

Research Article

The Effect of Labor Absorption, Work Motivation, and Worker Productivity on the Free Nutritious Meal Program in Blitar City According to the Perspective of Sharia Economics

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Abstract: This study discusses the quality of the implementation of the Free Nutritious Meal Program (MBG) in Blitar City which is influenced by labor absorption, work motivation, and worker productivity in the perspective of sharia economics. This study aims to analyze the influence of labor absorption, work motivation, and worker productivity on the quality of the implementation of the MBG Program. The research method used is a quantitative approach with the type of associative research. The research population amounted to 550 workers and volunteers in 11 MBG kitchens in Blitar City with a sample of 121 respondents determined using purposive sampling techniques. Data collection techniques were carried out through questionnaires and documentation, while data analysis used validity, reliability, multiple linear regression tests, t-tests, F tests, and determination coefficients with the help of the EViews application. The results showed that labor absorption had a significant effect on the quality of program implementation with a significance value of 0.0074, work motivation had a significant effect with a significance value of 0.0134, and worker productivity had the most dominant influence with a significance value of 0.0000. Simultaneously, the three independent variables had a significant effect on the quality of the implementation of the MBG Program with an F-calculated value of 91.60139 and a significance of 0.000000. The Adjusted R-Squared value of 0.693725 indicates that 69.37% of program quality can be explained by all three independent variables. This study concludes that the application of trust values, justice, professionalism, and Islamic work ethic plays an important role in improving the quality of the implementation of the Free Nutritious Meal Program in Blitar City.

Keywords: Labor Absorption; Motivation; Perspective Sharia Economics; Productivity; Program Quality.

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1. Introduction

Improving the quality of human resources (HR) is one of the priorities for national development because healthy and productive human resources play an important role in supporting economic growth (Todaro & Smith, 2006). From a development economics perspective, community nutrition fulfillment is closely related to work productivity, quality of education, and human capital enhancement (human capital) (Becker, 1994). Therefore, the government presents the Free Nutritious Eating Program (MBG) as an effort to improve the nutritional quality of the community, especially students, while supporting the improvement of the quality of human resources in Indonesia. Blitar City is one of the regions that supports

the implementation of the MBG Program through the involvement of local workers, MSMEs, and food suppliers.

The success of the implementation of the MBG Program is not only determined by the budget, but also by the quality of the human resources involved. Labor absorption, work motivation, and worker productivity are important factors in supporting the effectiveness of program implementation. Good absorption of labor can improve the division of tasks and smooth program operations. In addition, work motivation affects employee responsibility, discipline, and morale, while worker productivity determines the ability to produce effective and efficient services according to program standards (Robbins & Judge, 2009).

Previous research generally used a quantitative approach with multiple linear regression analysis to measure the influence of labor absorption, work motivation, and productivity on the quality of services or organizational performance. The method is able to explain the influence of variables partially or simultaneously, but most of the research still focuses on the general sector and has not integrated the perspective of sharia economics. In addition, research on the quality of implementation of the MBG Program is still limited, especially those that discuss the relationship between these three variables in sharia-based public programs. This condition shows that there is a research gap that needs to be studied further.

From the perspective of sharia economics, the quality of program implementation is not only measured by technical effectiveness, but also by the value of trust, justice, professionalism, and benefit. Therefore, this study proposes an analysis of the influence of labor absorption, work motivation, and worker productivity on the quality of the implementation of the MBG Program in Blitar City from the perspective of sharia economics.

The contributions of this study include: (1) providing an empirical analysis of the influence of labor absorption, work motivation, and worker productivity on the quality of the implementation of the MBG Program; (2) expanding the study of sharia economics in the implementation of public programs; (3) to be a reference for the government in improving the quality of the implementation of programs based on public services and sharia values. The structure of this article consists of an introduction, research methods, results and discussions, and conclusions.

2. Theoretical Foundation

Labor Absorption

A workforce is an individual who has the ability, skills, and potential that can be used in organizational activities to achieve predetermined goals. Stephen P. Robbins and Timothy A. Judge explain that the success of an organization is greatly influenced by the contribution of individuals who work effectively within an organizational system (Robbins & Judge, 2009). In addition, David Osborne emphasized that the quality of public program implementation is determined by the organization's ability to manage resources effectively and efficiently (Osborne, 2020), while Walker et al. stated that optimal labor management affects organizational performance (Walker dkk., 2010).

