



Implementation of Indonesia's Free Nutritious Meal Program from the Perspective of Islamic Development Economics

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ABSTRACT

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Purpose: This study evaluates the implementation of Indonesia's Free Nutritious Meal (MBG) Program from the perspective of Islamic Development Economics using the *Maqasid al-Shariah* framework.

Design/methodology/approach: A qualitative literature review was conducted using journal articles, books, government reports, and other relevant publications. Data were analyzed through descriptive content analysis based on the five dimensions of *Maqasid al-Shariah*.

Findings: The findings show that the MBG Program aligns with Hifz al-'Aql and Hifz al-Nasl, but has not yet fully met the objectives of Hifz al-Din, Hifz al-Nafs, and Hifz al-Mal due to challenges in governance, food safety, institutional readiness, infrastructure, fiscal accountability, and public resource management.

Originality: This study provides a *Maqasid al-Shariah*-based evaluation of the MBG Program, offering a broader Islamic Development Economics perspective that extends beyond nutritional and fiscal assessments.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Human resource quality is one of the primary objectives of economic development in Indonesia. The success of development is measured not only by economic growth but also by improvements in public health and nutritional status. The availability of nutritious food plays a crucial role in developing healthy, productive, and competitive human resources capable of contributing to national development. Therefore, ensuring adequate nutritional intake, particularly for school-aged children, has become one of the key priorities in Indonesia's development policy (Siti Chotifah Hastuty et al., 2026a).

The implementation of the Free Nutritious Meals (MBG) Program has shown significant progress since its introduction. According to data from the Indonesian Ministry of Finance, as of May 21, 2025, the program had reached approximately 3.98 million beneficiaries through 1,386 Nutrition Fulfillment Service Units (*Satuan Pelayanan Pemenuhan Gizi*—SPPGs) operating across various regions, with total budget realization amounting to approximately IDR 3 trillion. Furthermore, the government has expanded its target to approximately 82.9 million beneficiaries by the end of 2025, requiring an estimated additional budget of around IDR 100 trillion should the target be fully achieved (Radhi et al., 2026).

The Indonesian government introduced the Free Nutritious Meals Program as a strategic policy to improve children's nutritional status, reduce stunting prevalence, enhance educational outcomes by improving students' concentration and learning capacity, and strengthen the quality of human resources in support of the Golden Indonesia 2045 Vision. Beyond its public health objectives, the program is also expected to generate substantial economic benefits by increasing demand for locally produced food commodities, empowering Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), creating employment opportunities, and improving the welfare of farmers, livestock producers, and fishers who supply food ingredients. From an Islamic perspective, such improvements in public welfare represent an important manifestation of *maslahah* (public benefit) (Aji, 2025).

From the perspective of Islamic development economics, development extends beyond the pursuit of economic growth. Instead, it seeks to achieve *maslahah* (public welfare), distributive justice (*'adl*), balance (*tawazun*), and comprehensive prosperity (*falah*). Islam recognizes the state's responsibility to ensure that every citizen's basic needs—including access to adequate and nutritious food—are fulfilled. These principles are closely aligned with the objectives of *Maqāṣid al-Shari'ah*, particularly the preservation of life (*ḥifẓ al-nafs*), intellect (*ḥifẓ al-'aql*), and progeny (*ḥifẓ al-nasl*), which collectively serve as the foundation for sustainable human development (Khoirudin et al., n.d.).

Examining the implementation of the Free Nutritious Meals Program through the lens of Islamic development economics is particularly important because the program encompasses not only fiscal policy and social protection but also issues related to equitable welfare distribution, equal access to basic necessities, and the optimization of the state's role in promoting social justice. Moreover, the program's success depends heavily on transparent, accountable, efficient, and well-targeted governance to ensure that its benefits are distributed fairly while minimizing fiscal inefficiency and inequality.

