

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FREE NUTRITIOUS MEAL PROGRAM TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' LEARNING CONCENTRATION IN SURABAYA CITY

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Abstract

The government has created a program focused on improving children's nutrition. Namely, the Free Nutritious Meal Program, which is based on Presidential Regulation Number 83 of 2024, which regulates the fulfillment of national nutrition needs. This study was conducted to analyze in depth the implementation of the Free Nutritious Meal Program in schools in Surabaya City, which includes the planning, implementation, and evaluation stages, involving various stakeholders such as the government, schools, and service providers. The method used in this study is a qualitative method through a descriptive approach. The results of this Free Nutritious Meal Program study have shown that this program improves student learning concentration. This study uses Edward III's theory, so it can be seen that the communication and resource aspects have fully supported this MBG program, however, it is still very unfortunate because there are still problems with the disposition and bureaucratic structure. Therefore, it still requires improvements from the government to address these problems.

Keywords: Concentration, Free Nutritious Meal Program, , Surabaya City

A. INTRODUCTION

The quality of Human Resources is determined not only by the level of education but is also greatly influenced by the health and nutritional status of the population. Nutritional problems such as stunting, underweight conditions caused by malnutrition, and deficiencies in essential vitamins and minerals remain major challenges faced by Indonesia. Children who suffer from malnutrition generally have lower learning abilities, reduced concentration levels, and higher health risks compared to children who receive adequate nutritional intake. To address these issues, the Indonesian government launched the Free Nutritious Meals Program (MBG) as one of its strategic policies to improve the nutritional quality of the population. This program is designed to provide free nutritious meals to key target groups, including school students, pregnant women, breastfeeding mothers, and toddlers. The policy focuses not only on meeting basic needs but also serves as part of a long-term strategy to create a healthy, intelligent, and productive generation in support of the Golden Indonesia 2045 Vision (Nango et al., 2025).

The Free Nutritious Meals Program is based on Presidential Regulation Number 83 of 2024,

which governs national nutrition fulfillment. This Presidential Regulation specifies the groups eligible to receive national nutrition support. In addition, the program includes provisions regarding budget allocation for its implementation, as stipulated in Law Number 17 of 2025. The MBG Program is also supported by several other regulations, including Law Number 18 of 2012 on Food, which mandates the state to ensure the availability of sufficient, safe, high-quality, and nutritionally balanced food consumption at both national and regional levels. Furthermore, the same law emphasizes that all development efforts must be guided by a health-oriented perspective, which aligns with the objectives of the MBG Program.

In addition, Presidential Regulation Number 83 of 2017 on Strategic Food and Nutrition Policies states that the government must strengthen sustainable food and nutrition security in order to develop high-quality and competitive human resources. Likewise, Presidential Regulation Number 72 of 2021 on the Acceleration of Stunting Reduction highlights the importance of accelerating stunting reduction as part of sustainable development efforts. Beyond these laws and regulations, the Free Nutritious Meals Program is also guided by regulations issued by the National Nutrition Agency regarding the management of the Free Nutritious Meals Program in support of accelerating stunting reduction and achieving national nutritional goals (Habibah, 2024).

As one of Indonesia's largest cities, Surabaya has demonstrated a strong commitment to improving both educational quality and public welfare. The implementation of the MBG Program in the city is an important subject of study because it involves various stakeholders and is applied across schools with diverse characteristics (Hastuti & Hariyadi, 2026). In Surabaya, the Free Nutritious Meals Program has reached 207,355 beneficiaries. This was demonstrated during pre-tests, mid-tests, and post-tests conducted by members of the Surabaya Regional House of Representatives (DPRD). The pre-test results showed an average score of 60, while the mid-test results increased to 85. The post-test is still in the planning stage and has not yet been conducted (Astrid, 2024).

These findings indicate a positive impact in improving students' concentration levels in Surabaya. The following graph provides evidence that the MBG Program can enhance students' learning concentration in Surabaya:

