

Enhancing Consumer Dispute Literacy and The Complaint System of The National Consumer Protection Agency (BPKN) in Realizing A Smart Consumer Society

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Abstract

Consumer protection in indonesia continues to face challenges related to the low level of consumer legal literacy and limited utilization of the complaint mechanisms provided by the National Consumer Protection Agency (BPKN). This study aims to analyze how the improvement of consumer dispute literacy and the optimization of BPKN's complaint system contribute to the realization of smart consumers in society. Using a juridical-normative approach, this research examines the legal framework governing consumer protection, supported by conceptual and case-based analyses from relevant regulations, legal literature, and official reports. The findings indicate that while Law No. 8 of 1999 on Consumer Protection and Presidential Regulation No. 50 of 2017 provide a solid foundation, the implementation remains hindered by normative limitations, weak institutional coordination, and low legal awareness among consumers. The discussion reveals that the effectiveness of BPKN's complaint system depends not only on regulatory strength but also on public literacy and participation. Therefore, the study concludes that enhancing consumer literacy and strengthening institutional synergy are crucial in building a responsive and inclusive consumer protection system. These efforts will enable BPKN to play a more strategic role in empowering consumers and fostering a culture of smart, critical, and legally aware consumption behavior.

Keywords: BPKN, Complaint System, Consumer Protection, Legal Literacy, Smart Consumer

1. INTRODUCTION

Consumer protection is one of the essential pillars in creating a fair and sustainable economic order. In the modern context, characterized by rapid technological development and digitalized transactions, consumers are becoming increasingly vulnerable to non-transparent business practices and misuse of information (Kadir et al., 2024). This situation demands a stronger understanding from the public regarding their rights and obligations as consumers (Abdillah et al., 2024). Law Number 8 of 1999 concerning Consumer Protection has provided a normative foundation for such protection; however, its implementation often faces obstacles, particularly regarding the level of legal literacy within society (Saputra, 2025). Many consumers are still unable to recognize violations of their rights or to pursue the available mechanisms for dispute resolution.

In practice, consumer disputes are often resolved informally or even left unsettled due to the public's lack of knowledge about the complaint procedures (Simanjuntak, 2019). This condition reflects the low capacity for consumer dispute literacy, which weakens the bargaining power of society against business actors (Satory et al., 2020). On the other hand, authorities such as the National Consumer Protection Agency (Badan Perlindungan Konsumen Nasional, BPKN) have made efforts to provide complaint and advocacy mechanisms to protect consumers (Rahmah et al., 2023). However, the effectiveness of this system greatly depends on how well the public understands and utilizes it. Without adequate literacy, even a well-designed complaint system cannot function optimally.

The National Consumer Protection Agency (BPKN), as a non-structural state institution, is mandated to provide advice, recommendations, and advocacy related to consumer protection policies (Shidarta & Koos, 2019). BPKN also plays a role in receiving and following up on public complaints concerning consumer disputes (Rahmah et al., 2023). In recent years, the agency has

innovated by developing a digital-based complaint system to improve accessibility and service transparency (Shahirah & Simanjuntak, 2024). Nevertheless, there remain significant challenges in increasing public participation in utilizing this system. Low levels of digital and legal literacy are among the main barriers, creating a gap between the system's availability and its practical use in society.

This phenomenon indicates that the success of consumer protection systems is determined not only by the existence of legal frameworks and implementing institutions but also by the capacity of the public as legal subjects to understand and exercise their rights (Anggraini et al., 2022). In this framework, consumer dispute literacy is not merely about knowledge of laws but also the ability to understand procedures, assess risks, and make appropriate decisions when facing consumer issues (Setianingrum & Yuliati, 2017). Thus, strengthening consumer dispute literacy becomes a strategic element in enhancing legal protection for society (Mahardika & Yuliati, 2022). A society with high literacy will be better equipped to demand its rights and actively participate in creating a fair and healthy marketplace.

In the digital transformation era, the concept of a *smart consumer* is increasingly relevant as a direction for developing a critical and empowered modern society (Azzara & Simanjuntak, 2023). A smart consumer is not only aware of the products and services consumed but also possesses legal awareness and the ability to utilize dispute resolution mechanisms when their rights are violated (Puad & Hamdi, 2025). In this context, the BPKN complaint system has the potential to become an important instrument in building an intelligent and independent consumer ecosystem (Simanjuntak, 2024). However, without systematic education and literacy enhancement strategies, the role of this system will not be maximized. The gap between existing policies and public awareness must be bridged through efforts to strengthen both legal and technological literacy among consumers.

