The 8th Open Society Conference (OSC) 2026
Faculty of Law, Social and Political Science
Universitas Terbuka
DOI: doi.org/10.33830/osc.v4i1.9340 / ISSN: 3032-2227

Responsive Public Service Delivery and Policy Conflict in Indonesia's Makan Bergizi Gratis (MBG) Program

Yusup Lintang Cahyo Andrian Putro
Universitas Terbuka, Jalan Cabe Raya, Pondok Cabe, Pamulang, Tangerang Selatan 15437, Banten, Indonesia
e-mail: yusup.lintang@ecampus.ut.ac.id

Abstract

The Makan Bergizi Gratis (MBG) Program represents an expansion of Indonesia's welfare-oriented public services, for schoolchildren. Despite its policy objectives, implementation has generated food safety incidents, distribution problems, procurement controversies, social resistance, and public skepticism, indicating tensions between policy ambition and administrative capacity. This study aims to analyze MBG implementation through the perspectives of responsive public service delivery and policy conflict, focusing on the relationship between policy design, bureaucratic capacity, risk governance, social legitimacy, public responsiveness, and public trust. The study employs a qualitative literature review based on secondary data from scientific journals, books, policy documents, institutional reports, and national and international media coverage. Data were analyzed through literature reduction, thematic categorization, theoretical interpretation, and conceptual synthesis using a descriptive-analytical approach. The findings indicate a design–implementation gap, reflected in limited bureaucratic capacity, weak food safety and risk management, inadequate oversight, fragmented inter-institutional coordination, procurement complexity, and insufficient adaptation to local conditions. Implementation conflicts also extend beyond administrative dimensions to social legitimacy, particularly where policy practices intersect with religious and community values. Limited public feedback mechanisms and administrative responses further contribute to a crisis of policy responsiveness and declining public trust. The study concludes that MBG implementation constitutes a multidimensional governance challenge characterized by wicked-problem dynamics. Effective implementation therefore requires stronger institutional and street-level capacity, integrated risk governance, collaborative coordination, participatory feedback mechanisms, adaptive policy implementation, and sensitivity to social values. These measures are essential for strengthening service quality, policy legitimacy and accountability, and public trust in large-scale welfare policy.

Keywords: *Governance, Makan Bergizi Gratis, Policy, Policy Conflict, Public Administration, Responsive Public Service Delivery.*

INTRODUCTION

Responsive public service delivery is one of the key indicators of successful modern governance. From a contemporary public administration perspective, the quality of public service is measured not only by the state's ability to provide services, but also by its ability to respond to public needs in a timely, adaptive, and accountable manner, while remaining sensitive to evolving social dynamics [1]. Public service delivery that fails to respond to social changes and implementation risks has the potential to cause policy conflicts, erode legitimacy, and reduce the public's level of trust in the state.

Copyright © 2026, Yusup Lintang Cahyo Andrian Putro.

DOI: doi.org/10.33830/osc.v4i1.9340 / ISSN: 3032-2227

The welfare state framework positions large-scale social policies as strategic instruments for strengthening the state's legitimacy by improving the quality of life for the public. The MBG Program in Indonesia represents one form of the state's expansion of social services aimed at improving the nutritional quality of the population, particularly schoolchildren. Conceptually, this policy reflects a progressive, welfare-oriented approach, as the state is directly involved in providing services to meet the basic needs of the public. The reality of the MBG Program's implementation, however, reveals that welfare policies never operate in a space entirely free of conflict.

Modern public administration literature views policy conflict as an inherent consequence of the complexity of contemporary public governance [2]. This complexity stems from multi-stakeholder involvement, disparities in capacity across regions, political pressures, and high public expectations regarding the quality of government services. Such a situation means that public policy faces not only administrative challenges but also issues of social legitimacy and institutional responsiveness. These characteristics are increasingly evident in large-scale social service policies that demand high implementation capacity and effective cross-sectoral coordination.

The MBG program clearly demonstrates how the ambition to expand public services is often not accompanied by adequate implementation capacity. Recent literature on public administration emphasizes that policy success is largely determined by the alignment between policy design and implementation capacity (policy design fit) [3]. This mismatch creates a design–implementation gap, the discrepancy between the normative expectations of a policy and the administrative reality on the ground. This situation indicates that ambitious policy formulation is not always followed by the institutional readiness to ensure consistent implementation quality.

The reality of the MBG Program's implementation in various regions reveals a number of fundamental issues, ranging from the distribution of food unfit for consumption and weak food safety standards to cases of mass food poisoning among student beneficiaries of the program. These issues demonstrate that risk management has not yet been fully prioritized in the design and implementation of public service policies. This situation also indicates that the focus on expanding services has not been fully balanced with the strengthening of mechanisms for oversight and quality control of services.

The risk governance perspective explains that public policies directly related to public health require a rigorous risk control system, particularly regarding food safety, service delivery, and oversight of implementation. Renn (2020) asserts that failing to integrate risk management into the policy-making process will increase vulnerability to implementation crises while simultaneously eroding public trust in state institutions [4]. These dynamics are particularly relevant to the implementation of the MBG Program, especially when the accelerated distribution of social services is not always accompanied by adequate oversight and quality control systems.

The challenges surrounding the implementation of the MBG Program extend beyond mere administrative and technical aspects; they have evolved into issues of social legitimacy. The controversy over the use of imported *ompreng* and the emergence of religious sensitivities demonstrate that public services cannot be separated from the social and cultural values of society. The high level of religious sensitivity in Indonesian society means that public policies are evaluated not only based on their administrative

Copyright © 2026, Yusup Lintang Cahyo Andrian Putro.

DOI: doi.org/10.33830/osc.v4i1.9340 / ISSN: 3032-2227

effectiveness but also on their alignment with the social norms prevalent within the community.

Suchman (1995) explains that institutional legitimacy depends heavily on the alignment between the state's actions and the public's value system. Any disruption to this alignment has the potential to erode public trust in state institutions [5]. This view is reinforced by Rothstein (2011), who asserts that the success of public policy is determined not only by administrative performance but also by the state's ability to maintain normative legitimacy in the eyes of the public [6]. Social conflicts related to religious issues in the implementation of the MBG Program demonstrate that public services insensitive to societal values risk losing their social legitimacy.

The crisis in the implementation of the MBG Program also highlights issues with bureaucratic responsiveness. Various cases of food poisoning, disparities in service distribution, and controversies over logistics procurement indicate that the government's response is often perceived as out of step with the urgency of the issues on the ground. This perception reinforces the public's view that the government is not only slow to address implementation issues but also has not fully heeded the substantive needs of the community.

The perspective of responsive public service delivery emphasizes that public services should be able to establish mechanisms that are responsive, dialogic, and adaptive to the social dynamics of the community. Woodhouse (2022) explains that modern public services require an interactive relationship between the state and the public through effective feedback mechanisms [7]. The reality of the MBG Program's implementation shows that policy response mechanisms still tend to be administrative in nature and have not yet fully adapted to public aspirations or evolving social dynamics.

