



## THE ROLE OF LEGAL KNOWLEDGE IN STRENGTHENING CONSUMER PROTECTION AND ACCESS TO JUSTICE

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### ABSTRACT

Consumers' low level of legal awareness regarding their rights remains a significant factor contributing to their weak ability to seek protection when violations occur. Although consumer protection is firmly regulated under Law Number 8 of 1999 concerning Consumer Protection and its implementing regulations, many consumers still do not fully understand or exercise their rights. This study examines how consumers' knowledge influences their awareness and behavior in utilizing legal protection mechanisms, as well as evaluates the effectiveness of existing regulations. Using a qualitative approach with a normative legal research method, primary data is derived from statutory provisions, while secondary data is collected through literature reviews of books, journals, academic articles, and legal documents. The findings indicate that consumers with higher levels of legal knowledge are more proactive in defending their rights through authorized institutions such as Community-Based Consumer Protection Organizations and Consumer Dispute Resolution Agency. In contrast, those with limited legal knowledge tend to be passive and view violations as common occurrences. Key challenges include low legal literacy, insufficient access to dispute resolution bodies, and inadequate dissemination of consumer protection regulations. To strengthen consumer protection, comprehensive legal education, improved institutional performance, and collaborative efforts among stakeholders are essential in enhancing public legal awareness and access to justice.

### A. INTRODUCTION

In the context of economic expansion and the swift advancement of goods and services trade, consumers hold an important role in the economic structure.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, in practice, consumers often find themselves in a

<sup>1</sup> Shintia Alvernia Gorrettie Gijoh, "Awareness and Implementation of Consumer Protection Law in the Service Sector of Tomohon: Kesadaran dan Implementasi Undang-Undang Perlindungan

weak and disadvantaged position during transactions due to limited information, unequal resource access, and imbalances in power between consumers and business actors. Consequently, consumer rights are frequently disregarded by businesses, whether through defective goods, deceptive information, services that fail to match agreed terms, or persuasive and manipulative advertisements. What is more concerning, many consumers either hesitate to assert their rights or lack understanding of the legal avenues available to protect themselves.<sup>2</sup>

Consumer knowledge of their rights is a key element in fostering legal awareness. Consumers who understand their rights and the protections guaranteed by law tend to be more proactive in reporting, complaining about injustices, and taking legal action when harmed.<sup>3</sup> Conversely, low levels of legal knowledge led consumers to adopt a passive attitude, accepting detrimental treatment without resistance. The high number of unresolved or unreported complaints indicates a weak legal awareness among the public in the context of consumer protection.<sup>4</sup>

Consumer protection in Indonesia is clearly regulated through legislation. Law Number 8 of 1999 on Consumer Protection serves as the main legal foundation governing the rights and obligations of both consumers and business actors.<sup>5</sup> Article 4 specifies various consumer rights, including the right to comfort, safety, and security when using goods or services; the right to receive accurate, clear, and honest information; and the right to express opinions and file complaints. In addition, the Minister of Trade Regulation Number 25 of 2021 on Consumer Complaint Management and Government Regulation Number 59 of 2001 on Community-Based Consumer Protection Organizations (*Lembaga Perlindungan Konsumen Swadaya*

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Konsumen di Sektor Jasa Kota Tomohon," *Santhet (Jurnal Sejarah Pendidikan Dan Humaniora)* 9, no. 3 (2025): 947.

<sup>2</sup> Nurul Fibrianti, Budi Santoso, Ro'fah Setyowati, and Yuli Rindyawati, "Legal Culture and Legal Consciousness of Consumers: The Influence on Regulation and Enforcement of Consumer Protection Laws," *JILS* 8 (2023): 1267. See too, Wiwik Sri Widiarty, and Aartje Tehupeiory, "The role of business law in improving consumer protection in the digital age," *Journal of Law and Sustainable Development* 12, no. 2 (2024): 13; Nurul Fibrianti, Budi Santoso, Ro'fah Setyowati, and Yuli Rindyawati, "Legal Culture and Legal Consciousness of Consumers: The Influence on Regulation and Enforcement of Consumer Protection Laws," *JILS* 8 (2023): 1267.

