



LEVEL OF CONSUMER AWARENESS OF THE RIGHT TO REDRESS AND EFFECTIVENESS OF CONSUMER PROTECTION ADVOCACY: BASIS FOR PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

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ABSTRACT

Completed during Academic Year 2025–2026, this study investigated consumer knowledge regarding the right to redress and the effectiveness of consumer protection advocacy in the Province of Bataan as a basis for program recommendations. The study also evaluated how consumers exercised their right to redress and how awareness correlates to advocacy outcomes. Using a quantitative, non-experimental and descriptive-correlational method, data was collected from 202 consumers using a questionnaire developed by the researcher. The respondents were selected through a non-probability sampling quota method with proportional targets for municipalities and convenience selection. The data was analyzed using frequency, percentage, weighted mean, and Pearson's product-moment correlation. The results demonstrated that the knowledge related to the right to redress was relatively good, while the advocacy was considered very effective. The low levels of consumer awareness were found in procedures for filing complaints, requirements to file complaints, timelines, and responsible agencies for complaints. The study found that consumers exhibit behavior aimed at obtaining redress while maintaining a believing disposition toward consumer protection programs despite multiple barriers to obtaining redress. The study found a positive significant moderate relationship between consumer knowledge and effectiveness of advocacy. In light of the findings, the study recommends clearer means of filing complaints, accessible mechanisms of redress, and localized advocacy programs.

Keywords: *consumer awareness, consumer protection advocacy, consumer redress practices, consumer rights, program recommendations, right to redress.*

INTRODUCTION

Consumer protection remains important as marketplace transactions continue to expand across both physical and online environments. Consumers are expected to make informed purchasing decisions and to respond appropriately when they encounter defective products, unsatisfactory services, misleading advertisements, or unfair sales practices. In the Philippines, Republic Act No. 7394, otherwise known as the Consumer Act of the Philippines, provides the legal foundation for protecting consumers against unfair, deceptive, and unconscionable sales acts and practices and supports their access to appropriate remedies when consumer problems arise (Republic Act No. 7394, 1992).

However, the existence of consumer protection laws does not necessarily mean consumers know how to exercise their rights. Access to information and consumer education remain important concerns, particularly where consumers may know they have a right to redress but lack practical knowledge of how to use it (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2020; United Nations Conference on Trade and Development [UNCTAD], 2021). Consumers may be uncertain about where to file complaints, what documents are required, what remedies they may request, what filing timelines apply, and which government agency handles a particular concern. Such gaps in procedural knowledge may discourage consumers from pursuing valid complaints and may leave them vulnerable to unfair marketplace practices (Department of Trade and Industry [DTI], 2022).

Consumer awareness of the right to redress therefore involves more than recognizing that consumer rights exist. It includes knowledge of available remedies such as refunds, replacements, or repairs; complaint procedures and documentary requirements; filing timelines; and the agencies responsible for handling consumer concerns. The United Nations Guidelines for Consumer Protection emphasize accessible consumer information, education, dispute resolution, and effective redress mechanisms (United Nations, 2016; UNCTAD, 2023). Within the ASEAN context, consumer empowerment similarly requires improving public understanding of complaint and redress mechanisms (ASEAN Committee on Consumer Protection, 2021, 2023). Research also suggests that awareness of consumer rights can influence attitudes and behavioral intentions, underscoring the importance of translating legal protections into practical knowledge that consumers can use (Makanyeza et al., 2021).

Consumer protection advocacy plays an important role in addressing these information gaps. Government agencies, local government units, academic institutions, consumer organizations, and other concerned groups may conduct seminars, information campaigns, public advisories, complaint-assistance activities, community orientations, printed information drives, and online or social media campaigns. The effectiveness of these initiatives depends not only on the information provided but also on its accessibility, frequency, schedule, location, and ability to reach different consumer groups. Studies on consumer education indicate that advocacy can strengthen consumers' understanding of their rights and participation in complaint resolution, particularly when information is

clearly communicated and applicable to actual consumer concerns (Bashir et al., 2023; Pajarillo-Agustin, 2023).

Although this study focuses primarily on the right to redress, consumer protection advocacy also includes information on product and service standards, labeling and safety, deceptive and unfair sales practices, warranties, guarantees, and seller obligations. These areas matter because they help consumers recognize when redress may be necessary. Previous studies indicate that consumers may have general awareness of their rights but limited knowledge of grievance procedures and complaint mechanisms (Baquiran et al., 2023; Taguinod et al., 2023). Awareness alone may also be insufficient to produce action when complaint procedures are perceived as complicated, inconvenient, costly, time-consuming, or uncertain (Kashyap, 2020). Thus, effective consumer protection requires not only awareness of rights but also practical guidance that enables consumers to act on those rights.

The study is further grounded in the Knowledge-Attitude-Practice (KAP) Model (Rogers, 2003), Protection Motivation Theory (PMT) (Rogers, 1975), and the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991). The KAP Model explains how knowledge may influence attitudes and practices and supports examining consumer awareness of the right to redress. PMT explains how individuals may take protective action when they recognize potential harm and believe that an effective response is available, providing a basis for examining consumer protection advocacy. TPB explains how attitudes, social influence, and perceived behavioral control may shape intentions and behavior, supporting the examination of consumers' redress-seeking practices. Taken together, these perspectives suggest that providing consumers with appropriate knowledge and accessible protection mechanisms may influence their willingness and ability to seek redress when consumer problems occur.

