

The Linkage between Regulatory Framework and Practical Field: Problem Tracing and Correction Strategies for Consumer Association's Function Performance

Min Lu*

Law School, Guizhou University of Finance and Economics, Guiyang, Guizhou, China

**Corresponding Author*

Abstract: The problems in the performance of Consumer Associations mainly occur in three areas: the adverse impact of their basic positioning in the regulatory framework, the shortcomings in the supporting mechanisms for specific functions, and the actual absence of regulatory oversight. The six specific dilemmas in function performance include organizational registration, funding and human resources, invitation methods, complaint-related time limits, filing civil public interest lawsuits, and supervision of function performance. These six specific issues are not only the result of the unilateral output of the regulatory framework but also the product of the joint action between regulations and the practical field. Therefore, problem tracing and correction require the intersection and integration of both dimensions.

Keywords: Consumer Association; Functions; Invitation; Public Interest Litigation; Supervision and Inspection

1. Introduction

As the "spokesperson" for consumer rights protection, the Consumer Association is a social organization established by law to conduct social supervision over goods and services and protect consumers' legitimate rights and interests, playing a crucial role in social co-governance. Nationally, there are the China Consumers Association (CCA) and local Consumer Associations (or Consumer Rights Protection Commissions). Both the Consumer Protection Law (CPL) and the Regulations for the Implementation of the Consumer Protection Law (RCPL) focus on provisions regarding the functions of consumer organizations in the chapter on consumer

organizations, including eight basic responsibilities: providing consumer information and consultation services, participating in the formulation of consumer rights-related laws, regulations, and standards, engaging in supervision and inspection of goods and services, reflecting and inquiring about rights issues and making suggestions, accepting and mediating complaints, entrusting the appraisal of goods and service quality, supporting consumer litigation, and exposing and criticizing acts that harm consumer rights. However, the extensive absence of regulatory mechanisms for guaranteeing the functions of Consumer Associations is closely related to the difficulties in practical performance. In fact, the problems in the actual state are not limited to the externalization of the shortcomings in the functional formulation of Consumer Associations at the regulatory level but are also constrained by many practical factors.

2. Problem Analysis of Consumer Association's Function Performance

The difficulties in the performance of Consumer Associations under the regulatory framework and practical field are generally manifested in the following aspects:

2.1 Organizational Registration of Consumer Associations

The issue of organizational registration of Consumer Associations may seem indirectly related to their function performance. From a regulatory perspective, the CPL and RCPL have clearly defined Consumer Associations as social organizations established by law, with their basic positioning as social organizations. In contrast, the CCA and its charter start with the identity of a "social group," a national social group that implements social supervision over goods and services to protect

consumers' rights and interests. The category of "social organizations" is significantly broader than "social groups," raising the question of whether these two different regulatory definitions will lead to differences in the function performance of Consumer Associations. According to the Regulations on the Registration and Management of Social Groups, the establishment of a social group requires registration with the civil affairs department and must meet the conditions for legal person status.

However, in the local legislative practices of some provinces and cities, instead of using the consumer associations stipulated in the superior laws, the "Consumer Rights Protection Commission" is used. Through research, it is found that the Consumer Rights Protection Commissions adopted in local legislation are not subject to the restrictions of social groups that need to be registered and undergo annual inspections by the civil affairs department. The purpose is to better perform the duties entrusted to consumer associations by the Consumer Protection Law and the Implementation Regulations. But this also triggers a series of issues worthy of in - depth exploration: What is the relationship between consumer associations and Consumer Rights Protection Commissions? Are there differences in organizational structure, operation mechanism, duty coverage, or power boundaries? And will such differences affect their respective performances in protecting consumers' rights and interests and other related duties in actual operations? For example, do different names bring differences in public awareness and the shaping of social credibility, thus affecting the smoothness and effectiveness of their work? Will they also confuse consumers when seeking rights protection and interfere with their choice of rights - protection paths? These are all key points that cannot be ignored.

Different from social groups that need to be registered for establishment, consumer associations rely on administrative departments. They are "too administrative colored and fail to fully reflect their independence" [1]. Because they do not meet the conditions that social groups are voluntarily formed by members and have independent fund accounts, it is difficult to obtain support for organizational registration.

