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Implementation of the Free Nutritious Meal (MBG) Program and Its Impact on Local Employment Opportunities in the Kalideres Area

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ABSTRACT

The Free Nutritious Meals (Makan Bergizi Gratis/MBG) Program is a government initiative designed to meet community nutritional needs while engaging local workers and businesses through Nutrition Fulfillment Service Units (Satuan Pelayanan Pemenuhan Gizi/SPPG). However, its contribution to local employment opportunities requires further examination. This study aimed to analyze the implementation of the MBG Program and its effect on local employment opportunities in Kalideres District. A mixed-methods approach with a sequential explanatory design was employed, involving 80 respondents for the quantitative phase and 23 informants for the qualitative phase. Data were collected using questionnaires and qualitative data collection techniques, then analyzed using descriptive statistics, regression analysis, and qualitative analysis to explain the quantitative findings. The results indicated that the implementation of the MBG Program was categorized as high, with a mean score of 3.82, while local employment opportunities also received a high mean score of 3.84. Regression analysis revealed that program implementation had a positive and statistically significant effect on local employment opportunities, with an R-squared value of 0.603 and a significance level of less than 0.001. Qualitative findings further showed that employment opportunities emerged through direct recruitment by SPPGs and the involvement of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and suppliers, both directly and indirectly. These findings demonstrate that the MBG Program can serve not only as a nutritional intervention but also as a mechanism for expanding local employment and strengthening community economic participation. Effective implementation should therefore consider local workforce engagement and partnerships with local businesses to maximize its broader socioeconomic benefits.

1. Introduction

The Free Nutritious Meals (Makan Bergizi Gratis/MBG) Program is a government initiative designed to improve nutritional outcomes, support human resource development, and contribute to Indonesia's vision of Golden Indonesia 2045. Globally, school meal programs have become an important policy instrument for addressing nutritional challenges while supporting children's well-being. According to the World Food Programme (WFP), at least 65 countries had policies providing free school meals in 2022. In Indonesia, the urgency of such interventions is reflected in persistent nutritional challenges. The 2022 Indonesian Nutrition Status Survey reported a stunting prevalence of 21.6%, compared with the government's target of reducing it to 14%, while approximately 3.8% of children under five experienced severe malnutrition (Kamalawati et al., 2025; Tarmizi, 2023). The scale of the MBG Program is substantial, with approximately 59.86 million intended beneficiaries in 2026, including elementary, junior high, senior high, and vocational high school students, as well as children under five (Muhamad, 2026). These figures demonstrate the program's significance not only as a nutritional intervention but also as a large-scale public policy with potential implications for employment and local economic development.

The substantial scale of the program is reflected in its funding requirements. In 2026, the budget of the National Nutrition Agency (Badan Gizi Nasional/BGN) reached IDR 268 trillion, increasing from the previous allocation of IDR 217.9

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trillion. Of this amount, IDR 34.49 trillion was allocated to MBG for school students, while IDR 3.19 trillion was designated for pregnant women, breastfeeding mothers, and children under five. Approximately 95.4% of the BGN budget, equivalent to IDR 255.6 trillion, was directed toward national nutrition improvement programs (Muhamad, 2026). Nevertheless, program implementation has faced challenges related to geographical distribution and food safety. Java accounted for approximately 18.42 million beneficiaries, or 59% of the total, whereas Maluku and Papua accounted for around 0.70 million beneficiaries, or 2% (Ridwan, 2025). Food safety incidents have also raised concerns about implementation quality. Data reported by the Indonesian Education Monitoring Network (JPPI) recorded 3,079 food-poisoning victims in August 2026 and 15,735 victims between January and August 2026. From 2025 through August 2026, a total of 43,838 victims were recorded across 36 provinces. Approximately 65% of the incidents in August occurred on Java, with around 35% occurring in Central Java (Ridwan, 2026). These challenges indicate that evaluating the MBG Program requires attention not only to its nutritional objectives but also to its implementation mechanisms and broader socioeconomic implications.