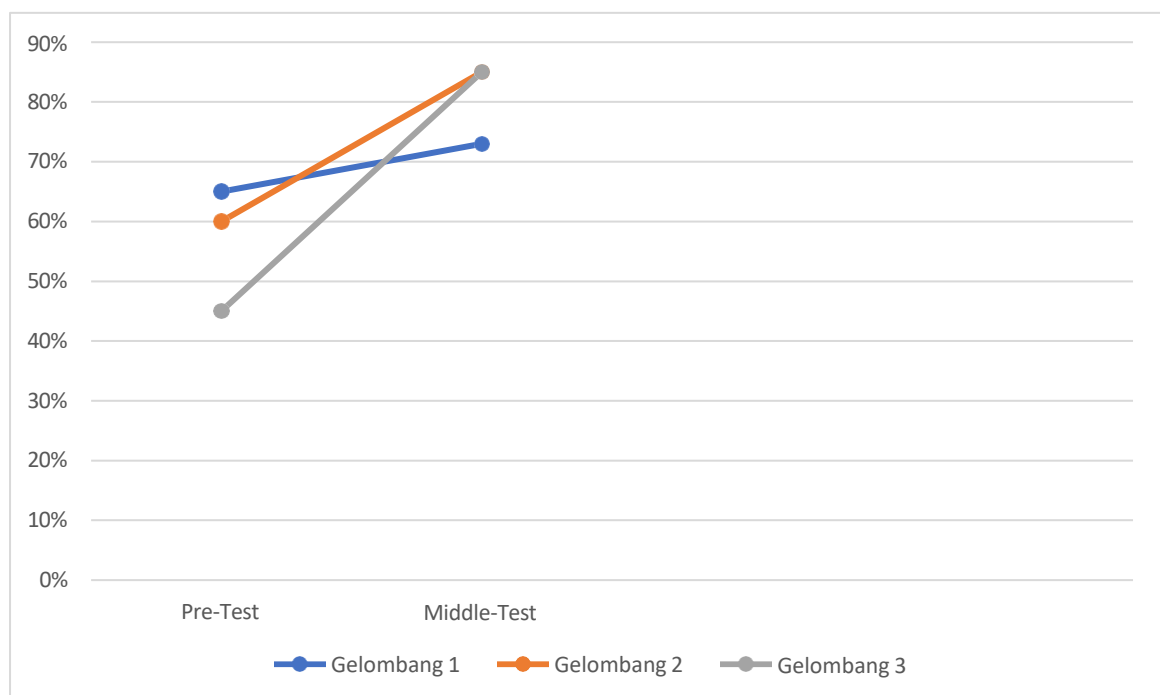


Figure 1.1 Graph of Student Concentration Improvement by 2025

Source: Jatim.Antarnews Website

Furthermore, several researchers have stated that implementing the MBG program in schools can be a strategic step in supporting increased concentration in students in Surabaya. Concentration is a crucial aspect of the teaching and learning process. Concentration is the ability to concentrate on one thing while ignoring unrelated distractions (Margiathi et al., 2023). If students are focused, they will easily succeed in completing assignments. Therefore, the MBG program is an excellent way to improve concentration in students. In Surabaya, several SPPGs (Schools for Teachers and Teachers) run the Free Nutritious Meals program. SPPG Rungkut Medokan Ayu was chosen as the research location because it demonstrates active and sustainable program implementation, allowing for more comprehensive observation of the implementation process. Due to the diverse backgrounds of its students, this area is considered representative enough to investigate the program's impact on concentration. Compared to other SPPGs, the implementation of observations and easy access to data are also crucial. Therefore, the locations were selected based on the program's level of activity, regional representation, and ease of access. The purpose of this location selection was to provide a comprehensive overview of MBG use and its impact on student learning concentration.



Figure 2. Instagram account of SPPG Medokan Ayu

Source: Social Media Instagram @sppgmedokanayu in 2025

The selection of MTsN 3 & MIN 1 Surabaya City as the research locations for the MBG program was based on several main reasons. First, both schools are actively implementing the program, allowing for direct observation of how the program is implemented. Furthermore, the elementary/Islamic elementary school (SD/MI) and junior high/high school/Islamic junior high school (SMP/SMA/MTsN) levels were chosen because the students are in their teenage years and require healthy nutrition to help them focus on their studies. These schools have diverse student backgrounds, allowing them to reflect common conditions when evaluating the program's impact. Furthermore, factors such as ease of access, data availability, and transparency from the school administration were crucial to ensuring the research ran smoothly. Therefore, MTsN 3 & MIN 1 Surabaya City were deemed more appropriate than other schools because they could provide relevant data that aligned with the research objectives.

Based on previous research, studies on the Free Nutritional Meal Program (MBG) generally focus on aspects of nutritional fulfillment, stunting prevention, and improving student health. Furthermore, most studies only highlight the program's benefits from an output perspective, while research analyzing the implementation of the MBG Program using George C. Edward III's policy implementation theory is relatively limited. Research on the implementation of the MBG Program at the local level, particularly at the Medokan Ayu SPPG in Surabaya, and its impact on student learning concentration, is also rare.

