

LEADERSHIP INTEGRITY: ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS IN IMPLEMENTING FREE NUTRITIOUS LUNCH PROGRAMS IN INDONESIA

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ABSTRACT

The implementation of free nutritious lunch programs in Indonesia highlights the crucial role of ethical leadership in public policy. As the government seeks to address nutritional disparities among school-aged children, ethical challenges related to policy advocacy, budget transparency, and social equity emerge. This paper examines the ethical considerations that arise when designing and implementing free nutritious lunch programs, emphasizing the importance of integrity and responsible governance. Through a qualitative analysis of policy documents and stakeholder perspectives, this study identifies key factors that influence ethical decision-making, including budget allocation fairness, community involvement, and adherence to national values. The findings suggest that incorporating ethical leadership principles can enhance program effectiveness and sustainability while fostering public trust. This study contributes to the discourse on how leadership integrity can shape inclusive public nutrition policies, particularly in the context of Indonesia's socio-economic dynamics.

Keywords: Ethical, Free Nutrition lunch, Indonesia, Integrity, Leadership, Programs

INTRODUCTION

Integrity is a very important thing for a leader to have. The integrity of a leader can make those being led better. Leaders with moral aspects will consider the implications of Actions on the system as well as a guide in carrying out one's actions. According to Engelbrecht et al. (2015), leaders who have integrity as a moral value will create ethical leadership. When a leader does not have integrity, sooner or later the group or organization he leads will be destroyed. This happens because any policy, decision, attitude and action of a leader will have a very broad impact on the entire organization he leads.

According to Shakeel et al. (2019), ethical leadership involves demonstrating normative behavior through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, as well

as promoting such behavior to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement, and decision-making. It includes aspects such as integrity, ethical guidance, and rewarding and punishing to reinforce ethical behavior.

Ethical considerations in public policy advocacy involve a variety of principles and values that aim to ensure that the advocacy process is conducted fairly, honestly, and responsibly. Some key considerations include distributive justice (ensuring that the benefits and burdens of policy are distributed fairly), respect for human rights (protecting the rights and dignity of individuals), transparency (open advocacy processes and clear information), and accountability (advocates' responsibilities to the public). In addition, it is important to avoid manipulation or misleading information, and to ensure that advocacy does not disadvantage certain groups or ignore the interests of the wider community.

The free nutritious meal program is one step to address inequality, especially in increasing access to nutrition for children from underprivileged families. Currently, household consumption expenditure is always the largest contributor to the national economy. In the second quarter of 2024, for example, based on BPS data, this household consumption expenditure contributed 54.53 percent to national GDP. If we look deeper, from this household consumption expenditure, expenditure for food and beverage consumption other than restaurants is the largest, reaching 22.69 percent (BPS, 2024)

Although food consumption dominates household expenditure, inequality in the fulfillment of nutrition, especially protein, is still a serious problem. The significant difference between high and low income groups in access to nutritious food has not been resolved. If not addressed immediately, this is feared to have a long-term impact on the quality of human resources in the future.

Amidst this stark inequality, the free nutritious lunch program offers a potential solution to improve nutritional intake, especially for children from poor families. The program focuses on providing food that is not only filling, but also contains sufficient nutrients, including protein, vitamins, and minerals. Targeting school children in areas vulnerable to nutrition, the program is expected to help improve the nutritional status of the younger generation, which in turn will have an impact on the future of Indonesia's human resources. If implemented properly, the program can also reduce the burden of food expenditure for low-income families. This is very important considering the large proportion of poor families' expenditure on food consumption. The free nutritious lunch program can ease their burden so that existing resources can be diverted to other needs that support family

welfare, such as education and health.

The implementation of a free nutritious meal policy has several important ethical considerations, including the principles of justice, sustainability, transparency, and human rights. Justice ensures that the program reaches all groups in need, without discrimination. Sustainability ensures that the program does not only provide temporary relief but also encourages long-term behavioral change and access to better food. Transparency ensures that the budget is used effectively and prevents misuse. Human rights ensure that the program does not disadvantage certain groups, for example by ensuring the quality of safe food.

This paper formulates the problem of how Ethical Considerations Implement Free Nutritious Lunch Program in Indonesia. These considerations include aspects of Policy Formulation, Policy Implementation, and Policy Evaluation in the Implementation of the Free Nutritious Lunch Program Policy. This paper aims to understand and examine the ethical considerations that arise when designing and implementing a free nutritious lunch program, emphasizing the importance of integrity and responsible governance.