<sup>3</sup> Sobia Bashir, Abdus Samad Khan, and Faisal Shahzad Khan, "The role of consumer education in strengthening consumer protection laws," *Pakistan Journal of Social Research* 5, no. 02 (2023): 85.

<sup>4</sup> Riie Heikkilä, "The slippery slope of cultural non-participation: Orientations of participation among the potentially passive," *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 24, no. 1 (2021): 213. See too, Josef Purwadi Setiodjati, and Jamal Wiwoho, "Consumer legal protection: Building legal awareness in the age of globalization," In *International Conference on Environmental and Energy Policy (ICEEP 2021)*, Atlantis Press, 2021, 42.

<sup>5</sup> Sutan Pinayungan Siregar, "Kepastian Hukum Perlindungan Konsumen Sesuai Dengan Ketentuan Undang-Undang Perlindungan Konsumen," *Journal of Law, Administration, and Social Science* 4, no. 2 (2024): 223.

*Masyarakat/LPKSM*) further reinforce advocacy mechanisms available to consumers.

However, despite the robust legal framework, many consumers remain unaware of the substance of these regulations. Low legal literacy, particularly among the younger generation and digital consumers, poses a significant barrier to the implementation of consumer protection.<sup>6</sup> The socialization of regulations by the government, businesses, and related institutions is deemed insufficient in reaching all consumer segments. This results in low consumer participation in reporting violations and advocating for their legal rights.

Several prior studies have highlighted aspects of consumer protection, but few have directly examined the relationship between consumer knowledge and awareness in exercising legal rights. For instance, Widiarty and Tehupeiory<sup>7</sup> focused more on consumer compliance with procedures rather than awareness of asserting rights. Meanwhile, Santriati and Juwita<sup>8</sup> explored the legal framework and principles of justice without assessing the extent to which consumers understand and utilize their rights. Furthermore, Le and Ha<sup>9</sup> addressed knowledge but did not evaluate its relationship with legal awareness. In other words, while there are studies on consumer protection, there remains a research gap in quantitatively and empirically examining the impact of consumer knowledge on legal awareness in exercising rights.

Moreover, in the context of economic digitalization and the rise of e-commerce, consumers face new challenges not encountered previously. Risks such as online fraud, misuse of personal data, and unclear identities of businesses require consumers to better understand their rights. However, to date, few studies have explored the legal awareness of digital consumers in exercising their rights under the Consumer Protection Law. This gap needs to be addressed to ensure consumer protection policies are more targeted and contextually relevant.

<sup>6</sup> S. C. Vetrivel, P. Vidhyapriya, and V. P. Arun, "Education and Consumer Awareness," In *Sustainable Practices in the Fashion and Retail Industry*, IGI Global Scientific Publishing, 2025, 235. See too, Wiwik Sri Widiarty, and Aartje Tehupeiory, "The role of business law in improving consumer protection in the digital age," *Journal of Law and Sustainable Development* 12, no. 2 (2024): 14.

<sup>7</sup> Wiwik Sri Widiarty, and Aartje Tehupeiory, "The role of business law in improving consumer protection in the digital age," *Journal of Law and Sustainable Development* 12, no. 2 (2024): 11. See too, M. Kadir, Yakub Aiyub, Miftah Arifin, Fradhana Putra Disantara, Mac Thi Hoai Thuong, and Briggs Samuel Mawunyo Nutako, "The Reform of Consumer Protection Law: Comparison of Indonesia, Vietnam, and Ghana," *Jurnal Suara Hukum* 6, no. 02 (2024): 23.

<sup>8</sup> Amanda Tikha Santriati, and Dwi Runjani Juwita, "Perlindungan Hak Konsumen dalam Perspektif Hukum Islam dan Undang-Undang Perlindungan Konsumen Nomor 8 Tahun 1999," *Opinia de Journal* 2, no. 2 (2022): 34.

<sup>9</sup> Long Hoang Le, and Quang-An Ha, "Effects of negative reviews and managerial responses on consumer attitude and subsequent purchase behavior: An experimental design," *Computers in Human Behavior* 124 (2021): 107.