Aside from literacy factors, public perception of the effectiveness of consumer protection institutions also influences participation in the complaint system (Handari & Saputro, 2025). Many consumers perceive the complaint process as complicated, lengthy, or yielding insignificant results (Annisa & Hamzah, 2025). Such views can reduce public motivation to exercise their rights in dispute resolution (Rojimantoro et al., 2024). Therefore, it is important to reassess to what extent the BPKN complaint system has fulfilled the principles of simplicity, speed, and fairness for all parties. Analyzing the relationship between consumer literacy levels and the effectiveness of the complaint system will provide a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges in consumer protection in Indonesia.

Furthermore, the development of the digital economy has created new forms of consumer disputes, such as online fraud, misuse of personal data, and product inconsistencies in electronic transactions (Darti & Marnija, 2025). BPKN and related institutions are faced with the task of adjusting protection mechanisms in response to these dynamics (Fajar et al., 2025). Increasing public legal literacy becomes an adaptive step to ensure that consumers are not merely objects of protection but active and conscious actors in safeguarding their rights (Budiman & Hidayat, 2025). By strengthening consumer dispute literacy and optimizing the complaint system, it is expected that a new legal culture will emerge—one that positions consumers as empowered subjects capable of navigating the complexities of the modern market.

Finally, this reality highlights the crucial role of the state, through institutions such as BPKN, not only in building a strong legal system but also in cultivating public legal awareness (Kumurur & Kansil, 2022). Consumer dispute literacy should be viewed as an integral part of the national consumer protection strategy that emphasizes public empowerment (Sari et al., 2024). Enhancing legal literacy and optimizing the complaint system are key to achieving balance between business actors and consumers (Masturi et al., 2025). Based on this foundation, this study emphasizes the importance of building synergy between legal, institutional, and public awareness aspects to create intelligent consumers and an effective consumer protection system.

Based on the above discussion, this research aims to analyze how improving consumer dispute literacy and optimizing the complaint system of the National Consumer Protection Agency (BPKN) can contribute to realizing smart consumers in society. This study seeks to provide a clear overview of the effectiveness of existing legal policies and mechanisms while identifying barriers

that hinder public participation in exercising their consumer rights. The results of this study are expected to offer theoretical contributions to the study of consumer protection law and practical recommendations for BPKN and policymakers to strengthen education, outreach, and legal literacy programs, thereby fostering a society that is critical, empowered, and legally protected.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The concept of consumer protection is theoretically rooted in the principles of justice and balance in the relationship between business actors and consumers. According to Kotler and Keller (2016), consumers are the main actors in the economic system who are entitled to safety, information, choice, and fairness in transactions. In a legal context, consumer protection aims to shield consumers from fraudulent practices, misleading information, and products that endanger their rights. Nasution (2001) emphasizes that consumer protection is the embodiment of the principle of distributive justice, which requires the state to intervene in regulating and balancing the interests of business actors and consumers. Law Number 8 of 1999 concerning Consumer Protection thus serves as the normative foundation for a balanced legal relationship between the two parties.

The theory of legal literacy forms an essential foundation for understanding the relationship between law and societal behavior. Friedman (1975) asserts that the effectiveness of law is determined by three elements: structure, substance, and legal culture, where legal literacy is part of the cultural aspect. A society with a high level of legal literacy better understands its rights and obligations and is more capable of utilizing available legal instruments. According to Soekanto (2012), Indonesia's legal culture remains weak due to a lack of understanding of prevailing legal norms and procedures. Therefore, enhancing legal literacy is a strategic step in building legal awareness and improving the effectiveness of consumer protection implementation.

The concept of consumer literacy encompasses individuals' ability to understand, evaluate, and use relevant information to make safe and rational consumption decisions. Remund (2010) identifies five main dimensions of consumer literacy: awareness of rights and obligations, understanding of product information, risk assessment, decision-making, and the ability to seek legal justice. Meanwhile, Engel, Blackwell, and Miniard (1995) argue that modern consumer behavior is influenced by education, access to information, and the ability to reflect on risks. In the context of consumer protection law, this literacy includes understanding legal mechanisms such as filing complaints with BPKN, BPSK, or the courts. The higher the consumer literacy level, the greater their capacity to claim their rights and avoid exploitative business practices.

