

Effectiveness of Monitoring the Use of Food Additives in Consumer Health Protection in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Monitoring the use of non-standard food additives in Indonesia has become an urgent issue, especially in relation to consumer health protection. This study discusses the effectiveness of monitoring the use of non-standard food additives and its implications for consumer health in Indonesia. While regulations are in place, such as the Head of BPOM (Food and Drug Administration) Regulation Number 23 Year 2016, major challenges remain, including limited resources, lack of consumer understanding, and suboptimal supervision. This study found that while BPOM plays an important role in monitoring the use of food additives, there are still gaps in monitoring that allow non-standard food to circulate in the market. Efforts are needed to improve monitoring capacity, stricter law enforcement, and higher community awareness of the dangers of non-standardized food additives. This study is expected to serve as a basis for policy reforms in the monitoring of food additives, with the aim of ensuring that consumer health is better protected.

INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, community awareness about the importance of the quality of food consumed has increased, especially in relation to the potential health risks that can arise from the use of food additives. Food additives, which are used to extend shelf life, enhance flavor or improve the appearance of food products, are often a crucial component of the food industry. While their benefits are clear, the use of these ingredients in excessive amounts or not in accordance with established standards can have a negative impact on consumer health. Consumer protection issues related to food additives are becoming a highly relevant topic in an increasingly health-aware world (Hura et al., 2016).

In Indonesia, BPOM has established regulations governing the types and amounts of food additives that may be used in food products, as well as provisions related to the monitoring and control of their use. Less stringent monitoring and limited knowledge among most consumers often make them unaware of the potential risks that can arise from the consumption of non-standard food additives. This is further exacerbated by the fact that food products circulating in the market sometimes do not include clear information on the composition of the food additives used (Jusmyra, 2022).

The rapid development of the food industry and the high demand for food products at affordable prices encourage producers to look for food additives that are cheaper and easier to obtain, although they do not always meet the established quality standards. This situation has the potential to reduce the quality of food products circulating in the market and increase risks to consumer health. The implementation of strict standards on food additives should be a serious concern, given the many reports on the harmful effects of using non-standard food ingredients, such as long-term health problems, ranging from digestive disorders to increased risk of cancer.

Apart from the regulatory aspect, monitoring the implementation of these rules is also a problem that cannot be ignored. While regulations exist, less than optimal enforcement in the field is often a major obstacle in maintaining the quality of food additives used in food products. Reports of food products containing illegal food additives, or additives that exceed the prescribed limits, are evidence that monitoring at the distribution and marketing levels needs to be improved. This suggests the need for stricter and more transparent monitoring so that producers do not cut corners that could be detrimental to public health.

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Amidst the rapid development of information, most consumers do not fully understand the dangers that can arise from non-standard food additives. This lack of knowledge about food ingredients and their impact on health has resulted in many consumers not realizing that they have consumed products with potentially harmful additives. It is important to ensure that consumer protection in this case is not only limited to regulatory arrangements, but also to empower consumers to make smarter and safer choices in selecting food products.

The main problem with the use of non-standard food additives in Indonesia is the lack of effective monitoring to ensure compliance with existing regulations. While Law Number 18 Year 2012 concerning Food and Head of BPOM Regulation Number 23 Year 2016 concerning Provisions for the Use of Food Additives clearly regulate the safe use of food additives, implementation in the field is far from perfect. The number of products circulating in the market with uncontrolled composition of food additives and unclear information is a problem that risks threatening public health. Not to mention the phenomenon of the use of illegal and hazardous food ingredients that are not detected by the existing monitoring system.

Inadequate monitoring of markets and distribution of high-risk food products leads to the misuse of food additives, especially in traditional markets and small food industries. In an effort to reduce production costs or extend the shelf life of products, some businesses illegally add ingredients that should be banned or used beyond the allowed limits. Lack of firmness in law enforcement against violations related to food ingredients also exacerbates this problem. Although there are clear regulations on the use of food additives, such as the BPOM Regulation and other legislation, implementation is often reactive rather than preventive. In many cases, products containing hazardous food additives are only revealed after they have caused adverse impacts on consumer health, adding to the burden on the public health system (Nababan et al., 2021).

With weak regulation and monitoring, consumers are vulnerable to food products that contain additives that do not meet standards. Consumers are often not given adequate information about the composition of ingredients in the products they consume (Utami, 2012). In fact, a better understanding of the hazards of non-compliant food additives will minimize the health risks that may occur in the future. The lack of education on this matter further exacerbates the situation, as many consumers are not aware of the importance of choosing safe and healthy products.

