



Stakeholder Collaboration Management Model in the Implementation of the Free Nutritious Meal Program in Primary Schools: A Systematic Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

The Free Nutritious Meal Program represents a strategic national policy aimed at addressing child malnutrition while improving educational outcomes in Indonesian primary schools. However, its implementation involves complex coordination among multiple stakeholders. This study aims to identify and synthesize an effective stakeholder collaboration management model to support the successful implementation of the program. This research employed a systematic literature review using the PRISMA 2020 framework. Data were collected from peer-reviewed journal articles published between 2020 and 2025 using Google Scholar accessed through Publish or Perish software. A total of fourteen articles met the inclusion criteria and were analyzed using VOSviewer to identify thematic patterns. The findings reveal three key dimensions influencing successful implementation: cross-sector governance and coordination, policy-driven socio-economic impact, and strategic communication. The study concludes that structured, transparent, and data-driven collaboration among stakeholders is essential for program sustainability and effectiveness. Strengthening institutional capacity, improving coordination mechanisms, and enhancing communication strategies are necessary to optimize program outcomes.

1. Introduction

Indonesia faces persistent challenges in improving child nutrition and educational quality simultaneously. National health data indicate that stunting prevalence remains a significant concern, reflecting long-term risks to human capital development (Kementerian Kesehatan Republik Indonesia, 2025). Child malnutrition not only affects physical growth but also undermines cognitive development, learning achievement, and future economic productivity (Roothaert et al., 2021). These conditions highlight the urgent need for integrated policy interventions that address both health and education in a comprehensive manner.

Without proper intervention, the long-term consequences may hinder national development and reduce the quality of future human resources. Therefore, addressing child nutrition is not only a health issue but also a strategic investment in education and national competitiveness. This is increasingly relevant in the context of educational transformation in the era of Industry 5.0, where human resource quality becomes a key determinant of national progress (Nadeak, 2024; Ridha et al., 2026).

In response to this challenge, the Government of Indonesia launched the Free Nutritious Meal Program in January 2025 as a strategic policy to improve students' nutritional intake and learning outcomes. The program is designed as a comprehensive intervention that integrates nutrition services within the education system by utilizing schools as primary implementation hubs. This approach aims to enhance students' physical well-being, increase school attendance, and improve learning concentration (Rahmah et al., 2025). Moreover, the program reflects a broader policy perspective that sustainable social interventions require cross-sector collaboration rather than isolated actions (Ansell & Gash, 2008). By involving multiple sectors, including education, health, and local economic actors, the program is expected to generate both educational and socio-economic benefits.

However, the implementation of the Free Nutritious Meal Program at the local level presents significant challenges due to the complexity of stakeholder involvement. The program requires coordination among various actors, including local governments, education and health offices, school administrators, teachers, local small and medium enterprises, and community members. Each stakeholder operates within different institutional frameworks, capacities, and priorities, which often leads to coordination difficulties (Freeman, 2010). This condition reflects the importance of stakeholder roles in decision-making processes within educational management systems (Jaenudin, 2024).

Teachers, for instance, play a central role in program implementation but frequently face increased workload and administrative responsibilities. At the same time, local governments encounter challenges related to infrastructure readiness, budget allocation, and inter-agency coordination. These complexities indicate that effective collaboration management is essential to ensure program success, as also reflected in studies emphasizing the role of management information systems and school leadership in improving educational performance (Nikmah et al., 2025).

Empirical studies have shown that school feeding programs contribute significantly to improving students' nutritional status, attendance rates, and academic performance, although the outcomes vary across different regions (Kristjansson et al., 2016; World Food Programme, 2020). Disparities between urban and rural areas, differences in institutional capacity, and uneven infrastructure development often result in inconsistent program effectiveness (Roothaert et al., 2021). Furthermore, international experiences from countries such as Brazil and Tanzania demonstrate that governance quality and stakeholder coordination are critical factors in determining program success (World Bank, 2018; Food and Agriculture Organization, 2019). These findings suggest that the effectiveness of such programs

is not solely determined by resource availability but also by how well stakeholders collaborate and coordinate their roles. In line with the transformation of education systems in the Industry 5.0 era, collaboration and integration of multiple sectors become increasingly essential to support adaptive and technology-driven governance (Nadeak, 2024).