This study aims to fill this gap by analyzing the implementation of the MBG Program through indicators of communication, resources, disposition, and bureaucratic structure. The results indicate that the implementation of the MBG Program in Surabaya has been quite successful, supported by effective communication, adequate resources, high commitment of implementers, and clear standard operating procedures (SOPs). However, this study also identified several obstacles not widely discussed in previous research, such as limited labor

during increased production, food distribution issues, the lack of specific incentives for implementers, and differences in the implementation of SOPs between SPPG and schools. These results enhance understanding of the successes and challenges of implementing the Free Nutritious Meals Program at the implementer level.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

Public Policy

Several scholars have provided different definitions of public policy. For example, Harold D. Lasswell states that public policy is a program developed based on certain practices, objectives, and values (D, 2020). Thus, public policy can be understood as a carefully designed program aimed at achieving predetermined goals and serving the broader public interest.

According to Carl J. Frederick, public policy is defined as a series of actions taken by an individual, group, or government within a particular environment while considering existing threats and taking advantage of available opportunities (D, 2020). In Frederick's view, public policy is formulated to utilize potential opportunities and overcome obstacles that arise within the social, political, or economic environment.

According to David Easton, public policy is the outcome of governmental activities through which the government performs its functions (D, 2020). In this context, public policy refers to all actions and decisions made by the government that affect society as a whole and whose impacts are directly experienced by the public.

Based on the definitions provided by these scholars, the author concludes that public policy is a set of actions undertaken by the government and governmental actors to address existing societal problems.

Policy Implementation

There are several models of policy implementation proposed by various scholars. The first is the model developed by George C. Edward III, who argues that one of the major issues in Public Administration is the lack of attention given to implementation. Edward III states that there are important elements in policy implementation that directly or indirectly influence the execution of a policy. According to Edward III, the key elements required for successful policy implementation are:

- **Communication**

Communication is a crucial aspect of policy implementation. Factors such as transmission, consistency, and clarity are influenced by communication. Effective communication is important because it enables policy implementers to discuss issues and reach mutually beneficial agreements.

- **Resources**

It is essential for a policy to have adequate resources, including human resources, materials, and methods. Without sufficient resources, a policy is likely to be ineffective and may remain merely a document incapable of solving societal problems.

- **Disposition**

Disposition refers to the attitudes and characteristics possessed by policy implementers in carrying out their duties. These characteristics include commitment, discipline, honesty, intelligence, and a democratic attitude. The better the disposition of policy implementers,

the greater the likelihood that the policy will be implemented effectively and in accordance with its intended objectives.

- **Authority/Bureaucratic Structure**

Authority refers to the legitimacy granted to implementers to carry out a policy. This authority originates from the bureaucratic structure, including both the individuals involved in policy implementation and their official positions. Therefore, authority is closely related to Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), which help ensure that policies are implemented in accordance with established rules and objectives.

The second policy implementation model was developed by Merilee S. Grindle (1980). According to Grindle, the success of policy implementation can be assessed from two perspectives: the implementation process and the achievement of the expected outcomes.

From the process perspective, success is measured by the extent to which policy implementation conforms to the planned regulations and actions. From the outcome perspective, success is measured by the achievement of program objectives and the impacts experienced by individuals and groups within society.

According to this theory, two main factors influence the success of policy implementation:

- **Content of Policy**

One of the most important factors determining successful policy implementation is the content of the policy itself. This variable includes several aspects, such as:

- The interests of the target groups affected by the policy;
- The benefits expected from the policy;
- The degree of change anticipated;
- The location or level at which decisions are made;
- The parties responsible for implementing the program; and
- The availability and support of the resources necessary to implement the policy.

- **Context of Implementation**

This factor includes:

- The power and interests of actors involved in policy implementation;
- The characteristics of the institutions and governing regimes responsible for implementation; and
- The level of compliance and responsiveness of target groups toward the implemented policy.

The effectiveness of policy implementation is greatly influenced by the extent to which implementation is carried out successfully, as this serves as a measure of how effectively a policy can be executed in order to achieve its intended objectives.

The third policy implementation theory was developed by Van Meter and Van Horn, who argue that there are six indicators that influence the implementation of a policy. These six indicators are:

- **Policy Standards and Objectives**

This indicator states that policy implementation must have clear standards and objectives so that it can be effectively realized. If policy standards and objectives are unclear, multiple interpretations may arise, leading to conflicts among implementation actors.

