

# The Effectiveness of Managerial Approaches in Promoting Adolescent Healthy Lifestyles: A Qualitative Study at HKBP Gedong Church

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## ABSTRACT

The prevention of stunting and obesity must be addressed simultaneously by emphasizing the importance of a balanced diet and a healthy lifestyle from an early age. Healthy living habits among adolescents serve as a crucial foundation for shaping a productive, resilient, and high-quality generation. This study aims to examine the effectiveness of a managerial approach in encouraging adolescents to adopt a healthy lifestyle through community-based nutrition education and physical activities within church environments. A qualitative approach was employed, with data collected through in-depth interviews, documentation, and document analysis. Respondents were selected using purposive sampling, involving church leaders, adolescents, and community figures. The findings indicate that the church successfully managed a structured and targeted physical exercise program that encouraged adolescents to stay physically active. In addition, the delivery of nutrition education in an engaging and communicative manner improved adolescents' understanding of the importance of consuming healthy food. The church's managerial strategies, including cross-sectoral coordination and facility support, effectively created a conducive environment for promoting healthy behaviors among adolescents. This study recommends the importance of collaboration between religious institutions and health professionals to strengthen community-based health promotion efforts.

**Keywords:** Managerial Approaches; Healthy Lifestyles; Adolescents; Health Promotion; Qualitative Study; Behavioral Change; Youth Wellness; School Management; Leadership Strategies; Preventive Health.

## 1. Introduction

Nutritional problems in children remain a major challenge faced by many countries, including Indonesia. Despite progress in addressing malnutrition, the issue remains complex due to various influencing factors. Furthermore, the transformation in children's consumption patterns and lifestyles in the modern era has introduced new challenges, such as the increasing prevalence of childhood obesity.

Children today tend to consume more fast food and sugary drinks, while engaging less in sufficient physical activities (Sudargo et al., 2018; Saputri & Undaryati, 2025). This condition increases the risk of non-communicable diseases such as diabetes and hypertension, even at a young age. Therefore, a comprehensive and sustainable approach is needed to tackle children's nutrition problems. Collaboration among the government, non-governmental organizations, and communities is crucial to ensure access to nutritious food, improve health and sanitation services, and provide effective nutrition education for children, adolescents, and parents (Statistik, 2014; Nasional, 2019).

The prevention of both stunting and obesity must be pursued simultaneously, emphasizing the importance of balanced diets and healthy lifestyles from an early age. In this context, improving children's nutritional status is not only a health initiative but also a strategic investment in the nation's future generation. A healthy lifestyle among adolescents is a key foundation in shaping a productive, resilient, and high-quality generation. Adolescence is a critical transitional phase from childhood to adulthood, marked by accelerated physical growth, psychological development, and social change (Sawyer et al., 2012; Thalib, 2017; Sawyer et al., 2018). During this stage,

adolescents face various challenges that can influence their lifestyle choices, including food consumption habits, physical activity levels, and stress management (Yuliarsih et al., 2024).

With the demands of academic and social activities, adolescents typically spend 4 to 6 hours per day in school environments (Rosalia et al., 2018; Purba et al., 2022). Therefore, it is essential to ensure they have both access to and awareness of healthy, safe, and nutritious food and drink options. However, in practice, the tendency to consume fast food, sugary drinks, and unhealthy snacks remains high, especially in urban areas such as East Jakarta. Data from 2020 showed that this region had the highest number of malnourished toddlers in Jakarta, with 1,823 cases out of a total of 6,047 nationally. Besides undernutrition, overnutrition—such as obesity—has also emerged as a growing concern among adolescents and children.

