



WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE GOVERNMENT IN MONITORING SUGAR CONTENT IN FOOD TO MAINTAIN HEALTH

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Abstract

Excessive sugar consumption in children has become an increasingly worrying public health issue, especially due to the increased risk of obesity, type 2 diabetes and other diseases. The government has an important role in monitoring and controlling the sugar content in food consumed by children through various policies and regulations. This paper examines the role of the Indonesian government in monitoring sugar content in children's food, including the policies that have been implemented, the challenges faced, and evaluating the effectiveness of these policies. The results of the study show that although measures such as sugar content labeling and education campaigns have been implemented, the effectiveness of these policies is still limited by various factors, such as food industry resistance, low public awareness, and limited supervision. Based on policy analysis in other countries, such as the UK and Mexico, it is recommended that the Indonesian government consider implementing additional policies, such as a sugar tax, as well as strengthening public education and monitoring existing regulations. In conclusion, the government's role in monitoring sugar content in children's food is very important, however still needs strengthening and improvement so that the goal of protecting children's health can be achieved effectively.

Keywords : *Sugar content, children's health, government supervision, health policy, sugar tax.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Excessive sugar consumption has become a major public health concern, especially among children. Research shows that high sugar intake can cause a variety of health problems, including obesity, type 2 diabetes, and cardiovascular disease ¹. According to data from the World Health Organization (WHO), the prevalence of obesity in children continues to increase, and consumption of added sugars is one of the main factors contributing to this problem ². In Indonesia, the prevalence of obesity in school -aged children has increased significantly in recent decades, raising concerns about the health of future generations.

The government has a responsibility to protect public health, especially children who are a vulnerable group. One way to do this is through monitoring the sugar content in foods and drinks that are sold widely. In Indonesia, various regulations have been implemented to control sugar content, including regulations regarding nutritional labeling on processed food and beverage products. However, even though this policy has been implemented, its effectiveness is still questionable, and many children are still exposed to foods and drinks with high sugar content. Apart from regulations, efforts to increase public awareness about the dangers of sugar are also the government's focus. Campaigns such as "Balanced Nutrition" and "Healthy Living Community Movement (Germas)" have been launched to encourage people to reduce sugar consumption.

¹ Ilmi, IMB, Fatmawati, I., & Sufyan, L. (2021). The Relationship between Stress Levels and Excessive Added Sugar Consumption Behavior in Adolescent Girls. *Endurance Journal* , 6 (2), 393-401.

² Miko, A., & Pratiwi, M. (2017). The relationship between eating patterns and physical activity with the incidence of obesity in Aceh Ministry of Health Polytechnic students. *AcTion: Aceh Nutrition Journal* , 2 (1), 1-5.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE GOVERNMENT IN MONITORING SUGAR CONTENT IN FOOD TO MAINTAIN HEALTH

Vicki Dwi Purnomo¹, Sigit Irianto², Sri Mulyani³

However, major challenges remain in implementing and monitoring this policy ³. The low awareness of parents regarding the importance of limiting sugar in children's diets and the strong influence of the food industry in promoting products high in sugar are the main obstacles in controlling sugar consumption. With this background, this paper will discuss the government's role in monitoring sugar content in children's food in Indonesia. The main objective of this research is to evaluate existing policies, identify challenges in their implementation, and provide recommendations to strengthen monitoring and control of sugar consumption among children. It is hoped that this analysis will provide new insights for the development of more effective policies to protect the health of children in Indonesia. However, even though there is increasing awareness about the dangers of sugar, there are still many challenges faced in efforts to monitor and control sugar content in children's food. Various questions arise, such as: To what extent is the government's role in monitoring the sugar content in children's food? What policies have been implemented by the government and how effective are these policies in reducing sugar consumption in children?

2. IMPLEMENTATION METHOD

A. Research Methods

- 1) **Research Type** : Qualitative descriptive with case studies on sugar control policies in Indonesia.
- 2) **Data source** :
 - a. Primary data from interviews with health experts and regulators.
 - b. Secondary data from government reports, journals and related literature.
- 3) **Data Analysis** : Policy analysis and comparison with policies in other countries.

B. Literature Review

1. The Effect of Sugar on Children's Health

Excessive sugar consumption has been linked to various health problems, especially in children. The study by Lustig et al. (2012) shows that high sugar intake can cause an increased risk of obesity, type 2 diabetes, and other health problems such as dental caries. Sugar consumed in large amounts by children can also affect their behavior and cognitive performance (Anderson et al., 2005). In addition, according to the World Health Organization (WHO), consumption of added sugars should be limited to less than 10% of total daily calorie intake to reduce the risk of non-communicable diseases (WHO, 2015).

2. Sugar Control Policies in Various Countries

Various countries have adopted sugar content control policies in an effort to reduce sugar consumption among the population, especially children. In England, for example, the government has implemented a sugar tax on sweet drinks since 2018. This policy has succeeded in reducing the sugar content in products subject to the tax (Public Health England, 2019). Mexico has also implemented a sugar tax since 2014 and reported a significant decline in sales of sugary drinks (Colchero et al., 2016). Policies like this show the effectiveness of government intervention in controlling sugar consumption through economic regulation.