This crisis of responsiveness can also be understood as a form of policy communication failure. Habermas (1975), through his concept of the "legitimation crisis," explains that the crisis of the modern state stems not only from economic or administrative issues, but also from a failure of communication between the state and society [8]. Policy communication that proceeds asymmetrically, where the state is more dominant in conveying policies than in listening to social responses, will result in a dislocation between the administrative system and the social reality of society. This phenomenon is evident in the implementation of the MBG Program, where policies continue to be carried out administratively, while public perception is shifting toward increasingly deep skepticism.

The dimensions of implementation conflicts are further exacerbated by weak coordination among policy actors. The multi-level governance perspective views policy implementation as a complex process involving interactions between state and non-state actors at various levels of government [9]. The lack of synchronization in responses among institutions regarding the implementation of the MBG Program reinforces the public perception that the state lacks consistency in addressing policy implementation issues in an integrated manner.

The perspective of street-level bureaucracy also helps explain the dynamics of the MBG Program's implementation on the ground. Lipsky (2010) asserts that street-level bureaucrats are the key actors who determine how policies are translated into public service practices [10]. Resource constraints, administrative pressures, and the high complexity of implementation in the MBG Program lead field bureaucrats to exercise

Copyright © 2026, Yusup Lintang Cahyo Andrian Putro.

DOI: doi.org/10.33830/osc.v4i1.9340 / ISSN: 3032-2227

broad discretion. The use of discretion that is not well managed has the potential to lead to fragmented implementation, inconsistent service delivery, and policy conflicts at the community level.

The accumulation of these various implementation conflicts ultimately leads to the erosion of public trust. Modern public administration views public trust not merely as a psychological variable, but as an intangible asset that determines the effectiveness and sustainability of public policy. Rothstein (2011) asserts that the quality of government is greatly influenced by the level of public trust in state institutions [6]. Health risks, procurement controversies, and social conflicts arising from the implementation of the MBG Program reveal a policy paradox: state interventions intended to build trust may actually undermine it.

Pierson (1993) explains that policy failure can lead to a negative policy feedback loop, a situation in which the public's negative experiences with a policy foster skepticism toward subsequent government policies [11]. The recurring implementation conflicts in the MBG Program demonstrate that the public assesses the state's capacity based on the consistency of implementation rather than merely on the normative design of the policy.

The complexity of implementing the MBG Program demonstrates that policy conflicts cannot be understood merely as administrative failures, but rather as an inherent part of the dynamics of modern policy governance. Rittel and Webber (1973) refer to such policy issues as "wicked problems" that is, multidimensional problems that have no definitive solution because every policy intervention has the potential to create new problems [12]. The MBG Program exhibits these characteristics because it simultaneously involves health, logistical, economic, social, and political dimensions.

This article aims to analyze the implementation of the MBG through the perspectives of responsive public service delivery and public policy conflicts. The discussion focuses on the relationship between the quality of public services, bureaucratic capacity, social legitimacy, risk management, and the dynamics of welfare policy governance in Indonesia. It is hoped that this article will contribute to the advancement of public administration studies, particularly regarding the responsiveness of public services in the implementation of large-scale social policies.

Studies on the implementation of public service policies and social welfare programs have been widely conducted, particularly regarding the effectiveness of aid distribution, bureaucratic capacity, and the implementation of food policies. However, most research still focuses solely on administrative aspects and program effectiveness, and thus has not extensively examined the MBG through the integrated perspectives of responsive public service delivery and public policy conflicts. This situation indicates a research gap in public administration studies, particularly regarding the relationship between public service responsiveness, social legitimacy, risk management, and public trust in the implementation of large-scale social policies.

Copyright © 2026, Yusup Lintang Cahyo Andrian Putro.

DOI: doi.org/10.33830/osc.v4i1.9340 / ISSN: 3032-2227

The novelty of this study lies in its use of a responsive public service delivery perspective to analyze the implementation of the MBG Program as part of the dynamics of modern public policy conflicts. This article integrates the policy design fit, risk governance, street-level bureaucracy, multi-level governance, and public trust approaches into a single framework for analyzing contemporary public administration. Furthermore, this study positions social legitimacy and sensitivity to societal values as key elements in determining the success of public service policy implementation.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach using a literature review method to analyze the implementation of the MBG through the perspectives of responsive public service delivery and public policy conflict. The literature review method is used to systematically and comprehensively identify, examine, evaluate, and synthesize various studies relevant to the research topic. This approach allows researchers to build a conceptual understanding of a phenomenon through the integration of various findings from previous studies [13].

Literature reviews are also considered relevant in public administration research because they can map research trends, identify research gaps, and establish a more comprehensive analytical framework for public policy phenomena [14]. Furthermore, this method is widely used in contemporary public administration research to critically and systematically analyze bureaucratic reform, governance, and public policy implementation [15]. This approach is relevant for understanding the dynamics of policy conflicts, the responsiveness of public services, and the complexities of implementing the MBG Program within the context of modern governance.

Research data sources derived from secondary data are considered relevant in public policy research because they enable researchers to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of policy implementation through various credible documents, reports, and academic literature [16]. The use of various literature sources also enables the research to construct a broader conceptual synthesis regarding the relationship between bureaucratic capacity, policy governance, and public services [17]. The process of identifying, selecting, and classifying literature based on substantive relevance is a crucial component of the literature review method to ensure academic validity and theoretical relevance to the research focus [18]. This approach is widely used in public policy implementation research because it enables the systematic and critical mapping of implementation barriers, policy conflicts, and the complexities of governance [19].

The research analytical framework was developed using a policy design versus implementation approach and policy conflict mapping. These approaches were employed to understand how the gap between policy design and implementation capacity gives rise to policy conflicts within the MBG Program. Modern public administration literature emphasizes that policy success is heavily influenced by the alignment between policy design and implementation capacity (policy design fit) [3]. This mismatch results in a design–implementation gap, namely the discrepancy between the normative expectations of the policy and the reality of implementation on the ground.

Copyright © 2026, Yusup Lintang Cahyo Andrian Putro.