In the perspective of Islamic economics, Rafik Issa Beekun explained that labor absorption is a process of accepting labor based on individual achievements, abilities, and competencies, not due to nepotism or self-interest. In addition, organizations must provide fair employment opportunities and encourage workers to have moral responsibility and Islamic work ethics (Beekun, 1997). Based on Beekun's theory, indicators of labor absorption include competency suitability in job placement, fairness in the recruitment and placement process, responsibility and trust in work, and compliance with Islamic work ethics.

Work Motivation

Work motivation is an internal and external drive that influences a person to work optimally in achieving organizational goals. Robbins and Judge explain that motivation is related to the intensity, direction, and perseverance of individuals in carrying out work (Robbins & Judge, 2009). Meanwhile, Kasmir stated that work motivation is an encouragement that encourages a person to do work activities to achieve certain results (Kasmir, 2016).

From an Islamic perspective, Abbas J. Ali explained that work motivation is not only influenced by material needs, but also spiritual, moral, and self-development needs. Work is seen as a worship activity that encourages individuals to work in a disciplined, honest, trustworthy, and responsible manner (Ali & Weir, 2005). Based on Ali's theory, indicators of

work motivation include intention to work as worship, responsibility and trust, sincerity in work, work ethic (Itqan), as well as the orientation of benefits.

Worker Productivity

Worker productivity is the ability of individuals or organizations to produce output effectively and efficiently through the use of available resources. Sedarmayanti explained that productivity is not only seen from the number of work results, but also the quality of the results, timeliness, and the ability to use resources economically (Sedarmayanti, 2018).

In the perspective of Islamic economics, M. Umer Chapra explained that work productivity is not only oriented to material results, but also to moral values and human welfare (falah). The efficiency of the use of resources must be carried out optimally, fairly, and not wastefully while still paying attention to social balance (Chapra, 1992). Based on Chapra's thinking, indicators of worker productivity include work efficiency that is worth worship, the quality and accuracy of work results, and the achievement of responsible work targets.

Program Quality

Program quality is the level of success of a program in achieving the goals that have been set through effective implementation and according to standards. Philip B. Crosby explains that quality is conformity to requirements (Crosby, 1979), while David A. Garvin states that quality is multidimensional (Garvin, 1988).

From an Islamic economic perspective, M. Umer Chapra explained that the quality of program implementation is not only measured by the achievement of administrative targets, but also by the program's ability to realize the welfare of the community as a whole (Chapra, 1992). Based on Chapra's thoughts, program quality indicators include the suitability of labor competencies with program tasks, the program's ability to increase Islamic work motivation, contribution to productivity and performance of implementers, and compliance with sharia principles and work ethics.

Research Relevance

Previous research has shown that labor absorption, work motivation, productivity, and service quality have a significant relationship with the effectiveness of public organizations and programs. (Charismahenny, 2023) and (Wahyuni, 2024) Explain the importance of labor and human capital absorption in supporting the quality of work implementation. (Sanjaya et al., 2025) , (Wulandari & Lailiyah, 2022) and (Halizah, 2023) shows that work motivation, productivity, and Islamic work ethic affect worker performance. (SATRIADI, 2018) affirms that the quality of public programs is influenced by transparency and compliance with procedures, while (Armstrong, 2016) and (Yusuf, 2022) provides a foundation for the importance of the effectiveness of human resources as well as the values of trust, justice, and benefits in the perspective of Islamic economics. Thus, these studies are relevant as a theoretical and empirical basis in analyzing the influence of labor absorption, work motivation, and worker productivity on the quality of implementation of the Free Nutritious Meal Program (MBG) in Blitar City.

3. Research Methods

This study uses a quantitative approach with the type of associative research. The quantitative approach is used because the research focuses on statistical numerical data to determine the influence between research variables. The research was carried out on the implementation of the Free Nutritious Meal Program (MBG) in Blitar City which consisted of 11 MBG kitchens in three sub-districts, namely Sananwetan, Sukorejo, and Kepanjenkidul. The research was conducted from January to March 2026.