Balanced nutrition plays a vital role not only in physical growth but also in supporting intelligence, immune function, and emotional balance in adolescents (Leidy & Gwin, 2020; Li, 2024). Consuming nutritious food has been shown to help maintain ideal body weight, enhance learning abilities, and reduce the risk of chronic diseases in the future (Hargreaves et al., 2022; Pratama, 2023). Hence, a systematic, integrated, and sustainable strategy is needed to drive behavioral changes in adolescents' consumption patterns and lifestyles towards healthier directions. Understanding the dynamics of physiological changes in humans should also serve as a reference in developing early-life health policies. Physical changes such as the decline in digestive function, the sense of smell and taste, and basal metabolism can serve as important lessons for adolescents in building awareness of consistent nutrition intake and physical activity. Common nutritional problems that adolescents need to be aware of include: (1) malnutrition—either undernutrition or overnutrition—such as protein-energy malnutrition that can cause muscle weakness and a weakened immune system; and (2) obesity, which increases the risk of non-communicable diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, and cardiovascular disorders (Kumala et al., 2019; Rahmanu et al., 2022).

One effective approach to integrating various interventions is the managerial approach. Through systematic processes of planning, organizing, implementation, and evaluation, this approach can optimize the roles of all stakeholders—including churches, schools, teachers, parents, and healthcare workers—in creating environments that support healthy lifestyles among adolescents. Although managerial approaches are generally applied in educational or industrial sectors, their principles and strategies remain relevant and adaptable to adolescent populations (Suprayitno & Wahyudi, 2020; Satibi & Najitama, 2021). Especially in educational efforts, habit formation, and cross-sectoral collaboration, this approach can serve as a strategic tool to establish structured and sustainable support systems.

This study aims to examine how effectively the managerial approach can promote healthy eating and regular physical activity among adolescents. A coordinated approach involving various stakeholders such as churches, schools, families, and health institutions is essential in creating a supportive environment for adolescents to live healthier lives. The urgency of this study lies in the importance of educating adolescents about balanced nutrition as a foundation for physical growth, cognitive development, and productivity. In addition, regularly scheduled and structured physical activity training is deemed crucial for improving physical fitness and preventing the early onset of non-communicable diseases.

This research aims to assess the effectiveness of the managerial approach in promoting healthy lifestyles among adolescents, particularly in the context of nutritious food consumption, physical activity habits, and positive stress management. The findings of this study are expected to serve as a basis for developing adolescent health policies grounded in adaptive, collaborative, and outcome-oriented managerial approaches.

## 2. Theoretical Review

### 2.1. Malnutrition in Adolescents

Malnutrition is a condition of nutritional imbalance, which includes both undernutrition and overnutrition, and it can have serious impacts on adolescent growth and development. During adolescence, the need for energy and nutrients increases significantly due to rapid physical growth and hormonal changes. An imbalance in intake—whether due to a lack of essential nutrients or excessive consumption of foods high in sugar, salt, and fat—can result in a double burden of malnutrition, such as stunting and obesity, which have long-term health consequences (Leidy & Gwin, 2020). Adolescents who are undernourished are vulnerable to various health issues, such as decreased learning concentration, growth disorders, anemia, immune system dysfunction, and increased risk of infection. On the other hand, overnutrition or obesity among adolescents has become a growing concern in the modern era due to the rise in fast food consumption and sugary beverages, combined with low physical activity. Adolescent obesity has been shown to correlate with an increased prevalence of non-communicable diseases such as type 2 diabetes, hypertension, and other metabolic disorders at a young age (Kumala et al., 2019).

The causes of adolescent malnutrition are complex and multidimensional, involving individual, family, school environment, cultural consumption patterns, and public policy aspects (Suhaimi, 2019). Therefore, addressing adolescent nutrition issues requires a holistic, cross-sectoral, and data-based strategy to encourage sustainable changes in dietary behaviors and lifestyles.

### 2.2. Managerial Approach in Addressing Adolescent Nutrition Problems

In this context, a managerial approach becomes highly relevant in addressing adolescent malnutrition. This approach encompasses stages of planning, organizing, implementing, and evaluating nutrition programs in a systematic and structured manner (Nadeak et al., 2023). Effective management enables coordination among stakeholders such as schools, health departments, families, and civil society organizations in creating an ecosystem that supports a healthy lifestyle for adolescents (Rahmayanti, 2024).