The 8th Open Society Conference (OSC) 2026
Faculty of Law, Social and Political Science
Universitas Terbuka
DOI: doi.org/10.33830/osc.v4i1.9340 / ISSN: 3032-2227

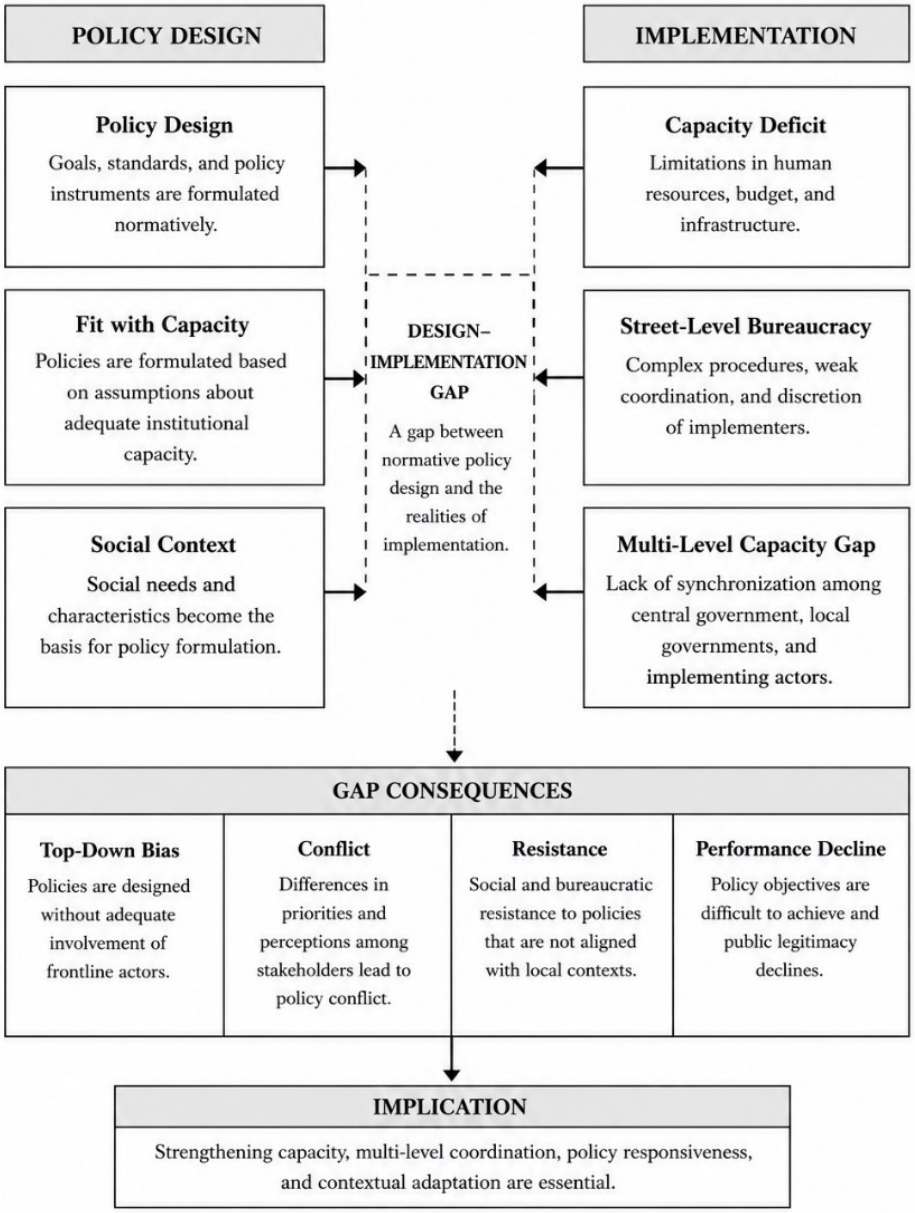


Figure 1. Policy Design vs Implementation Gap

(Source: Adapted from Howlett et al. [3]; Hill & Hupe [20])

The figure illustrates the relationship between normative policy design and the realities of implementation, which are influenced by limited bureaucratic capacity, administrative complexity, and weak coordination of implementation. This perspective is used to explain that implementation conflicts in the MBG Program arise from a mismatch between policy ambitions and institutional capacity in the practice of public service delivery.

Copyright © 2026, Yusup Lintang Cahyo Andrian Putro.

The 8th Open Society Conference (OSC) 2026
Faculty of Law, Social and Political Science
Universitas Terbuka
DOI: doi.org/10.33830/osc.v4i1.9340 / ISSN: 3032-2227

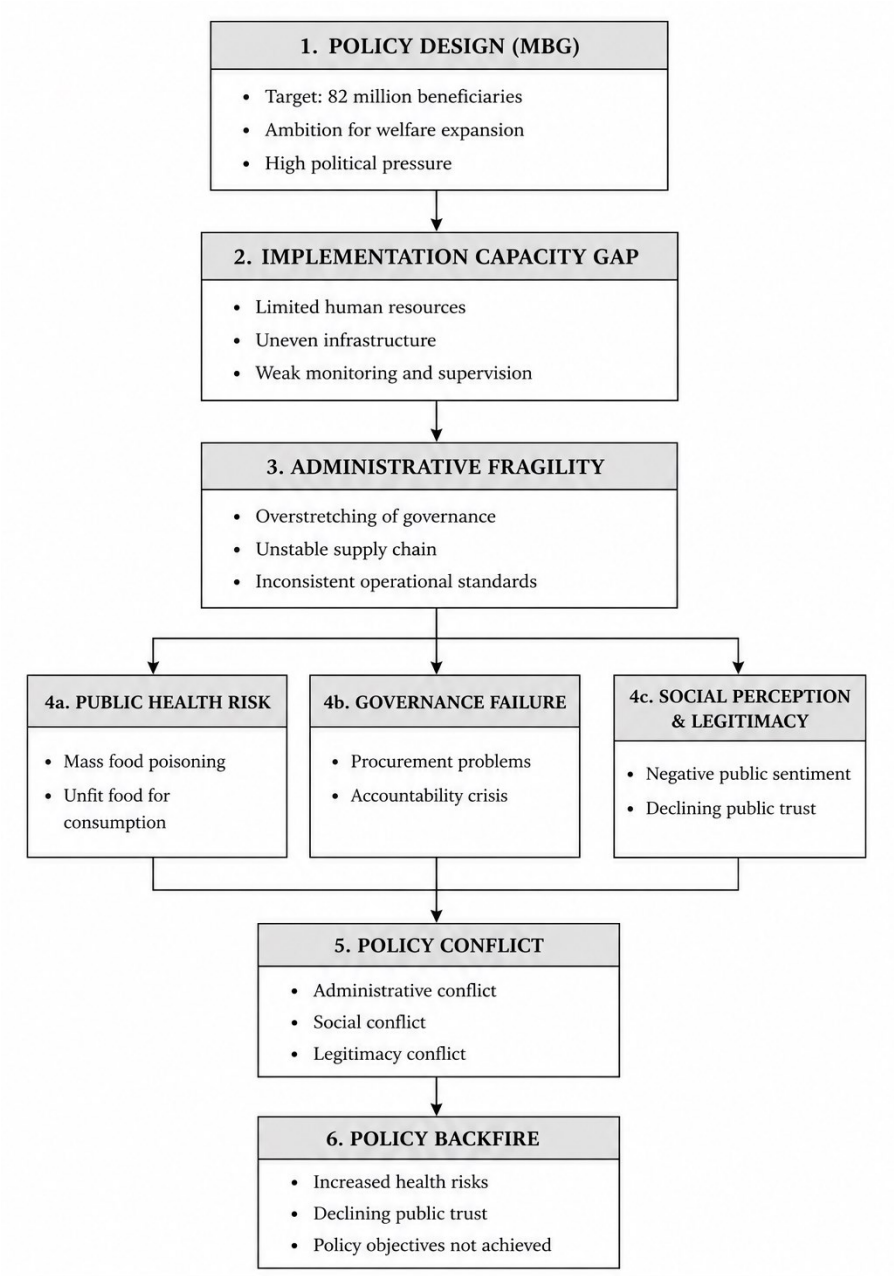


Figure 2. Policy Conflict Mapping in MBG Program

(Source: Adapted from Hill & Hupe [20]; Howlett et al. [3]; Hood [21])