Despite the availability of consumer protection programs and information campaigns, localized evidence remains limited on how consumers in the Province of Bataan perceive these advocacy efforts and whether they are associated with awareness of the right to redress. Existing studies have largely examined consumer awareness, protection, or complaint behavior more broadly, while paying limited attention to the relationship between consumer awareness of redress and the perceived effectiveness of consumer protection advocacy in local settings. This gap matters because knowing one has consumer rights does not necessarily mean knowing how to exercise them. Consumers may still hesitate to seek redress because of uncertainty regarding procedures, documentary requirements, responsible agencies, cost, time, or the perceived complexity of the complaint process.

Against this background, the study assessed consumers' awareness of the right to redress and their perceptions of the effectiveness of consumer protection advocacy in the Province of Bataan. It also examined consumer redress practices and the relationship between awareness of the right to redress and advocacy effectiveness. By identifying areas where consumer knowledge and advocacy may be strengthened, the study provides a basis for localized program recommendations to improve consumer education,

clarify complaint procedures, increase access to redress mechanisms, and support consumers in exercising their rights.

Research Questions

This study aimed to determine the level of consumer awareness of the right to redress and the effectiveness of consumer protection advocacy among consumers in the Province of Bataan as a basis for program recommendations.

1. What are the characteristics of the respondents in terms of:
 - 1.1 age;
 - 1.2 sex;
 - 1.3 civil status;
 - 1.4 highest educational attainment;
 - 1.5 municipality;
 - 1.6 primary type of consumer transaction;
 - 1.7 frequency of purchases; and
 - 1.8 experience of consumer problems?
2. What is the level of consumer awareness regarding the right to redress in terms of:
 - 2.1 knowledge of the right to seek redress;
 - 2.2 knowledge of available remedies;
 - 2.3 knowledge of complaint procedures; and
 - 2.4 knowledge of the government agencies responsible for handling consumer complaints?
3. How effective are consumer protection advocacy efforts in disseminating information on:
 - 3.1 consumer rights;
 - 3.2 complaint procedures;
 - 3.3 available remedies;
 - 3.4 product and service standards, labeling, and safety information;
 - 3.5 deceptive, unfair, and fraudulent sales acts and practices; and
 - 3.6 warranties, guarantees, and seller obligations?
4. What are the redress practices of consumers when faced with defective products, misleading advertisements, or unfair sales acts and practices in terms of:
 - 4.1 redress-seeking behavior;
 - 4.2 barriers to seeking redress; and
 - 4.3 trust in consumer protection policies and programs?
5. Is there a significant relationship between the consumers' level of awareness of the right to redress and the perceived effectiveness of consumer protection advocacy efforts?

Null Hypothesis:

1. There is no significant relationship between the consumers' level of awareness of the right to redress and the perceived effectiveness of consumer protection advocacy efforts.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative, non-experimental, descriptive-correlational research design. Quantitative research involves collecting and analyzing numerical data, while descriptive research summarizes existing characteristics or conditions and correlational research examines relationships among variables without manipulation (Calderon & Gonzales, 2018; McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). The design was appropriate because the study described respondents' characteristics, determined their level of awareness of the right to redress, assessed the perceived effectiveness of consumer protection advocacy and consumer redress practices, and examined the relationship between consumer awareness and advocacy effectiveness.

Locale of the Study

The study was conducted in the Province of Bataan, covering one component city and eleven municipalities: Abucay, Bagac, City of Balanga, Dinalupihan, Hermosa, Limay, Mariveles, Morong, Orani, Orion, Pilar, and Samal. Based on available Philippine Statistics Authority records, the provincial population was 891,440.

Respondents and Sampling Method

The final sample consisted of 202 consumers. The study used nonprobability quota sampling with proportional municipal targets to provide representation from the component city and eleven municipalities according to their share of the provincial population. During actual data gathering, respondents were selected through convenience sampling because the questionnaire was administered online and participation depended on availability, willingness, and compliance with the inclusion criteria.

Eligible respondents were residents of Bataan who were at least 18 years old and had engaged in at least one consumer transaction, either through a physical store or an online platform, within the previous 12 months. Consumers who were minors, lived outside Bataan, had not engaged in a consumer transaction within the specified period, or did not voluntarily agree to participate were excluded from the study.

Research Instruments

The primary data-gathering instrument was a structured researcher-made survey questionnaire developed from the research questions, theoretical framework, and related literature and studies. The questionnaire consisted of four parts.

Part I gathered respondents' characteristics, including age, sex, civil status, highest educational attainment, municipality, primary type of consumer transaction, purchase frequency, and experience of consumer problems.

Part II measured consumer awareness of the right to redress through knowledge of the right to seek redress, available remedies, complaint procedures, documentary requirements, filing timelines, and responsible government agencies.

Part III measured the perceived effectiveness of consumer protection advocacy in disseminating information on consumer rights, complaint procedures, remedies, product and service standards, labeling and safety information, deceptive and unfair sales practices, warranties, guarantees, and seller obligations.

Part IV assessed consumer redress practices in terms of redress-seeking behavior, barriers to seeking redress, and trust in consumer protection policies and programs. Parts II, III, and IV used a four-point Likert scale.

The instrument's construction was also guided by the study's theoretical foundations. The Knowledge-Attitude-Practice Model informed the items concerning consumer awareness and redress practices, Protection Motivation Theory supported the measures of advocacy effectiveness, and the Theory of Planned Behavior guided the assessment of redress-related behavior, perceived barriers, and confidence in complaint mechanisms.

