

Analysis Of Online Media Coverage of The Alleged “Foundation Farming” Scheme in The Free Nutritious Meal (MBG) Program

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Abstract

The Free Nutritious Meals (MBG) program is a strategic social policy of President Prabowo Subianto's administration, designed to fulfill the nutritional rights of vulnerable groups, particularly school-age children. However, beneath the program's social ambition, allegations of a "foundation farming" practice emerged whereby certain parties systematically established multiple foundations to manage more than one MBG kitchen simultaneously, maximizing program fund acquisition. This study aims to analyze how national online media constructed news coverage of this issue using Robert N. Entman's framing analysis framework. A qualitative approach grounded in critical paradigm was employed to examine news texts from Kompas.com, Detik Finance, and iNews.id published between April 2025 and March 2026. Analysis was conducted through four Entman framing elements: define problems, diagnose causes, make moral judgement, and treatment recommendation. Findings reveal that the three media outlets constructed the same reality with divergent emphases: Kompas.com highlighted social impacts and governance failures affecting beneficiaries, while Detik Finance and iNews.id foregrounded opportunistic behavior by implementing partners and regulatory loopholes. Despite differing in framing, all three media converged on the view that the MBG program should be preserved and accompanied by structural reforms and strengthened oversight mechanisms. These findings imply the need for a responsive and proactive policy communication strategy from the government in addressing media discourse dynamics.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Free Nutritious Meal Program (MBG) is a strategic policy of President Prabowo Subianto's administration, designed as a form of state intervention to address nutritional problems among the population, particularly school-age children and other vulnerable groups. The policy positions the state as the principal actor responsible for fulfilling citizens' nutritional rights by delivering services through a network of community-based kitchens managed by Nutrition Fulfillment Service Units (*Satuan Pelayanan Pemenuhan Gizi* or SPPG) and partner foundations. Such a policy design reflects a welfare-state approach that emphasizes the direct distribution of public benefits to target groups while simultaneously requiring accountable and measurable governance.

The involvement of foundations as operational partners in the MBG Program constitutes a common policy instrument in the delivery of community-based social services. Foundations are considered to possess structural proximity to beneficiaries, managerial flexibility, and the capacity to mobilize local resources that government institutions may not always have. However, such partnership arrangements also contain inherent risks of moral hazard, particularly when substantial financial incentives are provided without proportionate oversight mechanisms.

Findings reported by the National Nutrition Agency (*Badan Gizi Nasional* or BGN) in early March 2026 indicated that such risks had allegedly developed into actual practices. BGN disclosed a phenomenon referred to as **“ternak yayasan”** (“foundation farming”), involving the systematic establishment of multiple foundations by certain parties allegedly seeking to manage more than one MBG kitchen simultaneously in order to maximize access to program funds. Such practices may represent not only an ethical deviation but also a structural distortion of the program’s social objectives by shifting its orientation from the provision of public nutritional services toward economic extraction.

This type of deviation can be understood through the *principal-agent* problem commonly discussed in public policy studies, in which implementing partners as agents may exploit information asymmetries to act beyond the mandate established by the principal. Weak or absent verification systems concerning the institutional identities of foundations, combined with the absence of explicit restrictions on kitchen ownership in the program’s initial regulatory framework, may create structural loopholes that enable such practices to develop. This condition suggests weaknesses in policy design rather than merely problems of individual integrity.

Governance challenges become even more complex when allegations of misappropriation of MBG funds enter the public sphere. One MBG kitchen in the Kalibata area was reported to have suspended operations after nearly IDR 1 billion in payments had allegedly not been received, as reported by *Kompas.com* in April 2025. The case not only reflects potential failures in fund disbursement and financial accountability mechanisms but also illustrates the tangible consequences that financial disputes can have for the continuity of nutritional services provided to beneficiaries.