The figure provides information on a conceptual framework for mapping forms of policy conflict in the implementation of the MBG Program. This mapping of conflicts shows that implementation conflicts are multidimensional and involve administrative aspects, food security, social legitimacy, bureaucratic responsiveness, and policy governance. This perspective views policy conflict as an inherent part of the dynamics of modern public policy governance.

The data analysis technique was conducted through the stages of literature reduction, theme categorization, theoretical interpretation, and conceptual synthesis using a descriptive-analytical approach. These stages align with Miles and Huberman's

Copyright © 2026, Yusup Lintang Cahyo Andrian Putro.

DOI: doi.org/10.33830/osc.v4i1.9340 / ISSN: 3032-2227

qualitative data analysis model, which positions data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions as an analytical process that occurs simultaneously and interactively in qualitative research [22]. Data reduction was carried out through a process of selecting, simplifying, grouping, and focusing the data based on the research themes, thereby enabling the researcher to identify patterns, relationships, and policy dynamics more systematically [23].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The study findings indicate that the implementation of the MBG faces a range of multidimensional implementation challenges. Policy conflicts arise not only in administrative aspects but also extend to the dimensions of food security, social legitimacy, policy governance, and bureaucratic responsiveness.

Empirical data indicates an escalation of issues surrounding the implementation of the MBG Program in various regions. Some of the cases identified include mass food poisoning among students, the distribution of food unfit for consumption, production kitchens that fail to meet hygiene standards, controversy over the use of imported cooking stoves, and disputes regarding the procurement of program supplies.

Table 1. Several Policy Conflicts in the MBG Program

Type of Conflict	Location / Scale	Findings	Source (Link)
Mass Poisoning (National Case)	38 Provinces	±12.658 affected students	https://news.detik.com/berita/d-8309812/data-kpai-12-658-anak-di-38-provinsi-keracunan-mbg-sepanjang-2025
Mass Food Poisoning (Local Case)	West Bandung	±1.333 students who were poisoned	https://bandung.kompas.com/read/2025/09/25/165121378/update-korban-keracunan-mbg-di-bandung-barat-tembus-1333-orang
Food Poisoning (The Lebong Case)	Bengkulu	±427 affected students	https://www.detik.com/sumbagsel/berita/d-8094523/penyebab-456-siswa-di-bengkulu-keracunan-mbg-karena-ada-bakteri-dimakanan
Unfit Food	Multiple Regions	Spoiled/unhygienic food	https://nasional.kompas.com/read/2025/04/24/18431321/rentetan-keracunan-massal-mbg-lebih-dari-200-siswa-jadi-korban
The kitchen does not meet standards	Several Regions	MBG's kitchen has been sealed off	https://news.detik.com/berita/d-8117060/warga-segel-rumah-dapur-mbg-di-bandung-karena-bau-dan-beroperasi-24-jam

Copyright © 2026, Yusup Lintang Cahyo Andrian Putro.

DOI: doi.org/10.33830/osc.v4i1.9340 / ISSN: 3032-2227

The Ompreng Issue (Religious)	National	Allegations of non-halal ingredients	https://ugm.ac.id/id/berita/ramai-ompreng-mbg-diduga-tak-halal-pakar-ugm-jelaskan-cara-mengujinya/
Motorcycle Procurement	National	Approximately 21,000 units have been criticized	https://www.tempo.co/politik/nasional-sepekan-pengadaan-motor-mbg-kritik-saiful-mujani-2128324
International Highlights	National	±9.000–10.000 cases	https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/nov/10/maggots-in-the-tempeh-glass-in-the-rice-indonesias-free-school-meals-tainted-by-food-poisoning
Public Sentiment	National	Negative sentiment is on the rise	https://ekonomi.republika.co.id/berita/t46ckg490/indef-ungkap-kasus-keracunan-massal-tingkatkan-sentimen-negatif-pada-program-mbg
Policy Coordination	National	Weak coordination	https://www.kompas.id/artikel/reformulasi-kebijakan-mbg
Sock Procurement	National	Price highlight: IDR 6.9 billion	https://www.msn.com/id-id/berita/other/heboh-penggunaan-anggaran-bgn-beli-kaos-kaki-rp69-miliar-hingga-motor-listrik-rp12-triliun/ar-AA20yuk4

(Sources: Compiled from various national media reports regarding the implementation of the MBG Program)

Other findings indicate that implementation issues are not only related to service quality but also to public perceptions of the policy's legitimacy. The controversy over the use of imported ompreng from China has sparked social resistance because they are seen as insensitive to the community's social and religious values.

The study also identified a gap between policy design and implementation capacity (the design–implementation gap). The MBG program was designed as a welfare expansion policy, but its implementation on the ground revealed limitations in bureaucratic capacity, weak oversight, inadequate infrastructure, and suboptimal cross-sectoral coordination.

These implementation issues have led to growing public skepticism toward the MBG program. Research reports and media coverage indicate that the rise in poisoning cases and policy controversies is directly linked to increasing public skepticism regarding the government's ability to manage large-scale social service programs.

Research findings also indicate that the implementation of the MBG Program is closely linked to the level of fiscal capacity and the complexity of national logistics procurement. Procurement data from the National Nutrition Agency for 2025 reveals the high value of goods procurement expenditures in the implementation of the MBG Program. The large scale of this procurement exacerbates the complexity of policy

Copyright © 2026, Yusup Lintang Cahyo Andrian Putro.

DOI: doi.org/10.33830/osc.v4i1.9340 / ISSN: 3032-2227

governance, as it involves cross-regional logistics distribution, multi-stakeholder coordination, and administrative oversight on a national scale.