The proposition developed is Ethical Considerations in Implementing a Free Nutritious Lunch Program By considering ethical aspects, a Free Nutritious Lunch program can provide optimal benefits for students, society, and the country as a whole.

METHOD

The approach used in this study is a qualitative approach with descriptive analysis. In this case, the researcher conducted research by describing or describing the Ethical Considerations of Implementing the Free Nutritious Lunch Program in Indonesia. The data used in compiling this information is Primary data, data obtained directly from interviews with stakeholders, the Community, etc. and secondary data, data collected from Document study information, Library studies, about ethical leadership and the Free Nutritious Lunch Program Policy in Indonesia. Data collection techniques use Observation, Interview, and Documentation techniques.

Creswell, (2014:274) stated that data analysis involves open data and is based on general questions and analysis of information from participants. Qualitative data analysis will investigate thoroughly and the data is saturated. The activities in data analysis are as follows:

a. Data Collection

Data collection is carried out throughout the research from initial observation, initial interviews, observations during preparation to implementation, in-depth interviews until the data needed by the researcher has been fulfilled.

b. Data Reduction

Reducing data means summarizing, choosing the main points, focusing on important things, looking for themes and patterns. Thus, the data that has been reduced will provide a clearer picture and make it easier for researchers to collect further data and search for it if needed. In relation to the implementation of data analysis in the research carried out, what needs to be done is to record the data obtained in the field, then reduce the collected data and conclude it.

c. Data Presentation

In qualitative research, data presentation is in the form of brief descriptions, charts, relationships between categories, flowcharts and the like. The most frequently used to present data in qualitative research is narrative text.

d. Drawing Conclusions.

The operational parameters built in this paper can be seen in the following table.

Table 1 Operational parameters

Sub variabel	aspect	Parameter	Data source
Ethical Considerations (Riant N, 2023)	1.formulation of policy	<input type="checkbox"/> Openness and Participation <input type="checkbox"/> Transparency <input type="checkbox"/> Fairness	Secondary Data Primary Data
	2.implementation of policy,	<input type="checkbox"/> Effectiveness <input type="checkbox"/> Accountability <input type="checkbox"/> Efficiency <input type="checkbox"/> Integrity <input type="checkbox"/> Accessibility	Secondary Data Primary Data

	3.Evaluation of policy	<input type="checkbox"/> Objectivity: <input type="checkbox"/> Public Involvement	Secondary data Primary Data
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Source: Research Results, 2025

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Aspects of ethical considerations in public policy include three main principles: policy formulation, policy implementation, and policy evaluation. These three principles must be implemented by considering ethical values so that the resulting policies can be accepted, effective, and beneficial to the community. (Riant Nugroho, 2023).

1. Policy Formulation (Policy Formulation)

Policy formulation or public policy formulation is a stage in the public policy process where problems are identified, alternative solutions are formulated, and the policies to be taken are decided. This process involves various actors, including policy makers, stakeholders, and the community, who work together to find the best solution to a problem. The parameters in the Free Nutritious Lunch Policy formulation aspect include:

- a. Transparency and Participation; The process of formulating a free nutritious meal policy involves various parties, including the central and regional governments, the National Nutrition Agency (BGN), related ministries, and the private sector such as MSMEs and cooperatives. In addition, the community, especially target groups such as school students, pregnant women, breastfeeding mothers, and toddlers are also an important part of this process. Participation in formulating the Free Nutritious Lunch Program

- problem in Indonesia can involve various parties, including the central and regional governments, educational institutions, the community, and related business actors. It is important to involve these various parties so that the program can run effectively and on target, and have a positive impact on health, education, and the economy. Participation Forms
- 1) The central and regional governments need to jointly formulate clear and detailed policies regarding the free nutritious lunch program, including target beneficiaries, types of food provided, budget, and implementation mechanisms. The government needs to ensure good coordination between related ministries/institutions, such as the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Agriculture, and regional governments, so that the program can run synergistically. The government needs to supervise the implementation of the program to ensure that the program runs according to plan, is on target, and provides optimal benefits.
 - 2) Schools can provide data and information regarding the number of students, students' nutritional conditions, and the need for nutritious food in their respective schools. Schools can play an active role in implementing the program, such as setting lunch times, providing dining facilities, and educating students about the importance of balanced nutrition. Schools can conduct internal supervision of the implementation of the program in the school environment, and provide input to the government regarding obstacles and problems faced.
 - 3) The community can actively participate in the program, for example by volunteering in providing food, providing nutrition education to children, or helping to supervise the implementation of the program.
 - 4) Business actors, especially MSMEs, farmers, and fishermen, can be involved in the supply chain of the free nutritious lunch program, for example by providing fresh and nutritious food ingredients and Business actors can provide quality and affordable nutritious food for students, in accordance with the established nutritional standards.
- b. **Transparency;** Transparency in the formulation of free nutritious meal policies is important to ensure accountability, effectiveness, and public trust. The government opens access to information on the budget, procurement process, nutritional standards, and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. This is to prevent misuse, ensure food quality, and achieve program objectives properly. The free nutritious meal program must involve strict supervision and clear mechanisms to ensure effective budget use. This includes mechanisms to control food quality, budget use, and ensure there is no misuse.
 - c. **Justice;** The aspect of justice in the formulation of free nutritious meal policies includes the principle of equality and equal access to nutritious food for all