These issues have received extensive attention from national online media, which have reported them using different framing approaches. Media framing is not a neutral process; rather, it involves the active selection and emphasis of particular aspects of reality in ways that encourage certain interpretations among audiences. Entman (1993) defines framing as the process of selecting and making certain aspects of perceived reality more salient in order to promote particular problem definitions, causal interpretations, moral evaluations, and treatment recommendations. Accordingly, the ways in which media construct news about alleged irregularities in the MBG Program can contribute to shaping public perceptions and social pressure surrounding the policy.

Differences in editorial ideology, media ownership position, and target audiences may generate variations in the construction of reality that cannot be overlooked in studies of policy communication. Media outlets that emphasize institutional accountability may construct a different public agenda from those that focus more heavily on grassroots social impacts. Such variations in framing have direct implications for the formation of public opinion, pressure on policy actors, and the direction of discourse surrounding program reform.

A framing analysis of media coverage concerning MBG-related issues is therefore relevant, particularly because systematic research documenting how Indonesian online media construct narratives surrounding alleged irregularities in a government program of such scale and political sensitivity remains limited. Most framing studies of social policy in Indonesia have tended to focus on health and disaster issues, while questions of governance and accountability within national nutrition programs have received comparatively little academic attention.

This gap in the literature provides the basis for the urgency of the present study. A framing analysis of national online media coverage concerning the alleged **“foundation farming”** scheme and alleged irregularities in MBG funding, using Entman’s analytical framework, can make a dual contribution. Theoretically, it can enrich the literature on framing within the context of Indonesian social policy. Practically, it can provide a map of competing discourse constructions that may assist policymakers in designing more effective public communication strategies and strengthening oversight mechanisms for the future implementation of the MBG Program.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach grounded in a critical paradigm. The critical paradigm was selected based on the assumption that news texts are not merely reflections of reality, but products of social construction shaped by power relations, institutional interests, and the ideological orientations of media as actors in the public sphere. Within this framework, the media are understood not as neutral transmitters of information, but as active agents of meaning construction that selectively choose, emphasize, and marginalize particular aspects of social reality.

The study used a descriptive qualitative design with Robert N. Entman's (1993) framing analysis model. This method was selected because of its ability to systematically reveal how media define problems, identify causal factors, assign moral evaluations, and propose treatment recommendations. These four elements collectively form the interpretive framework offered to audiences.

The data consisted of news texts published by three national online media outlets—Kompas.com, Detik Finance, and iNews.id—between April 2025 and March 2026. These three outlets were selected to represent different audience segments and journalistic orientations. Kompas.com represents a general news outlet with a long-standing tradition of policy journalism, Detik Finance represents an economy- and business-oriented news platform, and iNews.id represents a speed-oriented digital news outlet with a broad audience reach. This heterogeneity allows for a richer analytical comparison of framing patterns.

Data were collected through documentation by identifying news reports that explicitly contained the keywords **"ternak yayasan"* ("foundation farming"), **"dapur MBG"* ("MBG kitchen"), and **"penyimpangan MBG"* ("MBG irregularities") across the three media platforms. Articles included in the analytical corpus were those that substantively discussed the alleged "foundation farming" scheme and its implications for the MBG Program, rather than merely mentioning the terms incidentally. This selection process resulted in six news articles that served as the primary objects of analysis.

Data analysis was conducted in several stages. The first stage involved a comprehensive reading of each news text to understand its overall context and narrative structure. The second stage consisted of identifying Entman's framing elements within each text: **define problems** (how the issue is defined), **diagnose causes** (who or what is identified as the cause), **make moral judgement** (the ethical evaluation attached to the issue), and **treatment recommendation** (the solution implied or proposed). The third stage involved cross-media comparison to identify recurring patterns and divergences in framing. The trustworthiness of the findings was maintained through interpretive consistency, whereby each analytical conclusion was continuously traced back to explicit textual evidence contained in the news reports.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the results of a framing analysis of online media coverage concerning the alleged "foundation farming" scheme in the Free Nutritious Meal Program (MBG), as published by three national online media outlets—Kompas.com, Detik Finance, and iNews.id—between April 2025 and March 2026. The analysis employs the four framing elements proposed by Robert N. Entman (1993): **define problems**, **diagnose causes**, **make moral judgement**, and **treatment recommendation**. The discussion examines how each media outlet constructs the same issue from different perspectives and with different emphases, as well as how these framing differences reflect each media institution's editorial orientation and perceived audience interests.