Despite the growing body of literature on school feeding programs, there is still a lack of comprehensive and context-specific studies that focus on stakeholder collaboration management in the implementation of the Free Nutritious Meal Program in Indonesian primary schools. Most existing studies emphasize program outcomes rather than examining the underlying collaboration mechanisms that enable effective implementation, as highlighted in recent systematic reviews of complex interventions in education and health (Page et al., 2021). As a result, practical implementation often remains fragmented, and opportunities to enhance program sustainability are not fully optimized. Therefore, a systematic analysis of existing research is necessary to identify patterns, gaps, and best practices in stakeholder collaboration. Therefore, this study aims to identify, analyze, and synthesize effective stakeholder collaboration management models that support the implementation of the Free Nutritious Meal Program in Indonesian primary schools through a systematic literature review.

2. Methodology

This study employs a bibliometric analysis approach to systematically examine the existing literature on the Free Nutritious Meal Program. Bibliometric analysis is a quantitative method used to evaluate research trends, publication patterns, and relationships among scientific publications. Data were collected from Google Scholar using relevant keywords such as "Free Nutritious Meal Program," "school feeding," "student nutrition," and "education policy." The selection process followed the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) framework to ensure transparency and rigor. Initially, a total of 200 articles were identified. After removing duplicates and screening titles and abstracts, 78 articles remained. Further eligibility assessment based on relevance, publication year, and research focus resulted in 36 articles. Finally, 14 articles were selected for in-depth analysis.

The selected data were analyzed using VOSviewer software to visualize keyword co-occurrence and identify thematic clusters. This tool allows researchers to map relationships between concepts and detect dominant research themes. In addition, bibliometric indicators such as keyword frequency and network visualization were used to provide a deeper understanding of research development. This approach enables the identification of emerging trends and underexplored areas in the field. As shown in Table 1, the inclusion criteria ensure that selected articles are relevant, recent, and derived from credible academic sources. The selection process followed the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-

Analyses) framework to ensure transparency and rigor (Page et al., 2021). The inclusion and exclusion criteria used in this study are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Criteria for Article Inclusion and Exclusion

Criteria	Inclusion	Exclusion
Publication Year	Articles from January 2020 - October 2025	Articles before 2020
Type of Publication	Journal Articles	Proceedings, Books, Edited Works
Source	Peer-reviewed Journals	Non-journal sources
Language	English	Other languages
Scope	Discusses Free Nutritious Meal Program	Not relevant to the topic

Initially, a total of 200 articles were identified. After removing duplicates and screening titles and abstracts, 78 articles remained. Further eligibility assessment resulted in 36 articles, and finally, 14 articles were included in the analysis. The PRISMA flowchart of the data selection process is illustrated in Figure 1.