In addition, the annual inspection standards of the civil affairs department do not take into account the special nature of consumer associations and thus do not distinguish them from other social groups. As a result, consumer associations are stuck in the difficulties of annual inspections, dispersing much of the energy that should be used for performing their duties. It can be seen that the organizational registration of consumer associations has a real and natural impact on their performance of duties.

2.2 Organizational and Financial Guarantees for Consumer Associations

Unlike general social groups and other legally established consumer organizations, the personnel and funds of consumer associations (or consumer protection commissions) are guaranteed by the national finance, rather than coming from membership fees, donations, and sponsorships. Many local consumer associations or consumer protection commissions exist as public institutions with financial support. Take a provincial consumer association as an example. It was approved by Be responsible for the arrangement and distribution of personnel in various institutions within a province, confirming that the provincial consumer association is a first - class public - welfare institution at the county - level affiliated with the provincial market supervision department, and the number of staff with established positions was determined. There are no mandatory legislative provisions or practical requirements regarding at which administrative level consumer associations (or consumer protection commissions) should be set up, whether they must be established, and whether they must be equipped with daily offices and specialized staff after establishment. There is also no unified standard for the personnel allocation of consumer associations (or consumer protection commissions) in different regions. As a result, there are cases where some jurisdictions have not established consumer associations. For example, in a certain province in the southwest region, the 9 municipal cities in the whole province include 88 counties, cities, and districts. A total of 101 consumer associations have been established. As of 2024, there are 357 staff members with established positions in the consumer associations, and 226 are on -

duty, with an on - duty rate of 63.3%. The consumer associations established in counties either lack personnel or do not carry out substantial work. Without independent financial guarantees, their office spaces mainly rely on local administrative departments. Since the implementation of the "One Association, Two Stations" policy, in order to facilitate grassroots consumers to file complaints and safeguard their rights, consumer associations in some areas have set up branches in towns and consumer rights - protection stations in villages and communities. However, ensuring personnel and funds has become even more difficult. Nevertheless, laws and administrative regulations endow consumer associations with relatively rich legal responsibilities. Therefore, neither the organizational guarantee nor the financial guarantee can match the performance of the duties of consumer associations (or consumer protection commissions).

2.3 "Invitation" and "Interview" by Consumer Associations

The RCPL newly stipulates that Consumer Associations may investigate acts that harm consumer rights based on consumer complaints, verify the situation with relevant operators, and invite operators to present facts, opinions, and evidence. This is different from the "interview" specified in the Measures for Consumer Associations to Interview Operators for Rights Protection (trial) issued by the CCA in 2016, which refers to the act of consumer organizations directly communicating with operators about prominent issues in product or service quality that affect consumer rights, notifying situations, listening to opinions, studying solutions, guiding operators to establish self-regulatory systems, and urging them to protect consumer rights and implement long-term management mechanisms. Feedback from surveys of the secretariats of a provincial and municipal Consumer Associations in a southwestern province shows that 85% of staff do not recognize the difference between "invitation" and "interview," still understanding it based on the Interview Measures.

Clearly, there is a cognitive misunderstanding regarding these two behavioral methods. A typical example is the Zhejiang Consumer Rights Protection Commission's interviews with the heads of five platforms, including

iQIYI, Youku, Tencent Video, Sohu, and PPTV, as well as four video and audio websites, including Mango TV, LeTV, Himalaya, and Qingting FM, in 2021. In December 2024, the Zhejiang Commission held multiple interviews with 27 platform enterprises in knowledge payment, video/audio, and reading apps. Considering that the RCPL came into effect on July 1, 2024, continuing to use "interview" instead of "invitation" as stipulated in the RCPL is worth considering.