Beyond nutritional outcomes, the MBG Program has the potential to stimulate economic activity through the involvement of local workers, suppliers, and business entities. In 2026, the program involved 61,857 suppliers, comprising 26,899 micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), 26,773 other parties or individuals, 7,098 cooperatives, 806 village-owned enterprises (BUMDes), 82 joint village-owned enterprises (BUMDesma), and 199 Merah Putih Cooperatives (Kopdes Merah Putih). Furthermore, 20,617 partners managed 21,102 Nutrition Fulfillment Service Units (Satuan Pelayanan Pemenuhan Gizi/SPPGs), involving approximately 887,048 workers or personnel (Muhamad, 2026). Estimates attributed to Statistics Indonesia (Badan Pusat Statistik/BPS) indicated that an MBG budget of IDR 43.28 trillion could generate approximately 1.2 million direct and indirect jobs, contribute to a 0.3% increase in economic growth, and increase local employment opportunities by 0.9% in 2025 (SIPERS-71/BGN/02/2026, 2026). These figures suggest that the program may generate employment through both direct recruitment within SPPGs and indirect economic activities involving food production, distribution, trade, and related services. From an economic perspective, government expenditure can stimulate demand for goods and services, encourage production, and subsequently increase labor demand. Within the MBG context, these mechanisms may create employment opportunities across multiple sectors of the local economy (Kamil et al., 2026; Lubis & Qarni, 2025; Marlina et al., 2024; Waty, 2023).

The potential contribution of the MBG Program is particularly relevant given Indonesia's continuing employment challenges. Statistics Indonesia reported 7.28 million unemployed people in February 2025, corresponding to an open unemployment rate of 4.76%, down from 5.45% in February 2023. The urban unemployment rate was 5.73%, compared with 3.33% in rural areas. Young people aged 15–24 faced a substantially higher unemployment rate of 16.16%, equivalent to approximately 3.65 million people, while the rates for individuals aged 25–59 and those aged 60 and above were 3.04% and 1.67%, respectively (Ahdiat, 2025a; BPS, 2025; Zakia, 2025). Employment conditions in Jakarta further illustrate the relevance of examining local labor absorption. In February 2025, the number of unemployed people in Jakarta reached 338,390, with an unemployment rate of 6.18%. In West Jakarta, the unemployment rate decreased from 7.10% in August 2022 to 6.02% in August 2025 (Ahdiat, 2025b; Fathurilham & Maulana, 2026; BPS, 2025). These conditions raise an important question concerning the extent to which large-scale public programs can translate government expenditure into employment opportunities for communities in the areas where program activities are implemented.

Previous studies have examined the MBG Program and related school meal interventions primarily in relation to health, education, and local economic empowerment, including the studies by Widyasari et al. (2025), Aurino et al. (2023), and Auliawan and Harsiwi (2025). However, the specific contribution of MBG implementation to local labor absorption remains insufficiently examined in the context addressed by this study. In particular, further investigation is needed to establish whether program implementation is associated with greater local employment opportunities and to understand the mechanisms through which these opportunities

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emerge. Quantitative analysis can measure the relationship between program implementation and local employment opportunities, while qualitative analysis can explain how SPPG operations, local business participation, and supplier involvement contribute to employment creation. Addressing this gap is important because the scale of program funding and participation does not, by itself, establish the extent to which employment benefits reach the surrounding community.

Against this background, this study aims to analyze the implementation of the MBG Program and examine its effect on local employment opportunities in Kalideres District. Specifically, it evaluates the implementation of the program, assesses local employment opportunities, measures the relationship between program implementation and local employment opportunities, and explores the mechanisms through which employment is generated through SPPGs and associated local economic activities. The study employs a mixed-methods approach with a sequential explanatory design, combining quantitative analysis with qualitative inquiry to provide both statistical evidence and contextual explanations. Its theoretical contribution lies in extending the discussion of government-funded nutrition programs beyond nutritional and educational outcomes to include local employment as a relevant socioeconomic dimension. Practically, the findings can inform policymakers, SPPG managers, and local business stakeholders in strengthening local workforce participation and developing partnerships with MSMEs and suppliers. The novelty of this study lies in its integrated examination of the relationship between MBG implementation and local employment opportunities in Kalideres District, together with an exploration of the direct and indirect mechanisms through which the program may support local economic participation.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Conceptual and Theoretical Foundations