Based on these issues and research gaps, this study aims to analyze the influence of consumer knowledge levels on their awareness in exercising legal protection rights. The study will also measure the extent to which consumers understand their rights under existing regulations and provide recommendations to stakeholders, such as the government, businesses, and LPKSM, in designing strategies to enhance consumer legal literacy. It is hoped that the results of this study will contribute theoretically and practically to building a fair, participatory, and sustainable consumer protection system.

## B. RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach with a normative legal research method. This method is selected because the study centers on examining the legal norms that regulate consumer rights and assessing how these norms shape consumers' awareness in asserting those rights. Normative legal research is carried out by analyzing relevant legal sources, such as statutory regulations, legal principles, and prior scholarly works. The aim is to present a comprehensive understanding of the existing legal framework and to critically explore the connection between consumers' level of legal knowledge and their behavior in exercising their rights.

The data utilized in this study comprise both primary and secondary sources. Primary data refer to the main legal materials analyzed, particularly Law Number 8 of 1999 on Consumer Protection, which provides the core regulations on the rights and obligations of consumers and business actors. Complementing this are the Minister of Trade Regulation Number 25 of 2021 on Consumer Complaint Management and Government Regulation Number 59 of 2001 concerning Community-Based Consumer Protection Organizations (*Lembaga Perlindungan Konsumen Swadaya Masyarakat*/LPKSM), which further reinforce consumer legal protection. Meanwhile, secondary data are gathered through a literature review and include various materials such as legal textbooks, academic journals on consumer protection, scholarly articles, seminar papers, and other relevant documents that help assess the effectiveness of legal implementation. These secondary sources also support theoretical discussions and provide insight into the socio-legal context influencing consumer awareness.

Data in this study is obtained through document analysis of relevant regulations and a literature review of credible academic sources. The search is conducted systematically to ensure the materials align with the research focus, especially regarding the link between consumers' legal knowledge and their behavior in asserting their rights. The data is analyzed using a descriptive-analytical method. Descriptive analysis is used to interpret the content of the regulations, while analytical techniques explore the connection between legal

norms and consumers' actual level of legal awareness. This approach helps determine how well consumers understand existing laws and how that understanding influences their ability and willingness to pursue their rights through legal mechanisms.

## C. DISCUSSION

### 1. Digital Literacy and Consumer Protection in the E-Commerce Era

Consumer knowledge is a fundamental factor in fostering legal awareness, particularly in the context of protecting consumer rights. According to Bashir et al.<sup>10</sup> consumer education is key to strengthening the effectiveness of consumer protection laws. Consumers who understand their rights tend to have the courage to report, seek compensation, and even reject harmful business practices. This is reinforced by Ishak and Zabil<sup>11</sup> who stated that effective consumer behavior is highly dependent on the level of knowledge and awareness of their rights and obligations as legal subjects.

Furthermore, Maharani and Dzikra<sup>12</sup> suggest that consumer legal awareness is determined not only by the presence of regulations but also by the legal culture that develops in society. Consumers who do not understand their rights tend to be passive and accept unfair treatment as normal. In the digital context, Widiarty and Tehupeiry<sup>13</sup> note that weak digital and legal literacy are major obstacles to achieving comprehensive consumer protection. The rise of e-commerce transactions increases the risk of violations, ranging from misleading advertising, non-compliant products, to misuse of personal data. Rahmaniah et al.<sup>14</sup> also stated that consumers' low understanding of their rights in digital transactions can strengthen the dominance of business actors, as this loophole is often exploited to avoid legal responsibility. This

<sup>10</sup> Sobia Bashir, Abdus Samad Khan, and Faisal Shahzad Khan, "The role of consumer education in strengthening consumer protection laws," *Pakistan Journal of Social Research* 5, no. 02 (2023): 86.

<sup>11</sup> Suraiya Ishak, and Nur Faridah M. Zabil, "Impact of consumer awareness and knowledge to consumer effective behavior," *Asian Social Science* 8, no. 13 (2012): 108.

<sup>12</sup> Alfina Maharani, and Adnand Darya Dzikra, "Fungsi perlindungan konsumen dan peran lembaga perlindungan konsumen di Indonesia: Perlindungan, konsumen dan pelaku usaha (Literature review)," *Jurnal Ekonomi Manajemen Sistem Informasi* 2, no. 6 (2021): 660. See too, Athiyyah Safirazkiya Yusuf, "Legal Analysis of Consumer Protection against Companies not Fulfilling Consumer Obligations," *Estudiante Law Journal* 7, no. 1 (2025): 58.