The population in this study is all workers and volunteers in 11 MBG kitchens in Blitar City with a total of 550 people. The number of samples was determined using the G*Power application version 3.1 and a minimum sample number of 119 respondents was obtained. To anticipate incomplete data, the number of samples was increased to 121 respondents. The sampling technique uses purposive sampling with the criteria of respondents, namely workers who are directly involved in the implementation of the Free Nutritious Meal Program, are at least 15 years old, and are willing to become respondents.

The independent variables in this study include labor absorption (X1), work motivation (X2), and worker productivity (X3), while the dependent variable is program quality (Y). The data collection technique was carried out using questionnaires and documentation. The research instrument used a five-level Likert scale.

The stages of data analysis in this study include:

- a) Test the validity of research instruments;
- b) Reliability test of research instruments;
- c) Classic assumption test;
- d) Berganda lineman regressi analysis;
- e) Hypothesis tests using t-test and F-test;
- f) Analysis of the coefficient of determination.

Data analysis was carried out with the help of the EViews application. The multiple linear regression equations used in this study are as follows:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + e$$

The equation was used to analyze the influence of labor absorption, work motivation, and worker productivity on the quality of implementation of the Free Nutritious Meal Program in Blitar City from the perspective of sharia economics

4. Results and Discussion

In this study, data processing was carried out using the Eviews12 software with data obtained through the distribution of questionnaires to workers and volunteers of the Free Nutritious Meal Program (MBG) in Blitar City. Data analysis was carried out in stages including validity tests, reliability tests, multiple linear regression analysis, hypothesis tests, and determination coefficients to determine the influence of labor absorption, work motivation, and worker productivity on the quality of program implementation.

Validity and reliability tests

The results of the validity test showed that all statement items in the variables of Labor Absorption (X1), Work Motivation (X2), Worker Productivity (X3), and Program Quality (Y) had a greater r-count value than the r-table of 0.361 so that all items were declared valid

Table 1. Validity and Reliability Test Results.

Variabel	Validity Statement	Cronbach's Alpha	Remarks
Labor Absorption (X1)	Valid	> 0.70	Reliabel
Work Motivation (X2)	Valid	> 0.70	Reliabel
Worker Productivity (X3)	Valid	> 0.70	Reliabel
Program Quality (Y)	Valid	> 0.70	Reliabel

Data processed 2026

The results of the reliability test showed that all variables had a Cronbach's Alpha value above 0.70 so that the research instrument was declared reliable and suitable for use in the study.

Analysis of the Regresi Linier Berganda

Based on the results of data processing, the following multiple linear regression equations were obtained:

$$Y = 1.950925 + 0.249895X_1 + 0.197687X_2 + 0.594377X_3$$

The regression equation shows that all independent variables have a positive influence on the quality of the implementation of the Free Nutritious Meal Program. The largest regression coefficient was found in the worker productivity variable of 0.594377 which showed that worker productivity was the most dominant variable in influencing the quality of program implementation.

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Test Results t

Table 2. Test Results t.

Variabel	Significance Value	Remarks
Labor Absorption (X1)	0,0074	Significant Impact
Work Motivation (X2)	0,0134	Significant Impact
Worker Productivity (X3)	0,0000	Significant Impact

Data processed 2026

The results of the t-test showed that labor absorption had a significance value of 0.0074, work motivation of 0.0134, and worker productivity of 0.0000. The whole significance value is less than 0.05 so that the entire partial hypothesis is accepted

F Test Results

Table 3. F Test Results.

F-count	Significance	Remarks
91,60139	0,000000	Significant Impact

Data processed 2026

The results of the F test showed an F-calculation value of 91.60139 with a significance of 0.000000. This shows that the simultaneous absorption of labor, work motivation, and worker productivity have a significant effect on the quality of the implementation of the Free Nutritious Meal Program in Blitar City.