2.1.1. Free Nutritious Meals Program Implementation

The implementation of the Free Nutritious Meals (Makan Bergizi Gratis/MBG) Program refers to the operational delivery of government-funded nutrition services through Nutrition Fulfillment Service Units (Satuan Pelayanan Pemenuhan Gizi/SPPG). In this study, program implementation is examined through three dimensions: program governance, program distribution, and nutrition standards and food safety. These dimensions reflect the extent to which the program is managed, delivered to beneficiaries, and operated in accordance with nutritional and food safety requirements. Effective implementation requires adequate coordination, appropriate resource allocation, reliable food procurement, and compliance with operational standards. Previous studies have discussed school meal programs in relation to child health, educational outcomes, and local economic empowerment (Aurino et al., 2023; Auliawan & Harsiwi, 2025; Widyasari et al., 2025). However, the socioeconomic implications of implementation, particularly local employment opportunities, also warrant examination. From an economic perspective, government expenditure can stimulate aggregate demand, encourage production, and increase demand for labor (Marlina et al., 2024; Waty, 2023). In the MBG context, these mechanisms may operate through SPPG recruitment and the procurement of food and other operational supplies from local businesses.

2.1.2. Local Community Employment Opportunities

Local community employment opportunities refer to opportunities for residents to participate in work generated directly or indirectly by the implementation of the MBG Program. Direct employment opportunities arise from the operational requirements of SPPGs, including recruitment, worker placement, training, and the provision of wages or incentives. Indirect employment opportunities emerge through supply-chain activities involving MSMEs, suppliers, traders, and other businesses that provide food ingredients and operational necessities. The distinction is important because program-related economic activity does not automatically translate into additional jobs; employment creation also depends on business capacity, procurement arrangements, and changes in labor requirements. Research on the employment implications of the MBG Program has highlighted its potential to stimulate local economic activity and create employment opportunities (Kamil et al., 2026; Lubis & Qarni, 2025). Accordingly, this study examines local employment opportunities through

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two dimensions: direct employment through SPPG operations and indirect employment through the participation of local businesses and suppliers.

2.1.3. Government Expenditure and Labor Demand

The relationship between public program implementation and employment can be explained through the economic principle that government expenditure generates demand for goods and services, which may stimulate production and increase labor demand. When a public program requires food preparation, distribution, procurement, and supporting services, its operational expenditure can create employment opportunities both within implementing organizations and across related supply chains. In the MBG Program, SPPGs require personnel to deliver daily operations, while their procurement activities create commercial opportunities for local suppliers and MSMEs. These relationships provide the theoretical basis for expecting a positive association between program implementation and local employment opportunities. Nevertheless, the extent of employment creation depends on how program resources are managed and how extensively local workers and businesses participate in implementation.

2.2. Review of Empirical Studies

Previous empirical studies have examined school meal programs and the MBG initiative from several perspectives. Aurino et al. (2023) examined the learning impacts of a large-scale school feeding program, while Auliawan and Harsiwi (2025) discussed Japan's *kyushoku* system as a reference for Indonesia's MBG Program. Widyasari et al. (2025) evaluated the MBG policy in elementary schools in relation to children's health and local economic empowerment. Together, these studies provide relevant perspectives on the nutritional, educational, and broader socioeconomic dimensions of school meal programs. However, their research focuses, as described in the available literature, do not establish the specific effect of MBG implementation on local employment opportunities in Kalideres District.

Research more directly related to employment has considered the economic implications of the MBG Program. Lubis and Qarni (2025) examined its multiplier effect in relation to job creation in Batang Kuis, Deli Serdang, from a *maslahah* perspective. Kamil et al. (2026) discussed the program's social, economic, and political implications for communities in Aceh Tenggara. Meanwhile, Marlina et al. (2024) and Waty (2023) provide economic perspectives relevant to understanding aggregate demand, production, and labor demand. These studies support the argument that government-funded programs may generate economic benefits beyond their immediate objectives. Nevertheless, the available literature does not provide sufficient evidence to determine how the implementation of the MBG Program is statistically associated with local employment opportunities at the SPPG level in Kalideres District or how direct and indirect employment mechanisms operate in this specific setting. The present study addresses this issue by combining quantitative measurement with qualitative explanations from program personnel, business actors, suppliers, beneficiaries, and other relevant informants.