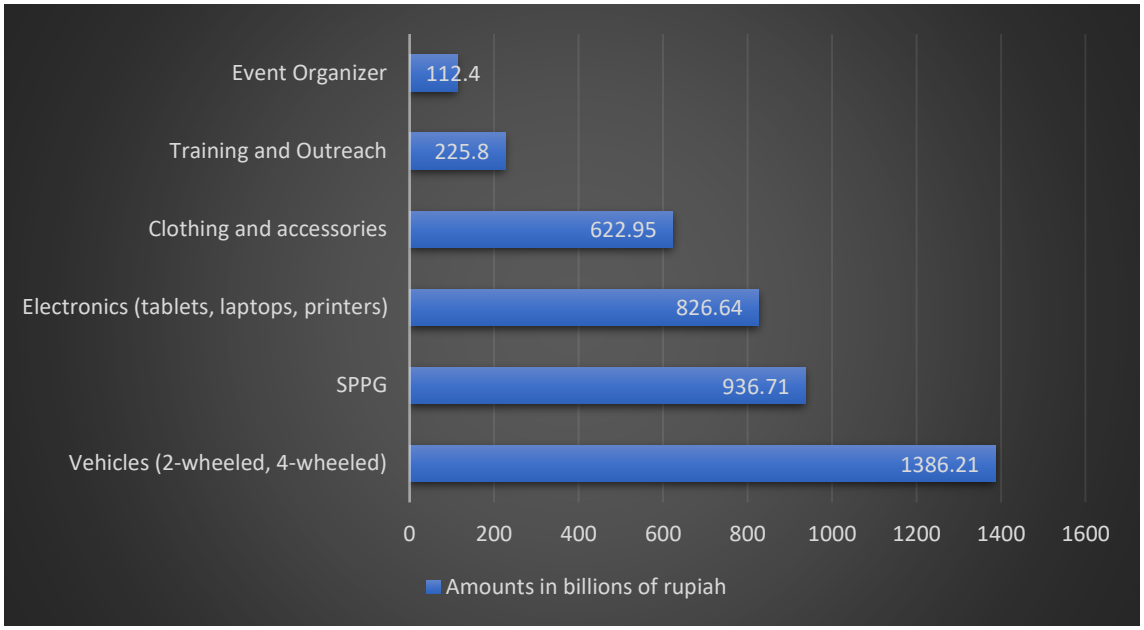


Figure 3. An Overview of the National Nutrition Agency's 2025 Procurement Budget

(Source: Processed from INAPROC Data; BBC News, 2026. https://www.bbc.com/indonesia/articles/crr110erpyeo)

The data indicates that the implementation of the MBG Program is not merely a matter of social services, but is also linked to the capacity of public procurement governance. The sheer scale of the budget and procurement activities increases the risk of coordination issues, oversight problems, distribution disparities, and implementation conflicts on the ground.

The study's findings also highlight the need for a more adaptive policy governance approach to address conflicts arising from the implementation of the MBG Program. The complexity of implementation issues demonstrates that linear, top-down policy models are no longer sufficient to address the dynamics of contemporary public service delivery, which involves numerous actors, interests, and policy risks.

Copyright © 2026, Yusup Lintang Cahyo Andrian Putro.

The 8th Open Society Conference (OSC) 2026
Faculty of Law, Social and Political Science
Universitas Terbuka
DOI: doi.org/10.33830/osc.v4i1.9340 / ISSN: 3032-2227

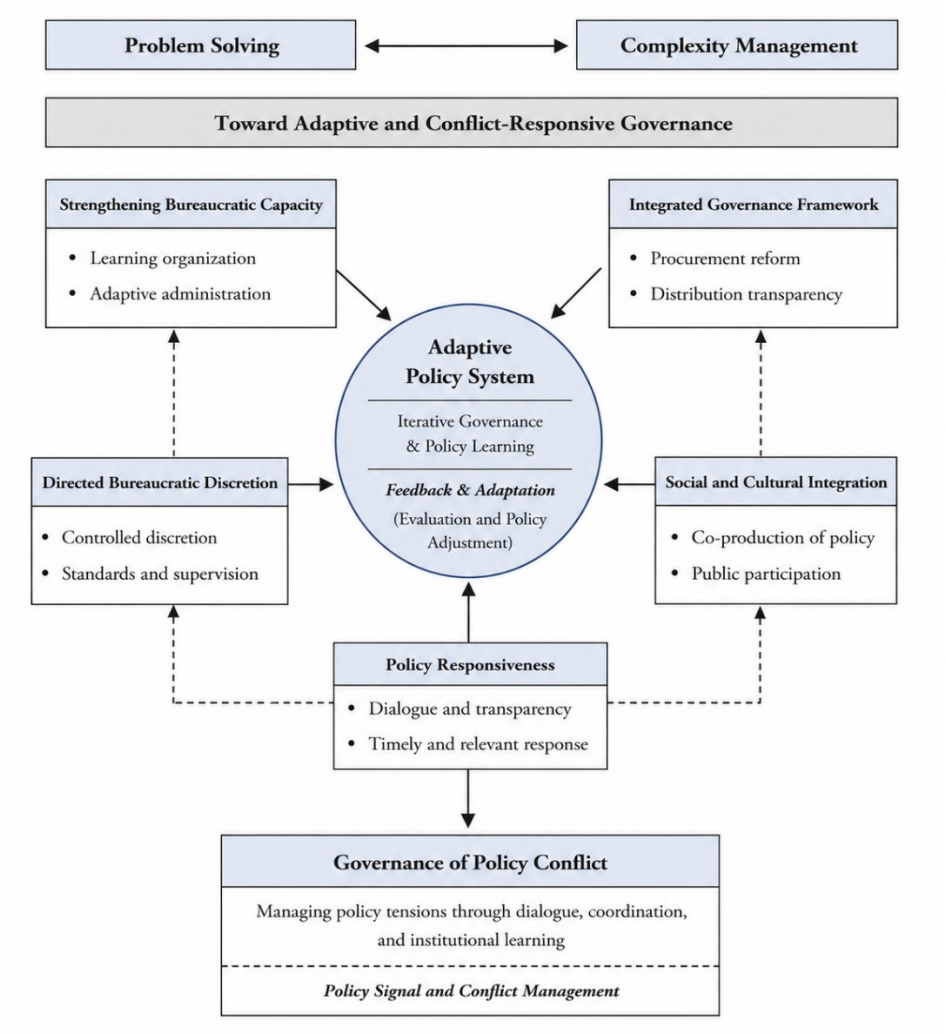


Figure 4. An Adaptive Policy System Model Based on Conflict Management
(Sources: Adapted from Policy Learning, Adaptive Governance, and Conflict Management in Public Administration Literature)

The model illustrates that public policy implementation requires the integration of bureaucratic responsiveness, strengthened risk management, public feedback mechanisms, and multi-stakeholder coordination throughout the policy implementation process. This adaptive approach is essential for mitigating potential policy conflicts while strengthening the legitimacy and effectiveness of public services in the implementation of the MBG Program.

Discussion

Research findings indicate that implementation conflicts in the MBG cannot be understood merely as technical or administrative issues, but rather as a consequence of the complexity of modern public policy governance. Howlett, Ramesh, and Perl (2009) assert that policy conflict is an inherent feature of modern governance systems [2], arising from the interaction of various actors, interests, and institutional capacities in the policy implementation process. This perspective is relevant to the implementation of the MBG

Copyright © 2026, Yusup Lintang Cahyo Andrian Putro.