students, regardless of their socio-economic status. This policy aims to ensure that all children have the same opportunity to obtain sufficient nutrition to support their growth and development, as well as improve learning achievement. The free nutritious meal program must reach all groups in need, including children, pregnant women, breastfeeding mothers, and those experiencing nutritional problems. This means that the program must have a mechanism to ensure that assistance is not only provided to certain groups, but also to the most vulnerable

- d. Effectiveness: Effectiveness in formulating free nutritious meal policies considers several important aspects, including the impact on health, economy, and society. In addition, there also needs to be continuous evaluation and monitoring to ensure the program runs according to its objectives. The effectiveness of the Free Nutritious Meal Program in Indonesia can be seen from various aspects, including the impact on health, education, and economy. This program aims to improve the nutritional status of children, reduce stunting rates, and improve learning achievement and productivity. In addition, this program also has the potential to encourage local economic growth through the empowerment of MSMEs and the food supply chain.

2. Policy Implementation.

The implementation of the Free Nutritious Lunch Program policy in Indonesia is the process of implementing government policies to provide free nutritious food for school students, with the aim of improving the quality of human resources through the fulfillment of balanced nutrition, as well as having an impact on improving health, education, and the economy.

- a. Accountability in the implementation of the Free Nutritious Lunch (MBG) program in Indonesia is crucial to ensure the success of the program and avoid budget misuse. The government needs to ensure transparency, efficiency, and effectiveness in the management of funds, food quality, and distribution of benefits to the right targets. Accountability in the Free Nutritious Lunch (MBG) Program in Indonesia includes accountability for budget use, program implementation, and achievement of set targets. This involves transparency, effectiveness, and efficiency in program management, as well as strict supervision to ensure that program benefits reach the right target groups.
- b. Efficiency, Implementation of the Free Nutritional Meal Program (MBG)

policy in Indonesia needs to consider efficiency so that the program is effective and sustainable. Several important aspects include the use of village funds, strict supervision, flexible implementation models, and cross-sector coordination. Efficiency in the Free Nutritional Meal Program (MBG) in Indonesia is very important to ensure that the program achieves its goals effectively and on target. Efficiency includes budget management, logistics, and strict supervision to avoid waste and leakage of funds.

- c. Integrity in the implementation of the Free Nutritious Lunch program in Indonesia is very important to ensure the success of the program and its benefits for children. Integrity includes transparency, accountability, and good governance in every stage of the program, from planning, procurement, distribution, to supervision. Integrity in the Free Nutritious Lunch Program in Indonesia includes a commitment to run this program honestly, transparently, and accountably, and to ensure that nutritious food assistance reaches the right targets, namely pregnant women, breastfeeding mothers, toddlers, and students from various levels of education. The importance of integrity in this program also includes efficient budget management, utilization of local food, and a balanced and nutritious menu.
- d. Affordability in the implementation of the Free Nutritious Lunch Program policy in Indonesia, especially in relation to the budget and effectiveness of the program, is an important issue that needs attention. This program, which aims to provide nutritious food for school children and vulnerable groups, faces challenges in ensuring sufficient budget and efficient food distribution. Affordability in the Free Nutritious Lunch Program (MBG) in Indonesia refers to how this program can be accessed and enjoyed by all target groups, especially in areas that are difficult to reach and have diverse geographical conditions. This program aims to ensure that all children, pregnant women, breastfeeding mothers, and other vulnerable groups have access to nutritious food, regardless of their geographic location or socio-economic status.

3. Policy evaluation.

Evaluation needs to be conducted to ensure the effectiveness of the program, including aspects of nutritional fulfillment, food security, governance, and its impact on the local economy.