<sup>13</sup> Wiwik Sri Widiarty, and Aartje Tehupeiry, "The role of business law in improving consumer protection in the digital age," *Journal of Law and Sustainable Development* 12, no. 2 (2024): 16. See too, Agus Brotosusilo, "Hak-hak Produsen dalam Hukum Perlindungan Konsumen," *Jurnal Hukum & Pembangunan* 22, no. 5 (2017): 429.

<sup>14</sup> Amelia Rahmaniah, Fuad Luthfi, and Muhammad Haris, "The Role of Digitalization in Enhancing Legal Competencies of Sharia Economic Law Graduates: A Case Study of graduate users in South Kalimantan," *Syariah: Jurnal Hukum dan Pemikiran* 23, no. 1 (2023): 64.

aligns with the findings of Heikkilä,<sup>15</sup> who highlighted society's passive attitude towards rights violations, with only a small proportion of consumers using formal mechanisms such as the LPKSM or Consumer Dispute Resolution Agency (*Badan Penyelesaian Sengketa Konsumen*/BPSK) to report.

From a regulatory perspective, Budianto and Wulandari<sup>16</sup> assessed that although the Consumer Protection Law (*Undang-Undang Perlindungan Konsumen*/UUPK) provides a strong legal framework, its effectiveness depends heavily on consumers' understanding of the substance of the regulation. Le and Ha<sup>17</sup> added that businesses' active role in responding to complaints also serves as a form of indirect consumer education. Meanwhile, Li<sup>18</sup> emphasized the importance of adaptive, community-based legal education to bridge the legal literacy gap, especially in developing countries like Indonesia. Thus, it can be concluded that consumer knowledge plays a strategic role in promoting legal awareness. However, there are still research gaps, particularly regarding the direct relationship between consumer legal knowledge and awareness in the digital context and in areas where adequate access to legal protection is not yet available.

## 2. Consumer Knowledge Level as a Foundation for Legal Awareness

Consumer awareness of their rights is a crucial aspect of consumer protection, particularly in the era of globalization and technological advancements that have significantly transformed trading patterns.<sup>19</sup> The development of technology, especially in electronic commerce (e-commerce), has facilitated consumer access to various products and services but has also increased the risk of unfair business practices, such as misleading advertisements, defective products, or breaches of contract. In this context, the level of consumer knowledge about their rights is a key determinant of their ability to protect themselves from harmful practices.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Riie Heikkilä, "The slippery slope of cultural non-participation: Orientations of participation among the potentially passive," *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 24, no. 1 (2021): 214.

<sup>16</sup> Edy Budianto, and Diah Ayu Wulandari, "Critical study of criminal aspects of Law Number 8 of 1999 concerning consumer protection," *Journal of Law and Legal Reform* 1, no. 2 (2020): 335.

<sup>17</sup> Long Hoang Le, and Quang-An Ha, "Effects of negative reviews and managerial responses on consumer attitude and subsequent purchase behavior: An experimental design," *Computers in Human Behavior* 124 (2021): 106.

<sup>18</sup> Mengyang Li, "Retracted Article: Adapting Legal Education for the Changing Landscape of Regional Emerging Economies: A Dynamic Framework for Law Majors," *Journal of the Knowledge Economy* 15, no. 3 (2024): 10225.

<sup>19</sup> Zahra Dwi Arianti, and Rina Arum Prastyanti, "Legal Response to Consumer Protection Risks in The Information Technology Era," *International Journal of Business, Law, and Education* 6, no. 2 (2025): 1065.

<sup>20</sup> Sobia Bashir, Abdus Samad Khan, and Faisal Shahzad Khan, "The role of consumer education in strengthening consumer protection laws," *Pakistan Journal of Social Research* 5, no. 02 (2023): 87.