DOI: doi.org/10.33830/osc.v4i1.9340 / ISSN: 3032-2227

Program, which reveals a mismatch between policy design and implementation capacity (design–implementation gap), resulting in implementation stress at the field level.

The policy design fit perspective explains that policy success is heavily influenced by the alignment between policy design and implementation capacity. Howlett et al. (2021) explain that effective policy design requires alignment between governance capacity and implementation context [3]. The MBG program was normatively designed as a welfare expansion policy; however, the reality of implementation shows that bureaucratic capacity, distribution infrastructure, and oversight systems have not developed proportionally to the scale of the policy being implemented.

These conditions indicate that implementation conflicts within the MBG Program are structural and multidimensional. Administrative fragility is one of the primary sources of implementation conflicts. The phenomenon of governance overstretching is evident when the administrative system is forced to operate beyond its optimal capacity in situations requiring the accelerated delivery of large-scale social services. This situation leads to weak oversight, inconsistent service standards, and an increased risk of implementation failure.

These findings are consistent with Darwin's (2012) research, which confirms that bureaucratic responsiveness is a key indicator of public service quality [24]. A bureaucracy that fails to respond to public needs in a timely and adaptive manner will reduce the effectiveness of public services and increase public dissatisfaction with government institutions. This situation is relevant to the implementation of the MBG Program, which has revealed an inadequate government response to issues of food safety, service distribution, and oversight of implementation.

Cases of mass food poisoning, the distribution of food unfit for consumption, and weak food safety standards indicate serious problems in risk governance. Renn (2017) asserts that risk governance failures emerge when policy systems fail to integrate risk management into implementation processes [4]. This perspective suggests that public service policies directly related to public health must strictly integrate risk control mechanisms, particularly regarding food safety, service delivery, and implementation oversight. The reality of the MBG Program's implementation reveals that the accelerated delivery of social services has not been matched by adequate readiness in oversight systems and quality control.

These implementation issues also highlight the weaknesses in bureaucratic coordination and institutional capacity within the governance of public services. Agustin's research indicates that the success of policy implementation is heavily influenced by inter-agency coordination, organizational capacity, and the consistency of bureaucratic governance [25]. The lack of synchronization in coordination among implementation actors within the MBG Program demonstrates that bureaucratic reform has not yet fully produced a responsive and integrated public service system.

The perspective of street-level bureaucracy also helps explain why implementation conflicts continue to arise at the field level. Lipsky (2010) explains that street-level bureaucrats are the ultimate policy makers in practice [10], because frontline bureaucrats have the discretion to interpret policies in light of the social conditions and resource constraints they face. The discretion exercised in situations of resource constraints leads to variations in implementation across regions and exacerbates the fragmentation of public services.

Copyright © 2026, Yusup Lintang Cahyo Andrian Putro.

DOI: doi.org/10.33830/osc.v4i1.9340 / ISSN: 3032-2227

This context demonstrates that policy implementation does not proceed in a linear fashion from the central government to the local level, but rather unfolds through a process of continuous policy reinterpretation. Each implementing actor simultaneously adapts the policy based on their respective local contexts. This situation reinforces the argument that implementation conflicts within the MBG Program are structurally produced, rather than merely the result of individual deviations by field-level bureaucrats.

This phenomenon is consistent with the research by [26], which explains that the policy capacity of the bureaucracy is greatly influenced by the competence of civil servants, the clarity of the implementation structure, and the organization's readiness to implement public policies. These capacity limitations make public policies vulnerable to fragmented implementation and inconsistent service delivery at the field level.

Issues surrounding the implementation of the MBG Program have also escalated into a crisis of social legitimacy. The controversy over the use of imported ompreng and issues of religious sensitivity demonstrate that public policy cannot be separated from the social and cultural values of society. Suchman (1995) explains that "legitimacy is a generalized perception that organizational actions are desirable and appropriate within socially constructed systems of norms and values". [5] When policies are perceived as insensitive to the social values of the community, public resistance tends to increase and the legitimacy of the policy erodes.

This view is reinforced by Rothstein (2011), who asserts that "the quality of government is closely related to public trust" [6]. The implementation of policies that generate social controversy, health risks, and a weak government response will reinforce the public's negative perceptions of state institutions. These conditions demonstrate that the success of public policy is determined not only by administrative effectiveness but also by the state's ability to maintain normative legitimacy in the eyes of the public.

The findings of this study are also consistent with the research by Subekti and Pribadi (2022), which shows that the quality of public services has a direct relationship with the level of public trust in the government. Transparency, accountability, and the quality of bureaucratic services are key factors in building citizen trust [27]. Implementation conflicts within the MBG Program demonstrate that weak public service governance can accelerate the erosion of public trust in state institutions.

The implementation crisis of the MBG Program also highlights the emergence of a crisis in policy responsiveness. Woodhouse (2022) explains that modern public services require "effective feedback mechanisms between government and citizens" [7]. The state's response, which tends to be administrative and defensive, indicates that public feedback mechanisms have not been functioning optimally in the implementation of the MBG Program. This situation reinforces the public perception that the state has not been fully responsive to implementation issues on the ground.

Habermas (1975), through his concept of the "legitimation crisis," explains that the crisis of the modern state stems not only from economic or administrative issues, but also from a breakdown in communication between the state and society [28]. Policy communication that proceeds asymmetrically leads to a disconnect between the administrative system and the social reality of society. This phenomenon is evident in the implementation of the MBG Program, where policies continue to be implemented administratively, while public perception shifts toward increasingly deep-seated skepticism.

Copyright © 2026, Yusup Lintang Cahyo Andrian Putro.

DOI: doi.org/10.33830/osc.v4i1.9340 / ISSN: 3032-2227

Contemporary public administration perspectives also emphasize the importance of adaptive governance in addressing changing social dynamics within society. Research by Mallawi and Khaeriyah (2025) explains that social transformation requires public administration to build service systems that are more responsive, participatory, and sensitive to changing public expectations [29]. The implementation of the MBG Program demonstrates that large-scale social policies cannot rely solely on formal administrative approaches but also require public communication mechanisms, feedback systems, and adaptive governance to maintain policy legitimacy.

The complexity of implementing the MBG Program exhibits the characteristics of wicked problems. Rittel and Webber (1973) explain that wicked problems are multidimensional issues that "have no definitive formulation and no final solution." The MBG Program simultaneously involves health, logistical, economic, social, political, and governance dimensions, and therefore cannot be resolved through a linear, top-down administrative approach alone [12].

Given these circumstances, the governance of policy conflict approach is relevant for understanding and managing implementation conflicts within the MBG Program. Conflict is no longer viewed as an anomaly to be eliminated, but rather as a structural reality that must be managed adaptively through policy learning mechanisms, the strengthening of adaptive policy design, the development of public feedback systems, and the enhancement of collaboration among policy actors.