The implementation of a managerial approach to improve adolescent nutritional status can be carried out through several strategies (Sihotang & Nadeak, 2017; R. Hapsara, 2018; Sulaiman, 2021; Melani et al., 2024), including:

1. Planning nutrition education programs based on local needs and adolescent age groups.
2. Organizing school nutrition services such as healthy canteens, provision of nutritious breakfasts, and scheduled physical activities.
3. Conducting healthy lifestyle campaigns through social media, seminars, and community-based youth training.
4. Periodically evaluating adolescent dietary behaviors, nutritional status, and the effectiveness of implemented interventions.

By applying effective management principles, this approach enables program implementers to set success indicators, allocate resources efficiently, and involve active adolescent participation in the change process (Taufiq, 2024). It also encourages the empowerment of school counselors, parents, and school health personnel in providing guidance and monitoring eating habits and physical activity among adolescents.

Effective malnutrition intervention requires synergy among multiple stakeholders to create an environment that supports access to nutritious food, nutrition education, active living habits, and healthy stress management (Fibriansari & Asmaningrum, 2025). Thus, the managerial approach can serve as a key strategy in promoting the transformation toward a healthier and more sustainable adolescent lifestyle.

### **3. Research Methodology**

This study employs a qualitative approach to explore the effectiveness of the managerial approach in promoting healthy lifestyles among adolescents at HKBP Gedong Church. Data collection techniques include in-depth interviews, documentation, and document study. Respondents were selected purposively (purposive sampling), targeting informants directly involved in the implementation and management of youth health programs, such as church youth leaders, health coordinators, and several adolescents as participants.

In addition, anthropometric data were collected to provide a preliminary overview of the participants' nutritional status. These data served as supporting evidence for the interview findings, particularly in understanding the adolescents' physical health conditions. The most commonly reported health complaint was joint pain, which was perceived as interfering with their daily physical activities.

Data analysis was conducted using the interactive model by Miles and Huberman (1994), which includes three main stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. To ensure data validity, source triangulation was conducted by comparing data obtained from various types of informants and relevant documents.

### **4. Results and Discussion**

#### **4.1. The Effectiveness of a Managerial Approach in Delivering Balanced Nutrition Education**

The research findings indicate that the effectiveness of the managerial approach in implementing balanced nutrition education at HKBP Gedong Church in Kramatjati heavily depends on thorough planning, cross-role coordination, optimal resource utilization, and the active involvement of the church community as implementation partners. The initial foundation of success in this activity was the coordination meeting between the research team and the church representatives, particularly the church leaders and designated elders. Interviews with several church administrators revealed that a two-way communication approach and involvement in planning fostered a sense of ownership and significant contribution from the church in this initiative. This was evident in the joint decisions regarding task distribution, implementation procedures, and strategies for disseminating information to the congregation.

Based on activity documentation, the dissemination of the nutrition education program was carried out through various internal church communication channels, such as church bulletins announced during Sunday services for

two consecutive weeks, and banners displayed in the churchyard. This strategy proved effective in capturing the attention of the congregation, especially the elderly and young families with children, who were the primary targets of the balanced nutrition education.

Managerial effectiveness was also evident in the technical implementation of the program. Church partners took an active role in preparing logistics, from selecting the MC, organizing participant schedules for anthropometric measurements (height and weight), arranging participant meals, to ensuring the availability of facilities such as sound systems, LCDs, tables, chairs, and event rooms. This level of readiness reflected collaborative leadership and functional division of labor between the research team and the church administrators. The educational material, designed by the research team, took the form of simple, clear, and visually engaging PowerPoint presentations. Document analysis revealed that the content was aligned with the principles of balanced nutrition and adapted to the audience's characteristics. During the event, the material was delivered in a participatory manner, engaging participants in Q&A sessions and light discussions, which made it easier to understand and apply in daily life.