The *smart consumer* theory emphasizes the importance of fostering consumption behavior that is critical, rational, and legally aware. Sumarwan (2018) explains that a smart consumer is an individual who comprehensively understands the value of a product and is capable of considering ethical, economic, and legal aspects in decision-making. Similarly, Solomon (2018) highlights that intelligent consumers do not merely respond to advertising or price stimuli but also demand transparency and accountability from business actors. Within the legal framework, a smart consumer serves as a supervisory partner to business actors, thereby strengthening the effectiveness of the national consumer protection system. Therefore, enhancing literacy and legal awareness is a fundamental prerequisite for building an empowered and legally independent society.

In public service theory, the consumer complaint system is viewed as one form of a *social accountability mechanism*. Osborne and Gaebler (1992) describe public complaint systems as vital instruments for citizens to evaluate government performance and demand service improvements. Denhardt and Denhardt (2015) further state that public participation in complaints represents a tangible manifestation of the *new public service* principle, which positions citizens as partners in governance. In the context of consumer protection, the BPKN complaint system serves both as a legal channel and a public education tool that enhances citizens' legal awareness. However, the

effectiveness of this system heavily depends on the public's ability to understand and correctly access complaint procedures.

Previous studies have highlighted the relationship between consumer legal literacy, awareness of legal rights, and the effectiveness of consumer protection in Indonesia. Research by Simanjuntak (2025) shows that increased consumer awareness directly influences citizens' ability and confidence to assert their rights in the marketplace, yet this awareness remains uneven across social groups. Meanwhile, Simanjuntak et al. (2024) emphasize that access to information and the ease of obtaining protection services are crucial factors in empowering vulnerable consumer groups, including persons with disabilities. However, limited legal literacy continues to hinder their participation in formal complaint systems.

Furthermore, Sulistiyyono and Syamsudin (2024) explain that weak legal culture among the public is a fundamental obstacle to building a just consumer protection system because the values of consumer protection law have not been fully internalized in public consciousness. These findings suggest that although legal instruments exist, the public has not yet fully understood or utilized available protection mechanisms effectively. Additionally, research by Suryono et al. (2021) on consumer protection in the *fintech* peer-to-peer lending sector indicates that the public often falls victim to fraud due to low understanding of their rights and digital dispute resolution procedures. This phenomenon demonstrates that the presence of digital-based complaint systems has not fully reached communities with low levels of technological literacy. Consequently, the main problem in consumer protection in Indonesia lies not only in normative or legal substance aspects but also in cultural and structural issues namely, the lack of literacy, trust, and accessibility to consumer protection institutions.

Based on theoretical and empirical studies, there exists a significant research gap concerning the integration between improving consumer literacy and optimizing the BPKN complaint system to realize smart consumers. Most previous studies have focused on one aspect only either consumer literacy or the effectiveness of complaint systems without comprehensively linking the two within legal and institutional frameworks. Moreover, there remains a lack of legal scholarship that thoroughly analyzes BPKN's role as a public advocacy institution in promoting consumer legal awareness through digital-based complaint systems. Therefore, this research is essential to fill that gap by examining how strengthening consumer dispute literacy can enhance the functionality of BPKN's complaint system in fostering consumers who are intelligent, critical, and legally aware in the digital era.

3. RESEARCH METHODS

This research employs a normative juridical legal research method, which focuses on examining positive legal norms, legal principles, and doctrines that apply within Indonesia's consumer protection legal system. This approach is used to analyze how the legal framework governing consumer dispute literacy and the complaint system of the National Consumer Protection Agency (Badan Perlindungan Konsumen Nasional, BPKN) contributes to realizing *smart consumers* in society. The primary data sources include legislation, policy documents, academic literature, and relevant institutional research reports. The analysis aims to understand the relationship between the concepts of consumer legal literacy, the BPKN complaint system, and legal protection for consumers both conceptually and normatively.