Consumer knowledge of their rights forms the foundation for building strong legal awareness. When consumers understand their rights, such as the right to clear information, product safety, or compensation for losses, they tend to be more confident in seeking justice.<sup>21</sup> Conversely, a lack of knowledge often places consumers in a vulnerable position, making them susceptible to exploitation by businesses. Rahmaniah et al.<sup>22</sup> highlight that consumer in Indonesia is frequently in a vulnerable position due to limited knowledge of their rights. This condition enables businesses to act arbitrarily, for example, by offering products that do not match promises or providing misleading information.

Research by Maharani and Dzikra<sup>23</sup> confirms that consumer legal awareness is influenced by two main factors: knowledge and legal culture. Consumers with a good understanding of their rights tend to be more proactive in pursuing justice, such as by filing complaints or reporting violations to institutions like the LPKSM. In contrast, consumers with low knowledge tend to be passive, exacerbating an unethical business environment.<sup>24</sup> Data from the National Consumer Protection Agency (*Badan Perlindungan Konsumen Nasional*/BPKN) in 2022 shows that only about 30% of total consumer complaints come from those who utilize their legal rights through official mechanisms, underscoring the importance of knowledge in shaping legal awareness and action.

Indonesia's regulatory system provides a solid legal basis for consumer protection, with Law Number 8 of 1999 on Consumer Protection (UUPK) as its main pillar. The UUPK outlines key consumer rights, including access to accurate information, product safety, compensation for losses, and the right to voice complaints.<sup>25</sup> In its consideration section, point (d), the UUPK

<sup>21</sup> Suraiya Ishak, and Nur Faridah M. Zabil, "Impact of consumer awareness and knowledge to consumer effective behavior," *Asian Social Science* 8, no. 13 (2012): 109. See too, Ratna Sofiana, Satria Utama, and Abdur Rohim, "The problems of halal certification regarding consumer protection in Malaysia and Indonesia," *Journal of Human Rights, Culture and Legal System* 1, no. 3 (2021): 189.

<sup>22</sup> Amelia Rahmaniah, Fuad Luthfi, and Muhammad Haris, "The Role of Digitalization in Enhancing Legal Competencies of Sharia Economic Law Graduates: A Case Study of graduate users in South Kalimantan," *Syariah: Jurnal Hukum dan Pemikiran* 23, no. 1 (2023): 65.

<sup>23</sup> Alfina Maharani, and Adnand Darya Dzikra, "Fungsi perlindungan konsumen dan peran lembaga perlindungan konsumen di Indonesia: Perlindungan, konsumen dan pelaku usaha (Literature review)," *Jurnal Ekonomi Manajemen Sistem Informasi* 2, no. 6 (2021): 661. See too, Sukendar, Jonthan Rante Carreon, Singgih Purnomo, and Aditya Bagus Kuncoro, "Legal Consumerism Model in the Reconstruction of Consumer Protection Law," *The Eastasouth Management and Business* 4, no. 01 (2025): 69.

<sup>24</sup> Sojin Jung, Gargi Bhaduri, and Jung E. Ha-Brookshire, "What to say and what to do: the determinants of corporate hypocrisy and its negative consequences for the customer-brand relationship," *Journal of Product & Brand Management* 30, no. 3 (2020): 485.

<sup>25</sup> Edy Budianto, and Diah Ayu Wulandari, "Critical study of criminal aspects of Law Number 8 of 1999 concerning consumer protection," *Journal of Law and Legal Reform* 1, no. 2 (2020): 337. See too, Neelam Chawla, and Basanta Kumar, "E-commerce and consumer protection in India:

emphasizes that one of its core objectives is to improve consumer awareness, knowledge, and independence. Despite this, a 2024 report from BPKN shows that implementation remains limited due to low levels of legal understanding, especially in rural regions. Many consumers still do not recognize their rights or have insufficient access to information and legal assistance services.

Regulation of the Minister of Trade Number 25 of 2021, which governs trade in goods and services, including e-commerce, emphasizes the importance of information transparency and business accountability. This regulation also encourages digital campaigns to raise consumer awareness. However, weak oversight of digital platforms has led to many consumers falling victim to false advertisements or non-compliant products. Meanwhile, Government Regulation Number 59 of 2001 regulates the role of the LPKSM. This institution is tasked with providing education, handling complaints, and mediating disputes. However, limited resources and reach, especially in remote areas, are major obstacles to the effectiveness of LPKSM. Maharani and Dzikra<sup>26</sup> note that the success of LPKSM heavily depends on collaboration with the government and support from civil society.