- **Resources**

<http://jurnaldialektika.com/>

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According to this indicator, policy implementation requires adequate resources, including both human and non-human resources. The availability of resources is crucial because it contributes to the smooth execution of programs or policies. Without sufficient resources, policy goals and objectives will be difficult to achieve, thereby hindering program implementation.

- **Interorganizational Communication and Implementing Activities**

Effective communication, coordination, and cooperation among agencies and all parties involved are essential for implementing programs or policies. Strong interorganizational relationships ensure that each party understands its role and responsibilities. Conversely, poor communication and coordination can obstruct program implementation. Therefore, collaboration and synergy among agencies are critical to the successful implementation of policies.

- **Characteristics of the Implementing Agencies**

The characteristics of implementing agencies are closely related to the bureaucratic structure responsible for policy execution. This indicator includes various elements, such as organizational characteristics, applicable standards, and patterns of relationships established within the bureaucracy. These components can influence the performance of policy implementers, either directly or indirectly, in carrying out their duties and responsibilities. Consequently, the level of policy implementation success is affected by these characteristics.

- **Social, Economic, and Political Conditions**

This indicator relates to the social, economic, and political environment that may influence the success of policy implementation. Factors considered include the availability of economic resources that support policy implementation, the level of support from interest groups, the tendency of communities or stakeholders to support or oppose the policy, and the development of public opinion within the environment. In addition, support from political elites can significantly affect the success of policy implementation.

- **Implementers' Disposition**

Implementers' disposition refers to the attitudes, understanding, and tendencies of policy implementers in carrying out a policy. This indicator consists of three main components:

- Implementers' response to the policy, which may influence their willingness and commitment to implement it;
- Cognition, or the level of implementers' understanding of the content and objectives of the policy; and
- Disposition intensity, referring to the values, perspectives, or preferences of implementers that may affect how they apply the policy in practice.

The Free Nutritious Meals Program (MBG)

The Free Nutritious Meals Program (MBG) was first proposed by Prabowo Subianto in 2006, initially as an idea to provide free milk for children. During the 2024 election campaign, Prabowo directly observed the condition of malnourished children in various regions, leading the idea to evolve into a free meal program. The MBG Program became one of the national priority programs within the vision of "Golden Indonesia 2045" and one of the eight *Asta Cita* missions of the Prabowo-Gibran administration aimed at strengthening human resources. Following Prabowo Subianto's election as President for the 2024–2029 term, the program was

Mutiara Febriana, Pairus Ayainas, Farhanuddin, Umi Hasanah., (2024). Analisis Kualitatif Peran Program Makan Bergizi Dalam Pencegahan Stunting: Studi Kasus Di Desa Kuala Indah, Batubara. <i>Journal of Human And Education</i>, 4(5).	programs in the previous study preventing stunting, and the topic and focusing on how discussed in the these programs are current study both implemented, the discuss the challenges faced, implementation of the government support Free Nutritional Meal and the involvement Program.
	Differences: of various stakeholders, this The difference study can identify between the previous factors that influence study and the current children's nutritional study is the location status. of the study. The previous study was located in Desa Indah, while the current study is located in Surabaya City.
3 Research conducted by Tri Wahyuningtias, Mufarrihul Hazin., (2026). Implementasi Kebijakan Makan Bergizi Gratis Di SMP Negeri 13 Surabaya. <i>e-Jurnal Inspirasi Manajemen Pendidikan</i>, 13(1).	The implementation Similarities: of the Free Nutritious The topic discussed Meals program in in the previous study Surabaya has been and the topic successful, in terms of discussed in the resources, current study both disposition, and discuss the environment. Implementation of However, there are the Free Nutritional still challenges that Meal Program. need to be addressed, Differences: such as a lack of The difference communication and between the previous coordination between study and the current implementers, study is the location including the central of the study. The government, local previous study was governments, service conducted at SMPN providers, and 13 Surabaya, while schools. the current study was conducted at MTsN 3 & MIN 1 Surabaya City.