- a. Objectivity, Evaluation of the Free Nutritious Lunch (MBG) program in Indonesia needs to be conducted objectively to ensure its effectiveness and

impact on improving children's nutrition and the efficiency of budget use. Evaluation should cover various aspects, from food quality, distribution process, to the impact of the program on children's health and education. Evaluation Objects include Food Quality.

- b. Public Involvement, The community also needs to be involved in the policy evaluation process, to ensure that the evaluation reflects their views and experiences. Learning: The results of the policy evaluation should be used as learning material for improving future policies. Several Evaluation points: Challenges of Implementation, distribution and delays; Several areas reported delays in food distribution, some even did not receive nutritious food according to schedule, Menu Quality; there were complaints about the variety of menus that were less attractive to students, some students even did not like certain vegetables, so the food was not finished, according to (CNN Indonesia). Logistics Constraints; several areas experienced difficulties in logistics, such as providing food that did not meet standards, even incidents of poisoning, according to (Kompas.id). Fraud Mode; There were reports of individuals trying to take advantage of the program for personal gain, such as offering fake partnerships. 2) Positive Impact of Improving Nutrition; This program is expected to improve the nutrition of school children, which in turn can improve the quality of human resources. Savings; for some families, this program can help ease the burden of spending on lunch. Economic Support; This program also has the potential to have a positive impact on farmers, local producers, and MSMEs. 3) Need for Improvement and Careful Planning, The government needs to prepare more careful planning, including in terms of menus, distribution, and supervision of food quality. Clear Governance; clear and transparent governance is needed so that the program can run effectively and efficiently. Continuous Evaluation: Evaluations need to be carried out periodically to see the effectiveness of the program and make improvements if necessary. 4) Case Example: several schools in Bandung, Tasikmalaya, and other areas reported incidents of poisoning after consuming MBG food.

Local governments are urged to increase supervision and ensure that the food distributed is safe for consumption. The Free Nutritious Lunch Program in Indonesia covers the following aspects: Health, Education, Economy and Social. The results of field research show the following:

1. Health Aspect.

The Free Nutritious Lunch Program in Indonesia focuses on improving public

health, especially school children, pregnant women, and breastfeeding mothers, through the provision of nutritious food. This program aims to address the problems of stunting, malnutrition, and improve the quality of human resources. The health aspects of concern include meeting the Adequate Nutrition Intake (AKG), increasing endurance, and the potential for increasing learning achievement.

2. Education Aspect.

The Free Lunch Program in Indonesia, also known as the Free Nutritious Lunch Program (MBG), has a significant education aspect. This program aims to improve the nutritional quality of school children, which is expected to have a positive impact on their learning ability, concentration, and academic achievement.

3. Economic Aspect.

The Free Nutritious Lunch Program (MBG) in Indonesia has a significant economic impact, both directly and indirectly. This program has the potential to increase economic growth through various sectors, such as agriculture, MSMEs, and the logistics sector. However, it is also necessary to pay attention to the budget impact and potential challenges in its implementation.

4. Social Aspects.

The Free Nutritious Meals (MBG) Program in Indonesia has various social aspects that are important to pay attention to. This program not only focuses on fulfilling the nutrition of school children, but also has an impact on the local economy, food security, and community empowerment

CONCLUSION

The free nutritious lunch program has great potential to provide a positive impact on the nation's next generation. With careful planning, effective implementation, and strict supervision, this program can be an important investment in building superior human resources and creating a more advanced Indonesia.

The implementation of the free nutritious lunch policy is an important step in efforts to improve the quality of life of the Indonesian people. With careful planning, effective implementation, and strict supervision, this program has the potential to

provide a significant positive impact on future generations. Support from various parties, including the government, the community, and business actors, is needed to realize the success of this program.

Evaluation of the free nutritious lunch policy in Indonesia shows a positive impact on improving the nutrition of children, especially from the underprivileged. However, this program also faces challenges related to funding, logistics, and supervision of implementation. Careful planning, effective implementation, and strict supervision are needed for this program to achieve its goals.

The Free Nutritional Meal Program in Indonesia focuses on improving public health, especially school children, pregnant women, and lactating mothers, through the provision of nutritious food. The Free Lunch Program in Indonesia, also known as the Free Nutritional Meal Program (MBG), has a significant educational aspect. The Free Nutritional Meal Program (MBG) in Indonesia has a significant economic impact, both directly and indirectly. This program has the potential to increase economic growth through various sectors. The Free Nutritional Meal Program (MBG) in Indonesia has various social aspects that are important to note. This program not only focuses on fulfilling the nutritional needs of school children, but also has an impact on the local economy, food security, and community empowerment.

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