The issue of the use of non-standard food additives should be a major concern, given the long-term impact on public health. Given the increasing number of food products containing hazardous additives, consumer protection through stricter regulation and monitoring has become very urgent. Without strong preventive measures, the health risks faced by the community will continue to increase, which in turn will burden the country's health system. In the era of globalization and free trade, it is important for Indonesia to have a transparent and reliable supervisory system to maintain the quality of food circulating in the market. Improved monitoring and international standards in food products can better protect consumers and reduce the adverse effects of inappropriate food additives (Glubokova et al., 2021).

This study aims to analyze the extent to which supervision of the use of non-standard food additives in Indonesia can provide effective protection of consumer health. The study also aims to identify factors influencing weaknesses in the implementation of monitoring and provide an overview of the challenges faced in enforcing regulations related to food additives. The results of this study are expected to provide insight into the steps that need to be taken to improve the effectiveness of monitoring and protection of consumer health related to food ingredients circulating in the market.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a literature study approach to analyze consumer protection against health risks due to the use of non-standard food additives. This literature study approach aims to collect, review and evaluate various relevant references, both from scientific journals, books, laws and regulations, as well as previous studies on this topic. Using the literature study, this study seeks to identify key issues in the regulation of the use of food additives, particularly with regard to the effectiveness of existing monitoring in Indonesia. The literature used will also explore how existing regulations, such as Law Number 18 Year 2012 concerning Food, have been implemented in the field and the challenges that arise in monitoring the use of food ingredients.

Through this approach, the study aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the strengths and weaknesses of existing regulations governing the use of food additives. This literature study will also touch on aspects of consumer behavior in choosing food products containing additives and their level of awareness of potential health risks that may arise. Relevant literature provides important information used in policy analysis and evaluation of consumer protection against health risks due to food additives.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The development of the food industry in Indonesia has progressed rapidly, one of which is the widespread use of food additives. These additives are designed to provide certain benefits, such as enhancing flavor, improving appearance, and extending the shelf life of food products. Along with their growth, major challenges have arisen related to the use of these ingredients that do not comply with the standards set by the applicable regulations. Without adequate monitoring, the use of non-standard additives can pose serious health risks to consumers. This makes the monitoring of food additives a very important issue, both from a legal and public health perspective.

The use of non-standardized food additives can be potentially harmful to consumers, as the effects can be very hazardous. Excess consumption of additives such as artificial sweeteners and preservatives can increase the risk of chronic diseases such as diabetes and gastrointestinal disorders, ultimately harming consumers who are unaware of these dangers (Jain & Mathur, 2015). Excess of certain additives can lead to chronic diseases, making it important to tighten monitoring (Öztürk & Ceylan, 2023). Some additives used in food products can cause health problems such as allergies, poisoning, or indigestion, which if left unchecked can lead to more serious health problems, such as cancer. Processed food products on the market often do not comply with the safety standards set by BPOM. These products are found in traditional markets and often contain harmful additives that adversely affect consumer health (Nurhayati, 2012). Regulations related to food additives are very important in setting clear limits on the ingredients that can be used and the standards that must be met by producers. While there are regulations governing the use of food additives, the reality in the field shows that less stringent monitoring often leads to many food products in circulation that do not meet established standards.

In this regard, BPOM plays a central role in ensuring that food products circulating in Indonesia are safe for consumption. BPOM, through its regulations such as the Head of BPOM Regulation Number 23 Year 2016, regulates the use of food additives in Indonesia with the aim of protecting consumers from potential hazards. While regulations are in place, monitoring the implementation of these regulations still faces various challenges. One of them is the BPOM's limited resources, which hampers their ability to conduct comprehensive monitoring across Indonesia, both in traditional and modern markets (Waluyo et al., 2018; Putri, 2018).

Thus, in order to maintain the sustainability of consumer health protection, it is important to understand the effectiveness of the monitoring applied against the use of non-standard food additives. More intensive monitoring, improvements in law enforcement, and increased community awareness on the importance of choosing safe food products are crucial steps that need to be taken. When violations are dealt with fairly and openly, this will create a deterrent effect and increase public confidence in the food inspection system. Without a clear understanding of the effectiveness of existing supervision, consumer protection efforts will be difficult to achieve optimal results. Recognizing the urgency of this issue, more intense community engagement and participation on the effectiveness of monitoring in protecting consumers will be helpful in formulating policies that are more targeted and more effective in maintaining food quality in Indonesia.