3. Regulatory Theory and Health Policy

Health policy and regulation theory provides a framework for understanding how government interventions can influence societal behavior and population health. According to social regulation theory, the government has a role to protect society from health risks through regulations that limit or control risky behavior (Braithwaite & Drahos, 2000). Public health

³ ALZAHRA, SI (2023). GERMAS (Healthy Living Community Movement) Communication Campaign by the Lampung Provincial Health Service.



policy often focuses on preventing disease by reducing risk factors through regulation, such as monitoring the sugar content of foods (Gostin, 2000).

4. Social and Economic Impact of Sugar Control Policies

Sugar control by the government not only impacts public health but also has social and economic implications. Several studies show that sugar taxes can influence consumer behavior and food industry production. However, there are also arguments that strict regulations can have a negative impact on the economy, such as reducing sales of products high in sugar and causing job losses in the food industry sector (Cornelsen & Carreido, 2015)⁴. Therefore, sugar control policies need to be designed by considering the balance between health benefits and economic impacts.

5. Education Strategy and Public Awareness Campaign

Apart from regulations, education and public awareness campaigns are also important strategies in reducing sugar consumption in children. The study by Brown et al. (2017) show that effective public awareness campaigns can change people's consumption behavior, especially when combined with government policies. Successful campaigns usually involve multiple media and communication channels, and target specific target groups, such as children and the elderly.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Discussion

A. The Government's Role in Monitoring Sugar Content in Children's Food

The government has a crucial role in regulating and monitoring the sugar content in foods marketed to children. In Indonesia, various regulations have been implemented to control sugar consumption, such as setting maximum limits for sugar content in food and beverage products. Minister of Health Regulation no. 30 of 2013 concerning the inclusion of information on sugar, salt and fat content on processed food labels is an effort to increase public awareness of the sugar content in food. Apart from that, the government is also educating the public, especially parents, about the dangers of excessive sugar consumption through health campaigns. Campaigns such as "Balanced Nutrition" and "Healthy Living Community Movement (Germas)" aim to encourage people to choose healthier foods and reduce sugar consumption. The government is also working with schools to ensure that food sold in canteens meets established health standards.

B. Challenges in Controlling Sugar Content

Even though various policies have been implemented, monitoring sugar content in children's food faces various challenges. One of the biggest challenges is resistance from the food and beverage industry. The industry often opposes strict regulations, such as limiting sugar content or more transparent labelling, arguing that this could reduce the competitiveness of their products in the market. Apart from that, the low level of public awareness regarding the dangers of sugar is also an obstacle in supervision. Many parents do not understand the long-term impacts of excessive sugar consumption on their children, so they tend not to pay attention to the nutritional content labels on the food products they buy. Additionally, easy access to unhealthy sugary foods, especially in school settings, also exacerbates this problem. Limited resources and infrastructure to carry out effective supervision are also problems faced by the government. Often, supervision is carried out sporadically and is less comprehensive, so that many products with high sugar content are still on the market without strict supervision.

⁴ Cornelsen, L., & Carreido, A. (2015). Health related taxes on foods and beverages.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE GOVERNMENT IN MONITORING SUGAR CONTENT IN FOOD TO MAINTAIN HEALTHVicki Dwi Purnomo¹, Sigit Irianto², Sri Mulyani³**C. Policy Evaluation and Recommendations**

Evaluation of the policies that have been implemented shows that despite significant efforts by the government, additional steps are still needed to increase the effectiveness of supervision. One important recommendation is the implementation of a sugar tax, as has been done in several other countries, which has proven effective in reducing sugar consumption in society⁵. This tax could be applied to products with high sugar content, thereby encouraging manufacturers to reduce the sugar content in their products and reducing the appeal of unhealthy products in the eyes of consumers. In addition, clearer and more informative labeling regarding sugar content on product packaging needs to be implemented more strictly. Labels that include warnings about the health risks of excessive sugar consumption can help consumers make healthier choices. Increased education and more intensive campaigns are also needed to change people's consumption behavior, especially among children and teenagers⁶. The government also needs to strengthen cooperation with various parties, including the food industry, non-governmental organizations and educational institutions, to create an environment that supports healthy eating patterns. Tighter monitoring of sweet food advertising aimed at children is also important to protect them from the negative influence of such advertising.

D. Case Study: Policy Implementation in Other Countries

In comparison, several countries such as the UK and Mexico have succeeded in reducing sugar consumption through strict policies. The UK, for example, has implemented a sugar tax which has been successful in reducing consumption of sugary drinks. Mexico also imposed a sugar tax and tightened regulations on sweet food advertising. This case study shows that with the right policies and firm implementation, monitoring sugar content in children's food can be carried out effectively.