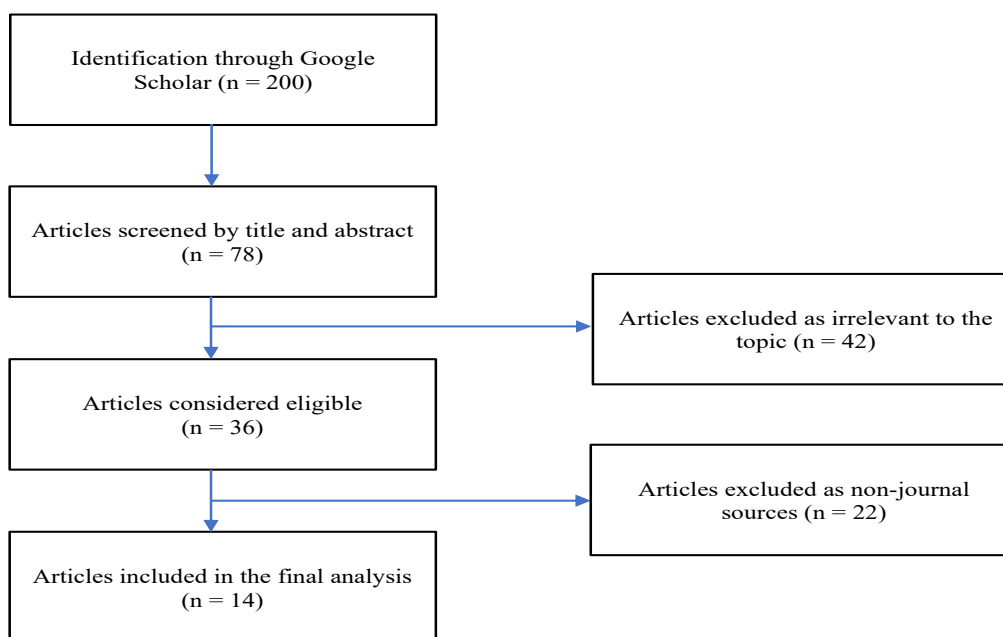


Figure 1. PRISMA Flowchart for Data Collection

As illustrated in Figure 1, the selection process ensured that only relevant and high-quality studies were included in the analysis.

3. Results and Discussion

To understand the complexity of the Free Nutritious Meal Program ecosystem, this study conducted a thematic analysis of fourteen selected articles, focusing on identifying key patterns related to stakeholder collaboration, implementation challenges, and strategic approaches in school-based nutrition programs. The

findings indicate that the success of school feeding programs is strongly influenced by multi-stakeholder collaboration involving government institutions, schools, communities, and external partners. This aligns with previous studies emphasizing that collaborative governance is essential in ensuring program sustainability and effectiveness (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Emerson et al., 2012; Azizah et al., 2026), and is further strengthened by recent findings on strengthening teacher participation and school quality management (Wahyuningsih, Sri et al., 2026)

Stakeholder collaboration emerges as a central theme in the implementation of the Free Nutritious Meal Program, where the government plays a dominant role in policy formulation and funding allocation, while schools function as the primary implementers responsible for program execution at the operational level. The effectiveness of this collaboration is closely linked to how stakeholders are involved in decision-making processes and organizational management (Jaenudin, 2024). Teachers and school administrators are directly involved in managing food distribution and monitoring student participation. Meanwhile, parents and local communities contribute through social support and supervision. In some cases, partnerships with private sectors and non-governmental organizations further strengthen program delivery. This finding is consistent with research indicating that effective collaboration enhances accountability, resource sharing, and program reach (Bryson et al., 2015; Ansell & Gash, 2008).

However, without strong coordination among stakeholders, implementation tends to face inefficiencies and inconsistencies across regions, which is also consistent with findings on school climate and its influence on teacher competence in educational settings (Saputro et al., 2026; Afwanudin et al., 2026). Despite its potential benefits, the implementation of the Free Nutritious Meal Program also faces several challenges. One of the main issues is the limitation of financial resources, which affects the quality and sustainability of food provision. In addition, logistical constraints such as food distribution, storage, and preparation often hinder program effectiveness, particularly in rural or remote areas. Variations in regional infrastructure also contribute to unequal program outcomes.

Another significant challenge is the lack of standardized monitoring and evaluation systems, where many schools implement the program without clear performance indicators, making it difficult to assess its impact on students' nutritional status and learning outcomes. These findings are supported by previous studies highlighting that program implementation often fails due to weak governance structures and limited institutional capacity (Gelli et al., 2019; World Food Programme, 2020).

As shown in Figure 2, several clusters represent dominant themes in the literature. The first cluster focuses on student nutrition and health outcomes, highlighting the role of school feeding programs in improving dietary intake and reducing malnutrition. The second cluster emphasizes policy and governance aspects, including program regulation, funding mechanisms, and institutional coordination. The third cluster relates to educational outcomes, where improved nutrition is linked to better concentration, attendance, and academic performance. This thematic distribution indicates that the Free Nutritious Meal Program is not only a

health intervention but also an educational and social policy instrument (Adelman et al., 2008; World Bank, 2018). To further explore the structure of research trends, keyword relationships were mapped using VOSviewer, and the network visualization is presented in Figure 2.