### **3. Challenges and Strategies for Increasing Consumer Legal Awareness and Policy Recommendations**

The main challenges in enhancing consumer awareness of their rights include low legal literacy, particularly among rural and remote communities, and limited access to dispute resolution mechanisms such as the Consumer Dispute Resolution Agency and Community-Based Consumer Protection Organizations. Many consumers are unaware of their rights as outlined in Law Number 8 of 1999 on Consumer Protection, such as the right to clear information or compensation.<sup>27</sup> This lack of knowledge is exacerbated by a passive consumer culture, where violations like defective products or misleading advertisements are often accepted as normal.<sup>28</sup> This culture creates

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the emerging trend," *Journal of Business Ethics* 180, no. 2 (2022): 588; Michelle Fernandes Martins, Logan T. Murry, Liesl Telford, and Frank Moriarty, "Direct-to-consumer genetic testing: an updated systematic review of healthcare professionals' knowledge and views, and ethical and legal concerns," *European Journal of Human Genetics* 30, no. 12 (2022): 1332.

<sup>26</sup> Alfina Maharani, and Adnand Darya Dzikra, "Fungsi perlindungan konsumen dan peran lembaga perlindungan konsumen di Indonesia: Perlindungan, konsumen dan pelaku usaha (Literature review)," *Jurnal Ekonomi Manajemen Sistem Informasi* 2, no. 6 (2021): 662. See too, Ana Maratus, and Latifatus Syafi'iyah, "Perlindungan Konsumen dalam Layanan Umum: Analisis Regulasi dan Implementasi Kebijakan terhadap Hak-hak Konsumen," *Forschungsforum Law Journal* 2, no. 03 (2025): 284.

<sup>27</sup> Dararida Fandra Fandra Mahira, Emilda Yofita, and Lisa Nur Azizah, "Consumer Protection System (CPS): Sistem Perlindungan Data Pribadi Konsumen Melalui Collaboration Concept," *Jurnal Legislatif* (2020): 290.

<sup>28</sup> Riie Heikkilä, "The slippery slope of cultural non-participation: Orientations of participation among the potentially passive," *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 24, no. 1 (2021): 215.



an environment where irresponsible businesses can dominate without fear of legal consequences.

Challenges in the e-commerce sector are increasingly complex, marked by widespread issues such as misleading product descriptions, goods that do not meet standards, and various forms of digital fraud.<sup>29</sup> Limited supervision of online platforms further exacerbates these problems, making consumers more susceptible to financial and non-financial losses. Moreover, the speed and anonymity of digital transactions often hinder effective legal enforcement, leaving consumers with few practical options for redress. As a result, violations in e-commerce are not only more frequent but also harder to resolve through formal legal channels, highlighting the need for stronger regulations and oversight.

To address these challenges, a systematic and collaborative approach is needed. Legal education is a crucial initial step to improve consumer literacy.<sup>30</sup> The government, in collaboration with LPKSM, should conduct educational campaigns that reach a broad audience through traditional media like radio and television, as well as digital media such as social media and mobile applications. The information provided must be simple, easy to understand, and accompanied by practical guides on how to file complaints, report violations, or access BPSK services. Additionally, improving access to dispute resolution institutions like BPSK and LPKSM should be a priority.<sup>31</sup> This can be achieved by providing adequate operational funding, training human resources to enhance staff capacity, and developing service networks in remote areas through mobile service units or community-based information centers.

In the context of e-commerce, oversight of businesses needs to be strengthened through integrated rapid reporting systems on digital platforms, strict enforcement against violations, and collaboration with platform providers to ensure compliance with consumer protection standards. Empowering local communities is also a key strategy. LPKSM can collaborate with community organizations, such as youth groups or women's associations, to conduct

<sup>29</sup> Ridwan Arifin, Juan Anthonio Kambuno, Waspiah Waspiah, and Dian Latifiani, "Protecting the Consumer Rights in the Digital Economic Era: Future Challenges in Indonesia," *Jambura Law Review* 3 (2021): 140. See too, Tiina Koskelainen, Panu Kalmi, Eusebio Scornavacca, and Tero Vartiainen, "Financial literacy in the digital age A research agenda," *Journal of Consumer Affairs* 57, no. 1 (2023): 512.