Despite its promising objectives, the implementation of the program continues to face numerous challenges, including infrastructure readiness, community characteristics, inter-agency coordination, distribution effectiveness, budget oversight, food quality assurance, public acceptance of the meals, and the long-term sustainability of financing. These challenges require comprehensive evaluation to ensure that the program effectively contributes to equitable and sustainable economic development in accordance with Islamic principles (Bundy et al., 2024).

Based on these considerations, investigating the implementation of Indonesia's Free Nutritious Meals Program from the perspective of Islamic development economics is both timely and essential. This study aims to examine the extent to which the implementation of the program reflects the fundamental principles of Islamic development economics, identify the factors that facilitate or hinder its implementation, and provide policy recommendations for the government and relevant stakeholders in promoting development that emphasizes *maslahah*, justice, and comprehensive social welfare.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

A review of previous studies indicates that research on Indonesia's Free Nutritious Meals (MBG) Program has largely been dominated by public policy and public health perspectives (Bundy et al., 2024; Schultz et al., 2024), with limited attention given to the perspective of Islamic development economics. Several studies have incorporated normative Islamic economic principles, political economy, or general analyses based on *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* (Ibrahim et al., 2021; Radhi et al., 2026; Siti Chotifah Hastuty et al., 2026b). However, these studies have not specifically examined the program within the broader framework of Islamic development economics. Moreover, most existing research has adopted descriptive approaches without positioning Islamic development economics as the primary analytical framework.

Hastuti et al. (Hastuti & Mahardika Hariyadi, 2025) found that the implementation of the MBG Program continues to face challenges related to inter-agency coordination and food quality control. Similarly, Tristiya and Achidsti (2026) identified inadequate infrastructure readiness and weak governance as the major obstacles to effective program implementation, emphasizing the need for a more robust implementation system. Meanwhile, Muhyidin et al. (2026) argued that the MBG Program is consistent with the objectives of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* because it contributes to the protection of life (*ḥifẓ al-nafs*), intellect (*ḥifẓ al-'aql*), and progeny (*ḥifẓ al-nasl*). Nevertheless, their study remains largely conceptual and does not comprehensively evaluate the program from the perspective of Islamic development economics.

Based on the existing literature, a significant research gap remains regarding how the implementation of the Free Nutritious Meals Program aligns with the fundamental principles of Islamic development economics, particularly distributive justice, *maslahah* (public welfare), efficiency, *amanah* (trustworthiness), and sustainable development. Addressing this gap constitutes the primary focus of the present study.

Islamic Development Economics Theory

Islamic development economics is a branch of economics that examines strategies for improving social welfare based on the principles of Islamic law (*Shari'ah*). Unlike the conventional development paradigm, which primarily emphasizes economic growth, Islamic development economics places both material and spiritual well-being (*ḥalal*) at the center of the development process. Consequently, development success is evaluated not only by increases in per capita income but also by equitable income distribution, poverty reduction, human resource development, social justice, and sustainable development.

According to Chapra (2008), Islamic economic development should establish a balance between economic growth, equitable distribution, and the fulfillment of society's basic needs. The state bears the responsibility of ensuring that these essential needs are met through public policies that promote *maslahah* (public interest). Within this framework, the Free Nutritious Meals Program can be viewed as an instrument of human development because it aims to fulfill one of the most fundamental human needs—access to nutritious food. Therefore, the implementation of the MBG Program encompasses not only economic objectives but also social and ethical dimensions rooted in Islamic teachings.

Indicators of Islamic Development Economics Based on *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*

According to Imam Al-Ghazali, five principal objectives of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* are widely recognized as the core indicators of Islamic development (Fauzi, 2021).

Hifẓ al-Din (Protection of Religion)

Hifẓ al-Din refers to safeguarding religious values and ensuring that individuals are able to practice their faith freely and responsibly. From the perspective of Islamic economics, the fulfillment of human needs must always comply with *Shari'ah* principles. Accordingly, all economic activities should adhere to the principles of *halal*, *halalan tayyiban* (lawful and wholesome), honesty, and justice.