2.3. Identification of the Research Gap

The literature reveals three related gaps. First, existing studies have examined school meal programs primarily through nutritional, educational, policy, and broader socioeconomic perspectives (Aurino et al., 2023; Auliawan & Harsiwi, 2025; Widyasari et al., 2025). Second, although research has considered the employment and economic implications of MBG (Kamil et al., 2026; Lubis & Qarni, 2025), the relationship between program implementation and local employment opportunities through individual SPPGs remains insufficiently examined in the context of Kalideres District. Third, the mechanisms connecting program implementation to employment require further explanation, particularly the distinction between direct recruitment by SPPGs and indirect opportunities arising through local MSMEs and suppliers. To address these gaps, this study uses a sequential explanatory mixed-methods design to test the relationship between MBG Program Implementation and Local Community Employment Opportunities quantitatively and subsequently explain the observed relationship through qualitative evidence. Its contribution lies in integrating statistical evidence with an examination of the local employment mechanisms associated with program implementation.

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2.4. Development of the Conceptual Framework

This study conceptualizes MBG Program Implementation as the independent variable (X) and Local Community Employment Opportunities as the dependent variable (Y). Program implementation is measured through program governance, program distribution, and nutrition standards and food safety. Local employment opportunities are examined through direct employment opportunities within SPPGs and indirect employment opportunities generated through local suppliers, MSMEs, and related business activities. The conceptual relationship assumes that better program implementation is positively associated with local employment opportunities because effective operational delivery requires workers and stimulates procurement-related economic activities. Qualitative inquiry complements the quantitative model by explaining how these opportunities emerge and identifying implementation conditions that may influence local participation.

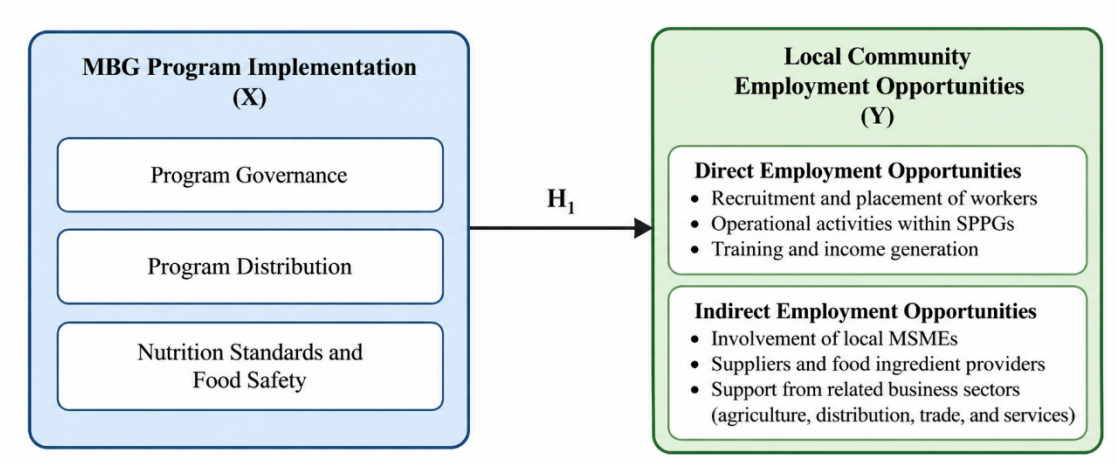


Fig. 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study

Source: Developed by the authors based on the study's research variables and conceptual rationale.

2.5. Hypotheses or Research Propositions

The conceptual framework suggests that the implementation of the MBG Program may be associated with local employment opportunities through two mechanisms. First, SPPG operations require personnel to perform food preparation, distribution, and other operational activities, creating opportunities for direct employment. Second, procurement activities may generate indirect economic opportunities for local MSMEs, suppliers, traders, and other business actors. These mechanisms are consistent with the economic argument that government expenditure can stimulate demand and production, potentially increasing labor demand (Kamil et al., 2026; Lubis & Qarni, 2025; Marlina et al., 2024; Waty, 2023). Accordingly, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H_0: MBG Program Implementation has no statistically significant effect on Local Community Employment Opportunities in Kalideres District.

H_1: MBG Program Implementation has a statistically significant effect on Local Community Employment Opportunities in Kalideres District.

The hypothesis is tested using simple linear regression. The qualitative component further explores how direct employment through SPPGs and indirect employment through local businesses and suppliers contribute to the observed relationship. These mechanisms are examined as explanatory themes rather than as separate hypotheses because the study does not independently test their statistical effects.