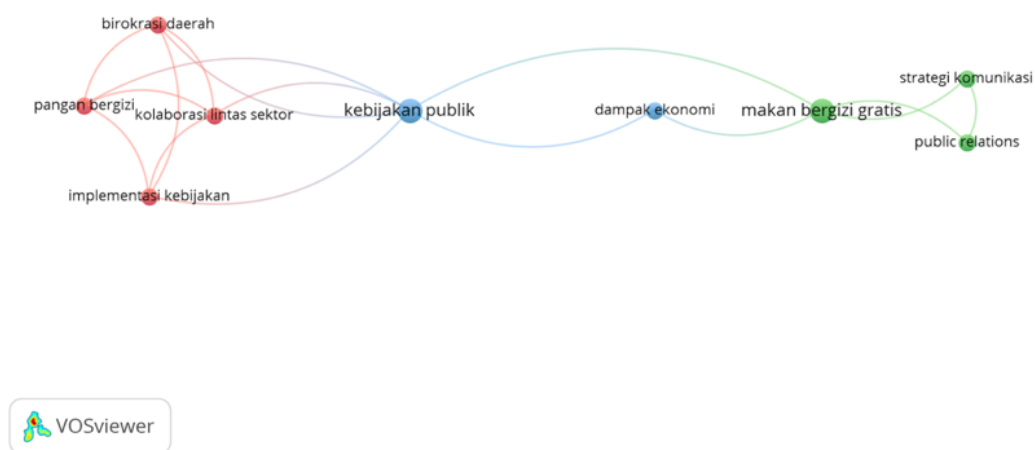


Figure 2. Network Visualization Analysis of the Free Nutritious Meal Program

Based on the synthesis of the selected articles, several strategic approaches can be proposed to improve the effectiveness of the Free Nutritious Meal Program. Strengthening cross-sector collaboration is essential to ensure integrated program management, including clearer role distribution among stakeholders and improved coordination mechanisms. Increasing budget allocation and financial transparency is necessary to maintain program quality, as adequate funding ensures better food quality, consistent distribution, and long-term sustainability (World Bank, 2018; World Food Programme, 2020).

Furthermore, the development of a standardized monitoring and evaluation system is crucial, where schools should be equipped with clear guidelines and measurable indicators to assess program performance. Lastly, leveraging digital technology such as e-governance systems can enhance data management, transparency, and accountability in program implementation, in line with the growing trend of digital transformation in public service delivery (Mergel et al., 2019), as also demonstrated in studies on web-based management information systems and data governance in education (Kamal et al., 2026). This aligns with the broader shift toward digital-based education systems and smart governance frameworks in the Industry 5.0 era (Nadeak, 2024).

The findings of this study highlight that the Free Nutritious Meal Program requires a comprehensive management approach that integrates policy, implementation, and evaluation dimensions. The program's success is not solely determined by food provision but also by how effectively stakeholders collaborate and manage available resources. From a theoretical perspective, this study supports the concept of collaborative governance, which emphasizes the importance of shared

responsibility among public and private actors in addressing complex social issues (Ansell & Gash, 2008). In the context of Indonesia, the implementation of this program reflects broader challenges in education policy, particularly in ensuring equity and quality across diverse regions. Therefore, strengthening institutional capacity and stakeholder engagement becomes a critical factor in achieving program success.

Furthermore, the effectiveness of the Free Nutritious Meal Program is also closely related to the level of institutional readiness and governance capacity at the local level. Differences in administrative capability, leadership quality, and resource management across regions significantly influence how the program is implemented in practice. Regions with stronger institutional structures tend to demonstrate more efficient coordination, better accountability mechanisms, and higher program sustainability. In contrast, areas with limited capacity often struggle with fragmented implementation and weak oversight, which ultimately reduces program impact. This finding reinforces the argument that decentralization in education policy must be accompanied by capacity strengthening at the local level to ensure policy effectiveness (OECD, 2019).

In addition, socio-cultural factors also play an important role in shaping the success of the program. Community perceptions, dietary habits, and local participation can influence both acceptance and effectiveness of school feeding initiatives. Programs that are designed with sensitivity to local context and cultural preferences are more likely to achieve higher levels of participation and satisfaction among students. This highlights the importance of adopting a context-based approach in policy implementation, where local knowledge and community engagement are actively integrated into program design and execution.