Within the implementation of the Free Nutritious Meals Program, *Hifẓ al-Din* is reflected in the provision of food that is *halal*, safe, nutritious, and prepared in accordance with Islamic dietary regulations. Furthermore, program management should uphold the values of *amanah* (trustworthiness), transparency, and accountability as manifestations of ethical responsibility in managing public funds.

Hifẓ al-Nafs (Protection of Life)

Hifz al-Nafs aims to protect human life from all forms of threats that may endanger health and safety. In Islamic development economics, ensuring access to adequate nutrition, healthcare services, sanitation, and a healthy environment constitutes an essential means of preserving human life. Consequently, policies that improve nutritional status and public health are considered integral components of sustainable human development.

Hifz al-'Aql (Protection of Intellect)

Hifz al-'Aql focuses on preserving and developing human intellectual capacity through education, scientific advancement, and adequate nutrition that supports brain development and cognitive performance. Islam regards human intellect as one of the greatest blessings bestowed by Allah, enabling individuals to fulfill their responsibilities as *kehalifah* (vicegerents) on earth (Jajang et al., 2022). Therefore, investments in nutrition and education are fundamental to strengthening human capital and promoting long-term national development.

Hifz al-Nasl (Protection of Progeny)

Hifz al-Nasl seeks to preserve future generations by ensuring that every individual has the opportunity to grow and develop in a healthy and supportive environment. According to Al-Ghazali and Al-Shatibi, protecting progeny extends beyond safeguarding lineage; it also includes guaranteeing children's rights to physical, mental, and social well-being. Consequently, protecting pregnant women, breastfeeding mothers, infants, toddlers, and school-aged children constitutes an essential element of achieving *maslahah* within society.

Hifz al-Mal (Protection of Wealth)

Hifz al-Mal emphasizes protecting wealth from misuse, waste, corruption, and inefficiency while ensuring that public resources are managed productively and responsibly. Within the framework of Islamic development economics, governments are obligated to administer public finances efficiently, transparently, and equitably so that their benefits are distributed fairly across society (Ibrahim et al., 2021).

The Free Nutritious Meals Program as an Instrument of Development

The Free Nutritious Meals Program is a government social policy designed to improve the nutritional status of schoolchildren, pregnant women, breastfeeding mothers, and children under five. The program is expected to enhance the quality of human resources through improved nutrition while simultaneously strengthening national food security.

From the perspective of development economics, investment in nutrition constitutes a long-term investment in human capital. Individuals with better nutritional status generally demonstrate higher learning capacity, greater labor productivity, and improved health outcomes, all of which contribute to sustained economic growth (Schultz et al., 2024).

Beyond its direct benefits for program beneficiaries, the MBG Program is also expected to generate substantial multiplier effects by increasing demand for agricultural, livestock, fisheries, cooperative, and locally produced MSME products. Previous studies conclude that the success of school feeding programs depends largely on the effective integration of local supply chains, transparent procurement systems, and sound governance practices (Drake et al., 2016; Permono, 2025). These factors are therefore essential to ensuring that the MBG Program contributes not only to improved nutrition but also to inclusive and sustainable economic development.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative research approach using the library research method to examine the implementation of Indonesia's Free Nutritious Meals (MBG) Program from the perspective of Islamic development economics. A qualitative approach was selected because it enables an in-depth exploration of concepts, policies, and theoretical frameworks relevant to the implementation of the program while facilitating a comprehensive interpretation of existing literature.

The study relies exclusively on secondary data obtained from a wide range of authoritative sources, including academic books, national and international peer-reviewed journal articles, government regulations, official policy documents, reports published by the National Nutrition Agency (*Badan Gizi Nasional*—BGN), the Ministry of National Development Planning (*Bappenas*), Statistics Indonesia (*Badan Pusat Statistik*—BPS), and publications issued by both national and international organizations related to the Free Nutritious Meals Program and Islamic development economics.

Data collection was conducted through a systematic literature review involving the identification, selection, and critical evaluation of relevant scholarly and policy documents. The selection process prioritized publications with high academic credibility and direct relevance to the objectives of the study.