In Indonesia, BPOM has a major role in regulating and monitoring the use of food additives. BPOM has issued clear regulations regarding the safe use of food additives, such as the Head of BPOM Regulation Number 23 Year 2016 concerning Provisions for the Use of Food Additives. This regulation regulates in detail the food additives that can be used in food products and the limits set for each type of ingredient. With this regulation, it is expected that food products circulating in the market will meet the predetermined safety standards. The implementation of the regulation still faces various challenges, including in terms of field monitoring and limited resources owned by BPOM. With a very wide market coverage, including traditional markets, small and medium enterprises, and home industries, the process of monitoring the compliance of business actors with the rules for the use of BTP is very challenging.

Monitoring of food additives in Indonesia should include strict inspection of products circulating in the market, both those produced by large industries and small and medium industries. Strict inspection of food products is very important, as inappropriate or excessive use of BTPs can harm consumers' health in the short and long term. Sub-optimal monitoring often occurs, especially for food products sold in traditional or smaller markets. These markets are often beyond the reach of effective monitoring, allowing many food products with illegal or non-compliant food additives to escape and circulate in the community. This is exacerbated by the community lack of understanding of the risks posed by non-standardized food additives, which makes them more likely to consume products without checking labels or information on ingredients.

The limited resources owned by BPOM are also an obstacle in implementing maximum monitoring. BPOM, despite having many supporting regulations, is often faced with obstacles such as a lack of personnel to conduct surveillance throughout Indonesia. Given the vast territory of Indonesia and the number of products circulating in the market, it is very difficult for BPOM to conduct comprehensive monitoring. These personnel limitations mean that many distribution and sales points of food products cannot be routinely and thoroughly monitored. Traditional markets, home industries, and micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) are often left untouched by periodic inspections, even though these sectors have a high potential for violations of the use of food additives. This leads to problems where some products that do not comply with standards or that contain hazardous food additives can escape monitoring and continue to circulate in the market (Wibaselpa et al., 2018).

The implementation of a non-transparent reporting system is also one of the main problems in the monitoring of food additives. Consumers or producers often do not get clear information about the results of monitoring or findings in the field (Zazili, 2019). This vagueness can affect community trust in food products circulating on the market. In fact, with the openness of data and supervision results, both consumers and industry players will be more encouraged to comply with regulations and improve product quality. Transparency in monitoring and announcing findings from BPOM needs to be improved, so that the community can better understand the risks that may arise and can make wiser decisions in choosing products that are safe for consumption.

Another important aspect is law enforcement against producers who violate regulations on the use of food additives. While BPOM has the authority to take action against products that do not meet standards, law enforcement against violations related to food additives is still not optimal. The lack of firmness in law enforcement reduces the deterrent effect on violating business actors (Nainggolan, 2018). Many cases of violations are not accompanied by strict legal action, either in the form of administrative sanctions, fines, or even temporary closure of business proven to use food additives that do not comply with standards. This weak law enforcement has led to irresponsible producers who are not afraid to violate regulations, as the impact is not too great. It is important to strengthen the law enforcement system and provide stricter sanctions so that producers are more compliant with existing regulations.

The importance of consumer understanding of safe food additives is also a major factor in effective monitoring. Many consumers do not know or do not pay attention to the label information on the food products they buy. In fact, the label contains important information such as the type of ingredients, BPOM registration number, and nutritional content. This results in consumers not realizing that they have consumed products that contain food additives that do not comply with standards (Budianto, 2018). Efforts are needed to increase consumer awareness through more vigorous education about what is contained in the food products they consume. A more intensive socialization program involving various levels of community needs to be carried out to increase consumer knowledge about the risks of food additives that do not comply with standards. Kaptan and Kayışoğlu (2015), emphasized there is a need for campaigns to increase consumer awareness about choosing safe products licensed by BPOM, which can reduce the health risks of hazardous food additives.

The successful monitoring of food additives also depends on collaboration between various related institutions, including BPOM, the Ministry of Health Indonesia, and other relevant agencies. Inter-agency cooperation is needed to strengthen monitoring in all sectors, at the production, distribution and consumption levels. This synergy will help ensure that the policies taken can be effectively implemented in the field and result in better protection for consumers. With an integrated supervisory system, any findings and violations can be immediately addressed across sectors, resulting in more effective consumer protection. Without solid collaboration between institutions, the monitoring of food additives that do not comply with standards will remain hampered. A collaborative and structured approach contributes to the efficient supervision of food additives and the protection of consumer health and safety throughout Indonesia.