Taken together, these findings suggest that the success of the MBG Program is determined not only by the size of the budget or the scope of services, but primarily by the state's ability to build a public service system that is responsive, adaptive, accountable, and enjoys strong social legitimacy. Without such capacity, large-scale welfare policies will continue to face recurring implementation conflicts and risk undermining public trust in state institutions.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Conclusion

The MBG program represents the government's effort to expand social services through welfare policies aimed at improving the nutritional quality of the population, particularly schoolchildren. Conceptually, this policy demonstrates the strengthening of the state's role in providing basic public services as part of the welfare state agenda. However, research findings indicate that the implementation of the MBG Program faces various structural challenges that highlight the complexity of contemporary public policy governance.

Research findings indicate a mismatch between policy design and implementation capacity (the design–implementation gap) in the implementation of the MBG Program. Issues ranging from food distribution, weak food safety standards, mass food poisoning incidents, controversies over logistics procurement, to conflicts involving social and religious sensitivities demonstrate that the expansion of large-scale public services has not yet been fully matched by adequate bureaucratic readiness, oversight systems, coordination capacity, and implementation governance. This situation indicates that the success of public policy is determined not only by the quality of policy formulation but also by the state's ability to manage the implementation process effectively, adaptively, and accountably.

Copyright © 2026, Yusup Lintang Cahyo Andrian Putro.

DOI: doi.org/10.33830/osc.v4i1.9340 / ISSN: 3032-2227

The perspective of responsive public service delivery indicates that modern public services require the state to build a service system that is responsive, dialogic, participatory, and sensitive to the social dynamics of society. The implementation of the MBG Program reveals that public feedback mechanisms and policy communication have not yet functioned optimally. The government's response, which tends to be administrative and reactive, reinforces the public perception of the state's lack of sensitivity to implementation issues on the ground. This situation has led to a policy responsiveness crisis, which has resulted in a decline in social legitimacy and increased public skepticism regarding the state's capacity.

This study also indicates that implementation conflicts within the MBG Program exhibit the characteristics of wicked problems. That is, multidimensional issues that simultaneously involve health, logistical, economic, social, political, and governance dimensions. Rittel and Webber (1973) explain that wicked problems are policy issues that lack definitive formulations or final solutions because every policy intervention has the potential to create new problems. [12] This complexity renders linear and top-down implementation approaches inadequate for addressing the dynamics of large-scale social policies [30]. Implementation conflicts must be understood as an inherent part of the dynamics of the governance of policy conflict, which requires an adaptive, collaborative, and policy-learning-based governance approach [31]. The adaptive governance approach is relevant because it emphasizes institutional flexibility, collaboration among actors, and the policy-learning process in addressing the complexities of contemporary public governance.

The contribution of this study lies in reinforcing the perspective of responsive public service delivery in the analysis of social policy implementation in Indonesia. This study demonstrates that the quality of public services is determined not only by the state's capacity to provide services, but also by its ability to maintain social legitimacy, build effective public communication, manage policy conflicts, and sustain public trust in state institutions. The success of large-scale welfare policies ultimately depends heavily on the integration of bureaucratic capacity, risk management, institutional coordination, and social sensitivity within the public policy implementation process.

Recommendation

Strengthening implementation capacity is a key requirement for the implementation of the MBG Program. The government must ensure that the large-scale expansion of social services is accompanied by institutional readiness, strengthened human resource capacity, adequate distribution infrastructure, and an effective implementation monitoring system. An overly centralized policy approach must be balanced with implementation flexibility based on local capacity so that policies can be adapted to local conditions.

Strengthening the risk governance system must also be a priority in the implementation of the MBG Program. The government needs to establish stricter food safety standards, strengthen the food distribution monitoring system, and develop mechanisms for periodic service quality audits. Strengthening risk management is essential to minimize potential implementation failures while maintaining the legitimacy of the policy and public trust in the state's social services.

Improvements to inter-institutional coordination mechanisms are needed through the

Copyright © 2026, Yusup Lintang Cahyo Andrian Putro.

DOI: doi.org/10.33830/osc.v4i1.9340 / ISSN: 3032-2227

strengthening of collaborative governance that involves the central government, local governments, educational institutions, civil society, the private sector, and local communities in the policy implementation process. A collaborative approach is necessary to reduce fragmentation in implementation, strengthen policy alignment, and enhance the effectiveness of responses to various issues on the ground.

Developing more participatory public communication and feedback mechanisms is also a crucial step in enhancing the responsiveness of public services. The government needs to establish a two-way communication system that allows the public to openly share their evaluations, criticisms, and aspirations regarding the implementation of the MBG Program. Transparent, dialogic, and adaptive public communication will help strengthen the legitimacy of policies and increase public trust in state institutions.

Strengthening the capacity of street-level bureaucrats must also be a top priority. Training in risk management, service quality oversight, public communication, and conflict management during implementation must be enhanced so that field-level bureaucrats can implement policies in a professional, adaptive, and accountable manner. The exercise of bureaucratic discretion must also be guided through mechanisms of directed discretion to ensure that implementation flexibility remains within the framework of accountable governance.

Further research is expected to expand the empirical approach through field studies, public perception surveys, and comparative analyses across regions to strengthen our understanding of the dynamics of the MBG Program's implementation. Follow-up studies are also important to analyze the relationship between welfare policies, the quality of governance, and the building of public trust in the context of contemporary public administration in Indonesia.

DECLARATION OF GENERATIVE AI

During the preparation of this manuscript, the Author(s) used ChatGPT (OpenAI, GPT-5.5) as an intellectual support tool to facilitate the refinement of academic language, improve the logical flow of arguments, evaluate alternative expressions, and enhance the overall clarity and coherence of the manuscript. The tool was not used as a substitute for scholarly judgment, scientific reasoning, data analysis, interpretation of findings, or the formulation of the study's conclusions.

All AI-assisted outputs were critically evaluated, substantially revised where necessary, and cross-checked against the relevant literature and the authors' own academic expertise. The authors retained full control over every stage of manuscript development and accept complete responsibility for the integrity, accuracy, originality, and final content of this publication.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to express sincere appreciation to colleagues and academic peers for their valuable insights, constructive feedback, and stimulating scholarly discussions throughout the development of this study. Their intellectual engagement has contributed to strengthening the clarity, rigor, and overall quality of this manuscript. Any remaining errors or omissions are entirely the responsibility of the author.

Copyright © 2026, Yusup Lintang Cahyo Andrian Putro.

