

RESEARCH ARTIKEL

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CAUSES OF POISONING AND DISINFORMATION DYNAMICS IN FREE NUTRITIOUS FOOD PROGRAMS IN SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTS

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Abstract. This study looks at two main problems when Indonesia's Free Healthy Meals Program (MBG) is carried out: the danger of food poisoning in schools and how false information and biased algorithms affect conversations online. The program started in January 2025 with the goal of fighting malnutrition and stunting. But it has faced major problems, like food safety issues and mixed public opinions that came from wrong information. Launched in January 2025 to tackle malnutrition and stunting, the program has faced notable challenges, including food safety issues and polarized public perceptions due to misleading information. This study uses a descriptive qualitative method and focuses on case studies to examine policy documents, media articles, and how people interact with each other on social media. The idea is based on selective exposure theory and the concept of echo chambers. The results show that problems in how food safety is managed lead to poisoning cases, and false information spread quickly online makes bad stories worse and causes people to have stronger disagreements. These results show that we need to improve food safety rules, keep the public well informed, hold algorithms responsible, and boost digital knowledge to help the MBG program stay sustainable.

Keywords; MBG; Food Safety; Food Poisoning; Miss information; Algorithm Bias; Public Opinion Polarization.

Article history: received 01 June 2025; revised 26 June 2026; accepted 07 July 2026

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INTRODUCTION

Education and health are two very important things that affect the quality of human resources. The two are interrelated, because students' ability to undergo the learning process is greatly influenced by their physical health, nutritional adequacy, and food safety that they consume every day. Students who have a good nutritional status usually have a more fixed focus, maximum endurance, and higher learning ability. In contrast, issues such as malnutrition, stunting, and nutritional imbalances are still major challenges in Indonesia, especially in rural areas and 3T locations that lack access to healthy food and other facilities. This situation emphasizes the importance of nutritional interventions that can reach all students equally (Study et al., 2025). In an effort to overcome this issue, the government launched the Free Nutritious Eating Program (MBG) as a national strategy to improve the nutritional security of students while improving the quality of learning. This program was created to serve nutritious food to support the physical condition of students before attending lessons at school (Study et al., 2025)

The quality of food provided to students greatly affects their health and ability to focus during the learning process. When food is not managed with adequate hygiene standards, there is a potential for health problems such as nausea, diarrhea, or digestive discomfort. This condition can make students have difficulty taking lessons or even not being able to come to school. Previous research has shown that health conditions and nutritional fulfillment are directly related. With thinking skills, memory, and learning achievements. Similarly, health problems due to unsafe food consumption can have a negative impact on the quality of learning. The interaction between disinformation and algorithmic bias exacerbates the polarization of public discourse. The community is divided between those who see MBG as a progressive policy to alleviate stunting, and those who consider it a population program with a large physical burden and low quality. This polarization is reflected in social media debates on online forums, as well as media coverage, where harsh criticism is often expressed in the media response with the same sharp defense. So as to widen the gap between the difference in perception.

This study uses the Selective Exposure Theory (Freedman & Sears, 1965) as the main basis for analyzing behavior, which is how a person tends to select and pay attention to information that matches his or her beliefs, while ignoring conflicting information. In the context of social media, this tendency is amplified by the platform's algorithms displaying content according to user preferences, thereby reinforcing exposure to disinformation and

provocative content. The interaction between the way people choose information and the work of algorithms can reinforce the split in public opinion about MBG. As an additional concept, echo chambers are used to explain the formation of a uniform information space, where people only get information from the same source and are not exposed to other perspectives, so that differences of opinion become increasingly polarized. (Kinanthi et al., 2025)

METHODS

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach with case study methods, analyzing policy documents, online media news, and user interaction on social media platforms. The theoretical framework used includes the Theory of Selective Exposure and the concept of echo chamber space.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Legal implications in the health sector for food poisoning cases in free nutritious meal programs in Indonesia This data shows that supervision of food safety in the production and distribution process still needs to be strengthened. The program is still very weak and needs significant improvement. The National Nutrition Agency (BGN) is the institution in charge of implementation. MBG has evaluated the kitchens that provide food. The results of the evaluation show that there are still many kitchens that do not meet the standards. meet the set standard operating procedures (SOP). An evaluation from The Indonesian Institute (2025) also shows that the implementation of MBG is still ongoing. face serious challenges, such as lack of access to nutrition education and unequal distribution. uneven, and weak reporting system (Rencang et al., 2025).

This shows the need for comprehensive reform in the governance of the MBG program in order to deliver. Maximum benefits for the community. In the perspective of health law, General food providers must meet the safety and quality standards of foodstuffs. as stipulated in Law Number 17 of 2023 concerning Health, and Law No. 18 of 2012 concerning Food. (Rencang et al., 2025). Non-compliance with these rules can result in legal problems, either. administratively or criminally, especially if it is proven to have a detrimental health impact on the community. In addition, the Consumer Protection Law No. 8 of 1999 provides rights to consumers. to obtain compensation for losses caused by such products. A study of the legal aspects of health in the case of MBG is important. to ensure accountability and protection of people's rights. Strict law enforcement can encourage improvements in the supervision and

certification system. food providers, and transparency in incident reporting. This is also an important lesson so that social programs that aim good will not be repeated is a source of public health hazard. With the right legal approach, MBG can still be a standout program and provide great benefits. for the young generation of Indonesia. The government needs to ensure that every component in the nutritious food supply chain meets applicable legal standards. and health ethics. The success of MBG is not only measured by the number of children who are. receive food, as well as guarantee the safety and quality of the food they consume.

News Hoaxes

Disinformation appears through fake news on social media, for example claims that a student died due to MBG which is not true, causing panic and political criticism of the program. Volunteers form cyber teams to fight fake news, distinguish helpful criticism from untrue speech, and promote good content such as student experiences. The government responded by providing food safety training and nutrition education modules to reduce this issue. (Setyawan et al., 2025) Hoaxes are false information that is spread deliberately to deceive people, usually for purposes such as political, economic, or social. In communication studies, hoaxes utilize cognitive manipulation such as confirmation bias, emotional framing, and message repetition to influence opinion, especially on government programs such as MBG which are vulnerable to negative narratives.

The relationship between hoaxes and the audience's way of thinking shows how important education is in this regard. digital literacy. Digital literacy skills allow a person to obtain, understand, and use information in the virtual world appropriately. develop the ability to better evaluate information, so they can recognize fake news and avoid it. misinformation. For example, in the case of fake news related to this free nutritious meal program, hoaxes can damage the good name of government programs. can cause confusion and doubt among the people who should benefit from this program.

CONCLUSION

The Free Nutritious Meal (MBG) program faces serious challenges in the form of weak food safety oversight and rampant disinformation on social media. Food poisoning cases show the need to strengthen governance, enforcement of health laws, and food safety standards. Meanwhile, algorithmic bias and low digital literacy reinforce the polarization of public opinion towards the MBG program. Therefore, improving food safety, information transparency, and digital literacy are the keys for MBG to run safely, effectively, and

sustainably in supporting student health and education.

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