Validity and Reliability

The questionnaire underwent content validation by three experts knowledgeable in research, consumer protection, and related fields. The validators assessed the instrument in terms of relevance, adequacy, clarity, consistency, and technical quality. All five validation criteria obtained an Item Content Validity Index of 1.00. The instrument also obtained a Kappa statistic of 1.00, an overall mean of 4.47, and a standard deviation of 0.76, interpreted as Excellent. Comments and recommendations from the validators were incorporated before pilot testing.

The revised questionnaire was pilot-tested among 30 consumers who possessed characteristics similar to the target respondents but were not included in the final sample. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. Consumer awareness dimensions obtained coefficients ranging from 0.849 to 0.921, consumer protection advocacy dimensions ranged from 0.941 to 0.975, and consumer redress practice dimensions

ranged from 0.912 to 0.973. These results indicated good to excellent internal consistency and supported the use of the instrument for actual data gathering.

Data Gathering Procedure

Data gathering followed five phases. First, the necessary authorization was secured and the validated and reliability-tested questionnaire was finalized. Second, qualified respondents were identified based on the inclusion criteria and proportional municipal targets. Third, respondents were provided with an informed consent form explaining the purpose of the study, voluntary participation, confidentiality, estimated completion time, and their right to decline or withdraw. Fourth, the questionnaire was administered through Google Forms and distributed through appropriate online communication channels, while responses were monitored until the required municipal quotas were attained. Finally, responses from the 202 participants were reviewed for completeness and consistency, organized, coded, and prepared for statistical analysis. Data collection was conducted during academic year 2025–2026.

Data Analysis

The responses were analyzed using IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Frequency and percentage were used to describe the characteristics of the respondents. Weighted mean was used to determine the level of consumer awareness of the right to redress, the perceived effectiveness of consumer protection advocacy, and consumer redress practices. Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient was used to determine the relationship between consumer awareness and perceived advocacy effectiveness. The level of significance was set at 0.05. A p-value below 0.05 resulted in rejection of the null hypothesis, while a p-value equal to or greater than 0.05 resulted in failure to reject the null hypothesis.

Scope and Limitations

The study was limited to the numerical responses and perceptions of consumers in Bataan during academic year 2025–2026. It focused on consumer awareness of the right to redress, perceived effectiveness of consumer protection advocacy, and consumer redress practices. Product standards, labeling, and safety information were included only as advocacy-related areas that may help consumers recognize situations requiring redress. Qualitative methods such as interviews, focus group discussions, and case studies were not included. Since the respondents were selected through nonprobability quota sampling with convenience selection and the data were self-reported, the findings should not be generalized to consumers outside Bataan.

RESULTS

The results are presented in the order of the research questions. These include respondents' characteristics, level of consumer awareness of the right to redress, perceived effectiveness of consumer protection advocacy efforts, consumer redress practices, and the relationship between consumer awareness and perceived advocacy effectiveness.

Characteristics of the Respondents

Table 1 - Demographic and Purchasing Characteristics of the Respondents

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
18 to 29 years old	137	68
30 to 39 years old	10	5
40 to 49 years old	31	15
50 to 59 years old	17	8
60 years old and above	7	4
Sex		
Male	80	40
Female	122	60
Civil Status		
Single	145	72
Married	46	23
Separated	3	1
Widowed	8	4
Highest Educational Attainment		
Elementary	3	1
High School	76	38
College	105	52
Postgraduate	18	9
Primary Type of Consumer Transaction		
Physical	46	23
Online	21	10
Both physical and online	135	67
Frequency of Purchases		
Daily	59	29
Weekly	81	40
Monthly	29	15
Occasionally	33	16
Experienced a Consumer Problem		
Yes	162	80
No	40	20

Most respondents were 18 to 29 years old (68%), female (60%), single (72%), and college graduates (52%). In terms of purchasing behavior, 67% engaged in both physical and online transactions, 40% made purchases weekly, and 80% had experienced a consumer-related problem.

Table 2 - Geographical Distribution of the Respondents (n=202)

Municipality/City	Frequency	Percentage
Abucay	10	5
Bagac	7	3
Balanga City	25	12
Dinalupihan	28	14
Hermosa	18	9
Limay	19	9
Mariveles	36	18
Morong	8	4
Orani	17	8
Orion	14	7
Pilar	11	5
Samal	9	4
Total	202	100

Respondents were represented across the component city and eleven municipalities of Bataan. Mariveles had the largest proportion of respondents (18%), followed by Dinalupihan (14%) and Balanga City (12%). Bagac had the smallest proportion (3%). The distribution corresponded to the proportional municipal targets established for the study.

Level of Consumer Awareness Regarding the Right to Redress

Table 3 - Level of Consumer Awareness Regarding the Right to Redress (n=202)

Indicator	Mean	SD	Descriptive Equivalent
Knowledge of the Right to Seek Redress	3.45	0.53	Very Knowledgeable
Knowledge of Available Remedies such as Refund, Replacement, or Repair	3.42	0.53	Very Knowledgeable
Knowledge of Complaint Procedures, Required Documents, and Filing Timelines	2.77	0.72	Knowledgeable
Knowledge of Government Agencies Responsible for Handling Consumer Complaints	2.89	0.78	Knowledgeable
Composite	3.13	0.51	Knowledgeable

Scale of Means: 4.00–3.26 = Very Knowledgeable; 3.25–2.51 = Knowledgeable; 2.50–1.76 = Slightly Knowledgeable; 1.75–1.00 = Not Knowledgeable.

