



Indonesia's The Free Nutritious Meal Program As A Platform For Developing Social Entrepreneurship Among Local Food Msmes In Tebing Tinggi City

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How to Cite :

Dewi, K, V., Sagala, I, C., Puspaningrum, C., Hayrunnisa. (2026). Beyond Ease of Use: Risk Perception as Primary Barrier to Parental Adoption of Fintech Cards in Banyumas Schools. EKOMBIS REVIEW: Jurnal Ilmiah Ekonomi Dan Bisnis, 14(4). DOI: <https://doi.org/10.37676/ekombis.v14i4>

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received [17 May 2026]

Revised [20 October 2026]

Accepted [22 October 2026]

KEYWORDS

MBG Program, Social Entrepreneurship, and Local Food MSMEs.

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the impact of Indonesia's the free nutritious meal (Makan Bergizi Gratis/MBG) program on the development of social entrepreneurship among local food MSMEs in Tebing Tinggi City. Using a mixed-methods approach, quantitative data were analyzed using multiple linear regression with SPSS, while qualitative data were collected through in-depth interviews with key stakeholders. The results of the quantitative findings indicate that, individually, MSME readiness, MSME involvement, and government support have a positive and significant effect on social entrepreneurship, while the cooperation variable, when considered individually, does not show a significant effect. When considered simultaneously, the variables of MSME readiness, MSME involvement, cooperation, and government support have a significant effect on social entrepreneurship. Qualitative findings indicate that local MSMEs are highly committed to participating in the MBG Program, although each MSME's operational capacity varies and they still face challenges, such as fluctuations in raw material prices and technical issues with the payment system. To support the program's sustainability, this study proposes the Sustainable Blended Value Ecosystem Model—a model that combines the creation of economic and social value through the strengthening of sustainable cooperation agreements, the integration of local government SME development systems, responsive feedback mechanisms, and the enhancement of economic value added.

INTRODUCTION

The quality of education is determined not only by the curriculum and teaching methods but also by external factors that significantly influence students' cognitive and physical development. One of the key factors contributing to educational success is the adequacy of school children's nutrition, which plays a crucial role in enhancing their cognitive performance, physical stamina, and learning endurance (UNESCO, 2021) (Qomarrullah & Suratni, 2025). According to (UNESCO, 2025), health and nutrition constitute fundamental foundations of the learning process. Children who are healthy and adequately nourished are more likely to achieve better academic performance. Based on this condition, governments have begun implementing school-based nutritious meal programs as a strategic effort to enhance children's health status and learning capacity. Nutritious meal programs in schools have been widely implemented in various countries, including Indonesia, which has now also launched Indonesia's the free nutritious meal program, called The Makan Bergizi Gratis (MBG) Program as a strategic government policy to help children obtain adequate nutrition, thereby improving their health and enhancing their future learning abilities and development as part of human resource development efforts. (Mostert, 2021) (Lundborg & Rooth, 2022) (Ren et al., 2023) (Zhao et al., 2024). In addition, several experts have confirmed the positive impact of school-based nutritious meal programs on students, including their physical and mental health, academic achievement, and cognitive and non-cognitive skills (Anderson et al., 2018) (Chakraborty & Jayaraman, 2019) (Ren et al., 2023) (Aurino et al., 2023). The MBG program is now increasingly recognized as a policy that offers numerous benefits. This policy not only helps school-age children meet their nutritional needs but also supports food producers—particularly farmers and small-scale businesses—and has a positive impact on society as a whole (Swensson & Tartanac, 2020) (Fonseca et al., 2025). (FAO, 2025) explains that meeting the need for nutritious food in schools through existing small-scale local food production can support the community's socioeconomic development. Research conducted by (Basit & Ramadani, 2025) found that the MBG Program can generate a multiplier effect in the agricultural sector and among MSMEs. Therefore, the implementation of the MBG Program is not only focused on meeting nutritional needs but also has the potential to serve as a vehicle for developing social entrepreneurship based on local food-based MSMEs by strengthening production and distribution chains at the community level. However, in its implementation at the regional level—including in Tebing Tinggi City—the MBG program still faces various challenges, such as limited production capacity, a lack of understanding of nutritional standards and food safety, and limited access to sustainable MBG partnership schemes.