3. Research Methods

3.1. Research Design

This study employed a mixed-methods approach with a sequential explanatory design, in which quantitative data were collected and analyzed first, followed by qualitative data collection and analysis to explain the quantitative findings (Hikmawati, 2020, p. 160). This design enabled the study to examine the statistical effect of Free Nutritious Meals (Makan Bergizi Gratis/MBG) Program Implementation on Local Community Employment Opportunities and to explore how employment opportunities emerged through

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program operations and local economic activities.

3.2. Research Context and Setting

The study was conducted from May to July 2026 at two Nutrition Fulfillment Service Units (Satuan Pelayanan Pemenuhan Gizi/SPPG) in Kalideres District, West Jakarta: SPPG Jakarta Barat Kamal 01 and SPPG Jakarta Barat Semanan 03. These sites were selected to examine employment opportunities associated with MBG implementation through SPPG operations and their involvement with local workers, micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), and suppliers.

3.3. Population and Sample / Research Participants

The study population comprised 100 personnel, including managers and workers or volunteers from the two SPPGs, with 50 personnel at each unit. Participants were selected using purposive sampling based on their involvement in and knowledge of MBG Program implementation (Icuk & Sakir, 2024, p. 147). The quantitative phase involved 80 respondents, comprising 40 respondents from SPPG Semanan 03 and 40 from SPPG Kamal 01. The qualitative phase involved 23 informants: two SPPG heads, eight workers or volunteers, three MSME owners or suppliers, three beneficiaries from the B3 group, one integrated health post (Posyandu) cadre, and six school representatives.

3.4. Data Sources and Data Collection

The study used primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through questionnaires administered to the 80 respondents and semi-structured interviews conducted with the 23 informants. Secondary data were obtained from the MBG Technical Guidelines (Petunjuk Teknis/Juknis) and SPPG profiles. Data collection involved questionnaires, interviews, and documentation. The quantitative data were collected to measure program implementation and local employment opportunities, while the qualitative data provided contextual explanations of the quantitative findings and the employment mechanisms associated with SPPG operations and local supply-chain activities.

3.5. Measurement of Variables and Research Instruments

The study examined two variables: MBG Program Implementation (X) as the independent variable and Local Community Employment Opportunities (Y) as the dependent variable. Both variables were measured using a questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 to 5. The research instrument was developed based on indicators for each variable. MBG Program Implementation was assessed through three indicators: program governance, program distribution, and nutrition standards and food safety. Local Community Employment Opportunities were assessed through direct employment opportunities arising from SPPG operations and indirect employment opportunities associated with local MSMEs, suppliers, and related economic activities. The instruments were used to obtain quantitative measures of the two variables and support the subsequent regression analysis.

3.6. Data Analysis Techniques

Quantitative data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics 30. The analytical procedures included descriptive statistics, validity and reliability testing, normality, linearity, and heteroscedasticity tests, simple linear regression, a t-test, and coefficient of determination (R^2) analysis. Hypothesis testing examined whether MBG Program Implementation had a statistically significant effect on Local Community Employment Opportunities in Kalideres District.

Qualitative data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman model, which comprises data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The qualitative findings were used to explain the quantitative results, particularly the ways in which SPPG recruitment and the participation of MSMEs and suppliers contributed to direct and indirect employment opportunities.

3.7. Validity, Reliability, and Trustworthiness

Quantitative instrument validity was assessed using Pearson's product–moment correlation at a 5% significance level. Instrument reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha, with a minimum acceptable threshold of 0.70 (Hardani, 2020, p. 199). The quantitative analysis also included normality, linearity, and heteroscedasticity tests to assess the assumptions relevant to simple linear regression.

For the qualitative component, data validity

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was assessed through source and method triangulation by comparing information obtained from questionnaires, interviews, and documentation (Sapto, 2020, p. 385). These procedures supported the assessment of consistency across data sources and strengthened the credibility of the study's interpretations.

3.8. Ethical Considerations

The study involved SPPG personnel, MSME owners or suppliers, beneficiaries, a Posyandu cadre, and school representatives. However, the available methodological description does not specify whether formal ethical approval was obtained, how informed consent was documented, or what procedures were used to protect participants' confidentiality and personal data. These details should be reported in the final manuscript if the corresponding procedures were implemented.