Overall consumer awareness had a composite mean of 3.13 (SD = 0.51), interpreted as Knowledgeable. Knowledge of the right to seek redress obtained the highest mean of 3.45, followed by knowledge of available remedies at 3.42, both interpreted as Very Knowledgeable. Knowledge of government agencies obtained a mean of 2.89, while knowledge of complaint procedures, required documents, and filing timelines received the lowest mean of 2.77. Both were interpreted as Knowledgeable.

Effectiveness of Consumer Protection Advocacy Efforts

Table 4 - Effectiveness of Consumer Protection Advocacy Efforts (n=202)

Indicator	Mean	SD	Descriptive Equivalent	Interpretation
Advocacy on Consumer Rights	3.34	0.55	Strongly Agree	Very Effective
Advocacy on Complaint Procedures and Filing Processes	3.33	0.55	Strongly Agree	Very Effective
Advocacy on Available Remedies such as Refund, Replacement, or Repair	3.35	0.54	Strongly Agree	Very Effective
Advocacy on Product and Service Standards, Labeling, and Safety Information	3.44	0.50	Strongly Agree	Very Effective
Advocacy on Deceptive, Unfair, and Fraudulent Sales Acts and Practices	3.43	0.58	Strongly Agree	Very Effective
Advocacy on Warranties, Guarantees, and Seller Obligations	3.38	0.55	Strongly Agree	Very Effective
Composite	3.38	0.48	Strongly Agree	Very Effective

Scale of Means: 4.00–3.26 = Strongly Agree/Very Effective; 3.25–2.51 = Agree/Effective; 2.50–1.76 = Disagree/Slightly Effective; 1.75–1.00 = Strongly Disagree/Not Effective.

Consumer protection advocacy obtained a composite mean of 3.38 (SD = 0.48), interpreted as Very Effective. Advocacy on product and service standards, labeling, and safety information obtained the highest mean of 3.44, followed by advocacy on deceptive, unfair, and fraudulent sales acts and practices at 3.43. Advocacy on complaint procedures and filing processes obtained the lowest mean of 3.33, although it remained within the Very Effective category.

Consumer Redress Practices

Table 5 - Consumer Redress Practices (n=202)

Dimension	Mean	SD	Descriptive Equivalent	Interpretation
Redress-Seeking Behavior	3.16	0.59	Agree	Practiced
Barriers to Seeking Redress	3.32	0.58	Strongly Agree	Highly Evident Barrier
Trust in Consumer Protection Policies and Programs	3.13	0.59	Agree	High Trust

For redress-seeking behavior, respondents obtained a mean of 3.16 (SD = 0.59). The highest-rated item in this dimension was attempting to seek redress when experiencing consumer problems (3.41), while the lowest was the ease and convenience of filing a complaint (2.95).

Barriers to seeking redress obtained a mean of 3.32 (SD = 0.58), indicating that the identified barriers were highly evident. Trust in consumer protection policies and programs obtained a mean of 3.13 (SD = 0.59).

Table 6 - Barriers to Seeking Redress (n=202)

Indicator	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Lack of knowledge on where/how to file complaints	3.32	0.68	Highly Evident Barrier
Complicated procedures	3.29	0.69	Highly Evident Barrier
Cost of filing complaints	3.33	0.69	Highly Evident Barrier
Time required to process complaints	3.37	0.63	Highly Evident Barrier
Distrust in complaint-handling agencies	3.28	0.71	Highly Evident Barrier
Composite	3.32	0.58	Highly Evident Barrier

The time required to process complaints obtained the highest mean of 3.37, followed by the cost of filing complaints at 3.33 and lack of knowledge on where or how to file complaints at 3.32. Complicated procedures had a mean of 3.29, while distrust in complaint-handling agencies had a mean of 3.28. All five indicators were classified as Highly Evident Barriers.

Relationship Between Consumer Awareness and Effectiveness of Consumer Protection Advocacy

Table 7 - Relationship Between Consumer Awareness of the Right to Redress and Perceived Effectiveness of Consumer Protection Advocacy

Consumer Awareness Dimension	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i> -value	Interpretation
Knowledge of the Right to Seek Redress	.49	< .001	Moderate Relationship
Knowledge of Available Remedies	.53	< .001	Moderate Relationship
Knowledge of Complaint Procedures, Required Documents, and Filing Timelines	.37	< .001	Low Relationship
Knowledge of Government Agencies Responsible for Handling Consumer Complaints	.41	< .001	Moderate Relationship
Overall Consumer Awareness	.56	< .001	Moderate Relationship

Significance level: $\alpha = 0.05$.

The overall correlation coefficient was $r = .56$, $p < .001$, indicating a statistically significant, moderate positive relationship between consumer awareness of the right to redress and perceived effectiveness of consumer protection advocacy. Since the p -value was below the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected. Among the awareness dimensions, knowledge of available remedies had the strongest relationship with advocacy effectiveness ($r = .53$). In contrast, knowledge of complaint procedures, required documents, and filing timelines had the weakest relationship ($r = .37$).

DISCUSSION

The findings provide a localized view of consumer awareness, advocacy effectiveness, and redress practices among consumers in the Province of Bataan. Taken together, the results indicate that respondents were generally aware of their basic right to redress and perceived consumer protection advocacy positively, but they demonstrated comparatively weaker knowledge of the practical procedures required to exercise that right. At the same time, consumers expressed willingness to seek redress and confidence in consumer protection mechanisms while still encountering substantial procedural, financial, and time-related barriers.