Coefficient of Determination

The Adjusted R-Squared value of 0.693725 shows that 69.37% variation in the quality of the implementation of the Free Nutritious Meal Program can be explained by the variables of labor absorption, work motivation, and worker productivity. The remaining 30.63% was influenced by other factors outside the research model

Discussion

The results of the study show that the absorption of labor has a significant effect on the quality of the implementation of the Free Nutritious Meal Program (MBG) in Blitar City. The placement of workers according to competencies can increase work effectiveness and support the smooth implementation of the program. In the perspective of sharia economics, labor absorption is not only related to the number of workers, but also includes the values of justice, trust, and professionalism. The results of this study are in line with Rafik Issa Beekun's theory that labor absorption in the perspective of Islamic human resource management must be based on competence, justice, and moral responsibility. These findings are also supported by research by Adhin Berliana Charismahenny (2023) who shows that labor absorption has a significant effect on work effectiveness, as well as research by Eka Sri Wahyuni (2024) who emphasizes the importance of the quality of human capital in supporting labor absorption. This research has novelty because it integrates aspects of Islamic competence, trust, and work ethics in the implementation of the MBG Program.

Work motivation has also been proven to have a significant effect on the quality of the implementation of the MBG Program. Highly motivated workers tend to be more disciplined, responsible, and able to carry out their duties optimally. Islamic values such as the intention to work as worship, sincerity, and Islamic work ethic are important factors in improving the quality of work. The results of this study are in line with Syed Ali's theory which states that work motivation in Islam is not only influenced by material needs, but also spiritual, moral, and worship orientation. These findings are supported by research by Halizah (2023) who shows that Islamic work ethic and work motivation have a positive effect on employee performance, as well as research by Wulandari and Lailiyah (2022) who explain that work motivation has an effect on work productivity. This study expands on previous studies by linking sharia value-based work motivation to the quality of public program implementation.

Worker productivity is the most dominant variable in improving the quality of the implementation of the MBG Program. High productivity reflects the ability of workers to produce output effectively and efficiently according to program standards. In an Islamic perspective, work productivity is not only oriented to material results, but also to the value of mutual benefit and welfare. The results of this study are in line with Muhammad Umer Chabra's theory which states that work productivity in Islam must pay attention to efficiency, quality of work results, and social benefits. This finding is also supported by research by Wulandari and Lailiyah (2022) who stated that work productivity is influenced by work motivation and discipline, and Armstrong (2016) who explained that the effectiveness of human resource management is the main factor in increasing work productivity. Thus, this study confirms that work productivity based on sharia values is able to improve the quality of the implementation of the MBG Program in Blitar City.

Simultaneously, labor absorption, work motivation, and worker productivity have a significant effect on the quality of the implementation of the MBG Program. This is proven through the F test with an F-calculated value of 91.60139 and a significance of $0.000 < 0.05$. In addition, the Adjusted R^2 value of 0.693725 showed that 69.37% of the quality of the implementation of the MBG Program could be explained by the variables of labor absorption, work motivation, and worker productivity, while the remaining 30.63% were influenced by other variables outside the study. The results of this study are in line with Michael Armstrong's theory that the success of an organization is influenced by the effectiveness of human resource management through the process of recruitment, motivation, and increased work productivity. Thus, this study emphasizes that the success of the Free Nutritious Meal Program is not only influenced by the technical aspects of implementation, but also the quality of human resources and the application of sharia values in work.

5. Conclusions and Suggestions

Conclusion

The results of the study show that the absorption of labor has a significant effect on the quality of the implementation of the Free Nutritious Meal Program in Blitar City from the perspective of sharia economics. Work motivation has also been shown to have a significant effect on the quality of program implementation, while worker productivity is the most dominant variable. In addition, the simultaneous absorption of labor, work motivation, and worker productivity have a significant effect on the quality of the implementation of the Free Nutritious Meal Program in Blitar City.

This study shows that the success of the implementation of public programs is not only influenced by technical and operational aspects, but also influenced by the quality of human resources and the application of Islamic economic values such as trust, professionalism, justice, and Islamic work ethic. Therefore, improving the quality of labor and worker productivity needs to be a major concern in supporting the successful implementation of the Free Nutritious Meal Program in a sustainable manner.

Suggestions

The manager of the Free Nutritious Meal Program in Blitar City is expected to improve the quality of labor absorption, strengthen Islamic work motivation, and increase worker productivity through the application of the values of trust, discipline, and professionalism.

Researchers are then advised to expand the research object and add other variables, such as leadership, organizational culture, or supervisory systems to make the research results more comprehensive.

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