Tebing Tinggi City has a potential in the local food MSME sector to support the implementation of the MBG Program. To participate effectively, MSMEs need to be well-prepared in terms of technology, human resources, data readiness, business processes, and accounting knowledge. (Susanto et al., 2026). In addition, the active involvement of MSMEs in the food supply chain and food processing is a key factor in the program's success. This involvement or participation can take the form of participation in planning, implementation, utilization of results, and evaluation. (Prastika, 2016). This success also requires good cooperation between MSMEs and other stakeholders to ensure the program is implemented effectively, which can be measured by several indicators, namely flexibility, information exchange, shared problem-solving, and restraint in the use of power (Brito et al., 2014). Furthermore, this program also requires government support, such as adequate infrastructure (road access, electricity, water, etc.) to operate businesses or enterprises, government policies, equitable distribution of digital infrastructure, skills training programs for business owners, and relevant information and knowledge that assist MSMEs (Kristiawati & Afifah, 2024).

Among the various business approaches, social entrepreneurship has emerged as a key driver of socioeconomic development in many developing countries (Hamid et al., 2017) (Thahira

et al., 2023). According to (Utomo, 2021) social entrepreneurship can be identified through indicators such as creating social value, driving social change, economic activity, community empowerment, and resource mobilization. Social entrepreneurship plays a strategic role in supporting the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). (Diaz-sarachaga & Ariza-montes, 2022) (Nagdev et al., 2025). The goal of social entrepreneurship is to improve the well-being of communities by identifying and capitalizing on opportunities to create social value, implementing innovations, taking risks, and overcoming limitations in available resources, thereby driving socioeconomic change in communities (Najafizada & Cohen, 2017) (Imanuella et al., 2024) (Syahril & Anggadwita, 2024). Social entrepreneurship-based management is developed through cooperation among various stakeholders by integrating diverse resources and communities (Purnomo et al., 2015) (Imanuella et al., 2024). Social entrepreneurship encourages people to start their own businesses alongside their day jobs. Social entrepreneurs are individuals who are proactively involved in innovation and capable of providing transformative services that ultimately have a significant impact on the performance of MSMEs, leading to increased profits. (Samuelsson & Witell, 2022) (Thahira et al., 2023).

Based on these conditions, this study determined to answer the following research questions: What is the level of involvement and capacity of local food MSMEs in the implementation of the MBG Program in Tebing Tinggi City?; What factors act as barriers and enablers to the development of social entrepreneurship among local food MSMEs in the implementation of the MBG Program?; what are the patterns of relationships and partnerships between the government, schools, and local food MSMEs in the implementation of the MBG Program?; and what is a social entrepreneurship-based MBG Program model capable of improving the nutritional quality of schoolchildren while strengthening the sustainability of local food MSMEs in Tebing Tinggi City?

METHODS

This study employs a mixed-methods approach with a sequential explanatory design. According to (Sugiyono, 2019) explained that mixed methods research is an approach that combines quantitative and qualitative methods to be used simultaneously in a research study, thereby yielding data that is more comprehensive, valid, reliable, and objective. A sequential explanatory design is a design used to explain the results of quantitative research through an in-depth analysis of qualitative data

(Toyon, 2021). This study employs a mixed-methods approach with a sequential explanatory design. This design was chosen because it aims to determine the influence of independent variables (X), such as MSME readiness, MSME involvement, cooperation, and government support, on social entrepreneurship (dependent variable Y) in the Free Nutritious Meals Program in Tebing Tinggi City, while also deepening the interpretation of these quantitative results through qualitative data. The study was conducted in two sequential stages:

Phase 1 (Quantitative): The researcher distributed questionnaires to MSME operators to determine whether MSME readiness, MSME involvement, cooperation, and government support influence social entrepreneurship. The data were analyzed using SPSS software.

Phase 2 (Qualitative): After obtaining the quantitative results, the researcher conducted interviews to delve deeper into and enrich (explain and elaborate on) those quantitative findings.

The population in this quantitative study comprised all local food MSMEs in Tebing Tinggi City with the potential to participate in the implementation of the MBG Program. Meanwhile, the sample for this study consists of local food MSMEs in Tebing Tinggi City that had become partners in the MBG Program and were willing to participate as research respondents. Furthermore, The qualitative informants included all stakeholders involved in the implementation of the MBG Program in Tebing Tinggi City, including representatives from government institutions, local MSMEs, and other relevant stakeholders.

Quantitative data was collected via a Likert-scale questionnaire, distributed in person and via Google Forms to MSMEs to measure their level of readiness, involvement, cooperation, and government support for social entrepreneurship. Furthermore, qualitative data was obtained through interviews, observations, and document reviews with MBG stakeholders to deepen the quantitative findings.