Characteristics of the Respondents

The respondent profile provides important context for understanding the findings. Most respondents were 18 to 29 years old, female, single, and college-educated. Most also used both physical and online transactions, purchased regularly, and had experienced a consumer-related problem. The predominance of consumers using both physical and digital transactions reflect exposure to different marketplace environments where concerns about defective products, misleading information, warranties, returns, and seller accountability may arise.

The high proportion of respondents who had experienced a consumer problem is particularly relevant to the study. Eighty percent reported previous consumer-related concerns, indicating that the issues addressed in the questionnaire were not merely hypothetical for many participants. Previous consumer experiences may increase familiarity with marketplace problems and the potential need for remedies. Kashyap (2020), however, emphasized that experience with consumer problems does not necessarily lead to formal complaint behavior because procedural uncertainty, inconvenience, cost, time, and confidence in complaint mechanisms may still affect action.

The educational profile may also provide context for respondents' ability to understand consumer information, although the present study did not statistically test differences in awareness according to educational attainment or other demographic characteristics. Similarly, the higher representation of particular age, sex, or civil-status groups should not be interpreted as evidence that these characteristics caused differences in consumer awareness or redress practices. The characteristics were used primarily to describe the respondents rather than to establish demographic predictors of the study variables. The geographical distribution likewise reflected the proportional municipal targets of the nonprobability quota sampling procedure. It should not be interpreted as a probability-based representation of Bataan's entire population.

Consumer Awareness of the Right to Redress

The findings show that consumers were generally Knowledgeable about the right to redress, but awareness was not equally developed across its different dimensions. Respondents were Very Knowledgeable about their basic right to seek redress and the availability of remedies such as refund, replacement, or repair. In contrast, knowledge of complaint procedures, documentary requirements, filing timelines, and responsible government agencies remained at the Knowledgeable level.

This pattern suggests a distinction between knowing that a right exists and knowing how to exercise it. Consumers may recognize that they are entitled to seek a remedy and may know the common forms of redress available to them, yet still feel uncertain about how to translate that knowledge into an actual complaint. The lower ratings for procedural and institutional knowledge matter because effective consumer empowerment requires not only awareness of rights but also practical knowledge of where to go, what documents to prepare, what steps to follow, and which agency has jurisdiction over a particular concern.

This finding is consistent with the ASEAN Committee on Consumer Protection (2021, 2023), which emphasizes the need to strengthen consumers' understanding of complaint and redress mechanisms. The United Nations Guidelines for Consumer Protection similarly recognize access to information, education, dispute resolution, and redress as important elements of consumer empowerment (United Nations, 2016; UNCTAD, 2023). Makanyeza et al. (2021) also emphasized that awareness of consumer

rights relates to attitudes and behavioral intentions, suggesting that useful consumer knowledge extends beyond recognizing rights to information that supports action.

The finding also supports the Knowledge-Attitude-Practice perspective used in the study. Knowledge provides an important foundation for consumer action, but the results show that different types of knowledge may not be developed to the same degree. Strong awareness of rights and remedies does not automatically mean that consumers possess equally strong procedural knowledge. In practical terms, consumer education can be strengthened through simplified complaint guides, documentary checklists, filing timelines, agency directories, contact information, and step-by-step explanations of the complaint process. This pattern further highlights the gap between general awareness of consumer rights and specific procedural knowledge of where and how to seek assistance.

Effectiveness of Consumer Protection Advocacy

Consumer protection advocacy was perceived as Very Effective across all six areas assessed. Advocacy concerning product and service standards, labeling, and safety information received the highest evaluation, followed closely by information on deceptive, unfair, and fraudulent sales practices. These results suggest that advocacy efforts were particularly visible or understandable in areas that help consumers recognize unsafe products and questionable marketplace practices.

The inclusion of product standards, labeling, and safety information should be understood within the study's defined scope. These areas were not examined as separate consumer-right variables; rather, they were treated as advocacy-related information that may help consumers recognize circumstances in which redress becomes necessary. This maintains the research's primary focus on the right to redress while acknowledging that consumers must first recognize a problematic transaction before deciding whether corrective action is appropriate.

Although all advocacy dimensions were rated Very Effective, advocacy on complaint procedures and filing processes obtained the lowest mean among the six areas. This result is more meaningful when considered alongside the awareness findings. Respondents viewed advocacy positively overall, yet their actual knowledge of complaint procedures and responsible agencies remained comparatively lower than their knowledge of rights and remedies. This disparity suggests that favorable perceptions of advocacy do not necessarily correspond to equally strong procedural knowledge among consumers.

The finding suggests that consumer protection advocacy may communicate broad consumer messages effectively while still having room to strengthen the operational details needed when a consumer actually decides to complain. This does not mean that advocacy on complaint procedures was ineffective, since it was still rated Very Effective. Rather, its relative position among the advocacy dimensions and the corresponding lower procedural-awareness scores suggests an area where more practical information may help.

This interpretation is consistent with Bashir et al. (2023), who emphasized the role of consumer education in improving knowledge and strengthening consumer protection, and with Pajarillo-Agustin (2023), who highlighted the importance of awareness of complaint procedures, available remedies, and seller obligations. The United Nations Guidelines for Consumer Protection likewise emphasize that consumer education should be accompanied by accessible mechanisms for dispute resolution and redress (United Nations, 2016).