2.4 Time Limits for Accepting and Handling Complaints by Consumer Associations

Both the CPL and RCPL stipulate that Consumer Associations should accept consumer complaints and have the duty to investigate and mediate complaints, but they do not specify acceptance and handling time limits. This differs from the statutory time limits for administrative departments, which must handle and inform consumers within 7 working days of receiving a complaint. The RCPL further stipulates that non-acceptance should be processed within a specified time, and the mediation period after acceptance is 60 days, excluding appraisal and testing time. Although accepting and handling complaints is a crucial duty of Consumer Associations, there is a lack of supporting legislative mechanisms to ensure its implementation. The CCA issued and revised work guidelines for internal complaint handling in 2014 and 2023, with different acceptance and mediation time limits compared to administrative departments. The guidelines allow for extended acceptance time limits, while administrative departments have no such extensions. After revising the guidelines to cancel mediation extensions, the mediation period is shorter than that of administrative departments. However, these work guidelines are not legally binding, and consumers are often unaware of this information.

2.5 Public Interest Litigation Initiated by the Consumer Association

The Civil Procedure Law of the People's Republic of China stipulates that for acts that damage the legitimate rights and interests of numerous consumers and other acts that harm the public interest of society, the organs and relevant organizations specified by law may file a lawsuit with the people's court. The

Implementing Regulations stipulate that for acts that infringe upon the legitimate rights and interests of numerous consumers, the China Consumers Association and the consumer associations established in provinces, autonomous regions, and directly-administered municipalities may file a lawsuit with the people's court. Based on this, it can be considered that the main body that can initiate consumer public interest litigation includes the consumer association, and this responsibility is only assigned to the consumer associations at the provincial, autonomous region, and directly-administered municipality levels. This has at least triggered reflections on three issues: First, if consumer complaints regarding acts that infringe upon the legitimate rights and interests of numerous consumers are received by the consumer associations at the city and county levels, whether the consumer associations at the city and county levels can request the consumer associations at the provincial, autonomous region, and directly-administered municipality levels to initiate public interest litigation is currently not clearly specified by any regulations. Second, when the consumer associations at the provincial, autonomous region, and directly-administered municipality levels collect evidence for initiating civil public interest litigation and need the assistance of relevant departments, how should the assistance procedure be initiated? And if the relevant departments do not provide assistance, how should the remedy be sought? Third, how should the compensation funds obtained from the litigation be disposed of? Should they be temporarily managed by the court or by the consumer association? When consumers are reluctant to claim the compensation funds, the issue of the ownership of the compensation funds is rather thorny.

2.6 Supervision and Inspection of Consumer Association's Function Performance

There are no clear regulatory provisions for supervising the function performance of Consumer Associations (or Consumer Rights Protection Commissions), and it is not implemented in practice. Legally registered Consumer Associations undergo annual inspections by their competent departments and civil affairs departments, which have a supervisory nature. For unregistered Consumer

Associations or those not requiring registration with civil affairs departments, there is no guarantee for performance supervision. Competent departments are often understaffed and lack the capacity to supervise Consumer Associations' performance, leading to a vacuum in supervision. Currently, only a few regions have legislated on this issue. For example, the revised Shanghai Consumer Rights Protection Regulations in 2022 stipulate that municipal and district Permanent institution for local legislation should strengthen supervision through listening to and reviewing special work reports, organizing law enforcement inspections, and conducting inquiries and interrogations. They should also organize deputies to carry out special investigations and inspections to urge the implementation of consumer rights protection work. This indicates that Permanent institution for local legislation and deputies have the obligation to supervise and inspect Consumer Rights Protection Commissions' compliance with laws and regulations.

According to the Supervision Law of the Permanent institution for local legislation at All Levels of the People's Republic of China, standing committees supervise the work of local governments, supervisory committees, courts, and procuratorates, but Consumer Associations are not within their supervision scope. However, listening to and reviewing special work reports and inspecting the implementation of laws and regulations are important duties of standing committees. Consumer organizations can only submit special work reports through government channels, making their positioning unclear. Standing committees annually select major issues concerning social stability and public interests for law enforcement inspections, and local legislation on consumer rights protection, being crucial to people's livelihood, should fall within this scope. In reality, however, law enforcement supervision by Permanent institution for local legislation and deputies over Consumer Associations is minimal, failing to form effective oversight and hindering the resolution of performance difficulties.

3. Correction Strategies for Consumer Association's Function Performance

Based on the practical dilemmas in Consumer

Associations' function performance, this section explores solutions to bridge the gap between the ideal and actual states and return Consumer Associations to their role as public welfare social organizations.