Source: Processed by researchers, 2026

D. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Essentially, every policy designed by the government, both at the central and regional levels, requires special attention during its implementation to ensure its success. One of the areas studied by the author is the implementation of the Free Nutritious Meals program. Referring to Edward III's opinion in Mustari (2015), it is important to pay attention to four main indicators during the implementation phase: communication, resources, disposition or attitude, and bureaucratic structure. This will ensure more effective policy implementation. The author also used these four indicators as the basis for examining the implementation of the free nutritious meal program in improving student learning concentration in this study. (Septiani, 2024)

Communication

The implementation of any policy inevitably involves interaction between policymakers and policy implementers. According to Dunn (2003), a key characteristic of this interaction is the use of information related to highly complex issues. In this context, interaction is closely linked to communication. Based on Dunn's explanation, interaction is not only necessary during policy formulation but is also crucial throughout the policy implementation process.

Furthermore, Widodo (2010) argues that regardless of how well a policy is designed, its objectives will not be achieved if it is not implemented effectively. Therefore, harmonious relationships among institutions are essential in the implementation process, and these can be fostered through communication, cooperation, and coordination.

As further explained by Dunn (2003), communication inherently involves interaction between policymakers and policy implementers. The findings of this study indicate that communication occurred through a coordination process among public sector actors, namely the National Nutrition Agency of Surabaya City, which conducted socialization activities with the local Nutrition Fulfillment Service Units (SPPG). Subsequently, the SPPGs clearly disseminated information about the Free Nutritious Meal (MBG) Program to local schools. The MBG coordinators at schools then coordinated with homeroom teachers to assess whether the program contributed to improving students' learning concentration. The findings showed that students' concentration levels improved following the implementation of the MBG program.

Effective communication in implementing the Free Nutritious Meal Program is expected to ensure smooth execution and serve as a benchmark for evaluating the program. It also functions as a means of ensuring that the program is delivered equitably and comprehensively, thereby reducing disparities during implementation. To ensure successful policy implementation, continuous communication among all relevant stakeholders is essential.

According to Madani (2011), interaction between local government institutions and the community during the policy-making process creates cooperative relationships. These relationships are intended to address public interests and needs through public policy processes. In addition to government-led socialization conducted by the National Nutrition Agency, communication also took place between the SPPGs and schools through coordination and evaluations conducted every three months.

Overall, the findings demonstrate a well-established communication process through both coordination and interaction among the National Nutrition Agency, the Nutrition Fulfillment

Service Units, and the participating schools.

Resources

Resources available for policy implementation are closely related to the supporting factors that facilitate the implementation process. Van Meter and Van Horn (as cited in Setyawan & Srihardjono, 2016) argue that the success of policy implementation is highly influenced by resource support, including human resources, materials, and methods. Similarly, Dachi (as cited in Nurwan, 2019) emphasizes that adequate resources, including human resources, financial resources, authority, and equipment, are essential for successful policy implementation. Although different terminology is used, both perspectives highlight that resources are critical components supporting public policy implementation.

One of the most important resources is human resources. According to Setyawan and Srihardjono (2016), human resources serve not only as implementers of a program but also as the objects of the implementation process itself. This highlights the unique role of human resources in managing and utilizing all other supporting resources.

The implementation of the Free Nutritious Meal Program to improve students' learning concentration in Surabaya has been supported by adequate resources. These include human resources, budgetary resources, facilities and equipment, and authority resources. Human resources consist of SPPG staff and participating teachers. Facilities and equipment are supported by the availability of MBG kitchens in every district, food containers (ompreng), and MBG delivery vehicles provided for each kitchen. Schools are also equipped with facilities such as designated areas for the collection and return of food containers. These facilities contribute to the smooth implementation of the program.

In terms of financial resources, the program is funded through the State Budget (APBN). Regarding authority resources, both the SPPGs and schools operate under different Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), all of which have been implemented by the stakeholders involved in the MBG program.

As stated by Van Meter and Van Horn (cited in Sulistyadi, 2014), the success of policy implementation is strongly influenced by the availability of supporting resources. This demonstrates the crucial role of resources in ensuring successful public policy implementation. Even a well-formulated policy will not be effective without adequate resources to support its execution. The findings indicate that both the SPPGs and teachers have implemented the MBG program effectively, supported by the resources described above.

Disposition

Edward III explains that disposition refers to the attitudes and motivations of policy implementers in carrying out policies earnestly to achieve the intended objectives. Disposition also encompasses implementers who not only possess the necessary capabilities but also demonstrate strong commitment in executing the policy (Mustari, 2015). This variable reflects the character and personal qualities of policy actors, which significantly influence the success of policy implementation. Therefore, disposition can be understood as the willingness and determination that are closely linked to the commitment of policy implementers.