DOI: doi.org/10.33830/osc.v4i1.9340 / ISSN: 3032-2227

REFERENCES

[1] Pollitt, C., & Bouckaert, G. Public management reform: A comparative analysis Into the age of austerity (4th ed.). Oxford University Press. 2017.
[2] Howlett, M., Ramesh, M., & Perl, A. Studying public policy: Policy cycles and policy subsystems (3rd ed.). Oxford University Press. 2009.
[3] Howlett, M., Mukherjee, I., & Woo, J. J. From tools to toolkits in policy design studies: The new design orientation towards policy formulation research. Policy & Politics, 49(2), 291–311. 2021. https://doi.org/10.1332/147084414X13992869118596
[4] Renn, O. Risk Governance. Routledge. 2017.
[5] Suchman, M. Managing legitimacy: Strategic and institutional approaches. 1995.
[6] Rothstein, B. The Quality of Government. University of Chicago Press. 2011.
[7] Woodhouse, E. F., Belardinelli, P., Bertelli, A. M. Hybrid Governance and the Attribution of Political Responsibility: Experimental Evidence from the United States, Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory, 32(1), 150-160, 2022 https://doi.org/10.1093/jopart/muab014
[8] Habermas, J. Legitimation Crisis. Beacon Press. 1975.
[9] Hill, M., & Hupe, P. Implementing public policy: An introduction to the study of operational governance. Sage Publications. 2014. https://uk.sagepub.com/en-gb/asi/implementing-public-policy/book272134
[10] Lipsky, M. Street-Level Bureaucracy: Dilemmas of the Individual in Public Services (30th Anniversary ed.). Russell Sage Foundation. 2010. https://www.russellsage.org/publications/book/street-level-bureaucracy
[11] Pierson, P. When effect becomes cause: Policy feedback and political change. 1993. https://doi.org/10.2307/1960333
[12] Rittel, H. W. J., & Webber, M. M. Dilemmas in a general theory of planning. Policy Sciences. 1973. https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/BF01405730
[13] Erbara, A., & Takdir, M. Systematic Literature Review: Implementasi Prinsip-prinsip Administrasi Keuangan di Indonesia. Jurnal Ilmiah Ekotrans & Erudisi, 2(1), 1-10. 2022. https://doi.org/10.69989/gajx9g32
[14] Tanjung, A., Fitrisia, A., Ofianto. Systematic Literature Review: Analisis Tren, Metode dan Tantangan dalam Penelitian di Bidang Ilmu Administrasi Publik. Ensiklopedia of Journal, 5(2), 37-45. 2023. https://jurnal.ensiklopediaku.org/ojs-2.4.8-3/index.php/ensiklopedia/article/view/1550. https://doi.org/10.33559/eoj.v5i2.1550
[15] Haning, M. T. Reformasi Birokrasi di Indonesia: Tinjauan Dari Perspektif Administrasi Publik. Jurnal Analisis Kebijakan dan Pelayanan Publik. 4(1). 2019. https://doi.org/10.31947/jakpp.v4i1.5902
[16] Agindawati, isye nuriyah. Implementasi Kebijakan Publik dari Perspektif Penyelenggaraan Pengawasan. Jurnal Inspirasi, 10(1), 98–105. 2019. https://doi.org/10.35880/inspirasi.v10i1.68
[17] Yanto, P., Jumanah, J., Sutoto, S. Analisis Implementasi *E-Participation* dalam Kebijakan Publik di Indonesia Berdasarkan *Literature Review. Jurnal Sosial dan Huaniora.* 9(2), 182-200). 2024. https://doi.org/10.47313/pjsh.v9i2.3876
[18] Aurilia, D., Zetra Hainul Putra, & Neni Hermita, Jimmy Corpiady. Strategi Pengumpulan Data Kualitatif Dalam Penelitian Implementasi Kebijakan

Copyright © 2026, Yusup Lintang Cahyo Andrian Putro.

DOI: doi.org/10.33830/osc.v4i1.9340 / ISSN: 3032-2227

Pendidikan Dengan Metode Systematic Literature Review (SLR) . Didaktik : Jurnal Ilmiah PGSD STKIP Subang, 11(02), 244-254. 2025. https://doi.org/10.36989/didaktik.v11i02.6903

[19] Sari, A. L. Hambatan Implementasi Kebijakan Publik di Indonesia: Tinjauan Systematic Literature Review. Triwikrama: Jurnal Ilmu Soial, 11(10), 2011-2020. 2026. https://cibinstitute.id/index.php/triwikrama/article/view/7078

[20] Hill, M., & Hupe, P. Implementing public policy: An introduction to the study of operational governance. Sage Publications. 2014. https://uk.sagepub.com/en-gb/asi/implementing-public-policy/book272134

[21] Hood, C. The blame game: Spin, bureaucracy, and self-preservation in government. Princeton University Press. 2011. https://press.princeton.edu/books/hardcover/9780691134871/the-blame-game

[22] Akib, H. Implementasi Kebijakan: Apa, Mengapa, dan Bagaimana. Jurnal Administrasi Publik, 1(1), 1 – 11. 2010. https://ojs.unm.ac.id/iap/article/view/289/6

[23] Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications. 2014.

[24] Darwin, D. Analisis Responsivitas Pelayanan Publik: Studi di Kecamatan Sunggal Kabupaten Deli Serdang. Jurnal Administrasi Publik (Public Administration Journal), 2(2), 207–233. 2012. https://doi.org/10.31289/jap.v2i2.1372

[25] Agustin, R. Implementasi Kebijakan Grand Design Reformasi Birokrasi dalam Upaya Peningkatan Kualitas Pelayanan Publik (Studi Implementasi Peraturan Presiden Nomor 81 Tahun 2010 di Pemerintah Kota Malang). Jurnal Administrasi Publik, 4(3). 2016. https://administrasipublik.studentjournal.ub.ac.id/index.php/jap/article/view/1200

[26] Mahtiasari, A. (2023). Analisis Kapasitas Kebijakan Penyederhanaan Birokrasi. *Jurnal Administrasi Publik, 6(7).* https://administrasipublik.studentjournal.ub.ac.id/index.php/jap/article/view/1754

[27] Subekti, D., & Pribadi, U. (2022). The Implication Of Bureaucratic Reform Of Public Services On Citizen Trust And Satisfaction: Case Study In Department of Population and Civil Registration Merangin Regency, Jambi Province. Kolaborasi : Jurnal Administrasi Publik, 8(3), 271-287. https://doi.org/10.26618/kjap.v8i3.9018

[28] Habermas, J. (1975). Legitimation Crisis. Beacon Press.

[29] Mallawi, N., & Khaeriyah, K. (2025). Analisis Sosiologis Terhadap Responsivitas Administrasi Publik Dalam Mengatasi Perubahan Dinamika Masyarakat Indonesia. *Dimensi: Journal of Sociology, 13(2), 40-51.* https://journal.trunojoyo.ac.id/dimensi/article/view/32527/11533

[30] Head, W. H., & Alford J. (2013). Wicked Problems: Implication for Public Policy and Management. *Sage Journals, 47(6).* https://doi.org/10.1177/0095399713481601

[31] Ansell, C., & Gash, A. (2008). Collaborative Governance in Theory and Practice. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, *18(4)*, 543–571. https://doi.org/10.1093/jopart/mum032

Copyright © 2026, Yusup Lintang Cahyo Andrian Putro.