In this normative juridical research, several complementary legal approaches are utilized. First, the statutory approach, conducted by examining *Law Number 8 of 1999 on Consumer Protection*, *Presidential Regulation Number 50 of 2017 on BPKN*, and other relevant regulations concerning consumer complaint mechanisms and public services. Second, the conceptual approach, used to explore the concepts of legal literacy, smart consumers, and the effectiveness of consumer protection within the framework of national legal development. Third, the case approach, applied by analyzing several consumer dispute cases handled by BPKN and related institutions as empirical illustrations of legal norm implementation. These approaches allow the research to integrate normative aspects and institutional practices comprehensively.

The data in this study consist of secondary data obtained through library research. The secondary data include primary legal materials such as legislation; secondary legal materials such as textbooks, academic journals, BPKN annual reports, and expert opinions; and tertiary legal materials including legal dictionaries and encyclopedias. The data collection technique involves tracing, reading, and identifying relevant legal materials, which are then systematically organized according to the research problem. Data were analyzed qualitatively and descriptively by interpreting the content of legal norms and comparing them with theories of consumer protection law to produce logical and argumentative conclusions. The results of this analysis are expected to provide an in-depth understanding of the strategic role of enhancing consumer dispute literacy and strengthening BPKN's complaint system in shaping legally aware and empowered consumers.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the analytical results of the issues previously formulated based on the normative juridical approach and relevant literature review. The discussion focuses on the legal framework, implementation, and strategies for strengthening the role of the National Consumer Protection Agency (BPKN) in enhancing consumer dispute literacy to realize a *smart consumer* society.

4.1. Legal Framework on Consumer Dispute Literacy and the Complaint System in the National Consumer Protection Agency (BPKN)

Consumer protection in Indonesia is normatively regulated through *Law Number 8 of 1999 on Consumer Protection (UUPK)*, which serves as the primary legal umbrella governing the rights and obligations between business actors and consumers. The UUPK provides a strong legal foundation for the state to ensure consumer protection based on the principles of justice, balance, and legal certainty (Tomelo, 2025). Article 4 of the UUPK explicitly outlines consumers' rights, including the right to comfort, security, and safety in consuming goods and/or services, as well as the right to be heard regarding their opinions and complaints. Moreover, Articles 45 to 47 regulate mechanisms for consumer dispute resolution, both through the courts and out of court, such as through institutions like the Consumer Dispute Settlement Agency (Badan Penyelesaian Sengketa Konsumen, BPSK). However, the effectiveness of these provisions is often constrained by the low level of legal literacy among the public in understanding and exercising their rights (Anggraini et al., 2022). Therefore, consumer legal protection requires not only the existence of legal instruments but also an increase in public awareness of their rights and the available legal mechanisms.

The concept of consumer dispute literacy is not explicitly stated in statutory regulations but is substantively embedded in the state's mandate to educate the nation and protect citizens from harmful business practices (Annisa & Hamzah, 2025). Legal literacy in the context of consumer protection encompasses the public's ability to understand their rights and obligations, recognize violations, and know the steps to take in resolving disputes. Within the national legal framework, this literacy serves as a strategic element in achieving effective and participatory legal protection. Article 31 of the UUPK mandates the government to foster and develop consumer protection efforts, including through outreach, research, and publication (Abdillah et al., 2024). However, in practice, consumer legal literacy policies in Indonesia remain fragmented across institutions and lack systematic coordination, resulting in suboptimal effectiveness.

The National Consumer Protection Agency (BPKN) holds a central position in implementing advocacy, education, and oversight of consumer protection policies (Zulfi et al., 2025). Under *Presidential Regulation Number 50 of 2017*, BPKN is authorized to provide recommendations and advice to the government, receive and follow up on consumer complaints, and conduct research and dissemination of consumer protection policies. This strategic function positions BPKN as a bridge between consumers, business actors, and the government (Wahid, 2023). Through public education programs and legal awareness campaigns, BPKN strives to foster legal awareness within society so that consumers can actively safeguard their rights. Moreover,

BPKN's role in strengthening consumer legal literacy reflects the constitutional function of the state to ensure justice in digital economic transactions (Tjipto et al., 2021). Thus, consumer dispute literacy is not only preventive but also transformative, as it serves to build collective legal consciousness within society.