The collected data were analyzed using content analysis, which involved four sequential stages: data reduction, data presentation, data interpretation, and conclusion drawing. Throughout the analytical process, the findings were interpreted using the framework of Islamic development economics, emphasizing the principles of *Maqāṣid al-Shari'ah*, distributive justice ('*adl*), *maslahah* (public welfare), *amanah* (trustworthiness), efficiency, and sustainable development. This analytical framework enables a comprehensive assessment of whether the implementation of Indonesia's Free Nutritious Meals Program reflects the fundamental objectives and ethical values of Islamic development economics while contributing to equitable and sustainable national development.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Identification of Previous Research Findings Supporting and Opposing the Implementation of Indonesia's Free Nutritious Meals Program

To identify the existing body of knowledge, this study reviewed previous literature concerning the implementation of Indonesia's Free Nutritious Meals (MBG) Program. The reviewed studies were subsequently classified into two categories: those reporting positive findings (supporting the program) and those highlighting challenges, limitations, or critical perspectives (opposing or questioning the program's implementation). This classification provides a comprehensive understanding of the current scholarly debate and serves as the basis for identifying research gaps addressed in this study.

The findings of previous studies supporting and opposing the implementation of the MBG Program in Indonesia are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Previous Research Findings Supporting and Opposing the Implementation of Indonesia's Free Nutritious Meals (MBG) Program

Author(s)	Research Findings	Implications
Donald A. P. Bundy et al. (2009)	School feeding programs improve children's nutritional status, school attendance, academic performance, and serve as an investment in human capital (Bundy et al., 2009).	School meal programs represent a long-term investment in national development.
Drake et al. (2017)	School feeding contributes to improved health, cognitive development, and future productivity (Drake et al., 2017).	Supports the development of high-quality human resources.
Kristjansson et al. (2006) (<i>Cochrane Review</i>)	School feeding programs increase energy and micronutrient intake and positively affect learning outcomes, particularly in low-income countries (Kristjansson et al., 2006).	Effective as a public health intervention.
Tri Wahyuni et al. (2026) (<i>Scoping Review of Indonesia's MBG Program</i>)	The MBG program has the potential to improve children's nutritional status, health, and learning readiness. Its successful implementation largely depends on the quality of governance and institutional management (Tri Wahyuni et al., 2026).	Good governance is essential for maximizing the effectiveness of the MBG program.
Saputri & Utari (2026)	A systematic review indicates that the MBG program improves nutritional status, learning concentration, school attendance, and educational outcomes among students.	Demonstrates positive impacts on both nutrition and educational achievement.
Mahananny et al. (2026)	International evidence suggests that school meal policies provide a strong foundation for	International best practices support the implementation

development and implementation of the MBG of the MBG policy in program in Indonesia (Mahananny et al., 2026). Indonesia.

Source: Processed by the authors (2026).

Table 2. Previous Studies Highlighting Challenges of the Free Nutritious Meal (MBG) Program

Author(s)	Research Findings	Critical Issues
Tristiya & Achidsti (2026)	Major implementation challenges include inter-agency coordination, infrastructure readiness, food quality control, and governance mechanisms (Tristiya & Achidsti, 2026).	The program requires a more comprehensive and well-prepared implementation system.
Markus Hadinata (2026)	The success of the MBG program depends heavily on institutional capacity, fiscal governance, and sustainable financing (Hadinata, 2026).	Fiscal sustainability and institutional capacity must be carefully addressed.
Chotifah Hastuty et al. (2026)	A three-decade review of school feeding research reveals that current challenges focus on sustainability, operational efficiency, and monitoring systems (Chotifah Hastuty et al., 2026).	Governance and monitoring systems are critical determinants of long-term program success.

Source: Processed by the authors (2026).