<sup>30</sup> Sobia Bashir, Abdus Samad Khan, and Faisal Shahzad Khan, "The role of consumer education in strengthening consumer protection laws," *Pakistan Journal of Social Research* 5, no. 02 (2023): 88.

<sup>31</sup> Dinesh Kumar, and Nidhi Suthar, "Ethical and legal challenges of AI in marketing: an exploration of solutions," *Journal of Information, Communication and Ethics in Society* 22, no. 1 (2024): 125. See too, Mengyang Li, "Retracted Article: Adapting Legal Education for the Changing Landscape of Regional Emerging Economies: A Dynamic Framework for Law Majors," *Journal of the Knowledge Economy* 15, no. 3 (2024): 10228.

community-based legal training, workshops, and consumer discussion forums. These activities can create local change agents who encourage proactive attitudes in seeking justice while strengthening consumer advocacy networks across Indonesia.

The research findings indicate that the level of consumer knowledge significantly influences their awareness in exercising legal protection rights. Adequate knowledge is a crucial prerequisite for consumers to recognize and understand their rights as protected by Law Number 8 of 1999 on Consumer Protection, including the right to safety, accurate information, compensation, and the right to be heard.<sup>32</sup> Consumers who are aware of these rights are more likely to proactively report violations, file objections, and seek compensation when harmed by unfair business practices. These findings align with Bashir et al.<sup>33</sup> who emphasize that consumer education is a fundamental component in strengthening the effectiveness of consumer protection laws. Without knowledge, legal regulations have little impact as consumers will not use them as a tool for protection. Furthermore, Rahmaniah et al.<sup>34</sup> note that businesses often exploit consumer ignorance to evade legal accountability, for instance, by providing misleading information or complicating the complaint process.

The fact that only about 30% of complaints are submitted through official mechanisms like BPSK or LPKSM indicates a low level of practical legal awareness in society. This highlights a gap between the normative rights guaranteed by law and their realization in practice. Heikkilä<sup>35</sup> describes this phenomenon as passive societal participation, where violations are considered normal or not worth pursuing legally. A permissive legal culture toward violations also poses a challenge in encouraging consumers to seek justice.

The study also underscores the importance of regulations as both a guide and a driver of legally aware behavior. Although the Consumer Protection Law (UUPK) and its derivative regulations clearly outline consumer rights and obligations, their implementation is hindered by low legal literacy, limited access to support institutions, and inadequate legal socialization by the

<sup>32</sup> Akta Kurniawan, and Nurul Kahotimah, "Analisis Hukum Islam Tentang Perlindungan Hukum Terhadap Konsumen Menurut Undang-Undang No. 8 Tahun 1999," *Falah: Jurnal Hukum Ekonomi Syariah* 1, no. 1 (2021): 9.

<sup>33</sup> Sobia Bashir, Abdus Samad Khan, and Faisal Shahzad Khan, "The role of consumer education in strengthening consumer protection laws," *Pakistan Journal of Social Research* 5, no. 02 (2023): 89. See too, Hishamuddin Bin Ismail, and Mohammad Fateh Ali Khan Panni, "Consumer Perceptions on the Consumerism Issues and Its Influence on Their Purchasing Behavior: A View from the Malaysian Food Industry," *J. Legal Ethical & Regul.* 11 (2008): 45.

<sup>34</sup> Amelia Rahmaniah, Fuad Luthfi, and Muhammad Haris, "The Role of Digitalization in Enhancing Legal Competencies of Sharia Economic Law Graduates: A Case Study of graduate users in South Kalimantan," *Syariah: Jurnal Hukum dan Pemikiran* 23, no. 1 (2023): 67.

<sup>35</sup> Riie Heikkilä, "The slippery slope of cultural non-participation: Orientations of participation among the potentially passive," *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 24, no. 1 (2021): 217.

government and businesses. Research by Widiarty and Tehupeiori<sup>36</sup> reinforces that in the digital era, challenges are increasingly complex as consumers must understand new issues such as personal data security and information transparency in electronic transactions.