One of the most significant instruments developed by BPKN to fulfill its mandate is the consumer complaint system. This system allows consumers to submit reports of alleged rights violations both directly and online, in line with the principles of transparency and public legal accountability (Tresnawati & Fatmawati, 2021). Through the digitalization of the complaint process, BPKN applies principles of accessibility and public participation, enabling the public to report issues easily without bureaucratic barriers (Wahid, 2023). However, the effectiveness of this complaint system heavily depends on two main factors: first, the readiness of infrastructure and institutional responsiveness; and second, the public's level of legal literacy and digital capability in understanding reporting procedures (Zulfi et al., 2025). Based on BPKN's 2023 annual report, although there has been an increase in the number of complaints, most reports still originate from urban communities with higher educational backgrounds. This finding reinforces that a sound legal framework and institutional mechanisms are insufficient without concurrent improvement in public legal literacy as system users.

4.2. Implementation of the BPKN Complaint System in Enhancing Consumer Legal Literacy Capacity to Realize Smart Consumers

The implementation of the complaint system at the National Consumer Protection Agency (BPKN) is one of the government's strategic steps in strengthening the legal protection mechanism for the public. This system serves as a medium for consumers to submit complaints regarding violations of their rights committed by business actors, both in conventional and digital transactions. Based on Presidential Regulation No. 50 of 2017, BPKN has the authority to receive, verify, and follow up on public complaints as well as provide recommendations for resolution to the relevant authorities. In the context of modern law, strengthening this complaint mechanism is also part of consumer protection reform in the global era, characterized by increasing market complexity (Kadir et al., 2024). The implementation of the Online Consumer Complaint System (SPK BPKN) represents an institutional adaptation to digital transformation, aiming to create public services that are fast, transparent, and efficient (Kautsar et al., 2024). However, as emphasized by Handari and Saputro (2025), the effectiveness of such digital mechanisms must also be accompanied by adequate legal oversight to ensure that consumers' spiritual and material rights remain protected amid the rapid growth of e-commerce transactions.

Although institutionally the BPKN complaint system has been functioning fairly well, there remain major challenges in its utilization by the wider public. Based on BPKN's 2023 Annual Report, most complaints still come from urban communities with higher education levels, while communities in areas with low legal and digital literacy tend to remain passive. This phenomenon aligns with the findings of Kumurur and Kansil (2022), who explain that the lack of public understanding of their legal rights causes people to rarely report violations, even in cases that threaten public health. This disparity demonstrates that the success of the legal system depends not only on the existence of normative instruments but also on the public's ability to use them effectively. As noted by Fajar et al. (2025), legal certainty can only be achieved when monitoring mechanisms and community development efforts are aligned with initiatives to improve legal awareness and compliance with legal norms. Therefore, strengthening the BPKN complaint system must be balanced with an inclusive, participatory legal education approach for the public.

In order to enhance consumer literacy capacity, BPKN continuously implements various legal education and public outreach programs. These activities include seminars, counseling sessions, collaborations with universities, and digital campaigns aimed at fostering consumer legal awareness across all levels of society. The smart consumer concept proposed by Azzara and Simanjuntak (2023) emphasizes that intelligent consumers not only understand their rights but also possess the ability to make rational decisions and actively seek justice when their rights are violated. In this context, BPKN's legal literacy programs form part of a broader consumer

empowerment strategy, enabling individuals to better understand transaction risks and assess the credibility of business actors. However, as highlighted by Budiman and Hidayat (2025), major challenges remain such as fraudulent practices, counterfeit money circulation, and violations in financial transactions showing that society is still not fully protected due to weak legal education and inadequate oversight in digital financial systems.

To fully realize the concept of smart consumers, the implementation of BPKN's complaint system must be carried out through a holistic, adaptive, and inclusive approach. Efforts to improve legal and digital literacy must occur simultaneously through simplified complaint procedures, enhanced training for complaint officers, and expanded outreach to remote regions. Additionally, BPKN needs to strengthen coordination with institutions such as the Consumer Dispute Settlement Agency (BPSK), the Financial Services Authority (OJK), and the Ministry of Trade, ensuring that the consumer protection system operates in an integrated and effective manner (Darti & Marnija, 2025). These collaborative efforts must also consider the internationalization of consumer protection law, as highlighted by Kadir et al. (2024), who stress the importance of harmonizing policies among nations to strengthen consumers' positions in the global economy. Thus, the complaint system should not only serve as a reactive instrument to address grievances but also function as an educational mechanism that builds public legal awareness. When consumers fully understand and optimally use the complaint system, the ultimate goal of creating a smart consumer society, one that is critical, legally aware, and independent will be more easily achieved.