As shown in **Table 1 and 2**, the majority of previous studies support the implementation of Indonesia's Free Nutritious Meal (MBG) Program, highlighting its significant contribution to long-term national development objectives. The MBG program is considered a promising policy intervention with substantial potential to improve children's nutritional status, learning concentration, school attendance, and overall educational outcomes. Evidence from international studies further demonstrates that school feeding programs constitute an effective investment in human capital, as they enhance health, cognitive development, energy and micronutrient intake, ultimately leading to higher productivity and improved learning performance (Fauzi, 2021).

Nevertheless, several studies have also identified important challenges and criticisms regarding the implementation of the MBG program in Indonesia. These concerns primarily relate to the program's implementation capacity, including inadequate infrastructure readiness, insufficient food quality assurance mechanisms, weak fiscal governance, limited inter-agency coordination, uncertainties surrounding the sustainability of financing, and operational inefficiencies. These findings suggest that although the MBG program has considerable potential to generate positive socioeconomic outcomes, its long-term success depends on strengthening institutional capacity, improving governance, and establishing an effective and sustainable implementation framework.

4.2. Reviewing the Free Nutritious Meal (MBG) Program from the Perspective of Islamic Development Economics

Table 3. Indicators of Islamic Development Economics Based on Maqasid al-Shariah

Hifz al-Din (Protection of Religion)	Hifz al-Nafs (Protection of Life)	Hifz al-'Aql (Protection of Intellect)	Hifz al-Nasl (Protection of Lineage)	Hifz al-Mal (Protection of Wealth)
Ensuring that meals provided are halal, safe, nutritious, and produced in accordance with Islamic principles. Program management	Protecting human life by preventing health risks and safeguarding individuals from conditions	Promoting intellectual development through education, knowledge acquisition, and adequate nutrition	Ensuring that every generation has the right to grow and develop in a healthy environment with adequate physical and mental well-being	Protecting public wealth from misuse, waste, and corruption while ensuring that state resources are managed

should uphold the threaten their health that supports being, thereby productively, values of amanah and well-being. optimal brain fostering high-quality efficiently, and (trustworthiness), development and future generations. responsibly. transparency, cognitive functioning. accountability, and responsibility in the utilization of public funds.

Source: Adapted from Chapra (2008) and Fauzi (2021).

Table 3 presents the indicators of Islamic Development Economics based on the Maqasid al-Shariah framework, together with the key actions and principles represented by each dimension. These indicators provide an analytical framework for evaluating whether the implementation of the Free Nutritious Meal (MBG) Program aligns with the objectives of Islamic development. If the program implementation fulfills the criteria represented by these indicators, it can be concluded that the program is consistent with the principles of Islamic Development Economics. Specifically, the program should ensure the provision of halal and nutritious food, protect human life and health, promote intellectual development through adequate nutrition, safeguard the well-being of future generations, and uphold transparency, accountability, and the responsible management of public resources in accordance with the objectives of *Maqasid al-Shariah*.

Table 4. Assessment of the Free Nutritious Meal (MBG) Program Based on the *Maqasid al-Shariah* Framework: Supporting and Opposing Perspectives

Islamic Economics Dimension	Development	Supporting Arguments (Pros)	Challenges and Criticisms (Cons)
Hifz al-Din (Protection of Religion)	- Provides halal, safe, and nutritious meals. - Food production is expected to comply with Islamic dietary principles (Shariah). - Promotes the values of <i>amanah</i> (trustworthiness), transparency, accountability, and responsibility in the management of public funds.	- The implementation system remains insufficiently developed. - Several reported food poisoning cases raise concerns regarding food safety and quality assurance. - Weak accountability in the management of government expenditures may undermine public trust.	
Hifz al-Nafs (Protection of Life)	- Provides nutritious meals to children vulnerable to hunger and malnutrition. - Contributes to improving nutritional status and protecting children's health.	- Weak food safety management may expose children to foodborne illnesses. - Inadequate implementation may threaten children's health and safety.	
Hifz al-'Aql (Protection of Intellect)	- Has the potential to improve nutritional status. - May enhance brain development, cognitive function, concentration, and learning outcomes over the long term.	- Evidence of cognitive and educational benefits is still limited because the program has been implemented only recently. - Long-term impacts require further empirical evaluation.	
Hifz al-Nasl (Protection of Lineage)	- Supports children's right to grow and develop in a healthy physical and mental condition. - Contributes to the development of healthier and higher-quality future generations.	- Program sustainability is essential to ensure long-term intergenerational benefits. - Unequal implementation across regions may reduce its effectiveness.	
Hifz al-Mal (Protection of Wealth)	Public expenditure on nutrition can be viewed as an investment in human capital and long-term economic development.	- Potential fiscal and institutional risks. - Risks of budget misuse and inefficient public spending. - Food waste resulting from spoiled or	