The findings reveal a strong commitment from the Head of SPPG Medokan Ayu to ensure that the program meets all required standards. This commitment is demonstrated through regular evaluations of food distribution processes and firm action against implementers who fail to follow

procedures. To address delivery delays, the Head of SPPG Medokan Ayu introduced adjustments to production schedules, improved distribution routes, and replaced drivers who were not performing adequately. These actions reflect a high level of responsibility and dedication to ensuring the success of the MBG program.

Similarly, MTsN 3 Surabaya and MIN 1 Surabaya provided strong support for the program. Through organized duty schedules and clear task distribution, teachers and educational staff actively participated in program implementation. The schools viewed the MBG program as a means of fostering responsibility and discipline while also meeting students' nutritional needs.

The findings also indicate that implementers of the MBG Program at SPPG Medokan Ayu and beneficiary schools did not receive special incentives or rewards. According to the Head of SPPG Medokan Ayu, staff members carried out their responsibilities based on personal awareness and commitment. MBG coordinators at MTsN 3 and MIN 1 Surabaya reported similar conditions, explaining that teachers performed their duties according to their assigned responsibilities without receiving additional incentives. Nevertheless, implementers remained enthusiastic in supporting the program despite the absence of financial rewards.

This demonstrates that implementers' motivation was primarily driven by a sense of responsibility, concern for students, and commitment to the success of the Free Nutritious Meal Program. Therefore, the disposition variable in Edward III's theory can be considered well implemented, as it is supported by positive attitudes, strong commitment, and the determination of all implementers to carry out the program optimally without incentives.

Bureaucratic Structure

According to Edward, as cited in Nugroho (2011), bureaucratic structure reflects the suitability of bureaucratic organizations in implementing public policies through the roles of employees, administrators, and bureaucrats (Septiani, 2024). This suitability is demonstrated through coordination and cooperation among actors involved in program implementation. In this case, SPPG Medokan Ayu, MTsN 3 Surabaya, and MIN 1 Surabaya have established effective coordination and collaboration.

In addition, bureaucratic structure is generally associated with a clear division of authority in policy implementation. This is evidenced by the fact that each institution involved in implementing the policy operates according to established Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). This view aligns with Setyawan (2016), who defines bureaucratic structure or organization as a pattern of authority relationships and coordination among implementing actors or institutions involved in policy implementation.

The interview results indicate that the bureaucratic structure has generally functioned well. However, several issues remain. For example, students at MIN 1 Surabaya reported feeling hungry during class hours, which could negatively affect their learning concentration. Furthermore, one of the implementing actors lacked a written SOP. Ideally, even minor procedures should be formally documented to provide legitimate authority and clear guidance for managing the implementation of the MBG program within the school. These findings suggest that the bureaucratic structure supporting the implementation of the Free Nutritious Meal Program is generally adequate, although certain aspects still require improvement to enhance program effectiveness.

E. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the researcher's research, the implementation of the Free Nutritious Meal Program (MBG) to improve student learning concentration in Surabaya City is proceeding well, in accordance with George C. Edward III's policy implementation theory.

The communication variable was implemented through a socialization process conducted by the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI) with the Medokan Ayu SPPG and the target schools, such as MTsN 3 Surabaya and MIN 1 Surabaya. During the process, the Medokan Ayu SPPG also identified the beneficiary schools and provided clear terms of cooperation. This communication process was clear and well-received by all parties. Consistency in this communication variable was also evident when the Medokan Ayu SPPG conducted routine evaluations every two weeks for minor evaluations and every three months for major evaluations. Overall, these variables faced no challenges in their implementation.

Regarding resources, these included human resources, budget, equipment, and authority. Although there were occasional staff shortages, this was addressed through division of labor. Although the budget was sometimes felt to be a little short, the Medokan Ayu SPPG managed to manage it sufficiently to cover daily needs. None of these variables faced any obstacles in implementation.

The disposition variable reflects the attitude of program implementers. In the MBG program in Surabaya, the Medokan Ayu SPPG, MTsN 3 Surabaya, and MIN 1 Surabaya schools were supportive. However, the Medokan Ayu SPPG encountered obstacles, such as drivers resting at food stalls and not delivering meals to the school promptly. This resulted in late and ineffective meals. The bureaucratic structure variable is also a crucial aspect of the MBG program. This bureaucratic structure presents obstacles, such as Madrasa Ibtidaiyah 1 Surabaya's lack of written SOPs, and students requesting MBG meals before recess. This is also a problem that must be addressed

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