Emphasis is also placed on the role of LPKSM as a bridge between consumers and the legal system. However, as noted by Maharani and Dzikra<sup>37</sup> this institution still faces limitations in terms of resources, advocacy capacity, and geographic reach. Yet, LPKSM holds significant potential as a platform for legal education, dispute mediation, and strengthening consumers' bargaining power against businesses. Collaboration among stakeholders is key to enhancing the effectiveness of this institution in reaching underserved communities. In the context of digitalization, Li<sup>38</sup> recommends the importance of an adaptive legal approach tailored to changes in digital consumption patterns. Legal literacy should not only encompass understanding laws but also the ability to recognize digital risks, understand consumer rights in online services, and effectively use digital complaint channels. Therefore, legal education campaigns conducted through digital media with simple and accessible language are highly relevant strategies today.

Based on the overall discussion, it can be concluded that consumer knowledge plays a central role in shaping legal awareness and proactive behavior in advocating for rights. However, this knowledge does not stand alone; it must be supported by accessible legal structures, a legal culture that encourages participation, and adequate institutional support. This research underscores that effective consumer protection requires a comprehensive approach, not only through normative regulations but also through educational efforts, institutional capacity building, and community empowerment as legally aware subjects.

<sup>36</sup> Wiwik Sri Widiarty, and Aartje Tehupeiori, "The role of business law in improving consumer protection in the digital age," *Journal of Law and Sustainable Development* 12, no. 2 (2024): 17. See too, Alwi Syamsurralam, Muhammad Habibi, and Lunsia Avelia Mahatir, "Edukasi Hukum Perlindungan Konsumen bagi Masyarakat." *SELAYAR: Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat* 1, no. 5 (2025): 173.

<sup>37</sup> Alfina Maharani, and Adnand Darya Dzikra, "Fungsi perlindungan konsumen dan peran lembaga perlindungan konsumen di Indonesia: Perlindungan, konsumen dan pelaku usaha (Literature review)," *Jurnal Ekonomi Manajemen Sistem Informasi* 2, no. 6 (2021): 664. See too Wiwik Sri Widiarty, Suwarno Suwarno, Dhaniswara K. Harjono, and Hendra Susanto, "Consumer protection laws in Indonesian commercial transactions: safeguarding business transactions and consumer rights," *Journal of Law and Sustainable Development* 12, no. 1 (2024): 13.

<sup>38</sup> Mengyang Li, "Retracted Article: Adapting Legal Education for the Changing Landscape of Regional Emerging Economies: A Dynamic Framework for Law Majors," *Journal of the Knowledge Economy* 15, no. 3 (2024): 10230.

## D. CONCLUSION

This research shows that consumers' level of knowledge significantly influences their awareness of exercising their legal protection rights. Knowledge is the primary basis for determining whether consumers are able to recognize, understand, and respond to violations of their rights. Consumers who have a good understanding of the rights guaranteed by Law Number 8 of 1999 concerning Consumer Protection, such as the right to information, product safety, compensation, and the right to be heard, tend to be more active in reporting and holding businesses accountable. This finding confirms that the effectiveness of consumer protection is determined not only by the existence of sound regulations, but also by the extent to which consumers know and understand these legal provisions. Low legal literacy, a passive culture in society, and limited access to dispute resolution institutions such as the Community-Based Consumer Protection Organizations and Consumer Dispute Resolution Agency are real obstacles to achieving fair and comprehensive consumer protection.

Therefore, educational and participatory strategies are needed to increase consumer legal awareness. The government, together with LPKSM, businesses, and civil society organizations, need to expand the reach of legal education through digital and local media that are easily accessible and understandable to the public. Furthermore, strengthening institutions and increasing oversight of business practices, particularly in the e-commerce sector, are crucial steps in preventing repeated violations of consumer rights. Therefore, effective consumer protection requires not only robust legal instruments but also the active participation of the public as legal subjects. Consumer legal awareness will grow if supported by adequate knowledge, open access to information, and a responsive and equitable advocacy ecosystem across Indonesia.

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