Interview data from participants indicated that the event not only provided new insights into the importance of balanced nutrition but also raised awareness of the need to pay more attention to family food intake. Several parents reported being more mindful of their children's portion sizes and food variety after attending the sessions. Elderly participants also expressed a better understanding of the relationship between dietary habits and their joint or mobility issues.

Through source triangulation using interview data, activity documentation, and internal document studies, it can be concluded that the managerial approach used in the balanced nutrition education program at HKBP Gedong Church proved highly effective. The success was characterized by solid coordination, participatory leadership, optimized partner roles, and the preparation of content and methods relevant to the community context. Furthermore, the findings suggest that faith-based community health education programs can be effective when supported by an inclusive, well-planned managerial approach that is sensitive to local needs. This model has potential for replication in similar contexts, particularly in church-based or other community health promotion initiatives.

#### **4.2. The Role of Church-Managed Physical Exercise Programs in Enhancing Youth Physical Fitness**

Based on interview data, activity documentation, and a review of supporting documents, it was found that the physical exercise program organized by HKBP Gedong Church in collaboration with the research team played a strategic role in fostering healthy living awareness and improving physical fitness among church youth. This program was designed using a participatory managerial approach, in which the church acted as a community facilitator and implementation partner. Initial coordination was carried out between the research team and church leaders—especially from the youth and health ministries—to design an adaptive training program tailored to the characteristics of the youth participants. During implementation, the church provided the venue, disseminated information through internal media such as the church bulletin, and supplied necessary facilities, including refreshments and simple exercise equipment.

The fitness sessions were led by a professional instructor, James Manik, S.St. FT., M.Fis, from the Physiotherapy Department of the Christian University of Indonesia. The exercises included various physical movements that

could be incorporated into daily routines, such as neck and shoulder stretches, knee strengthening, hip flexibility exercises, back stretches, and coordination of hand and foot movements. All exercises were designed to be safe, enjoyable, and easy to follow for youths with varying fitness levels.

Interview results showed that most youth participants had previously rarely engaged in regular physical activity. The program offered a new and enjoyable experience, increasing awareness that exercise doesn't always require special time or equipment. One participant remarked: "This exercise made me realize that working out can be done with simple movements. I feel lighter and more energized." Beyond physical benefits, the program also fostered a positive social atmosphere. The youth became closer and more accustomed to participating in educational and interactive church activities. Some church leaders noted that the program helped increase youth participation in other church programs that had previously seen little interest.

Activity documentation recorded that more than 30 youths attended the fitness sessions, with all participants showing high enthusiasm throughout the activity. Evaluation notes indicated improved participant knowledge of the importance of exercise for physical and mental health, along with a growing desire to continue similar programs regularly. A review of church documents found no prior structured fitness program for youth before this initiative. As such, this program is viewed as an important innovation with the potential for periodic replication. Church leaders even expressed plans to form a small team to integrate fitness activities into the church's regular youth development agenda. In conclusion, the research findings indicate that a church-managed physical training program, developed through a collaborative and community-based managerial approach, has proven effective in enhancing physical fitness, promoting healthy lifestyles, and increasing youth engagement in church activities. The program not only had health benefits but also strengthened the social and spiritual dimensions of youth as part of an active and healthy church community.

#### **4.3. Managerial Strategies in Promoting a Community-Based Healthy Lifestyle**

This study reveals that the HKBP Gedong Church has implemented several effective managerial strategies in promoting a community-based healthy lifestyle, particularly among adolescents. These findings were obtained through data triangulation from in-depth interviews with church leaders, youth members, and parents; documentation of activities; and analysis of internal church documents.

First, in terms of leadership style, the church leadership exhibits a collaborative and inclusive approach. The pastor, along with elders and the youth ministry team, plays an active role as driving forces—not only as policymakers but also as facilitators of activities. Program decisions are made through regular deliberations among the church council and related ministries, taking into account the needs of the youth based on input from church leaders, parents, and the congregation.