4.3. Inhibiting Factors and Strategies to Optimize the Role of BPKN in Enhancing Consumer Dispute Literacy and Developing Smart Consumers

The implementation of the duties and functions of the National Consumer Protection Agency (BPKN) in improving consumer dispute literacy is not without challenges these stem from normative, institutional, and social aspects. From a normative perspective, the main obstacle lies in the limited derivative regulations from Law No. 8 of 1999 on Consumer Protection, which would otherwise provide detailed mechanisms for enhancing public legal literacy. As noted by Saputra (2025), the UUPK primarily focuses on the legal relationship between business actors and consumers, while the aspects of legal education and community empowerment are not operationally regulated. The absence of implementing regulations outlining a national strategy for consumer literacy results in educational functions remaining sectoral and uncoordinated among institutions such as the Ministry of Trade, BPKN, and BPSK. Furthermore, Satory et al. (2020) highlight that the lack of a national indicator for consumer legal literacy complicates the evaluation of consumer protection policy effectiveness. This condition weakens the legal foundation for BPKN to implement comprehensive, measurable, and sustainable consumer literacy programs.

From an institutional perspective, BPKN faces various constraints in terms of human resources, budget, and adequate digital infrastructure. According to Rahmah et al. (2023), the budget allocation for public outreach and education activities remains insufficient compared to actual field needs, causing most programs to reach only urban areas. Consequently, efforts to improve consumer legal literacy have yet to extend effectively to rural communities. Moreover, limited digital infrastructure hampers the operation of online complaint systems, particularly in terms of data security and inter-agency connectivity (Sari et al., 2024). Yet, as Puad and Hamdi (2025) point out, digitalization in consumer protection is an essential step toward strengthening legal safeguards in an increasingly complex digital economy. Insufficient coordination between agencies and minimal resources have therefore limited BPKN's effectiveness as a national advocacy body in reaching all levels of society.

Beyond normative and institutional barriers, social challenges also play a significant role in hindering the implementation of consumer protection in Indonesia. The level of public legal literacy remains relatively low, particularly among those with lower educational backgrounds and in areas with limited access to information. Many consumers still do not understand their rights or even regard consumer violations as normal occurrences (Mahardika & Yuliati, 2022). This lack

of legal awareness is further exacerbated by low public trust in legal institutions, resulting in low reporting rates to formal bodies such as BPKN or BPSK (Masturi et al., 2025). Additionally, Rojimantoro et al. (2024) emphasize that in digital transactions, low levels of legal literacy worsen consumers' bargaining positions against business actors, as many do not understand valid mechanisms for electronic dispute resolution. Consequently, public passivity becomes the primary obstacle in developing legally aware and empowered smart consumers.

To address these various challenges, a comprehensive and empowerment-oriented strategy is required to optimize BPKN's role. First, from a normative perspective, the government should formulate a Presidential Regulation or Ministerial Regulation specifically governing a national strategy for improving consumer legal literacy, thereby providing a strong legal foundation for BPKN's programs (Saputra, 2025). Second, from an institutional standpoint, BPKN should expand cross-sectoral collaboration with educational institutions, civil society organizations, and the private sector to strengthen networks for legal education and outreach (Rahmah et al., 2023). Third, from a social perspective, public education approaches should be adapted to community characteristics—through community-based campaigns and the use of accessible digital media (Mahardika & Yuliati, 2022). Consistent with the principle of maqasid shariah in consumer protection, as discussed by Puad and Hamdi (2025), legal education should aim at achieving public welfare and balance between economic and moral interests. Through the synergy of legal reform, institutional strengthening, and increased social awareness, BPKN is expected to enhance public legal literacy and promote the realization of smart consumers who are critical, independent, and fully aware of their rights within a modern economic ecosystem.

4.4. Policy Synergy and Multi-Stakeholder Roles in Strengthening Consumer Dispute Literacy and the Effectiveness of the BPKN Complaint System

Efforts to improve consumer dispute literacy and optimize the complaint system of the National Consumer Protection Agency (BPKN) cannot be carried out partially; rather, they require cross-sectoral synergy among the government, law enforcement agencies, business actors, academia, and civil society organizations. This synergy is essential because consumer protection is a multidimensional issue encompassing legal, social, economic, and technological aspects (Sulistiyono & Syamsudin, 2024). The government holds the primary responsibility for providing adaptive regulations in response to digital market developments, while institutions such as BPKN and BPSK act as the frontline in advocacy and dispute resolution. Furthermore, as emphasized by Shidarta and Koos (2019), a social-functional approach to consumer protection law demands active participation from non-governmental actors so that the law does not remain merely normative but becomes socially effective. On the other hand, business actors must demonstrate their commitment to corporate social responsibility (CSR) principles by ensuring transparency and fairness in transactions, which constitute an integral part of modern business ethics (Simanjuntak, 2025).