General Overview of Online Media Coverage of the MBG Issue

The alleged "foundation farming" scheme in the MBG Program first emerged in national media coverage when the National Nutrition Agency (**Badan Gizi Nasional** or BGN) disclosed an alleged practice in which certain parties systematically established multiple foundations in order to manage more than one MBG kitchen simultaneously, as reported by Detik Finance on March 8, 2026 (Ayuningrum, 2026a). One day later, similar coverage appeared with a more explicit headline suggesting that certain actors were allegedly seeking financial gain from the government program through practices considered improper (Ayuningrum, 2026b). At approximately the same time, iNews.id reported that BGN had formally characterized the practice as inconsistent with the intended objectives of the MBG Program (iNews.id, 2026).

Kompas.com, by contrast, adopted a reporting angle that placed greater emphasis on tangible impacts at the operational level. As early as April 2025, the outlet had reported on operational problems

affecting an MBG kitchen in the Kalibata area, which reportedly faced the possibility of suspending operations because nearly IDR 1 billion in payments had not been received (Kompas.com, 2025). Kompas.com subsequently linked this issue to statements by President Prabowo Subianto emphasizing the importance of oversight to prevent corruption within the program (Akbar, 2025). Across these publications, the three media outlets appear to have selected different points of entry in framing the same broader issue: Detik Finance and iNews.id positioned BGN as an authoritative source confirming alleged irregularities, whereas Kompas.com placed greater emphasis on affected beneficiaries and kitchen partners within its narrative construction.

Analysis Using Entman's Framing Elements

Define Problems: Defining the Problem

The first element of Entman's framing model concerns how the media define an event—as a social problem, a policy crisis, or a moral violation. In the case of MBG coverage, a notable divergence can be observed among the media outlets examined.

Kompas.com defines the central problem primarily as a governance failure that may threaten the continuity of nutritional services for vulnerable groups. By highlighting the concrete case of the Kalibata MBG kitchen, which reportedly faced operational disruption because of unpaid bills, Kompas.com frames the issue as a crisis in the distribution of public benefits with direct consequences for school-age children as the principal beneficiaries of the program. The problem is therefore defined not merely in terms of alleged misconduct by individual actors, but also in terms of systemic vulnerability and the inability of governance mechanisms to sufficiently protect beneficiaries at the implementation level.

Detik Finance and iNews.id, by contrast, define the problem more strongly through the dimension of opportunistic behavior by implementing partners. Their framing encourages readers to understand “foundation farming” as the alleged conduct of individuals or groups seeking to exploit a government program for private benefit. The use of phrases such as “seeking profit” and “deviating from the program's objectives” reinforces the construction of the issue as an ethical and moral violation rather than solely as a weakness in policy design. This difference in problem definition is consistent with Van Gorp's (2007) argument that framing constructions are shaped by cultural values and editorial orientations embedded within media institutions.

Diagnose Causes: Diagnosing the Causes

The second element of Entman's framing model focuses on how the media identify the causes of a problem and determine who or what is considered responsible. In MBG-related coverage, differences in causal diagnosis across media reflect fundamentally different ways of understanding the sources of the program's governance difficulties.

Kompas.com consistently directs causal diagnosis toward structural and institutional dimensions. Its coverage implies that the underlying problems may lie in weaknesses in the verification mechanisms for partner foundations, the absence of sufficiently explicit regulatory limits on the number of kitchens that may be managed by a single entity, and delays in financial disbursement and accountability processes that may place operational pressure on partner kitchens. Through this framing, Kompas.com positions the state—particularly BGN—as an institutional actor responsible for strengthening and correcting weaknesses in the system.

Detik Finance and iNews.id, meanwhile, place greater emphasis on an individual-agency diagnosis. Their reports foreground the alleged actors involved in “foundation farming” as active subjects who consciously exploit regulatory gaps for financial benefit. Although BGN is cited as the main information source, the narrative construction places greater causal responsibility on opportunistic actors rather than on systemic weaknesses. This pattern is consistent with Scheufele's (1999) argument that media framing influences causal attribution and, in turn, shapes public perceptions of who should be held responsible for a particular problem.