3.1 Canceling Registration Requirements for Local Consumer Associations

According to the articles of association of the China Consumers Association, it provides professional guidance to local consumer associations (committees), strengthens connections with other consumer organizations, and jointly does a good job in protecting consumers' rights and interests. The China Consumers Association is simultaneously under the professional guidance and supervision of the State Administration for Market Regulation (hereinafter referred to as the "business supervisor") and the Ministry of Civil Affairs (hereinafter referred to as the "registration authority"). Therefore, the China Consumers Association and local consumer associations do not have a leadership - subordinate relationship. As members of social organizations, local consumer associations have a certain degree of independence. The supervision and management by the civil affairs department over the China Consumers Association do not necessarily extend to local consumer associations. Judging from the current establishment of consumer associations in various regions, most of them are essentially public institutions affiliated with administrative departments. They are legally defined as statutory public - welfare organizations, which are different from social organizations that need to be registered with the civil affairs department in accordance with the law.

The Measures for the Management of Social Organization Names promulgated by the Ministry of Civil Affairs in 2024 classify registered social organizations into social groups, foundations, and private non-enterprise units. Public welfare organizations are not among these three types. Previously, Consumer Associations were defined as social groups, but they do not match the characteristics of social groups under the Regulations on the Registration and Management of Social Groups, which are voluntarily formed by members. Consumer Associations are established by administrative

departments, do not implement a membership system, and their council members are diverse, including representatives from government departments, social groups, media, research institutions, enterprises, and consumers. Notably, unlike regular social groups, Consumer Associations do not have a legal representative; their council, led by administrative department officials, serves as the leadership.

Thus, Consumer Associations essentially represent a mixed regulatory model that goes beyond the binary divide of government coercion or market mechanisms, integrating mandatory and non-mandatory, government and non-government means [2]. Canceling the registration system for local Consumer Associations does not violate relevant laws and regulations and allows these public welfare organizations to maximize their functions, focusing on protecting consumer rights, resolving social conflicts, participating in social co-governance, and guiding business compliance. Whether named "Consumer Rights Protection Commission" or "Consumer Association" is irrelevant, as both perform duties under the CPL and RCPL. The CCA and its charter, starting from the definition of "social group," have recently adjusted to "social organization," indicating that Consumer Rights Protection Commissions, Consumer Committees, and Consumer Associations are essentially the same organizations.

3.2 Clarifying Organizational and Financial Guarantees

The organizational and funding issues of consumer associations should be clearly defined in local legislation, which is closely related to their important role in resolving disputes. Taking 2023 as an example, consumer associations across the country received 1.3285 million consumer complaints, a year - on - year increase of 15.33%. They resolved 1.1274 million complaints, with a complaint resolution rate of 84.87%, and recovered 1.37 billion yuan in economic losses for consumers. They also received 1.06 million consumer visits and consultations [3]. Evidently, the current organizational guarantees and funding support for consumer associations are insufficient to enable them to fully perform their duties. Regarding funding

support, it is stipulated that people's governments at all levels should provide necessary financial support. However, there is no clear definition of "necessary". Judging from the current local legislative situation, the understanding of "necessary" is divided into two approaches: one is to include it in the same - level financial budget, and the other is to follow the expression of "necessary financial support" in superior laws. In most regions, the funding support for consumer associations mainly relies on allocations from administrative departments. There is no exclusive independent funding support, and the financial guarantee is weak. Therefore, it is a more advisable approach to include necessary financial support in the same - level financial budget. Moreover, during the budget - making process, the participation of administrative departments and consumer associations should be emphasized, and their opinions and suggestions should be fully heard and considered. After all, the lack of participation in the budget - making process is one of the reasons for the single - dimensional content of the budget [4].