In the final stage, the qualitative findings were used to interpret, confirm, or expand upon the results of the statistical tests, thereby providing a deeper understanding and reinforcing the findings regarding the role of local food MSMEs in the development of social entrepreneurship through the MBG Program.

RESULTS

Quantitative Research Findings

To determine the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable, a hypothesis test was conducted, with data analyzed using multiple linear regression analysis with the aid of SPSS software. The results of the t-test are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Results of Multiple Linear Regression

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.996	.695		1.433	.163
	MSME Readiness	.271	.123	.272	2.210	.036
	MSME Involvement	.188	.074	.219	2.538	.017
	Cooperation	.169	.094	.164	1.794	.084
	Government Support	.357	.120	.364	2.967	.006

a. Dependent Variable: Social Entrepreneurship

Source: Authors' analysis based on research data (2026)

Based on Table 1, the simple linear regression equation for this study is:

$$Y = 0,996 + 0,271X_1 + 0,188X_2 + 0,169X_3 + 0,357X_4$$

The description of the multiple linear regression equation above is as follows:

- The constant value (a) of 0.996 indicates that the effect of the social entrepreneurship variable (Y) on the X variables (MSME readiness, MSME involvement, cooperation, and government support) is zero.
- The regression coefficient for the MSME readiness variable (X_1) was 0.271, indicating that a one-unit increase in MSME readiness is predicted to increase the social entrepreneurship variable (Y) by 0.271 units, assuming the other independent variables remain constant. Furthermore, the calculated t-value was 2.210. At a significance level of $\alpha = 5\%$, the critical t-value was 2.048. Since the calculated t-value (2.210) exceeded the critical t-value (2.048), and the significance value was 0.036, which is less than 0.05, it can be concluded that MSME readiness (X_1) has a statistically significant positive effect on social entrepreneurship (Y).
- The regression coefficient for the MSME involvement variable (X_2) was 0.188, indicating that a one-unit increase in MSME involvement is predicted to increase the social entrepreneurship variable (Y) by 0.188 units, assuming the other independent variables remain constant. Furthermore, the calculated t-value was 2.538. At a significance level of $\alpha = 5\%$, the critical t-value was 2.048. Since the calculated t-value (2.538) exceeded the critical t-value (2.048), and the significance value was 0.017, which is less than 0.05, it can be concluded that MSME involvement (X_2) has a statistically significant positive effect on social entrepreneurship (Y).

- d. The regression coefficient for the cooperation variable (X_3) was 0.169, indicating that a one-unit increase in cooperation is predicted to increase the social entrepreneurship variable (Y) by 0.169 units, assuming the other independent variables remain constant. Furthermore, the calculated t-value was 1.794. At a significance level of $\alpha = 5\%$, the critical t-value was 2.048. Since the calculated t-value (1.794) was lower than the critical t-value (2.048), and the significance value was 0.084, which is greater than 0.05, it can be concluded that cooperation (X_3) does not have a statistically significant effect on social entrepreneurship (Y).
- e. The regression coefficient for the government support variable (X_4) was 0.357, indicating that a one-unit increase in government support is predicted to increase the social entrepreneurship variable (Y) by 0.357 units, assuming the other independent variables remain constant. Furthermore, the calculated t-value was 2.967. At a significance level of $\alpha = 5\%$, the critical t-value was 2.048. Since the calculated t-value (2.967) exceeded the critical t-value (2.048), and the significance value was 0.006, which is less than 0.05, it can be concluded that government support (X_4) has a statistically significant positive effect on social entrepreneurship (Y).

The coefficient of determination is used to assess the extent to which independent variables contribute to the dependent variable. The value used to assess the coefficient of determination in this study is found in the "adjusted R-squared" column. This is because the adjusted R-squared value is not affected by the addition of independent variables. The coefficient of determination values are shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Coefficient of Determination

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.982 ^a	.965	.960	.386
a. Predictors: (Constant), Government Support, MSME Involvement, Cooperation, MSME Readiness				

Source: Authors' analysis based on research data (2026)

Based on Table 2, the adjusted R^2 value is 0.960, indicating that the independent variables—MSME readiness (X_1), MSME involvement (X_2), cooperation (X_3), and government support (X_4)—collectively explain 96% of the variance in the social entrepreneurship variable (Y). The remaining 4% of the variance is explained by other factors not included in the research model.