An important analytical tension emerges between these two forms of causal diagnosis. Kompas.com's emphasis on structural weaknesses is more closely aligned with academic interpretations of the *principal-agent* problem in public policy, in which information asymmetry between the principal—in this case BGN—and implementing agents, such as partner foundations, creates inherent governance vulnerabilities. By contrast, the individual-centered framing employed by Detik Finance and

iNews.id may be more immediately accessible to general audiences and may generate more direct moral scrutiny of the actors alleged to have exploited the program.

Make Moral Judgement: Moral Evaluation

The third element of Entman's framing model concerns the ways in which media attach ethical evaluations to events or actors. In reporting on alleged irregularities in the MBG Program, moral judgement appears prominently and gives each media outlet's narrative construction a distinctive character.

Kompas.com constructs a moral evaluation centered on state responsibility and citizens' rights. By citing President Prabowo's statement regarding the importance of oversight to prevent corruption in the program, Kompas.com implicitly positions affected MBG kitchens and children at risk of losing access to nutritional services as parties harmed by weaknesses in institutional supervision. The moral evaluation is therefore directed upward, toward policymakers and state institutions that are expected to safeguard the integrity and continuity of the program. Within this frame, beneficiaries are presented as those potentially disadvantaged by failures in governance rather than merely as statistical targets of public policy.

Detik Finance and iNews.id, on the other hand, construct a more explicit moral evaluation directed toward implementing partners alleged to have behaved improperly. The use of terms such as "seeking profit," "deviating," and "foundation farming" in headlines is not merely an editorial choice; it also functions as an active framing device carrying particular moral connotations. The phrase "foundation farming" itself operates as a negatively charged metaphor, juxtaposing a legally recognized social foundation with an activity associated with multiplication for material gain. Such moral framing, as discussed by Eriyanto (2002), illustrates how media do not merely report events but also provide interpretive cues that guide audiences in understanding the ethical implications of those events.

There is an implicit similarity among the three media outlets in positioning the MBG Program as a fundamentally legitimate and beneficial policy that is currently being undermined by various dysfunctions. None of the three media questions the legitimacy or overall relevance of the MBG Program. The prevailing moral frame is therefore one of reform rather than rejection—a construction that tends to reinforce the legitimacy of the program while simultaneously encouraging demands for improvements in its implementation.

Treatment Recommendation: Recommended Solutions

The final element in Entman's framing model concerns how the media propose or imply solutions to the previously framed problem. This element is often conveyed implicitly through the selection of sources, the quotations emphasized, and the direction of questions constructed within the news text.

The recommendations implied by Kompas.com are operational and protective in nature. By positioning MBG kitchens facing possible operational disruption as the central subjects of its reporting, the outlet implicitly encourages the government to prioritize faster payment disbursement, stronger field-level monitoring mechanisms, and protection for the continuity of kitchen operations as the front line of program delivery. This recommendation is oriented toward short-term solutions designed to ensure that beneficiaries are not adversely affected by administrative dysfunction.

Detik Finance and iNews.id, by contrast, imply recommendations that are more regulatory and structural. By citing official BGN statements describing "foundation farming" as a deviation, both media outlets encourage expectations of regulatory reform, restrictions on the number of kitchens that may be managed by a single foundation, and comprehensive audits of all registered SPPG partners. These recommendations emphasize law enforcement and systemic reform, implying that long-term resolution can only be achieved through institutional changes rather than through case-by-case handling alone.

These differences in recommended solutions reflect the differing interpretations of the underlying causes discussed in the previous framing element. The internal consistency among the four framing elements within each media outlet indicates that framing is not the result of isolated editorial choices, but rather forms a coherent narrative construction. This finding reinforces the argument of Scheufele and Tewksbury (2007), who state that media framing operates through interconnected narrative packages rather than through single, isolated selections.