Another important aspect that emerges from the analysis is the need for sustainability-oriented program management. Many school feeding programs tend to focus on short-term outcomes, such as immediate nutritional support, without adequately addressing long-term sustainability issues. These include consistent funding, supply chain resilience, and institutional continuity. Previous studies emphasize that sustainable program design requires long-term planning, multi-year budgeting, and continuous evaluation mechanisms to ensure that benefits can be maintained over time (World Food Programme, 2020). Moreover, the integration of the Free Nutritious Meal Program with broader educational and health policies can further enhance its impact. Rather than being implemented as a standalone initiative, the program should be aligned with other interventions such as health screening, nutrition education, and poverty alleviation programs. This integrated approach allows for a more holistic impact on student well-being and learning outcomes, as it addresses multiple dimensions of child development simultaneously (World Bank, 2018).

The role of data and evidence-based decision-making is also increasingly important in improving program effectiveness. The use of digital monitoring systems can provide real-time data on program implementation, enabling policymakers to identify gaps, evaluate performance, and make timely adjustments. In this context,

data transparency not only supports accountability but also encourages stakeholder trust and participation. The adoption of data-driven governance is therefore a critical step toward modernizing public service delivery and ensuring more effective program outcomes (Mergel et al., 2019).

Finally, this study highlights the importance of continuous policy evaluation and adaptive management in responding to dynamic challenges in program implementation. As social, economic, and institutional conditions evolve, policies must be flexible enough to adapt to new realities. This requires ongoing research, stakeholder feedback, and iterative policy refinement to ensure that the Free Nutritious Meal Program remains relevant, effective, and sustainable in the long term.

In addition to the previously identified dimensions, a deeper examination of stakeholder interaction patterns reveals that collaboration effectiveness is not only determined by the presence of multiple actors, but also by the quality of interaction among them. Effective collaboration requires clearly defined roles, mutual trust, shared goals, and continuous communication. This also reflects the critical role of stakeholders in shaping effective educational management and decision-making structures (Jaenudin, 2024). Without these elements, stakeholder involvement may remain symbolic rather than functional. This finding is consistent with the collaborative governance framework, which emphasizes that successful collaboration depends on principled engagement, shared motivation, and joint capacity (Emerson et al., 2012). In the context of the Free Nutritious Meal Program, this implies that formal coordination structures alone are insufficient without strong relational dynamics among stakeholders.

Furthermore, power dynamics among stakeholders also influence decision-making processes and program outcomes. Government institutions often dominate decision-making due to their control over funding and policy direction, while schools and local communities act primarily as implementers. This imbalance can limit participatory decision-making and reduce local ownership of the program. Studies suggest that more inclusive governance structures, where local actors are actively involved in planning and evaluation, can significantly improve program effectiveness and sustainability (Ansell & Gash, 2008). Therefore, redistributing decision-making authority and promoting participatory governance become critical strategies in strengthening stakeholder collaboration.

Another critical issue identified is the fragmentation of policy implementation across different administrative levels. While national policies provide general guidelines, local implementation often varies due to differences in interpretation, resource availability, and institutional capacity. This fragmentation leads to inconsistencies in program quality and outcomes across regions. Similar findings have been reported in previous studies on decentralized education systems, where local autonomy without sufficient guidance and capacity support can result in uneven service delivery (OECD, 2019). Therefore, balancing standardization and flexibility is essential to ensure both consistency and contextual relevance in program implementation.

From an operational perspective, supply chain management emerges as a crucial factor affecting program success. The procurement, storage, and distribution of food require well-coordinated logistics systems, particularly in geographically diverse regions such as Indonesia. Weak supply chain systems can lead to delays, food quality issues, and inefficiencies that undermine program objectives. Research on school feeding programs highlights that integrating local food suppliers and strengthening logistical coordination can improve efficiency while simultaneously supporting local economies (World Food Programme, 2020; FAO, 2019). This approach not only enhances program effectiveness but also contributes to broader socio-economic development.

