

A Study on Customer Preference Towards Gas Companies in Palayamkottai Area

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Abstract

India is the 2nd largest oil refiner in Asia as of September 2018. Gas is one of the oil refining product which plays a vital role among the persons specifically home makers who preferably use this in their day to day life. In recent days, almost all the households are using Gas Stoves for their domestic persistence. In hotels also they prefer gas for making their food stuffs. Because it consumes their time and it couldn't cause any disease to them. Due to the raise of usage of Gas, some companies are there which supply gas to the deprived. Consumption will vary from buyer to buyer. Mode of consumption and preferring a particular product may also vary. Hence it is a difficult task to fulfill the customers with high satisfaction. In this article, we cover the area that consumers preference of gas among the available companies and we state the reason for preferring that particular company products among the alternatives. We also identify the basis for preferring that company.

Keywords: *deprived, domestic, oil refining, persistence, vital role.*

INTRODUCTION

Effective business managers realize the importance of marketing to the success of their firm. Most definitions of marketing encompass services and ideas as well as product and sound understanding of consumer behavior is essential to the long run success of any

marketing programme. The field of consumer behavior is rooted in marketing concept, which is an important orientation of philosophy of many marketing concerns. Consumers today are generally more sensitive to social and environmental issues. Along with sources of dissatisfaction already described the plight of the poor, air and water pollution, waste disposal and health and safety are other social and environmental causes receiving attention. Nowadays gas companies are playing a vital role and they are developing their work into a technological one to attract more consumers. Satisfying a customer is a difficult task for every business man and a fully satisfied customer will become a good publisher of the particular product. Preference of goods will lead to satisfaction. Hence preference is a primary part of consumer behavior which will lead the consumers to buy that goods regularly.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Krishnan Kutty (2012), “Oil & Gas for Sustainable Growth” “R&D Intervention in LPG”, International Journal of Distributed and Parallel Systems (IJDPS), 3(2) 287-300. He concluded that, subsequently, the domestic happenstance due to LPG has been diminished to an irrelevant level 0.23 ppm by manufacture LPG in the harmless domestic fuel.

Ruangwud Jarurungsipong & Nopalak Rakthum (2012) “Development of the Price level of Gas and Monitor System” International Conference on (ICMTMA-2012), 2(1), 1105–1108 in their study, price panelsupkeep LPG fuel consumption says that, LPG consumption will be suggestivelycondensed if the government allows the retail prices of LPG in all fragments to rise to market price levels.

Babasab Patil (2012), “Customer satisfaction on bharat gas agencies in Coimbatore”, Journal of multidisciplinary, 4(2) 1190-1194, conducted a study and he concluded that, the gas agency are well reputable in providing acceptable after sales services to its customers. By seeing the observations most of the customers are having positive awareness towards that particular gas agency and are satisfied with its services such as obtainability of timely and safe delivery, staff support, trained mechanics etc.

Purvin & Gertz (2013) in his articles, “World LPG Market Outlook”, Indian Streams Research Journal, 4(1), 45-50, stated that, over the past several years, the international LPG

production has seen a gradual shift in world trade configurations. Demand in the East of Suez market has risen faster than LPG deliveries in the region

M. Yadukrishnan, U.Vishnudas, M.K. Subramani (2015) in their study, "Consumers Satisfaction towards Direct Benefit Transfer of LPG (DBTL) Scheme with reference to Chennai, Avadi", International Conference on (ICEMI), 6(2), 930-933, concluded that the DBTL scheme are accomplishment in a better way, providing standard satisfaction to consumers, also the consumers are highly fulfilled with the LPG's current position without subsidy even if there are some exceptions. But the fluctuating schemes and previous disappointments due to unsuitable studies are compelling public to walk in a distance from these systems.

Sunil Kumar (2015) in his study, "Customer satisfaction from PAHAL (DBTL) scheme among LPG domestic customer", International Journal of Current Research, 7 (2) 844-850, concluded that the awareness about the PAHAL (DBTL) is very high as the 98% customers timely get the evidence about the scheme. The satisfaction about the amenities provided by the concern, distributors, banks, Government and the helpline is very high. The overall satisfaction of the LPG Domestic customers about the PAHAL (DBTL) Scheme is also very high.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To know the customer preference among several gas companies.
- To identify the reason for selecting that particular company.
- To know the customer's level of satisfaction while using this gas.
- To know the services provided by the gas companies.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Convenience sampling Method is used to collect the Primary Data from the Respondents. After the data was collected from various sources, information was tabulated. On the basis of this analyzes, findings were noted and conclusion were arrived. The area of the study is Palayamkottai area which is located in Tirunelveli city and sample size is 50.

Following tools are used for analyzing the collected data:

- Chi square analysis
- Likert's rank scale analysis
- Percentage analysis
- Pearson's correlation co-efficient

VARIOUS GAS COMPANIES IN PALAYAMKOTTAI

There are 3 leading gas companies which supply gas for domestic and commercial use. They are: Bharat, Indane and HP. There are several gas dealers in Palayamkottai. In that Sri Balaji gas services is one of the agency which provide Bharat gas to the nearby areas in Palayamkottai and Thangam agency, Maharaja Agencies are also the Bharat gas dealers in Palayamkottai. Under Indane gas services, Sundar gas, Siva gas agency and Nellai agency are the dealers to supply Indane gas for domestic purpose.

