indicated increased interest and engagement among participants. Some previously passive students even demonstrated improved initiative and involvement in both academic and extracurricular activities, suggesting a link between nutritional access and improved academic behavior.

Despite these benefits, challenges remain. Inconsistent eating habits at home, consumption of unhealthy food outside school, and the absence of professional nutrition monitoring may hinder long-term outcomes. Therefore, collaboration with healthcare providers, nutrition specialists, and parents is essential to sustain healthy eating practices beyond school settings. Strengthening cross-sector coordination will ensure that the MBG program supports not only immediate nutritional needs but also long-term health, learning readiness, and educational quality.

5. The MBG Program as a Driver of Learning Motivation and Positive School Culture

The study found that the MBG program not only influenced physical health but also contributed significantly to increased learning motivation. Surveys and interviews revealed that students felt valued and supported because their basic nutritional needs were provided by the school. This sense of care translated into improved school attendance, learning enthusiasm, and classroom engagement. Teachers observed higher student participation, more active questioning, and greater confidence in presenting ideas following consistent implementation of the program.

Beyond individual motivation, the MBG program strengthened positive school culture through routine shared meal practices. These communal activities fostered social interaction, reduced social barriers, and enhanced a sense of belonging among students. Observations showed that shared meal sessions promoted values such as cooperation, empathy, and mutual support, especially when students participated in food-serving roles, maintaining cleanliness, and managing queues. Thus, the program served dual functions nutritional fulfillment and social bonding contributing to an inclusive and collaborative school environment.

Although the benefits are evident, sustaining the positive culture requires ongoing effort. Management challenges include maintaining orderly behavior during meal distribution, ensuring cleanliness, and preventing stigma between program recipients and non-recipients. Continued involvement of teachers and parents is necessary to reinforce behaviors such as discipline, gratitude, and shared responsibility. With consistent stakeholder engagement and periodic evaluation, the

MBG program has the potential to serve as a catalyst for building a healthy, collaborative, and student-centered school culture.

Discussion

The implementation of the Government's MBG Program in schools was carried out through a data-driven management approach and multi-stakeholder collaboration. This aligns with findings by Beyer et al. (2009), Shloul et al. (2024), and Weingarden (2025), who emphasized that the success of programs addressing students' basic needs is strongly determined by early needs assessment, including nutritional screening, social profiling, and eating habit evaluations. Stakeholder involvement, including teachers, public health centers, and parents, also strengthened program accountability, as noted by Astuti et al. (2025) and Chigbu et al. (2023) in his research on collaborative-based school nutrition policies. Therefore, the findings of this study confirm that participatory planning is not merely administrative compliance but a fundamental strategy to ensure sustainable MBG implementation.

In the implementation stage, this study found innovations in service and distribution management through structured SOPs supported by a self-queuing system, dining zoning, and class rotation schedules. This is consistent with Janah et al. (2025), Maisaroh et al. (2024) and Siswanto et al. (2024), who reported that standardized food-distribution governance helps reduce crowding risks, minimize food waste, and improve service quality. The systematic innovation through SOPs also reflects the principles of good governance in public services in the education sector, as outlined by the Ministry of Administrative and Bureaucratic Reform (2022). Based on these findings, it can be concluded that governance innovation plays a crucial role in ensuring that the program operates not only functionally but also efficiently and with dignity.

The utilization of digital technology in monitoring the program such as QR codes, digital dashboards, and online survey platforms emerged as another key finding. This supports the study by Apriwulan et al. (2025), Tarso et al. (2025) and Tengku & Bustari (2024), which concluded that digital monitoring systems improve administrative efficiency, accelerate reporting processes, and enhance transparency in the use of public funds. Such digitalization also aligns with the concept of data-driven decision-making in accountable school management, as proposed by Afandi et al. (2025), Putri et al. (2024) and Saputra et al. (2025). However, similar to previous studies, this research identified challenges related to digital literacy and technological infrastructure that require further strengthening.

The fourth thematic finding shows that the MBG program produced tangible improvements in students' physical health and learning readiness. These results are consistent with Astutik et al. (2025), Basnawiyati et al. (2024) and Melizza et al. (2025) and who reported that school-based nutritious meal programs reduce absenteeism, increase stamina, and improve student concentration during lessons. The decline in student visits to the school health unit due to dizziness, fatigue, and skipped breakfast further supports Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1954), which asserts that physiological needs must be fulfilled before cognitive functioning can be optimized. Thus, the success of MBG extends beyond food distribution and contributes to establishing a stronger foundation for learning readiness.

The program also demonstrated positive effects on student learning motivation and the reinforcement of a positive school culture, particularly through consistent communal eating practices. This finding aligns with Irvine

(2018), Ian & Zhang (2025) and Tarso (2025), who observed that schools implementing structured social rituals experience increased levels of school belonging and intrinsic motivation among students. Furthermore, the results reinforce the Self-Determination Theory, which posits that fulfilling basic psychological needs such as feeling valued and socially accepted directly supports motivation and engagement. Therefore, MBG is not solely a nutrition initiative, but also a social intervention that fosters cohesion and a healthy school climate.

Overall, the findings of this study indicate that management innovation through needs-based planning, standardized governance, and digitalized monitoring contributes significantly to the effective implementation of the MBG Government Program. These findings strengthen existing literature showing that school meal programs not only improve health and academic participation, but also contribute to social character development, positive school culture, and learning motivation. However, challenges related to funding continuity, ongoing evaluation systems, and stakeholder empowerment must be addressed to ensure that the program evolves into a high-quality, sustainable, and impactful educational innovation.

Conclusion

The MBG Government Program provides a tangible contribution to improving the quality of educational services through need-based management innovation, systematic distribution governance, digitalized monitoring, and significant impacts on students' health and learning motivation. The implementation of the program is designed through a participatory planning process involving multiple stakeholders, resulting in a shared sense of ownership and strengthened accountable governance. Furthermore, the utilization of digital technology assists in enhancing efficiency, transparency, and the

effectiveness of continuous program evaluation. The MBG Program has also been proven to support students' learning readiness, concentration, and overall well-being while fostering a more positive school culture through social interaction and the development of healthy lifestyle habits within the school environment.

Despite the program's substantial positive impacts, several challenges remain and require attention for optimal implementation and long-term sustainability, such as limited digital infrastructure, varying levels of technological literacy among personnel, diverse student dietary preferences, and funding continuity. Therefore, strategic reinforcement is required through technical capacity-building, cross-sectoral collaboration with health workers, parents, and local government, as well as the establishment of a more structured routine evaluation mechanism. Additionally, schools must ensure program sustainability through alternative financial innovations and policy integration into institutional strategic planning documents.

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