3.9. Research Procedure

The research was conducted in sequential stages. First, the study identified the two SPPGs and selected participants using purposive sampling. Second, quantitative data were collected from 80 respondents using questionnaires and analyzed through descriptive statistics, instrument testing, regression assumption testing, and simple linear regression. Third, qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 23 informants and supported by documentation. Fourth, the qualitative data were analyzed through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Finally, source and method triangulation were used to compare information from questionnaires, interviews, and documentation, enabling the qualitative findings to explain the quantitative results.

3.10. Methodological Limitations

This study focused on two SPPGs in Kalideres District and used purposive sampling, which limits the extent to which the findings can be generalized to other locations or MBG implementation settings. The quantitative analysis used simple linear regression to examine the relationship between program implementation and local employment opportunities; therefore, the findings establish a statistical association within the specified model but do not independently establish causality. In addition, the analysis did not separately estimate the effects of program implementation on direct and indirect employment opportunities. The qualitative component provides contextual explanations of these mechanisms, but further research involving more SPPGs, broader geographical coverage, and separate analyses of direct and indirect employment would help assess the wider applicability of the findings.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Research Results

4.1.1. Sample Description and Descriptive Statistics

This study was conducted at two Nutrition Fulfillment Service Units (Satuan Pelayanan Pemenuhan Gizi/SPPG) in Kalideres District, West Jakarta: SPPG Jakbar Kalideres Semanan 03 and SPPG Jakbar Kalideres Kamal 01. Semanan 03 began operating on October 20, 2025, serving 3,213 beneficiaries with 50 personnel, whereas Kamal 01 began operating on October 13, 2025, serving 3,939 beneficiaries with 50 personnel. Their main operational difference concerned food procurement: Semanan 03 collaborated directly with 42 suppliers, while Kamal 01 relied primarily on a cooperative and purchased from local MSMEs or traders when necessary supplies were unavailable through the cooperative.

The quantitative analysis involved 80 respondents, comprising 40 respondents from each SPPG. The sample included 45 women (56%) and 35 men (44%). By age, 32 respondents (40%) were aged 18–25 years, 26 (33%) were aged 26–35 years, 14 (18%) were aged 36–45 years, and eight (10%) were aged 46–55 years. Most respondents (88.75%) resided in Kalideres District, while 11.25% came from outside the district. Regarding previous employment, 37 respondents (46.25%) had been unemployed, 18 (22.50%) had worked as daily workers, 16 (20%) as private-sector employees, five (6.25%) as traders or MSME owners, and two (2.50%) as homemakers. One respondent each (1.25%) had previously worked as a self-employed worker and a food and beverage (F&B) worker.

The mean score for MBG Program Implementation (X) was 3.82 (76.38%), categorized as high. Program Governance scored 3.73 (74.54%), Program Distribution scored 3.82 (76.40%), and Nutrition Standards and Food Safety scored 3.91 (78.21%). The highest-scoring item was X17, concerning menu completeness in accordance with

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balanced nutrition principles (4.31), while X4, concerning the appropriateness of budget utilization for operational needs, received the lowest score (2.64). Local Community Employment Opportunities (Y) also fell into the high category, with a mean score of 3.84 (76.79%). Indirect employment opportunities scored 3.87 (77.46%), compared with 3.81 (76.13%) for direct employment opportunities. Item Y7, concerning opportunities for local residents to apply for and work at SPPGs, received the highest score (4.29), while Y12, concerning clarity in the division of tasks and responsibilities, received the lowest score (3.26).

4.1.2. Data Quality and Preliminary Analysis

All 18 questionnaire items measuring MBG Program Implementation and all 12 items measuring Local Community Employment Opportunities were declared valid, with an r-table value of 0.220. Cronbach's alpha was 0.785 for MBG Program Implementation and 0.806 for Local Community Employment Opportunities, exceeding the minimum threshold of 0.70. The normality test produced an Asymp. Sig. value of 0.200. The linearity test yielded a significance value of less than 0.001, with a deviation-from-linearity significance value of 0.248. The heteroscedasticity test produced a significance value of 0.232. These results supported the use of simple linear regression for the analysis.