Table 1. Comparison of Entman's Framing in MBG News Coverage

Framing Element	Kompas.com	Detik Finance / iNews.id
Define Problems	Governance irregularities in MBG kitchen management are framed as a threat to program continuity and as potentially harmful to beneficiaries.	Opportunistic behavior by partner foundations is framed as an integrity problem and as the exploitation of regulatory loopholes that may harm public finances.
Diagnose Causes	Weak BGN verification and monitoring mechanisms, as well as the absence of explicit limits on kitchen ownership in the program's initial regulations.	Financial incentives that are disproportionate to accountability requirements, combined with legal or regulatory loopholes allegedly exploited by certain actors.
Make Moral Judgement	The state is portrayed as insufficiently protecting beneficiaries' interests, while MBG kitchens are positioned as victims of bureaucratic dysfunction.	Actors involved in alleged "foundation farming" are portrayed as unethical and opportunistic, while BGN is expected to take firm action.
Treatment Recommendation	Strengthening field-level monitoring, accelerating payment disbursement, and protecting the operational continuity of MBG kitchens.	Regulatory revision, restrictions on the number of kitchens managed by individual foundations, and comprehensive audits of SPPG partners.

Source: Researcher's analysis based on news coverage from Kompas.com, Detik Finance, and iNews.id (2025–2026).

Comparative Narrative Construction and Implications for Public Discourse

The framing analysis above demonstrates that the three media outlets construct narratives concerning the MBG issue with different emphases, despite relying on relatively similar factual material. These differences are not merely variations in writing style or technical editorial preferences; rather, they reflect the ideological orientations and social positions of each media institution within the national press landscape.

Kompas.com, as a media outlet with a long history of reporting on social issues and public policy, adopts a frame that places greater emphasis on social impacts and state accountability. This orientation is consistent with Kompas.com's editorial character, which has often foregrounded public interest and the protection of vulnerable groups. Sudibyo (2001) reminds us that editorial choices are closely related to power relations among media institutions, the state, and the market. In this context, Kompas.com appears to position itself as a watchdog that monitors state performance from the perspective of ordinary citizens affected by policy implementation.

Detik Finance, as an economic and business news platform, is more naturally oriented toward the financial and regulatory dimensions of the issue. Its framing tends to emphasize fiscal implications, budgetary consequences, and governance weaknesses from the perspective of policy economics. Meanwhile, iNews.id, with its emphasis on speed and broad audience reach, tends to reproduce official BGN statements more directly and with less contextual elaboration, thereby creating the impression that the "foundation farming" problem has already been formally acknowledged and will be addressed by the relevant authorities.

The variations in framing identified in this study have important implications for public discourse surrounding the MBG Program. As theorized by Entman (1993), media framing not only influences how audiences understand an issue, but also shapes perceptions of responsibility, appropriate solutions, and the values that should guide policy evaluation. In the context of the MBG Program, which involves both political interests and matters of broad public welfare, differences in framing across media may generate social pressure in different directions: some frames encourage service reform, others demand stronger law enforcement, while others emphasize the need to accelerate the resolution of operational problems.

An important point is that all three media outlets implicitly converge on one proposition: the MBG Program is fundamentally a policy that should be maintained and improved rather than abolished. This implicit consensus reflects what Scheufele and Tewksbury (2007) describe as a consolidated public

agenda, in which media debate no longer centers on whether the program should continue, but rather on how it should be improved. Thus, although the three outlets construct different narratives, their coverage collectively contributes to the long-term legitimacy of the MBG Program by encouraging accountability and reform rather than policy rejection.

Media Framing Dynamics and Pressure for Program Reform

The cumulative coverage produced by the three media outlets collectively generates significant social pressure on the National Nutrition Agency as the institution responsible for managing the MBG Program. When Kompas.com reports on kitchens facing operational disruption, Detik Finance highlights the alleged “foundation farming” scheme, and iNews.id reports BGN’s official response, these narrative streams reinforce one another and contribute to a public perception that the program is experiencing a governance crisis requiring immediate attention.