The Consumer Protection Law does not address the organizational guarantees for consumer associations. Although the Implementation Regulations add the content that people's governments at all levels should strengthen the organizational construction of consumer associations, overall, the organizational construction of consumer associations in various regions has not significantly improved. Properly resolving consumer disputes is an important part of achieving high - quality development in consumption for a better life. Consumer associations play a crucial role in resolving consumer disputes. Their organizational guarantees, that is, the guarantee of staffing resources, should be commensurate with their importance. It should have the same objective as the guarantee of institutional staffing resources. Because the people's growing needs for a better life are comprehensive, this requires overall thinking and planning for future institutional staffing work, providing institutional staffing resources to benefit the people, serve them, solve their problems, protect their rights and interests, listen to their voices, and accept their supervision [5]. The secretaries - general of the consumer

association councils from provinces and cities to counties and districts should be full - time positions. The composition of the daily office staff should be based on factors such as the number of consumer complaints to ensure the substantial development of grassroots consumer complaint and rights - protection work.

3.3 Clarifying the Misunderstanding between "Invitation" and "Interview"

The Implementation Regulations use "invitation" instead of "interview", which is consistent with the nature of consumer associations as non administrative departments and as social organizations without law - enforcement power or compulsion. The focus of the Measures for Consumer Associations to Interview Operators by the China Consumers Association is to implement a long term management mechanism. In the view of Herbert Simon, "management" is a decision making process. By exercising authority or exerting other influences, the decision making function can be centralized, enabling the control of the activities of all organizational members through an overall operation plan [6]. Consumer associations exercise the duties granted by the Consumer Protection Law, not powers. The use and interpretation of "interview" are inappropriate and can mislead the public into thinking that consumer associations are administrative entities.

Regarding the positioning of "interview" and "invitation", the former, as a new law - enforcement method, is a control mechanism in administrative law enforcement [7]. Through a co governance law - enforcement paradigm of equal dialogue and cooperative negotiation with the counterpart, it transforms passive market supervision objects into active negotiation - participating subjects, changing the traditional government - dominated unitary pattern in supervision [8]. Obviously, interviews related to the protection of consumers' legitimate rights and interests should occur between relevant administrative departments and business entities. There is no specific regulatory document to define "invitation". From a literal interpretation, it means to invite someone or a group to participate in an activity or treat them, emphasizing the initiative and sincerity of the invitation. It weakens the administrative color

of "interview" and reflects more of the dialogue and communication between equal subjects. The Implementation Regulations clarify that the way consumer associations use "invitation" promotes the modernization of the governance system and capacity of the consumption environment from a legal perspective. Both factual accuracy and effectiveness need to be considered. The maintenance of effectiveness does not mean rigidly implementing the law. "Invitation" expresses full respect for the opinions of business entities and aims to "achieve inter subjective consensus through the 'practice' of negotiation and dialogue" [9].

3.4 Improving Supporting Mechanisms for Complaint Acceptance and Mediation

Accepting consumer complaints and organizing investigations and mediations are fundamental and core duties of Consumer Associations. In 2024, national consumer associations received 1,761,886 complaints, a 32.62% increase, resolved 1,211,284, with a 68.75% resolution rate, and recovered 1.28 billion yuan in losses, receiving 700,000 visits and consultations [10]. National legislation on administrative department complaint handling should either apply to Consumer Associations or be clarified in local legislation. Relying solely on internal guidelines is inadequate, as it undermines consumers' right to know about procedural handling, even though it grants flexibility. Procedural justice is the basis for substantive justice, requiring fair, transparent, and standardized processes to meet societal values and public needs [11].

Local legislation shows three main types of complaint acceptance time limits: some provinces (Hubei, Shanxi, Jiangsu) align with administrative departments; others (Shanghai) use vague terms like "promptly"; and some (Guangdong, Shaanxi) set longer or flexible limits. Mediation time limits also vary, with some provinces setting shorter (Guangdong: 1 month) or longer (Shanxi: 45 working days) periods than the administrative 60-day limit. Some staff believe administrative departments should handle complaints first, but the CPL stipulates no mandatory order among the five dispute resolution channels (negotiation, mediation, complaint, arbitration, litigation). To protect consumer rights, time limits should at least match those of administrative

departments, considering staffing realities.