Consumer Redress Practices

The results on redress practices present a more complex picture of consumer behavior. Respondents generally practiced redress-seeking behavior and showed willingness to take action when consumer problems occurred. The strongest item was the attempt to seek redress when experiencing a consumer problem. However, respondents rated the ease and convenience of filing a complaint lowest within the redress-seeking dimension. This indicates that willingness to act may coexist with difficulty in navigating the complaint process.

This finding matters because consumer empowerment cannot be evaluated solely by willingness to complain. Consumers may recognize that pursuing redress is appropriate but may still hesitate to use formal mechanisms when they perceive the process as inconvenient or difficult. This corresponds with the Theory of Planned Behavior used in the study, particularly the role of perceived behavioral control. Consumers who believe that a complaint process is understandable and manageable may feel more capable of acting. In contrast, perceived difficulty may discourage action even when the consumer has a favorable attitude toward seeking redress.

The results therefore reinforce the distinction between intention or willingness and actual ability to navigate redress mechanisms. A consumer may want a refund, replacement, repair, or other corrective action but still face obstacles related to filing requirements, identifying the right agency, follow-up processes, or accessibility. This helps explain why redress-seeking behavior was Practiced rather than Highly Practiced despite respondents' relatively strong awareness of their fundamental rights and remedies.

Barriers to Seeking Redress and Trust in Consumer Protection

Barriers emerged as one of the study's most important findings. All five identified barriers were Highly Evident. The time required to process complaints received the highest rating, followed by the cost of filing complaints, lack of knowledge about where or how to file complaints, complicated procedures, and distrust in complaint-handling agencies. The consistency of these ratings suggests that several obstacles affect the decision to seek redress simultaneously, rather than lack of awareness alone.

The prominence of time and cost suggests that consumers consider not only whether they have a valid complaint but also whether pursuing it is worth the effort and

resources required. This may be particularly relevant when the value of a disputed transaction is relatively small or when consumers expect repeated follow-ups. At the same time, the high rating given to lack of knowledge on where or how to file complaints corresponds closely with the earlier finding that procedural knowledge was the weakest area of consumer awareness. These findings reinforce each other: consumers were less knowledgeable about the mechanics of filing complaints, and this lack of knowledge was also perceived as an important barrier to seeking redress.

Kashyap (2020) similarly observed that consumers may avoid complaint mechanisms because of procedural uncertainty, inconvenience, cost, time, or lack of trust. The results are also consistent with the ASEAN Committee on Consumer Protection (2023), which recognizes the importance of accessible and understandable consumer redress mechanisms. Reducing barriers therefore requires more than increasing awareness of consumer rights. It also involves making the processes for exercising those rights understandable, accessible, and manageable.

Despite these barriers, respondents generally expressed high trust in consumer protection policies and programs. They expressed confidence in consumer protection laws and complaint-handling agencies and perceived improvements in consumer protection in Bataan. However, none of the trust indicators reached the Very High Trust category. Accessibility of consumer protection programs was also among the relatively weaker areas. This suggests that consumers generally believe in the value of the existing system but may not experience its accessibility, responsiveness, or fairness consistently enough to express the highest level of confidence. The findings therefore indicate an opportunity to improve the accessibility, responsiveness, and perceived fairness of consumer protection mechanisms.

The combination of willingness to seek redress, high trust, and highly evident barriers is particularly significant. It indicates that the main issue is not simply consumers' unwillingness. Consumers may want to act and may generally believe in consumer protection mechanisms, yet practical barriers can still interfere with their ability to pursue a complaint. This supports the study's theoretical framing, in which knowledge, perceived effectiveness of protective mechanisms, and perceived ability to act all contribute to understanding consumer redress behavior.

Relationship Between Consumer Awareness and Consumer Protection Advocacy

The study found a statistically significant positive moderate relationship between consumer awareness of the right to redress and perceived effectiveness of consumer protection advocacy, $r = .56$, $p < .001$. Therefore, the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant relationship between the two variables was rejected.

The positive direction of the relationship means that higher consumer-awareness scores tended to occur together with higher perceived advocacy-effectiveness scores. The moderate magnitude indicates a meaningful association, although advocacy

perception and consumer awareness are not identical constructs and other factors may also contribute to consumer knowledge. Since the research employed a descriptive-correlational design, the result does not establish that advocacy caused greater consumer awareness.

The strongest association among the awareness dimensions involved knowledge of available remedies, while knowledge of the right to seek redress also showed a moderate relationship with advocacy effectiveness. These findings suggest that consumers who evaluated advocacy more positively also tended to report greater knowledge of basic rights and remedies. In contrast, knowledge of complaint procedures, documentary requirements, and filing timelines showed the weakest relationship with advocacy effectiveness. This is consistent with the descriptive findings, in which procedural knowledge also received the lowest awareness rating.

The weaker association involving procedural knowledge provides an important practical insight. Advocacy may be associated more strongly with consumers' understanding of general rights and available remedies than with their detailed knowledge of how to navigate complaint procedures. Consequently, strengthening advocacy does not simply mean increasing the volume of consumer-protection information. Greater attention may be given to actionable content, including filing steps, documentary requirements, timelines, agency jurisdiction, contact channels, and follow-up procedures.