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- Effective financial management may contaminated meals.
generate long-term socioeconomic returns.
 - Large-scale government expenditure
may contribute to inflationary pressures if
not properly managed.
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Source: Processed by the authors (2026).

As shown in Table 3, the implementation of Indonesia's Free Nutritious Meal (MBG) Program continues to generate both supporting and opposing perspectives. Overall, most of the *Maqasid al-Shariah* dimensions are represented by both positive and negative aspects, while Hifz al-'Aql (Protection of Intellect) and Hifz al-Nasl (Protection of Lineage) are characterized predominantly by supporting arguments with relatively limited criticism. In contrast, Hifz al-Mal (Protection of Wealth) remains the most challenging dimension due to concerns regarding fiscal governance, resource allocation, and financial accountability.

The implementation of the MBG program in Indonesia remains a subject of public and academic debate. Previous studies have identified several critical challenges, including weaknesses in the implementation system, fiscal and institutional risks, and governance deficiencies. An inadequately prepared implementation system may generate unintended consequences, such as food poisoning incidents, inefficient infrastructure procurement resulting in budgetary waste, and disruptions in the food supply chain. These disruptions may reduce food availability in local markets, contribute to higher food prices, and create broader economic consequences. Rising prices can weaken household purchasing power, reduce business revenues, and increase the risk of unemployment and poverty as firms adjust their labor demand to cope with declining income. From this perspective, the current implementation of the MBG program has not yet fully reflected several key principles of Islamic Development Economics, particularly Hifz al-Din (Protection of Religion), Hifz al-Nafs (Protection of Life), and Hifz al-Mal (Protection of Wealth).

From the perspective of Hifz al-Din, Islamic Development Economics emphasizes not only compliance with halal principles but also trustworthiness (*amanah*), accountability, and responsibility in the management of public resources. Efficient and responsible use of public funds is therefore an essential component of this principle. If weaknesses in budget allocation or implementation contribute to broader economic pressures, such as inflation or reduced social welfare, these outcomes indicate the need to strengthen governance and improve public financial management to better align the program with Islamic ethical values.

Regarding Hifz al-Nafs, one of the primary objectives of the MBG program is to protect human life by improving children's nutritional status. However, reported food poisoning incidents raise concerns regarding food safety and quality control, highlighting the importance of strengthening monitoring and quality assurance mechanisms. Furthermore, if implementation challenges contribute indirectly to declining purchasing power through inflation or unemployment, vulnerable households may experience greater difficulty in meeting their basic needs, potentially undermining the broader objective of protecting human well-being (Hannanong & Aris, n.d.).

From the perspective of Hifz al-Mal, Islamic Development Economics requires public wealth to be protected from misuse, waste, and corruption while ensuring that government resources are managed efficiently and productively. Concerns have been raised regarding procurement practices associated with the MBG program, including expenditures on items that have been perceived as having limited relevance to the program's core objectives, such as electric motorcycles and other operational equipment. These concerns underscore the importance of prioritizing public spending, strengthening financial accountability, and ensuring that government expenditures generate maximum social benefits (Radhi et al., 2026).