In terms of policy coordination, BPKN needs to strengthen collaboration with strategic ministries and institutions such as the Ministry of Trade, the Ministry of Communication and Informatics, and the Financial Services Authority (OJK). Such inter-agency synergy is crucial to broaden the scope of protection, particularly in digital trade and financial services sectors, which are highly prone to disputes (Simanjuntak, 2024). Additionally, higher education institutions play an important role in cultivating public legal awareness through the integration of consumer literacy into academic curricula (Setianingrum & Yuliati, 2017). Through research and community service programs, universities can serve as partners in developing a smart consumer society that has a critical understanding of its rights and obligations. In line with this, Simanjuntak et al. (2024) emphasize that information accessibility and the empowerment of vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities, are essential components in ensuring inclusive and equitable consumer protection.

Civil society organizations such as the Indonesian Consumers Foundation (YLKI) also play a strategic role as a bridge between policy and public interest. Their advocacy, educational activities, and public awareness campaigns serve as instruments for expanding the reach of legal

literacy and strengthening social oversight of business practices. According to research by Simanjuntak and Shahirah (2024), consumer complaint behavior in Indonesia is significantly influenced by demographic and ethnic factors, meaning that legal education approaches must be tailored to the social and cultural characteristics of different communities. Meanwhile, Simanjuntak (2019) highlights that younger generations, particularly Generation Y, have strong potential to become agents of change in developing a consumer complaint culture, provided that they are given adequate access to information and a responsive complaint system. Moreover, the role of mass media and digital media is equally vital in shaping public opinion and increasing legal awareness through the rapid, transparent, and educational dissemination of information.

The success of multi-stakeholder synergy will ultimately determine the effectiveness of BPKN's complaint system and the sustainability of consumer legal literacy programs in the future. As stated by Simanjuntak (2024), the level of consumer empowerment in Indonesia is still heavily influenced by socio-demographic factors, meaning that public participation must be supported by inclusive regulations and strong institutional backing. By building collaborative networks among government bodies, academic institutions, civil society organizations, and the private sector, Indonesia can establish a consumer protection system that is not only reactive to violations but also proactive in cultivating legal awareness. This collaborative approach aligns with the prophetic values in consumer protection law, which position humans as empowered, intelligent, and morally responsible legal subjects (Sulistiyono & Syamsudin, 2024). Therefore, an inclusive policy synergy will serve as the fundamental basis for realizing a smart consumer society that is both critical and adaptive to the dynamic challenges of the digital economy.

5. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that consumer protection in Indonesia, particularly through the role of the National Consumer Protection Agency (BPKN), is closely linked to the level of consumer literacy in understanding their legal rights and dispute resolution mechanisms. Although the regulatory framework provided by Law No. 8 of 1999 on Consumer Protection and Presidential Regulation No. 50 of 2017 concerning BPKN has established a solid legal foundation, the implementation remains constrained by limited public awareness, inadequate institutional resources, and weak coordination among related agencies. Strengthening consumer literacy is therefore essential to transforming passive consumers into *smart consumers* who are aware of their rights and capable of utilizing legal mechanisms effectively. The integration of education, digital complaint systems, and institutional synergy is key to realizing a just and responsive consumer protection system in Indonesia.

It is recommended that the government and BPKN develop a comprehensive national strategy to enhance consumer literacy and optimize the complaint system's accessibility. This strategy should include the formulation of more detailed implementing regulations, the expansion of digital infrastructure, and cross-sector collaboration with educational institutions and civil society organizations. Public education campaigns should also be intensified through both traditional and digital media to foster a stronger culture of legal awareness among consumers. By combining legal reform, institutional strengthening, and public empowerment, Indonesia can advance toward a more effective and inclusive consumer protection system that supports the creation of informed, critical, and legally empowered *smart consumers*.

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