This study also examined whether the independent variables simultaneously had a significant effect on the dependent variable. Specifically, the simultaneous significance test (F-test) was conducted to determine whether MSME readiness (X_1), MSME involvement (X_2), cooperation (X_3), and government support (X_4) collectively exerted a significant influence on the social entrepreneurship variable (Y).

Table 3. Results of the Simultaneous Test (F-Test)

ANOVA ^a						
	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	111.442	4	27.861	186.833	.000 ^b
	Residual	4.026	27	.149		
	Total	115.469	31			
a. Dependent Variable: Social Entrepreneurship						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Government Support, MSME Involvement, Cooperation, MSME Readiness						

Source: Authors' analysis based on research data (2026)

As shown in Table 3, the calculated F-value was 186.833, while the critical F-value at a significance level of $\alpha = 5\%$ was 2.68. Since the calculated F-value (186.833) exceeded the critical F-value (2.68), and the significance value was 0.000, which is less than 0.05, it can be concluded that MSME readiness (X_1), MSME involvement (X_2), cooperation (X_3), and government support (X_4) collectively have a statistically significant effect on the social entrepreneurship variable (Y).

Qualitative Research Findings

Theme 1: Local Food MSME Involvement and Operational Capacity

The level of involvement of local food MSMEs in the implementation of the MBG program in Tebing Tinggi City is classified as very high. This is demonstrated by the commitment of the three SPPGs to prioritize the use of food ingredients from local MSMEs, such as eggs, meat (chicken and beef), vegetables, tofu, legumes, and bread. This policy was implemented because it improves distribution efficiency, ensuring that food ingredients arrive in a fresher condition and on time. Furthermore, the involvement of local MSMEs serves as an effort to strengthen the local economy by increasing business opportunities, boosting the income of MSME operators, and stimulating economic activity in Tebing Tinggi City.

Although many MSMEs have participated in the MBG program, research findings indicate that the operational capabilities of individual MSMEs still vary. These differences are evident in their ability to fulfill order volumes, maintain product quality, and meet demand on a sustainable basis.

MSMEs with independent operational capacity and strong growth potential are exemplified by businesses such as Jaya Telur and Roti Kita. Prior to joining the Free Nutritious Meal (MBG) Program, Jaya Telur had already established sufficient inventory and a reliable supplier network, having previously supplied wholesalers and restaurants. Meanwhile, Roti Kita experienced substantial business expansion after being selected as a partner by the Nutrition Fulfillment Service Unit, called Satuan Pelayanan Pemenuhan Gizi (SPPG). The home-based enterprise significantly increased its production capacity, producing thousands of loaves of bread each week while expanding its workforce to meet the growing demand generated by the program.

In contrast, MSMEs with more limited operational capacity are represented by businesses such as Sayur Segar Siregar and Potong Ayam Ayu. At the initial stage of the partnership, the SPPG assigned only small orders as a trial phase to assess product quality and delivery reliability. As demand increased, these MSMEs were unable to rely solely on their internal production capacity and therefore collaborated with local farmers and other suppliers to meet the program's requirements.

From the government's perspective, the Health Department explained that the capacity of MSMEs is assessed not only by the volume of products they can produce, but also by their ability to consistently maintain food quality and safety in accordance with health standards. This was reinforced by school officials, who stated that local suppliers have so far been able to meet the program's needs effectively. Delays in food deliveries are extremely rare, ensuring that food supplies to students run smoothly.

Theme 2: Barriers and Enablers of Social Entrepreneurship Development

The research findings indicate that the implementation of the MBG Program still faces several challenges, such as:

- a. The SPPG representatives noted that the quality of food products received from MSMEs is sometimes inconsistent. In addition, the availability of fruits and vegetables is heavily influenced by weather and seasonal factors, so the supply does not always meet demand.
- b. The prices of raw materials such as soybeans, chicken, flour, and spices often rise. Meanwhile, the selling price to SPPG has been agreed upon from the outset, so MSMEs must

absorb the increase in production costs without being able to raise their prices. This situation reduces the profits earned by MSMEs.

- c. Some SPPGs use a payment system that requires payment 2–3 days after goods are received. For small-scale MSMEs, this situation ties up working capital, which can disrupt the smooth running of day-to-day operations.
- d. Some MSMEs face challenges such as power outages, production machinery breakdowns, and high employee absenteeism during periods of high demand. These conditions can hinder the production process and increase operating costs.
- e. From the beneficiaries' perspective, there are still students who are picky eaters, especially when it comes to vegetables or eggs that are served repeatedly. This poses a challenge for MSMEs to create more appealing menu options without compromising nutritional value.