Discussion Results

Based on the analysis and discussions that have been carried out, several important points can be concluded regarding the government's role in monitoring sugar content in children's food:

1. Effectiveness of Government Policy

From a review of existing policies, such as Minister of Health Regulation no. 30 of 2013, it was found that the government has attempted to control sugar consumption through various regulations⁷. However, the effectiveness of this policy is still limited. Even though there are regulations regarding the inclusion of sugar content information on processed food labels, implementation in the field is often not optimal. Many products still do not comply with labeling regulations, and monitoring of this compliance is also not optimal.

2. Challenges in Policy Implementation

Some of the main challenges in policy implementation include resistance from the food industry, low public awareness, and limited resources for monitoring. The food industry often lobbies against stricter regulations, citing the economic impact. In addition, despite educational

⁵ Gula, VE, & Mulyani, SD (2020, April). The Influence of Capital Intensity and Deferred Tax Expense on Tax Avoidance Using Business Strategy as a Moderating Variable. In *Proceedings of the National Expert Seminar* (pp. 2-43).

⁶ Wahyuningsih, E. (2023). Technical Guidance on Allocation and Distribution of Remaining Business Proceeds to Members in Accordance with Cooperative Principles at the RAFINASI Sugar Cooperative, Yogyakarta City.

⁷ Yuniarti, R. (2017). *Implementation of Minister of Health Regulation No. 30 of 2014 concerning Pharmaceutical Service Standards at Community Health Centers in North Bengkulu Regency* (Doctoral Dissertation, Gadjah Mada University).



campaigns, public awareness regarding the dangers of excessive sugar consumption is still low, especially among parents who are responsible for their children's food choices.

3. Need for Additional Policies

The results of the discussion show that to improve supervision, additional policies are needed, such as implementing a sugar tax. This tax can function as an incentive for producers to reduce the sugar content in their products, as well as reduce sugar consumption in society. In addition, stricter labeling policies and more intensive education campaigns are also needed to strengthen supervision.

4. Learning from Case Studies in Other Countries

From case studies from other countries, it appears that stricter policies, such as sugar taxes and strict regulations on sweet food advertising, have succeeded in reducing sugar consumption. This shows that Indonesia can take lessons from these countries in an effort to improve its sugar control policies.

5. Role of Education and Awareness Campaigns

More effective education and campaigns are needed to increase public awareness about the risks of excessive sugar consumption. Campaigns involving schools, media and communities can help change people's consumption behavior, especially children and the elderly. The results of this discussion confirm that although the government has taken important initial steps in monitoring the sugar content of children's food, there is still an urgent need to strengthen regulations and policy implementation. By learning from the experiences of other countries and improving domestic policies, the Indonesian government can more effectively protect children's health from the negative impacts of excessive sugar consumption.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis carried out in this paper, it can be concluded that:

1. **Government Role** : The Indonesian government has taken important steps in monitoring the sugar content in children's food through regulations, such as sugar content labeling and educational campaigns. However, the effectiveness of this policy is still limited by various factors, including resistance from the food industry and low public awareness.
2. **Implementation Challenges** : The main challenges in implementing sugar control policies include a lack of resources for strict monitoring, the influence of the food industry, and challenges in raising public awareness regarding the negative impact of excessive sugar on children's health.
3. **Additional Policy Needs** : To strengthen supervision and control of sugar consumption, additional policies are needed, such as implementing a sugar tax and increasing regulations on sweet food advertising aimed at children.
4. **Lessons from Other Countries** : The experiences of other countries such as the UK and Mexico show that stricter and firmer policies, including sugar taxes and advertising restrictions, can significantly reduce sugar consumption and its health impacts.

Suggestion

Based on the conclusions obtained, here are several suggestions that can be considered to improve monitoring of sugar content in children's food in Indonesia:

1. **Implementation of a Sugar Tax** : The government should consider implementing a tax on products with high sugar content. This tax will not only encourage manufacturers to reduce the sugar content in their products, but can also reduce sugar consumption in society.
2. **Strengthening Labeling Regulations** : Regulations regarding the labeling of sugar content in foods and beverages need to be strengthened. Labels must include information that is

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Vicki Dwi Purnomo¹, Sigit Irianto², Sri Mulyani³

- clear and easy for consumers to understand, including health warnings regarding the risks of excessive sugar consumption.
3. **Education and Awareness Campaigns** : Education and awareness campaigns must be more intensive and involve various parties, including schools, communities and the media. The focus is to increase public understanding, especially parents and children, regarding the dangers of excessive sugar consumption.
 4. **Tighter Supervision** : Supervision of industry compliance with regulations must be increased. This includes more frequent inspections and strict sanctions for producers who do not comply with the rules.
 5. **Multisector Cooperation** : The government needs to strengthen cooperation with various stakeholders, including the food industry, non-governmental organizations, and educational institutions, to create an environment that supports healthy eating patterns and reduces children's access to foods with high sugar content. With proper implementation of these suggestions, it is hoped that excessive sugar consumption in children can be reduced, thereby improving their long-term health and reducing the risk of sugar-related diseases.

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