The findings of this study are consistent with those reported by Khoirudin et al. (n.d.), who argue that although the MBG program represents one of the government's flagship initiatives and is designed to improve children's nutritional status and long-term human capital development, its implementation still requires comprehensive evaluation and refinement. While the program is intended to promote public welfare by producing healthier and more productive future generations, its effectiveness depends on stronger governance, improved institutional readiness, more robust implementation mechanisms, and sustainable financing. Without these improvements, implementation challenges may reduce the program's overall effectiveness and limit its contribution to the broader objectives of sustainable and inclusive development.

5. CONCLUSION

The findings of this study indicate that the implementation of Indonesia's Free Nutritious Meal (MBG) Program fulfills two of the five dimensions of Islamic Development Economics based on the *Maqasid al-Shariah* framework, namely Hifz al-'Aql (Protection of Intellect) and Hifz al-Nasl (Protection of Lineage). However, the program has not yet fully met the requirements of the remaining three dimensions: Hifz al-Din (Protection of Religion), Hifz al-Nafs (Protection of Life), and Hifz al-Mal (Protection of Wealth).

On the one hand, the MBG program has the potential to improve children's nutritional status and cognitive development, thereby supporting the objective of Hifz al-'Aql. It also promotes Hifz al-Nasl by helping ensure that children have the opportunity to grow and develop in a healthy physical and mental condition. On the other hand, the findings suggest that several aspects of program implementation require further improvement to achieve closer alignment with the principles of Islamic Development Economics. These include strengthening governance and food safety systems to better protect human life (Hifz al-Nafs), enhancing institutional capacity and implementation readiness—including infrastructure and administrative arrangements—to ensure responsible and trustworthy program delivery (Hifz al-Din), and improving fiscal governance, public financial accountability, and the efficient use of state resources while carefully considering the broader socioeconomic multiplier effects of government spending (Hifz al-Mal).

Overall, while the MBG program demonstrates considerable potential to contribute to human capital development, its long-term success from the perspective of Islamic Development Economics will depend on strengthening governance, institutional effectiveness, and financial accountability to ensure that the program advances both social welfare and the objectives of *Maqasid al-Shariah*.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this study indicate that the implementation of Indonesia's Free Nutritious Meal (MBG) Program** has partially fulfilled the principles of Islamic Development Economics based on the *Maqasid al-Shariah* framework. Specifically, the program aligns with Hifz al-'Aql (Protection of Intellect) and Hifz al-Nasl (Protection of Lineage) by supporting improvements in children's nutritional status, cognitive development, and brain function, while also ensuring children's right to grow and develop in a healthy physical and mental condition. These outcomes demonstrate the program's potential to contribute to the development of high-quality human capital and the well-being of future generations. However, the findings also suggest that the program has not yet fully achieved the objectives of Hifz al-Din (Protection of Religion), Hifz al-Nafs (Protection of Life), and Hifz al-Mal (Protection of Wealth).

Several implementation challenges remain, including weaknesses in governance and food safety systems, limited institutional and infrastructure readiness, and the need for greater transparency, accountability, and efficiency in the management of public funds. Furthermore, greater attention should be given to the broader socioeconomic multiplier effects of government spending, including its potential implications for inflation, purchasing power, and public welfare. Therefore, while the MBG program represents a strategic policy for improving nutrition and human capital development, strengthening governance, institutional capacity, and fiscal accountability is essential to ensure that its implementation is fully consistent with the objectives of *Maqasid al-Shariah* and the principles of Islamic Development Economics.

7. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This study has several limitations. First, it relies on a relatively limited number of references, particularly international empirical studies on school feeding programs from the perspective of Islamic Development Economics. Second, the use of a qualitative literature review limits the ability to establish causal relationships between the MBG program and development outcomes. Third, the analysis is restricted to the *Maqasid al-Shariah* framework and does not incorporate broader economic or institutional perspectives.

Future research is encouraged to include more comprehensive references, adopt quantitative or mixed-methods approaches, and examine the impact of the MBG program on economic development using broader indicators, such as human capital, poverty, education, food security, fiscal sustainability, and social welfare.

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