The significant relationship is consistent with the theoretical and empirical foundations of the study. The KAP Model recognizes knowledge as an important component underlying consumer attitudes and practices, while Protection Motivation Theory emphasizes the importance of understanding effective protective responses. The finding also corresponds with Bashir et al. (2023), who emphasized the role of consumer education in strengthening consumer protection, and Pajarillo-Agustin (2023), who associated knowledge of complaint procedures and remedies with consumers' ability to assert their rights. These theories and studies help explain the observed association, although they should not be taken as evidence that the present correlational findings establish causation.

Overall, the discussion points to one consistent pattern: consumers demonstrated stronger awareness of what their rights and remedies are than of how to use formal redress mechanisms in practice. Consumer protection advocacy was viewed favorably, yet procedural knowledge remained comparatively weaker, and practical barriers were highly evident. The findings therefore suggest that the next stage of consumer protection advocacy in Bataan may benefit from moving beyond general awareness toward more action-oriented guidance that helps consumers translate knowledge of their rights into effective use of complaint and redress mechanisms.

Conclusions

1. Characteristics of the Respondents

The respondents' characteristics provide important context for understanding consumer protection in Bataan. Most were young adult consumers who regularly participated in both physical and online transactions, and a large majority had already encountered consumer-related problems. This indicates that consumer protection and redress are practical concerns affecting consumers who routinely interact with different marketplace channels. However, because the respondents were selected through nonprobability quota sampling with convenience selection, their characteristics describe the study participants and should not be interpreted as representing all consumers in Bataan.

2. Consumer Awareness of the Right to Redress

Consumers have a basic understanding of their right to redress, particularly their entitlement to seek corrective action and the remedies available to them. However, the more important gap lies in translating this general awareness into practical action. Consumers may know they can seek a refund, replacement, repair, or other remedy but remain uncertain about procedures, documentary requirements, filing timelines, and the appropriate agencies involved. Consumer empowerment therefore requires more than awareness of rights; it requires procedural knowledge that enables consumers to exercise those rights effectively.

3. Effectiveness of Consumer Protection Advocacy

Consumer protection advocacy serves an important role in communicating consumer rights and protections, particularly in areas involving product and service standards, safety information, deceptive practices, remedies, and seller obligations. Nevertheless, the comparatively weaker ratings for complaint procedures suggest that effective advocacy should go beyond general information dissemination. Advocacy becomes more meaningful when consumers receive clear, practical, and actionable guidance on what to do when a consumer problem occurs. Thus, the value of consumer protection advocacy lies not only in informing consumers but also in preparing them to act.

4. Consumer Redress Practices

Consumers demonstrate willingness to seek redress and generally maintain confidence in consumer protection policies and programs, yet willingness alone does not ensure successful redress. Time requirements, financial costs, lack of knowledge on where or how to complain, procedural complexity, and distrust in complaint-handling mechanisms can interfere with consumers' ability to exercise their rights. This suggests that strengthening consumer protection requires attention to both the consumer and the

system: consumers need practical knowledge, while complaint mechanisms need to be accessible, understandable, responsive, and convenient.

5. Relationship Between Consumer Awareness and Consumer Protection Advocacy

Consumer awareness of the right to redress and the perceived effectiveness of consumer protection advocacy are significantly and positively associated. This relationship supports the importance of advocacy as part of the broader environment in which consumers develop knowledge of their rights and remedies. However, because the relationship was moderate and the study was correlational, advocacy effectiveness should not be regarded as the sole cause of consumer awareness. Other personal, institutional, procedural, and contextual factors may also shape whether consumers understand and ultimately exercise their right to redress.

Overall, the study demonstrates that the central challenge in consumer protection is not simply whether consumers know that they have rights, but whether they are sufficiently equipped and supported to use those rights when problems occur. The findings reinforce the complementary principles reflected in the Knowledge-Attitude-Practice Model, Protection Motivation Theory, and Theory of Planned Behavior: consumer action is influenced by knowledge, perceptions of available protection, and the ability to act within existing conditions. The practical implication is that consumer protection initiatives in Bataan should increasingly focus on bridging the gap between awareness and action by making redress procedures clearer, more accessible, and easier to navigate. Consumer protection becomes meaningful when consumers are not only informed of their rights but can also exercise them.

Recommendations

Based on the study's findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance consumer awareness, strengthen consumer protection advocacy, and improve access to redress mechanisms in the Province of Bataan.

1. **Government Agencies.** The Department of Trade and Industry and other relevant consumer protection agencies may strengthen consumer education by providing clearer, more practical guidance on complaint procedures, documentary requirements, filing timelines, and responsible agencies. Simplified complaint guides, agency directories, infographics, and step-by-step flowcharts may be developed to help consumers understand how and where to file complaints.
2. **Local Government Units.** Local Government Units may establish or strengthen consumer assistance desks that can guide residents in identifying the appropriate agency, preparing documentary requirements, and completing complaint procedures. LGUs may also coordinate with national government agencies in conducting barangay-based seminars, information drives, and other community consumer education activities.