In addition, the study also identified several factors that support the participation of MSMEs in the MBG Program, namely:

- a. The MBG Program provides certainty regarding demand and purchase volumes on a regular, weekly basis. This gives MSMEs greater peace of mind because the products they produce have a clear market, and the risk of unsold inventory is reduced.
- b. SPPG does not immediately terminate the partnership when product quality issues arise. Instead, they give MSMEs the opportunity to conduct an evaluation, make improvements, and discuss solutions that can be implemented jointly.
- c. MSME operators have demonstrated a strong commitment to improving the quality of their products and services in order to maintain their partnership with SPPG. This commitment is a key factor in ensuring the sustainability of the partnership.
- d. Schools play an active role in monitoring food distribution and gathering feedback from students. This information serves as a basis for evaluation by the SPPG and MSMEs to continuously improve the quality of the food provided.

Theme 3: Dynamics of Multistakeholder Relationships and Partnerships

The research findings indicate that the successful implementation of the MBG Program in Tebing Tinggi City was supported by cooperation among various parties who complemented one another in accordance with their respective roles and responsibilities.

- a. The City Government (the Department of Trade, Cooperatives, and SMEs, and the Department of Health) serves as the policy maker, provider of guidance, and supervisor of program implementation. The Department of Health is responsible for ensuring food safety and the nutritional quality of the food served, while the Department of Trade, Cooperatives, and SMEs provides guidance to MSMEs to help them meet administrative requirements and improve their business capacity.
- b. The SPPG serves as the liaison between MSMEs and schools. The SPPG is responsible for selecting MSMEs as partners, setting prices, managing raw materials, preparing meals in accordance with nutritional standards, distributing meals to schools, and addressing any challenges that arise during the program's implementation.
- c. Local food MSMEs serve as food suppliers for SPPG. They are responsible for providing high-quality, fresh, and safe raw materials and delivering them on time so that the food supply process can run smoothly.
- d. The school is responsible for ensuring that the process of distributing food to students proceeds in an orderly manner. In addition, the school also monitors the quality of the food received by students and collects feedback or complaints from students to be forwarded to the SPPG for evaluation.
- e. As beneficiaries, students are the ones who directly experience the results of the MBG Program. Students' assessments, feedback, and satisfaction levels regarding the meals provided serve as important evaluation data for the SPPG, MSMEs, the government, and schools to improve the quality of the program in the future.

Theme 4: A Model for the MBG Program Based on Social Entrepreneurship in the Future

Based on interviews with all informants, the implementation of the MBG Program in Tebing Tinggi City needs to be developed into a Sustainable Blended Value Ecosystem Model, which emphasizes that the success of the MBG Program is measured not only by the achievement of social objectives—such as improving the nutrition of students— but also by the resulting economic impacts, such as increased income, business capacity, and the self-reliance of local food-related MSMEs. Thus, social and economic benefits can coexist in a balanced and mutually reinforcing manner, ensuring the program's sustainability.

The research findings indicate that there are four key components that need to be strengthened in order to implement this model, namely:

- a. Cooperation between SPPG and MSMEs should be established through long-term contracts to provide market certainty for business operators. This certainty will encourage MSMEs to invest in business development—such as increasing production capacity, purchasing equipment, expanding their business premises, and facilitating access to financing from financial institutions.
- b. The government, particularly the Department of Trade, Cooperatives, and SMEs, needs to strengthen its role through ongoing guidance and training programs. This guidance covers financial management, business administration, legal compliance, food safety, and product quality improvement so that MSMEs can consistently meet the standards of the MBG Program.
- c. Student input should be incorporated into the periodic menu planning process. Each educational level has different characteristics and food preferences, so feedback from students, relayed through the school, can help produce menus that are more varied and appealing while still meeting nutritional standards.
- d. The MBG Program should be designed to provide broader economic benefits to the community. Increased production needs will lead to the creation of new jobs, such as food processing workers, bakery workers, distribution workers, and other supporting sectors. Thus, the MBG Program not only improves students' nutritional quality but also serves as a driver of regional economic growth.

This model illustrates that the success of the MBG Program depends on strong cooperation between the government, SPPG, local food MSMEs, schools, and students. This synergy is expected to simultaneously yield two key benefits: improved community well-being through the economic empowerment of MSMEs and improved nutritional quality for students. With this model, the MBG Program becomes not only a food assistance program but also an instrument for sustainable local economic development.