4.1.3. Main Analytical Results

Simple linear regression indicated a strong positive relationship between MBG Program Implementation and Local Community Employment Opportunities, with an R value of 0.776. The coefficient of determination (R^2) was 0.603, indicating that 60.3% of the variation in local employment opportunities was explained by program implementation within the research model. The adjusted R^2 was 0.598 (59.8%), while the remaining 39.7% of the variation was associated with factors outside the model.

The qualitative findings provided further detail on the employment mechanisms associated with the program. Direct employment opportunities arose from SPPG recruitment, worker placement, training, and the provision of wages or incentives. Indirect opportunities emerged through food procurement and the involvement of MSMEs, suppliers, and other business actors. One chicken supplier reported increased income after becoming an MBG supplier. However, higher supplier income did not necessarily result in immediate job creation, as additional recruitment depended on business capacity and labor requirements.

4.1.4. Hypothesis Testing Results / Key Findings

The regression analysis produced a t-value of 10.876, with a significance level of less than 0.001. Because the significance level was below 0.05, the null hypothesis (H_0: $\beta = 0$) was rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H_1: $\beta \neq 0$) was accepted. The results therefore demonstrated a statistically significant effect of MBG Program Implementation on Local Community Employment Opportunities in Kalideres District. The positive R value indicated that better implementation was associated with greater employment opportunities. The qualitative findings further identified direct recruitment through SPPGs and indirect opportunities through local businesses and suppliers as mechanisms associated with this relationship.

4.1.5. Visual Presentation of Results

The principal quantitative findings are summarized by the following values: the mean score for MBG Program Implementation was 3.82, the mean score for Local Community Employment Opportunities was 3.84, the regression R value was 0.776, and R^2 was 0.603. These statistics, together with the indicator-level scores reported in Section 4.1.1, provide an overview of program implementation, employment opportunities, and the explanatory power of the regression model. No additional tables or figures are introduced here because the supplied results do not include a separate statistical table or figure.

4.2. Research Discussion

4.2.1. Interpretation of Key Findings

The findings indicate that MBG Program Implementation and Local Community Employment Opportunities were both categorized as high. The statistically significant regression result supports H_1 and suggests that better implementation is associated with greater local employment opportunities. The R^2 value of 0.603 indicates that program implementation explains a substantial proportion of the variation in employment opportunities within the research model. However, the remaining 39.7%

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demonstrates that other factors also contribute to employment outcomes. The qualitative findings clarify that the relationship operates through direct recruitment and operational activities at SPPGs, as well as indirect economic activities involving local suppliers and MSMEs.

Although the overall implementation score was high, the comparatively low score for budget utilization indicates an area requiring attention. Similarly, the low score for clarity in task allocation suggests that workforce management can be improved. These findings demonstrate that high overall implementation performance does not eliminate operational weaknesses that may affect the quality and distribution of employment opportunities.

4.2.2. Comparison with Previous Studies

The findings complement previous research examining school meal programs from nutritional, educational, and socioeconomic perspectives. Aurino et al. (2023) examined the learning impacts of a large-scale school feeding program, while Auliawan and Harsiwi (2025) discussed Japan's school meal system as a reference for Indonesia's MBG Program. Widyasari et al. (2025) examined the policy's implications for child health and local economic empowerment. The present study extends this discussion by empirically examining the relationship between program implementation and local employment opportunities.

The findings are also consistent with the broader employment and economic perspectives discussed by Kamil et al. (2026) and Lubis and Qarni (2025), which address the socioeconomic implications and employment-related multiplier effects of MBG. Furthermore, the relationship between public expenditure, economic activity, and labor demand provides a relevant interpretation of the observed findings (Marlina et al., 2024; Waty, 2023). The present study adds localized evidence from two SPPGs in Kalideres District and distinguishes between direct employment opportunities and indirect opportunities arising through the supply chain. Nevertheless, differences in research contexts and analytical approaches mean that the findings should be viewed as complementary evidence rather than as proof that all MBG implementations produce identical employment outcomes.

4.2.3. Theoretical Contributions

This study contributes to the understanding of government-funded nutrition programs by extending the analytical focus beyond nutritional and educational objectives to include local employment opportunities. The findings illustrate how public program implementation may be associated with labor demand through operational staffing and procurement-related economic activities. By combining regression analysis with qualitative evidence, the study also clarifies how direct and indirect employment mechanisms may operate within a local program setting. These findings support the relevance of examining public expenditure not only in terms of immediate service delivery but also in relation to its broader socioeconomic implications.