3.5 Legislative Guarantees for Consumer Public Interest Litigation

Although the Civil Procedure Law of the People's Republic of China grants the China Consumers Association and the consumer associations established in provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities directly under the administrative authorities the status of first - order subjects eligible to file consumer civil public - interest lawsuits, it is obvious that their role has been rather limited. Instead, the procuratorial organs, as the second - order subjects, have taken the lead. Research shows that, based on the situation of consumer civil public - interest litigation cases from 2017 to 2024, the number of consumer civil public - interest litigation cases filed by consumer associations is only 24 in total, while the number of such cases filed by procuratorial organs is more than 22 times that of consumer associations [12]. The question is whether consumer associations are reluctant to exercise this responsibility or if numerous practical difficulties are hindering their performance. Clearly, it is the latter. Some research indicates the limitations of consumer associations as litigation subjects. Specifically, the lack of public - interest litigation rights of consumer - association organizations below the provincial level affects the breakthrough in the number of public - interest litigation cases [13]. Undoubtedly, this is one of the reasons, but it cannot be regarded as the fundamental cause of the low number of public - interest litigation cases filed by consumer associations. According to the data mentioned above, in seven years, consumer associations and procuratorial organs filed a total of 528 civil public - interest litigation cases, with an average of less than 76 cases per year. There is 1 national level consumer association and 31 provincial level consumer associations. That is to say, on average, each of the 32 consumer associations eligible to file consumer civil public - interest lawsuits files less than 3 cases per year. Moreover, consumer public - interest litigation does not occur in every province every year.

The RCPL's concentration of public interest litigation rights at the national and provincial levels is a practical choice, considering case volume and sub-provincial capacity. Local

legislation should focus on mechanism integration without violating superior laws: first, designing procedures for municipal/county Consumer Associations to request provincial-level litigation; second, clarifying evidence collection support and legal liability for non-cooperation; third, entrusting provincial governments to manage compensation funds, with Consumer Associations holding unclaimed funds for consumer rights protection.

Local examples include the Shanxi Consumer Rights Protection Regulations, which allow sub-provincial associations to suggest litigation and require provincial compensation fund management, and the Shanghai Regulations, which emphasize procuratorial and administrative assistance in evidence collection and specify compensation use. Shanxi focuses on internal procedures but lacks enforcement; Shanghai prioritizes evidence support, a rare legislative breakthrough.

3.6 Establishing A Supervision and Inspection Mechanism for Function Performance

According to the articles of association of the China Consumers Association, as a social organization, the Consumer Association mainly receives professional guidance and supervision from the State Administration for Market Regulation (hereinafter referred to as the "business supervisor") and the Ministry of Civil Affairs (hereinafter referred to as the "registration authority"). In addition, the Consumer Protection Law stipulates that the Consumer Association shall accept social supervision from consumers. However, there are no clear regulatory guidelines on how the business departments and the civil affairs department conduct supervision, nor on how consumers carry out their supervision.

In addition to the supervision by the business supervisor and the registration authority (the civil affairs department), the Regulations on the Protection of Consumer Rights and Interests revised in Shanghai in 2022 newly added provisions for the supervision of the performance of duties by the Consumer Rights Protection Commission by Permanent institution for local legislation and their deputies. It is stipulated that the standing committees of the city level and district level

legislative bodies shall strengthen supervision over the implementation by means of listening to and reviewing special work reports, organizing law enforcement inspections, conducting inquiries and interrogations, etc. The standing committees of the city level and district level legislative bodies shall give full play to the role of deputies to the legislative bodies at all levels, organize deputies to carry out special investigations, inspections and other activities, and urge relevant parties to implement various tasks related to the protection of consumer rights and interests. Thus, it can be seen that Permanent institution for local legislation and their deputies have the obligation to supervise and inspect the fulfillment of legal and regulatory duties by the Consumer Rights Protection Commission. According to the Supervision Law of Permanent institution for local legislation at All Levels of the People's Republic of China, Permanent institution for local legislation at all levels supervise the work of the local people's governments, supervisory commissions, people's courts, and people's procuratorates. Obviously, the Consumer Association is not within the scope of supervision. However, listening to and reviewing special work reports and inspecting the implementation of laws and regulations are very important duties of Permanent institution for local legislation. Permanent institution for local legislation at all levels select several major issues related to the overall situation of reform, development, and stability, the vital interests of the people, and issues of widespread social concern every year, and arrange to listen to and review the special work reports of the local people's governments, supervisory commissions, people's courts, and people's procuratorates in a planned manner. Consumer organizations can only submit special work reports through government channels, and their positioning is not very clear. Permanent institution for local legislation at all levels select several major issues related to the overall situation of reform, development, and stability, the vital interests of the people, and issues of widespread social concern every year, and organize law - enforcement inspections of the implementation of relevant laws, regulations, or related legal systems in a planned manner. Local legislation on the protection of consumer rights and interests is of great significance to people's livelihood and