3. **Consumer Protection Advocacy Programs.** Consumer protection advocacy may utilize both traditional and digital communication channels, including social media, official websites, barangay information platforms, schools, public markets, community centers, and local government communication channels. Advocacy materials should be simple, localized, visually clear, and designed to provide practical information that consumers can readily understand and use.
4. **Complaint-Handling Systems.** Complaint-handling mechanisms may be simplified and made more accessible to reduce the barriers identified in the study. Consumers should receive clear information on filing procedures, documentary requirements, processing timelines, follow-up procedures, and possible remedies. Online filing assistance, QR-code complaint guides, and complaint-status tracking may also improve accessibility, transparency, and convenience.
5. **Program Implementers and Consumer Protection Advocates.** Consumer education activities may extend beyond general awareness of consumer rights by incorporating practical demonstrations of the redress process. Programs may include sample complaint forms, case-based examples, mock complaint filing, and role-playing activities that demonstrate how consumers can request remedies and lodge formal complaints.
6. **Business Establishments.** Business establishments may strengthen customer service and after-sales support by clearly communicating policies on refunds, replacements, repairs, warranties, guarantees, and complaint handling. Consumers should also receive appropriate receipts, product and warranty information, and accessible communication channels through which they can raise concerns and requests for redress.
7. **Future Researchers.** Future studies may examine consumer awareness, advocacy effectiveness, and redress practices in other provinces or regions to determine whether similar patterns occur in different local settings. Additional variables such as income, occupation, digital literacy, type of product or service purchased, and previous complaint experience may also be examined. Qualitative approaches, including interviews and focus group discussions, may provide deeper insight into why consumers choose to pursue or avoid formal redress mechanisms.

Proposed Consumer Redress Assistance Program

Based on the study's findings, a Consumer Redress Assistance Program is proposed to strengthen consumer awareness, improve access to complaint mechanisms, and make consumer protection advocacy more practical and responsive to consumers in Bataan. The program specifically addresses the gap between consumers' general awareness of their rights and their comparatively weaker knowledge of the actual procedures required to seek redress.

Table 8 - Proposed Consumer Redress Assistance Program

Program Component	Proposed Actions	Purpose
1. Simplified Complaint Process Guide	Develop a step-by-step guide covering identification of the consumer problem, preparation of required documents, selection of the proper complaint channel, submission of the complaint, monitoring of complaint status, and possible remedies.	Address limited knowledge of complaint procedures, requirements, filing timelines, and responsible agencies.
2. Consumer-Friendly Infographics and Visual Materials	Develop easy-to-understand infographics, flowcharts, icons, and visual guides covering consumer rights, available remedies, complaint procedures, and responsible agencies.	Make consumer protection information easier to understand, remember, and apply.
3. Establishment and Strengthening of Local Consumer Assistance Desks	Establish or strengthen LGU-based assistance desks that can help consumers identify the appropriate agency, prepare requirements, complete complaint forms, and understand filing and follow-up procedures.	Reduce barriers associated with limited procedural knowledge, complexity, cost, time, and accessibility.
4. Enhancement of Digital Complaint Platforms	Improve online complaint mechanisms through guided filing instructions, simplified forms, frequently asked questions, downloadable complaint templates, and complaint-status tracking.	Reduce time, procedural difficulty, and limitations associated with access to physical complaint offices.
5. Expansion of Community-Based Consumer Education Programs	Conduct barangay seminars, school-based information drives, public-market campaigns, and community workshops incorporating mock complaint filing, case simulations, role-playing, and demonstrations.	Move consumer advocacy from general awareness toward practical ability to act during actual consumer problems.
6. Improvement of Transparency in Complaint-Handling Systems	Provide clear information on processing timelines, mediation procedures, possible outcomes, service standards, and follow-up mechanisms. General complaint statistics and common consumer concerns may also be published while protecting privacy.	Strengthen consumer confidence and trust in complaint-handling agencies and consumer protection programs.

7. Strengthening Multi-Sectoral Collaboration	Strengthen coordination among government agencies, LGUs, academic institutions, business establishments, and community organizations through consumer education, extension programs, information campaigns, improved after-sales support, and accessible complaint channels.	Develop a coordinated support system that helps bridge the gap between awareness of consumer rights and actual redress behavior.
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The proposed Consumer Redress Assistance Program is intended to translate consumer awareness into practical action by combining procedural guidance, local assistance, digital accessibility, community education, transparency, and stakeholder collaboration. Its implementation may help consumers better understand not only their right to redress but also the actual steps necessary to exercise that right when consumer-related problems occur.

Compliance with Ethical Standards

The study followed established ethical principles to protect respondents' rights, dignity, privacy, and welfare. The researchers secured the necessary authorization before data collection, and they provided respondents with sufficient information about the study's purpose, the nature of their participation, the estimated time to complete the questionnaire, and the intended use of the collected data. We obtained informed consent before participation, and respondents were informed that participation was entirely voluntary and that they could refuse to participate, skip any question that caused discomfort, or withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or negative consequence. The researcher maintained confidentiality and anonymity throughout the research process. The questionnaire collected no personally identifying information, and the researcher stored responses in a password-protected electronic file accessible only to them. Data were reported only in aggregate form to prevent identifying individual respondents and were used solely for academic and research purposes. The study involved minimal risk, and the researcher took measures to safeguard respondents' well-being throughout data collection. No conflict of interest existed in the conduct or interpretation of the study. The researcher ensured that the data were handled, analyzed, interpreted, and reported objectively and without intentional bias or manipulation. Plagiarism was strictly avoided, and appropriate acknowledgment and citation were provided for ideas and materials obtained from other sources. Generative artificial intelligence, including ChatGPT, was used as an assistive tool to organize and refine portions of the manuscript for journal presentation and to develop content for the proposed consumer-information infographics. In contrast, Grammarly was used for language and grammar checking. These tools were not used to collect, generate, alter, or fabricate research data or to perform the statistical analysis. The researcher conducted the statistical analysis using IBM SPSS and retained responsibility for interpreting the findings, conclusions, and final scholarly output.

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