Second, in terms of program planning, the church integrates health issues as part of its comprehensive service to the congregation. Health promotion activities—such as balanced nutrition education and fitness training—are systematically designed based on congregational needs assessments collected through informal observations and brief surveys conducted by the social service and youth ministry teams. The educational materials are developed by



professionals, such as Dr. dr. Carmen Siagian, Sp.GK., MS., using tailored approaches for children, adolescents, adults, and the elderly.

Third, resource coordination is conducted efficiently. The church utilizes internal resources such as leaders, volunteers, and church facilities while also partnering with external parties such as academics from the Christian University of Indonesia. The role of parents is also optimized as strategic partners to ensure the sustainability of healthy lifestyle practices at home. In practice, the roles of parents, Sunday school teachers, and youth leaders are significant in accompanying and reinforcing behavioral changes among adolescents. This is evident from youth testimonies stating that they feel more motivated to maintain a healthy diet and stay physically active due to support from both the church and their families.

Fourth, the monitoring system for program sustainability remains informal but adaptive. The church uses weekly activity reports and monthly evaluations to monitor congregational engagement, activity effectiveness, and potential program enhancements. Although a structured quantitative evaluation instrument has not yet been used, the management team has noted an increase in youth and family participation in health-themed activities. Substantively, these managerial strategies help establish a community ecosystem that supports a healthy lifestyle as part of the church's spiritual values. Education on balanced nutrition is not only delivered through lectures but is also practiced in the community setting, such as by providing healthy meals during church events and avoiding fast food in youth activities.

On the other hand, the church is also aware that modern lifestyle challenges—such as fast food consumption, lack of physical activity, and rising obesity rates among adolescents—require systematic and continuous responses. Therefore, the church has begun building cross-sector partnerships as a strategic effort to expand the program's reach. Thus, the findings of this study affirm that the success of community-based healthy lifestyle promotion is significantly influenced by the church's managerial capacity in building participatory leadership, contextual program planning, optimal resource utilization, and adaptive evaluation mechanisms. Close collaboration between church leaders, parents, and youth serves as a vital foundation for fostering sustainable health behavior change in faith-based community settings.

## 5. Conclusion

The research findings are based on the three previously outlined indicators: (1) the role of physical training programs, (2) strategies for balanced nutrition education, and (3) managerial strategies for promoting a community-based healthy lifestyle. This study shows that the managerial approach adopted by HKBP Gedong Church significantly contributes to encouraging healthy lifestyle changes among adolescent congregation members. Through the examination of the three main indicators, the study found that:

1. The physical training programs organized by the church have provided adolescents with opportunities to actively engage in structured fitness activities guided by professionals. Simple yet consistent exercises, such as stretching and muscle-strengthening routines, have proven effective in raising awareness among adolescents about the importance of physical fitness as a part of a healthy lifestyle.

2. The nutrition education strategies targeting children, adolescents, and the elderly have deepened the congregation's understanding of the importance of a healthy and balanced diet. This knowledge serves as a foundational step in preventing nutritional issues such as stunting and obesity, and motivates adolescents to make healthier food choices in the face of modern lifestyle pressures.

3. The community-based managerial strategies—featuring participatory leadership, contextual program planning, cross-actor coordination, and adaptive monitoring—have created a church environment conducive to sustaining healthy behavioral changes. The collaboration among church leaders, parents, and adolescents has formed a synergistic effort that strengthens the collective commitment to maintaining both physical and mental health within the congregation, especially among the youth.

Overall, the effective, community-oriented, and spiritually grounded managerial approach has proven to be a strategic model for promoting a healthy lifestyle transformation within the church environment. These findings demonstrate that the church is not merely a place of worship but can also serve as a center for cultivating a healthy lifestyle with wide-reaching impacts on the physical, social, and spiritual development of adolescents.

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This study did not receive any grant from funding agencies in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

#### **Competing Interests Statement**

The authors declare no competing financial, professional, or personal interests.

#### **Consent for publication**

The authors declare that they consented to the publication of this study.

#### **Authors' contributions**

All the authors took part in literature review, analysis, and manuscript writing equally.

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