DISCUSSION

The level of involvement and capacity of local food MSMEs in the implementation of the MBG Program in Tebing Tinggi City

The results of the statistical analysis indicate that MSME involvement and readiness have a positive and significant impact on the development of social entrepreneurship. This means that the more involved and prepared the MSMEs are, the more successful the MBG program will be. These findings indicate that the development of social entrepreneurship depends not only on the presence of MSMEs but also on their level of readiness and involvement in government programs. MSMEs with adequate business capacity that actively participate tend to be better able to integrate economic goals with social goals—such as providing nutritious food to the community while simultaneously improving the well-being of local business owners.

The interview findings also provide strong evidence that the level of MSME involvement in Tebing Tinggi is exceptionally high. The SPPG consistently prioritizes sourcing food ingredients from local businesses, including eggs, chicken and beef, vegetables, tofu and tempeh, bread, and

seasonings. This procurement strategy not only enables faster deliveries and preserves the freshness of food supplied to schools but also keeps financial resources circulating within the local economy, thereby contributing to regional economic development.

Although the level of involvement is high, the results of the data integration reveal differences (differentiation) in operational capacity among MSME operators. The capital and production capabilities of MSMEs in Tebing Tinggi are not yet evenly distributed, creating a gap between MSMEs that are already self-sufficient and small MSMEs that still require supply support from third parties.

(Nurlaili, 2025) reveals that the involvement of MSMEs in the supply chain of free nutritious meal programs can create an inclusive and sustainable local economic ecosystem, provided it is supported by affirmative regulations, affordable food quality standards, and fair partnerships between small businesses and program organizers. When school or community meal programs are implemented by involving local providers, a dual effect is created: not only does it improve the nutrition of beneficiaries, but it also strengthens local food supply chains, increases the income of farmers and MSME operators, and creates new jobs.

Factors that act as barriers and enablers to the development of social entrepreneurship among local food MSMEs in the implementation of the MBG

The remaining 4% of the Adjusted R-Square is predicted to be influenced by factors outside the research model—such as market fluctuations, climate, and consumer preferences—which are described in detail in the qualitative data. The integration of qualitative data successfully identified external factors that serve as both obstacles and enablers for business operators.

The implementation of the MBG Program in Tebing Tinggi still faces various challenges, such as instability in the supply and prices of raw materials, late payments, operational obstacles for MSMEs, and student fatigue with the menu offerings. Therefore, improvements are needed in supply chain management, payment systems, and menu variety so that the MBG Program can run more effectively and sustainably, while providing optimal benefits for MSMEs and the community. This is where a multisectoral approach—involving the government, businesses, civil society, and educational institutions—becomes crucial to ensuring that the benefits of the free meal program are maximized both socially and economically. The involvement of MSMEs is not merely about food provision, but also about how they can grow, advance, and become part of a healthy and equitable national food system. (Nurlaili, 2025).

Predictable demand and consistent sales volumes can also provide market stability for MSMEs, allowing their businesses to operate more smoothly. As sales volumes increase, companies will also achieve their desired profits. (Gustian & Arini, 2023). In addition, a good relationship between SPPG and MSMEs allows any obstacles to be resolved through communication and joint guidance. Effective communication fosters better cooperation and speeds up decision-making (Ankesa, 2025). The commitment of MSMEs to continuously improve the quality of their products and services is also a key driver in maintaining the sustainability of the partnership. On the other hand, the schools' involvement in monitoring food quality and relaying feedback from students also supports the evaluation and improvement process. These factors help maintain sustainability and enhance the effectiveness of the MBG Program's implementation.

Relationship and partnership models between the government, schools, and local food MSMEs in the implementation of MBG

The results of the statistical analysis show that cooperation does not have an effect on social entrepreneurship, which means that cooperation is not yet considered to have a strong impact on the program's success. These findings indicate that the cooperation established within the MBG Program in Tebing Tinggi remains operational in nature and focused on meeting food distribution needs; it has not yet evolved into a cooperation capable of creating broader social

value. Cooperation between MSMEs, SPPG, local government, and schools is primarily aimed at ensuring the smooth provision of nutritious food in accordance with established standards. As a result, the existence of such cooperation has not yet directly driven an increase in social entrepreneurship, such as social innovation, community empowerment, capacity building for MSMEs, or the creation of sustainable social impact. On the other hand, government support has had the greatest impact on social entrepreneurship. These findings indicate that within the MBG Program, the development of social entrepreneurship among MSMEs is influenced more by the government's active role—through policies, mentoring, capacity building, and guaranteed market access—than by cooperation among stakeholders, which remains largely operational in nature (Hossain et al., 2020) states that government support for the sustainability of MSMEs refers to various measures or policies adopted by the government to help MSMEs achieve sustainability and long-term growth. MSMEs deserve more assistance and support from the government to ensure their growth and success. Thus, while cooperation remains important to ensure the smooth implementation of the MBG, the program's success in promoting social entrepreneurship is more determined by the strength of government support for capacity building and the sustainability of MSMEs.