In addition, the role of leadership at the school and local government levels is a determining factor in program implementation. Effective leaders are able to coordinate stakeholders, manage resources efficiently, and adapt to challenges in dynamic environments. Distributed leadership, where responsibilities are shared among multiple actors, has been shown to enhance organizational performance and program implementation outcomes (Harris, 2013). In the context of this program, empowering school principals and local administrators to take active leadership roles can strengthen coordination and improve implementation quality. This is consistent with the view that stakeholder engagement and leadership distribution are central elements in effective school management (Jaenudin, 2024).

The analysis also indicates that communication plays a pivotal role in bridging gaps among stakeholders. Ineffective communication often leads to misunderstandings, duplication of efforts, and lack of accountability. Establishing structured communication channels, both formal and informal, can facilitate information sharing and enhance coordination. Digital communication platforms, in particular, offer opportunities to improve real-time coordination and transparency. This aligns with recent studies highlighting the importance of digital transformation in public sector governance (Mergel et al., 2019).

Moreover, monitoring and evaluation systems need to be strengthened to support evidence-based decision-making. The absence of standardized indicators and reliable data collection mechanisms makes it difficult to assess program performance and identify areas for improvement. Implementing a comprehensive monitoring framework that includes both quantitative and qualitative indicators can provide a more holistic evaluation of program impact. Continuous evaluation also enables adaptive management, where policies and strategies can be adjusted based on real-time feedback and changing conditions. Another important dimension is the economic impact of the program on local communities. By involving local small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in food procurement and preparation, the program has the potential to stimulate local economic development. This creates a multiplier effect, where the benefits of the program extend beyond student nutrition to broader community welfare. Previous studies have shown that linking school feeding programs with local agriculture and food industries can enhance economic resilience and sustainability (Roothaert et al., 2021).

Despite these potential benefits, the sustainability of the program remains a major concern. Many programs rely heavily on government funding, making them vulnerable to budget fluctuations and policy changes. Developing diversified funding strategies, including partnerships with private sectors and community contributions, can enhance financial sustainability. In addition, institutionalizing the program within long-term policy frameworks ensures continuity beyond political cycles. From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to the development of a stakeholder collaboration management model by integrating elements of collaborative governance, network theory, and public management. The proposed model emphasizes three interconnected components: structural coordination (clear roles, institutional frameworks), relational dynamics (trust, communication, shared goals), and adaptive capacity (flexibility, continuous learning, data-driven decision-making). These components collectively determine the effectiveness of stakeholder collaboration in complex policy environments.

In practical terms, the findings suggest that policymakers should prioritize the development of integrated collaboration frameworks that combine clear governance structures with strong relational mechanisms. Training programs, capacity-building initiatives, and the use of digital tools can support stakeholders in improving coordination and performance. Furthermore, policy alignment across sectors is necessary to ensure that the Free Nutritious Meal Program is implemented as part of a broader strategy for improving education and public health outcomes. Finally, this expanded analysis confirms that the success of the Free Nutritious Meal Program is highly dependent on the ability of stakeholders to move beyond fragmented and sectoral approaches toward integrated and collaborative governance. Strengthening stakeholder collaboration is not merely a supporting factor but a central determinant of program effectiveness, sustainability, and long-term impact.

4. Conclusion

This study concludes that the successful implementation of the Free Nutritious Meal Program in primary schools is highly dependent on effective stakeholder collaboration. Three key dimensions were identified: cross-sector governance, socio-economic impact, and strategic communication. These dimensions play a critical role in ensuring program sustainability and effectiveness. The findings indicate that strong institutional coordination, transparent governance, and inclusive stakeholder engagement are essential to overcome implementation challenges. Variations in regional capacity highlight the need for adaptive and context-specific collaboration strategies.

Overall, this study confirms that the integration of health, education, and policy perspectives is crucial in optimizing program outcomes. Future research is recommended to conduct empirical validation and explore stakeholder perspectives to strengthen evidence-based policy development. In addition, this study provides practical implications for policymakers and educational institutions in designing more integrated and collaborative program management strategies. Strengthening

stakeholder engagement, improving coordination mechanisms, and adopting data-driven approaches are essential steps to enhance program effectiveness. Future research is recommended to conduct empirical studies and explore stakeholder perspectives in different regional contexts to further validate and refine the proposed collaboration model.

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