From the perspective of framing theory, this phenomenon illustrates the cumulative effects of framing discussed by Scheufele (1999), in which interpretive frameworks constructed by one media outlet may influence how audiences subsequently receive and interpret coverage from another. Readers previously exposed to Kompas.com’s reporting on disrupted kitchen operations may be more inclined to interpret Detik Finance’s coverage of “foundation farming” as confirmation of broader problems within program governance. Conversely, readers first encountering Detik Finance’s reports may seek further information regarding the concrete consequences of these governance problems, which may then be found in Kompas.com’s reporting.

This intersection of narrative references demonstrates that framing analysis should not be conducted in isolation by focusing exclusively on a single media outlet. Public discourse surrounding public policy is formed through the interaction of multiple frames produced by different media institutions that may reinforce, complement, or respond to one another. This finding strengthens the relevance of the comparative framing approach adopted in this study as an analytical method capable of capturing the complexity of media discourse construction in the context of politically sensitive public policy.

In the broader context of the MBG Program, the media framing dynamics identified in this study underscore the importance of responsive public communication strategies on the part of government institutions. When narratives of alleged irregularities and operational failures dominate media coverage from different perspectives without being balanced by concrete narratives of achievement and reform, there is a risk that negative perceptions of the program may become more deeply embedded in public consciousness than policymakers intend. This constitutes an important consideration for policymakers in designing proactive, transparent, and balanced communication strategies for managing public opinion surrounding the future implementation of the MBG Program.

4. CONCLUSION

This study examined the construction of news coverage by three national online media outlets—Kompas.com, Detik Finance, and iNews.id—regarding the alleged “foundation farming” scheme in the Free Nutritious Meal Program (MBG) using Robert N. Entman’s framing analysis model. Based on the overall analytical process, several main conclusions can be drawn.

First, the three media outlets constructed the same issue through different frames, although these frames were not fundamentally contradictory. Kompas.com developed a frame oriented toward social impacts and failures of state governance, positioning beneficiaries and kitchen partners as the actors most directly affected by systemic dysfunction. By contrast, Detik Finance and iNews.id constructed frames that placed greater emphasis on the opportunistic behavior of alleged actors and weaknesses in the program’s regulatory framework. These differences in emphasis reflect the editorial orientations, institutional identities, and audience characteristics of each media outlet, all of which actively shape how audiences perceive the same policy issue.

Second, in terms of causal attribution, Kompas.com tended to direct its diagnosis toward structural and institutional factors, whereas Detik Finance and iNews.id placed greater emphasis on individual agency as the source of the problem. This divergence has important implications: structural framing encourages demands for institutional reform, while individual-centered framing encourages calls for law enforcement and sanctions against alleged perpetrators. These two forms of social pressure are not mutually exclusive; rather, they can be understood as complementary in promoting more comprehensive improvements to the program.

Third, in the dimension of moral evaluation, the three media outlets implicitly converged on the view that the MBG Program is fundamentally a policy that should be maintained and improved. The dominant moral frame was therefore one of reform rather than rejection. None of the three outlets fundamentally questioned the legitimacy of the program as a whole. This implicit consensus may contribute to the program's longer-term legitimacy while simultaneously directing public scrutiny toward governance and implementation accountability. In this sense, the resulting discourse is broadly oriented toward policy improvement rather than policy abandonment.

Fourth, collectively, the accumulated coverage from the three media outlets contributed to the formation of a public agenda focused on operational and regulatory reform of the MBG Program. The interaction of different media frames created a cumulative effect that reinforced the perception that the program required immediate improvement, including faster payment disbursement to kitchen partners, restrictions on the number of kitchens managed by individual foundations, and stronger institutional audit and verification mechanisms.

This study is limited by the scope of the media analyzed, which included only three national online news organizations. Future research could broaden the media sample to include local media, digitally native platforms, and social media, while also integrating audience reception analysis to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of media discourse surrounding the MBG Program. In addition, longitudinal studies tracing the evolution of media framing from the program's initial implementation through subsequent reform phases following the emergence of alleged irregularities would enrich understanding of how media discourse changes in parallel with policy developments.

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