The MBG program model based on social entrepreneurship that improves the nutritional status of schoolchildren while strengthening the sustainability of local food-related MSMEs in Tebing Tinggi City

The statistical analysis revealed that the independent variables collectively exerted a very strong influence, indicating the need for a more integrated operational model for the MBG Program. Based on the qualitative findings, the Sustainable Blended Value Ecosystem Model was developed as a conceptual framework that integrates economic value, social value, and multi-stakeholder collaboration to support the sustainable development of social entrepreneurship among local MSMEs.

(Dallas et al., 2023) reveals that, fundamentally, no entrepreneurial activity is truly devoid of social value. Every entrepreneurial activity inherently has a social impact, whether directly or indirectly. Since then, the concept of blended value has garnered increasing attention in entrepreneurship studies. The blended value model is viewed as a framework that can foster business sustainability, as it integrates the creation of economic, social, and environmental value simultaneously. This approach is also considered an effective way to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through business activities.

The blended value framework is adopted from the practice of social entrepreneurship, which holds that value is measured not only by economic profit but also by the social benefits generated. Just as entrepreneurs are capable of creating and transforming an industry, social entrepreneurs serve as agents of change for society. They are able to identify and capitalize on opportunities that are often overlooked by others to improve existing systems. In addition, they develop and disseminate new approaches, create sustainable solutions to address pressing social issues, and drive long-term, sustainable change for society (Kickul et al., 2012). (Lindgreen et al., 2019) states that after deciding to start a business, sustainable entrepreneurs need to determine how to balance social, environmental, and economic goals. The way they achieve that balance will determine the type or characteristics of the sustainable entrepreneurship they pursue.

There are four key elements to implementing this model for the MBG program in Tebing Tinggi City, namely:

- 1) Transition from short-term procurement arrangements to formal long-term contracts between SPPG and MSMEs. This market certainty can serve as collateral for MSMEs to access formal financing (such as bank-provided KUR loans) to invest in production technology and expand their business capacity.

- 2) The Department of Trade, Cooperatives, and SMEs and the Department of Health have coordinated their work programs to provide ongoing training for MBG MSMEs. The training focuses on business financial management, national food safety standards (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points/HACCP), the digitization of bookkeeping, and compliance with halal certification requirements, with the aim of consistently improving the quality of MSME products.
- 3) The school facilitates the collection of feedback from students regarding their preferred menu options. This data is used by the SPPG and MSMEs to develop periodic menu variations that cater to the children's tastes while still adhering to nutritional adequacy standards.
- 4) The surge in food production volume is intentionally aimed at creating new job opportunities for the residents of Tebing Tinggi (such as food processors, cooks, distribution couriers, and workers in the home-based bakery industry), thereby directly contributing to a reduction in the region's unemployment rate.

Based on the explanation above, a visualization of the Sustainable Blended Value Ecosystem Model can be created in the form of a flowchart, as follows:

Figure 1 - Visualization of the Sustainable Blended Value Ecosystem Model

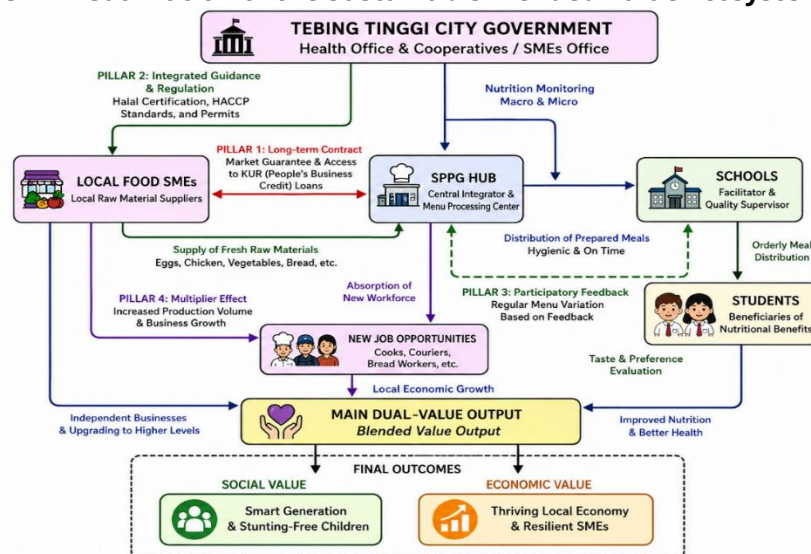


Figure 1 above can be explained as follows:

- 1) The Government as Program Director
At the top level, the Tebing Tinggi City Government is represented by the Health Office and the Office of Trade, Cooperatives, and SMEs. The government plays a role in providing guidance, formulating regulations, facilitating the Halal and Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) certification processes for MSMEs, and overseeing the nutritional standards implemented by the SPPG. This role constitutes Pillar 2 (Integrated Regulation and Guidance), ensuring that the entire process aligns with food safety standards and children's nutritional needs.
- 2) Collaboration between MSMEs and the SPPG Hub
On the left side of the image are local food MSMEs that supply raw materials such as eggs, chicken, vegetables, bread, and so forth. These MSMEs collaborate with SPPG through Pillar 1 (Long-Term Contracts). This partnership provides market certainty for the MSMEs, enabling them to increase production with greater confidence, while SPPG secures a supply of high-quality, sustainable raw materials
- 3) Preparation and Distribution of Nutritious Meals

After receiving raw materials from MSMEs, the SPPG processes them into nutritious meals that meet established nutritional standards. Subsequently, the meals are distributed to the schools, which are responsible for ensuring the food is received and distributed in an orderly manner to the students—the program's primary beneficiaries.

4) Feedback for Menu Improvement

After consuming the meals, students can provide feedback regarding the taste or the menu served. This input is conveyed to the SPPG through the school. This process constitutes Pillar 3 (Participatory Feedback), which aims to ensure the menu is continuously improved and adapted to students' tastes without compromising nutritional quality.

5) Economic Impact on the Community

The rising demand for raw materials and food production has led MSMEs and SPPGs to require more labor. Consequently, new jobs—such as cooks, couriers, and production workers—have been created. This situation demonstrates Pillar 4 (Multiplier Effect): the program not only improves children's nutrition but also stimulates the local economy (Syahiddin et al., 2024) (Wardoyo et al., 2025), especially in Tebing Tinggi City.

6) Final Outcome: Social and Economic Value

The entire process outlined in the diagram culminates in a "Blended Value Output." In terms of social value, the program fosters healthier, well-nourished children and supports the realization of a stunting-free generation. From an economic perspective, MSMEs gain access to more secure markets, expand their operations and scale up, stimulate local economic activity, and create new employment opportunities. Thus, the Free Nutritious Meal Program not only improves the nutritional quality of students but also serves as a driver for sustainable local economic development (Aziizah et al., 2026).

CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussion above, it can be concluded that:

1. The variables of MSME readiness (X_1), MSME involvement (X_2), and government support (X_4) were found to have a positive and statistically significant partial effect on the development of social entrepreneurship (Y). Government support emerged as the most dominant factor in accelerating social entrepreneurship through affirmative policies, mentoring, and guaranteed market access for local businesses.
2. The cooperation variable (X_3) does not have a significant partial effect on social entrepreneurship. This indicates that the current partnerships between MSMEs, Nutrition Service Units (SPPG), and schools are still operational in nature and focused on meeting food distribution needs; they have not yet evolved into cooperations capable of creating social value and empowering communities in an inclusive manner.
3. Although the SPPG's commitment to involving local food MSMEs is already very strong, on the ground there remains a disparity in operational capacity between independent MSMEs and small-scale MSMEs. Program implementation continues to face challenges such as fluctuations in raw material prices, inconsistent quality due to weather conditions, internal technical obstacles, and delays in the payment system that tie up working capital for small MSMEs.
4. To ensure the program's sustainability, a governance transformation toward the Sustainable Blended Value Ecosystem Model is required. This model emphasizes an absolute balance between the creation of social value (meeting students' nutritional needs) and economic value (enhancing the capacity and well-being of MSMEs), and consists of four main pillars: strengthening sustainable cooperation agreements; integrating local government MSME development systems; establishing responsive feedback mechanisms; and increasing economic value added.

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