SERVICED OFFERED

Gas dealers were provided the following services to the customers:

- New gas connection
- Deliver the cylinder whenever it is needed by customers
- Cancellation of old connection
- Online booking and payment facility by 24x7 hrs.
- Periodical services like verifying the cylinders and hoses if there is any damage or leakage or not.
- After sales services like installation of gas with free of cost.
- Providing relevant information to the customers about the grievances.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1. The area of the study is Palayamkottai area. So respondents are selected in this area only. And other areas in Tirunelveli City is neglected in this study.
2. Only 50 samples are chosen. So the response of other people are not known.
3. This study consumes more time for gathering and analyzing the data. But due to time in availability shorter period is used.
4. Simple random technique is used for analysis. Hence, equal importance in the selection of sample is not given.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Demographic profile of the sample respondents

Factor	Category	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Age	20 – 30 years	10	20
	31 – 40 years	22	44
	Above 40 years	18	36
	Total	50	100
Gender	Male	20	40
	Female	30	60
	Total	50	100
Qualification	Up to school level	12	24
	UG level	17	34
	PG level	13	26
	Above PG level	8	16
	Total	50	100
Occupation	Private employee	18	36
	Govt. employee	13	36
	Business	12	24
	Others	7	14
	Total	50	100
Monthly family income	Up to 30000	7	14
	30001 – 40000	16	32
	Above 40000	27	54
	Total	50	100

Source: Primary Data.

Table 2: Satisfaction level of respondents

Factors	HS	S	N	DS	HDS	Total weighted score	Rank
Price	4	21	9	16	--	163	4
Weight	17	14	11	8	--	190	1
Delivery period	10	10	20	7	3	167	3
Quick response for grievances	2	16	24	2	1	151	5
After sales services	14	9	16	4	7	169	2
Periodical services	--	4	18	19	9	117	6

Source: Primary Data

Inference: above table shows that consumers are highly satisfied with the weight of LPG and they give the rank 1 to that factor. After sales services are got the 2nd rank, delivery period was placed as 3rd, price was got the 4th place, responses for the grievances was placed as 5th and the periodical services got the 6th rank.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significance association between gender of the respondents and preference of brand.

Hypothesis 2: There is a significance association between gender of the respondents and preference of brand.

Table 3: Cross Tabulation

Variables	Bharat	Indane	HP	Total
Male	12	10	8	30
Female	8	10	2	20
Total	20	20	10	50

Source: Primary Data

Table 4: Chi-square Analysis

O	E	O-E	(O-E) ²	(O-E) ² /E
12	12	--	--	--
10	12	-2	4	0.33
8	6	2	4	0.67
8	8	--	--	--
10	8	2	4	0.5
2	4	-2	4	1
				2.5

Source: Computed Data

Level of significance: 5% Degree of freedom: 2

Table value for 5% level of significance at a degree of freedom of 2 is 5.99.

Here the calculated value is less than the table value. So null hypothesis is accepted.

Pearson's Correlation Co-efficient

In this study, the researcher has used the Pearson correlation coefficient analysis to know the relationship between the income and preference of brand

Table 5: Relationship between income and preference of brand

Income (X)	No. of respondents	Preference of brand (Y)	No. of respondents
Up to 30000	7	Bharat	20
30001 – 40000	16	Indane	20
Above 40000	27	HP	10
Total	50	Total	50

Source: Primary Data

Correlation groups	Calculated r value	Relationship
Income and preference of brand	-0.89	Strong negative correlation

Source: Computed Primary Data

The above table clearly indicates that, there is a strong negative correlation between the respondent's income and preference of brand. Hence, it is concluded that preferring the brand of LPG doesn't depends upon the income and vice versa.

FINDINGS

- It was found that majority of the respondents are in the age category of 31 – 40.
- It was found that most of the respondents are preferring Bharat and Indane brand for their domestic use. And 20% of respondents are preferring HP brand for domestic as well as commercial use.
- It was known that most of the respondents are preferring the particular brand due to the reason of used by their family members and the brand reputation.
- It is clear that nearly 50% of respondents are satisfied with the price, weight and the response for their grievances.
- Nearly 40% of respondents are having the neutral level satisfaction in the variables like delivery period and after sales service.

ARGUMENTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In view to the previous studies, most of customers are having a positive sense of awareness in preferring particular brand of gas and the selected sample members are satisfied with the services offered by the gas companies. Some of the previous studies are focused with one type of brand and all other brands are neglected but in this study the brands which are available in the selected research area is used for analysis and in the present research most of the customers are having a neutral level of awareness in preferring the particular gas brand, majority of the respondents are having the neutral level of satisfaction with the services provided by the gas companies. Hence it was analysed and known by the researcher that while selecting the single brand for research will result in positive waves and while selecting all the available brands will results the research article in a prescribed way with

both the positive and negative waves which will help the researcher to provide suitable suggestions and conclusions.

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

Consumer preference is depends upon certain factors such as sociological, environmental, and economical in nature. If a customer is having an idea to buy a product which is new to him, then he should make a pre evaluation about the brands, quality, quantity, price and availability. But in some of the products they don't bother about these factors which are they used in their daily life ex. Salt. Usage of LPG is in the increasing level. The subsidy provided by the government was impressed the people and they believe that they are not spending too much of amount in LPG. There is a positive attitude among the individuals to buy their gas even though there are some negative points. Hence, we concluded that the customer's preference of particular brand of LPG is depends upon their already usage and reputation of the company among the various brands of LPG. Following are the recommendations of the study:

- ❖ There is a negative level satisfaction among the respondents about the periodical services provided by the dealers. Hence they have to improve their services and satisfy the people.
- ❖ The dealers may provide the safety tips to the users while using the gas and as well as how to handle the LPG before and after use it.
- ❖ The working hours of the LPG Distributorship should be prominently displayed. Holiday notices should be displayed well in time.
- ❖ Provide relevant details about the shifting of LPG from one district to another and shifting from one brand to another.
- ❖ Clearly defining the subsidy charges to the customers make them to get a transparent look about the brand

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