4.2.4. Practical and Policy Implications

The findings suggest several practical improvements. First, SPPG managers should clarify the division of tasks and responsibilities among workers and document these arrangements where feasible, particularly because this item received the lowest score among the direct employment indicators (3.26). Second, information about vacancies should be disseminated more openly to local residents when additional workers are needed. Third, coordination among SPPGs, suppliers, and local businesses should be strengthened to improve the availability, quantity, price, and quality of food supplies.

The involvement of local MSMEs and suppliers should also be encouraged in line with their operational capacity, capital availability, inventory, and ability to meet program requirements. These measures may help broaden local economic participation while maintaining the nutritional and food safety standards required by the program.

4.2.5. Integration with the Research Gap

The study addresses the identified gap concerning the relationship between MBG implementation and local employment opportunities at the SPPG level. The quantitative results demonstrate a statistically significant relationship, while the qualitative findings explain the associated mechanisms through direct SPPG employment and indirect supply-chain activities. The combination of these findings provides localized evidence from

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Kalideres District, contributing to the discussion of MBG as both a nutrition initiative and a potential source of local economic opportunities.

4.2.6. Acknowledgment of Study Limitations

The findings are based on 80 respondents and 23 qualitative informants from only two SPPGs in Kalideres District. Therefore, their applicability to other locations and implementation settings requires further investigation. In addition, the regression model explains 60.3% of the variation in local employment opportunities, leaving 39.7% associated with factors outside the model. The study also did not estimate separate regression models for direct and indirect employment opportunities. Consequently, the results establish a statistically significant relationship within the specified model but do not establish that all observed employment opportunities were caused exclusively by the MBG Program.

5. Conclusion

5.1. Summary of Key Findings

This study examined MBG Program Implementation and its relationship with Local Community Employment Opportunities in Kalideres District. Program implementation achieved a mean score of 3.82 and employment opportunities achieved a mean score of 3.84, with both classified as high. Simple linear regression showed a positive relationship, with $R = 0.776$, $R^2 = 0.603$, a t-value of 10.876, and a significance level of less than 0.001. These results support the alternative hypothesis that program implementation has a statistically significant effect on local employment opportunities within the research model. Qualitative findings indicated that opportunities emerged through direct recruitment and operational activities at SPPGs, as well as through indirect economic participation by local MSMEs and suppliers.

5.2. Theoretical Contributions

The study extends the discussion of public nutrition programs by examining local employment as an additional socioeconomic outcome. Its mixed-methods findings connect the statistical relationship between program implementation and employment opportunities with practical mechanisms involving SPPG staffing and local supply-chain participation. The study thereby contributes localized empirical evidence to the broader discussion of the economic implications of government-funded nutrition programs.

5.3. Practical and Policy Implications

SPPG managers should strengthen workforce management by clarifying job responsibilities, improving task allocation, and communicating recruitment opportunities more openly to local residents. Program managers and relevant stakeholders should also strengthen coordination with local MSMEs and suppliers while ensuring that participating businesses can meet requirements for supply quantity, capital, inventory, price, and quality. Maintaining effective nutritional and food safety practices while addressing weaknesses in budget utilization and workforce management may help improve implementation and broaden local participation.

5.4. Limitations of the Study

The study covered only two SPPGs in Kalideres District, limiting the generalizability of the findings to other locations. The regression model explained 60.3% of the variation in employment opportunities, indicating that other determinants were not included. Furthermore, direct and indirect employment opportunities were not examined through separate regression models. The results should therefore be interpreted within the scope of the study rather than as evidence that MBG implementation alone determines local employment outcomes.

5.5. Directions for Future Research

Future studies should examine a larger number of SPPGs across different districts and regions to assess whether the relationship observed in Kalideres District also occurs in other settings. Further research could separately measure direct employment at SPPGs and indirect employment through suppliers and MSMEs, allowing their respective contributions to be examined more precisely. Additional variables, such as local procurement intensity, business capacity, recruitment practices, and workforce characteristics, could also be incorporated to explain the variation in employment opportunities not captured by the present model. Longitudinal research could further investigate whether employment opportunities and

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business participation change as the MBG Program develops.

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