should be within the scope of law enforcement inspections of the implementation of laws and regulations.

4. Conclusion

Protecting consumer rights means safeguarding people's interests and meeting their aspirations for a better life, requiring "hard measures" to optimize the consumption "soft environment." The analysis and correction of Consumer Associations' function performance issues must consider both the regulatory framework and practical field interactions. Focusing on three main areas—regulatory positioning impacts, supporting mechanism challenges, and supervision gaps—and six specific problems, this paper proposes solutions: canceling local registration requirements, strengthening organizational and financial guarantees, clarifying "invitation" vs. "interview," improving complaint procedures, enhancing public interest litigation legislation, and establishing supervision mechanisms. These strategies aim to align Consumer Associations with their statutory roles, promoting effective consumer rights protection and social co-governance.

Acknowledgments

Phased achievement of the legislative project for revising the Guizhou Province Consumer Rights Protection Regulations (Subject No.: 2022HX038).

References

- [1] Jin Jinping. Reanalysis of the Legal Status of Consumer Associations. *China Market Regulation Research*, 2023, (03): 25-29.
- [2] Yang Binglin. A Review of Responsive Regulation Theory: Essence and Issues. *Chinese Public Administration*, 2017, (04): 131-136.
- [3] Annual Report on the Status of Consumer Rights Protection in China (2023), China Consumers Association. <https://www.cca.org.cn/Detail?catalogId=492862039744581&contentType=article&contentId=551488720109637>.
- [4] Zheng Chengzhi. Discussion on Financial Budget and Performance Evaluation of Administrative Institutions. *Tianjin Economy*, 2023, (09): 39-41.
- [5] Liang Yuan. Optimize the allocation of institutional establishment resources to provide organizational guarantees for the development of the undertakings of leadership organizations and government departments in the new era.. *China Institutional Reform and Management*, 2021, (04): 25-29.
- [6] Simon, H. A. (1988). *Administrative Behavior* (Yang Li, Han Chunli, Xu Li, Trans.). Beijing Economic College Press: 11.
- [7] Lü Xinxin. Regulatory Reflection and Efficiency Optimization of Antitrust Law Enforcement Interviews. *Administrative Law Review*, 2025, (03): 161-175.
- [8] Li Wenjuan, Wang Guohua. Practical Inspection and Institutional Reflection on Internet Administrative Interviews from the Perspective of Responsive Regulation. *Journal of Xi'an Jiaotong University (Social Sciences)*, 2024, 44(04): 109-121.
- [9] Kong Ming'an, Huang Qiuping. Justice Based on Deliberation and Justice Based on Recognition—A Comparative Analysis of Habermas' and Honneth's Theories of Justice. *Academics*, 2018, (06): 55-64.
- [10] Analysis of Complaints Handled by National Consumer Associations in 2024, China Consumers Association. <https://www.cca.org.cn/Detail?catalogId=475804068798533&contentType=article&contentId=641724014739525>.
- [11] Cheng Songtao. The Art of Balancing Procedural Justice, Outcome Justice, and Perceived Justice in Organizational Management. *Leadership Science*, 2023, (06): 80-84.
- [12] Du Xiaoli. Dilemmas and Solutions for Consumer Associations in Civil Public Interest Litigation. *Journal of Guizhou University (Social Sciences)*, 2024, 42(06): 101-111.
- [13] Tu Fuxiu. Practical Inspection and Path Optimization of Consumer Associations' Public Interest Litigation—An Empirical Study of 16 Cases. *Journal of Huaqiao University (Philosophy and Social Sciences)*, 2021, (01): 101-113.