One of the challenges in monitoring non-conforming food additives is the globalization of food trade (Sood, 2014). Globalization of food trade facilitates international product access, but complicates the monitoring of food additives. Many food products of foreign origin circulate in the Indonesian market and often do not meet the standards set by Indonesian regulations. These imported products may contain food additives that have not been registered or do not comply with Indonesian standards. It is important for BPOM to enhance international cooperation in order to ensure the safety of imported food products circulating in Indonesia, as well as to strengthen the regulations governing these imported products.

As the most populous country in Southeast Asia, Indonesia faces major challenges in regulating and monitoring food additives in the market. The opportunity to improve the monitoring and consumer protection system is wide open. By strengthening regulations, increasing monitoring capacity and empowering consumers, Indonesia can create a safer environment for food consumption. This study on the effectiveness of food additive monitoring is expected to provide useful recommendations for policymakers in improving the monitoring system and consumer protection in the future (Amalia, 2018).

Existing regulations have provided a clear legal basis for the supervision of food additives, but major challenges remain in terms of implementation in the field. To improve the effectiveness of supervision, regular evaluation of existing policies and regulations is required, as well as adjustments to current conditions. Efforts to strengthen coordination among government agencies and increase community involvement in monitoring are also crucial to create a healthier and safer food environment for all consumers in Indonesia.

As a country with a large population, Indonesia has a great responsibility in ensuring the safety of food circulating in the community. Hazardous food additives can cause chronic health problems, which require extra attention in public health surveillance (Öztürk & Ceylan, 2023). While monitoring the use of non-standard food additives has been regulated by various regulations, the reality on the ground shows that there are still many loopholes that allow misuse. This monitoring is still weak, especially in remote areas, so food products with unsafe additives often escape into the market (Saputri & Subadi, 2022). The presence of non-standard or even dangerous additives can reduce consumer confidence in the domestic food industry, which in turn affects the growth of this sector. The success of supervision is highly dependent on the strong commitment of all relevant parties, ranging from the government, monitoring institutions, to food industry players themselves.

While the challenges faced are complex, there are great opportunities to improve the monitoring system. One of the steps that can be taken is to increase community involvement in the monitoring of food products that they consume. Continuous education on the dangers of non-standardized additives and how to choose safe food products needs to be carried out on a massive scale. The use of growing technology can be an effective tool in accelerating the monitoring process, so that the monitoring carried out becomes more efficient and targeted. With these steps, it is expected that a healthier and safer food ecosystem will be created for the community of Indonesia.

Finally, better monitoring of non-standard food additives is essential to protect consumers, and to build market trust in local food products. With tighter regulations and stricter law enforcement, Indonesia's food sector can develop more healthily and sustainably. In the long-term, this will have an impact on improving the quality of life of the community, as well as opening up greater opportunities for the Indonesian food industry to compete in the global market. All parties need to collaborate to ensure that consumers are well protected, and Indonesia's food industry can continue to develop positively.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this discussion shows that the supervision of the use of non-standard food additives in Indonesia still faces various challenges. While there are clear regulations such as the Head of BPOM Regulation Number 23 Year 2016 governing the use of food additives, its implementation has not been fully effective in the field. Limited resources, lack of consumer understanding, and incomplete supervision in all regions of Indonesia are the main obstacles. While regulations already exist, more intensive monitoring and strict law enforcement are still urgently needed to protect consumers from potential health risks due to non-standard food additives.

The implications of the results of this study indicate that although existing regulations provide a strong legal basis, the effectiveness of monitoring of food additives still needs to be improved. The sustainability of consumer health protection relies heavily on efforts to increase more thorough monitoring, improve reporting systems, and raise community awareness about the hazards of non-conforming food additives. Effective monitoring should include intensive inspection at both the production and distribution levels of food products, as well as stronger monitoring of imported food products entering the Indonesian market.

Suggestions include the importance of strengthening BPOM's capacity to carry out supervision with additional personnel and adequate facilities. Cooperation between related institutions, both at the national and international levels, needs to be strengthened to expand the monitoring of food ingredients. The community should also be empowered through intensive education programs on food additives and the health risks posed by nonconforming ingredients. Only with these measures, monitoring of food additives will become more effective and be able to provide maximum protection for consumers.

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