



Consumers' Rights Protection Awareness and its impact on Behavior: A Case of Street Food Vendors Using Liquefied Petroleum Gas in Ilemela District, Tanzania

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Abstract

Consumers are pivotal in economic transactions, yet their ability to receive fair treatment often hinges on their awareness and effective exercise of consumer rights as governed by consumer protection laws. This study investigated consumers' rights protection awareness and its impact on the behavior of street food vendors using LPG in selected wards in Ilemela District, Tanzania. Moreover, the study was guided by the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). Additionally, the study employed a descriptive design along with a quantitative methodology. Data collection involved questionnaires with a sample size of 123 participants. The analysis incorporated both descriptive and inferential statistics, such as correlation and regression techniques. The study reveals a generally low level of awareness regarding consumer rights, access to information, and redress mechanisms among street food vendors in the study area. Further, it was revealed that a significant positive relationship exists between consumer rights protection awareness and consumer behavior. Moreover, consumers' ability to access information about their rights had a significant influence on their behavior. Nonetheless, findings further expose that there is a strong positive correlation between knowledge of redress mechanisms and the level of customers' rights protection awareness. The study recommends that Ilemela District Commissioner in collaboration with government protection agencies (like the Weights and Measures Agency) should carry out education campaigning about consumer rights protection awareness and how to find reliable facts and information by using various ways such as mobile applications, community workshops, and collaboration with local media. The government protection agencies particularly the Weights and Measures Agency should provide adequate information on how consumers can seek redress mechanisms related to consumer goods like LPG.

Key terms: Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG), Consumer rights' protection, consumer behaviour, redress mechanism, access information

1. Introduction

Consumers purchase numerous goods and services to fulfill their needs and wants and they constitute the largest economic group in any economy and are the very reason for business (Kotler & Armstrong 2017). Very often these consumers do get less than what they deserve either because they are not aware of their rights or do not know how to exercise those rights to get redress according to consumer protection laws. According to UNCTAD (2016), the Malaysian Consumer Protection Act of 1999 defines a consumer as "a person who acquires or uses goods or services of a kind ordinarily acquired for personal domestic or household purpose". Simply put, a consumer is the final end-user of a product or service Kotler & Armstrong (2017). Many countries have

enacted laws to protect consumers from unfair treatment from suppliers, manufacturers, and intermediaries.

Consumer protection is a global issue and the origin of consumer protection can be traced from the development of the concept of private property which was characterized by greed and acquisitiveness whereas private property was characterized by the use of both fair and deceptive means to further the acquisition of more property (Kilenga 2023). In the long run, business practices became dominated by abuses and misconduct a situation that necessitated the emergence of the concept of consumer protection that focused on the protection of a person against violation of their legitimate rights as consumers to make sure that consumers attain value for money when spending their money to purchase goods and/or



services. Therefore, safety and protection against violation of consumer's legitimate rights were no longer inevitable (Komba, 2021) which led to the rise of the consumerism movement to safeguard consumers' rights.

The historical development of consumer rights dates back to 1962 and was a result of the announcement of the four basic consumer rights by President John F. Kennedy in the USA (UNCTAD 2016). He announced the four basic rights of protection, namely the right to safety, the right to be informed, the right to choose, and the right to be heard. These basic rights formed the basis for the United Nations Guidelines for Consumer Protection and continue to date (UNCTAD 2018). The UN expanded the rights to eight including the right to satisfaction of basic needs (the right to basic needs), the right to redress, the right to consumer education, and the right to a healthy environment. These rights have become the foundation of countries' Consumer Protection Acts, guidelines, and policies under different names (UNCTAD 2016).

According to Hima (2016), consumer rights protection is a global agenda that must be attained. In Zimbabwe for example, the Consumer Council of Zimbabwe (CCZ) and the Consumer Protection Act of Zimbabwe, companies are mandated to protect consumers' rights and to educate consumers about their rights so that they can get a fair deal in the marketplace (Consumer Council of Zimbabwe, 2019). The General guideline on Consumer Protection in Tanzania is provided under Parts III–IX of the Fair Competition Act 2003 (Cap 285) (FCA). The act promotes and protects effective competition in trade and commerce, protects consumers from unfair and misleading market conduct, and provides for other related matters (Kilenga 2023).

Makanyeza et al (2021) in a study in Namibia found that consumers' rights awareness had a positive effect on both consumer attitude and behavioral intention to exercise their rights while consumer attitude had a positive effect on consumer behavioral intention. Makanyeza et al (2021) also observed consumers' rights to choose, rights to safety, and rights to redress are primarily important in FMCGs. Therefore, manufacturers and distributors of consumer goods must strike a balance between their business and the rights and needs of consumers. In particular, companies are expected to play an active role in protecting consumers from adverse effects. However, sometimes businesses focus more on meeting their financial objectives at the expense of consumer protection a situation that calls for consumers' active role in protecting themselves against unfair business practices.

Considering that consumer rights awareness is at the core of consumer protection, consumers should be aware of their rights for self-protection. Consumers who are aware of their rights are less likely to be abused by businesses. As consumers become more aware of their rights, they can make informed decisions in the marketplace and they can protect themselves against exploitation by businesses. Consumers must acquire knowledge and skills about consumer rights so that they can make responsible, and informed decisions that

will benefit both the individual consumers and society at large (Makanyeza & Du Toit, 2015; Consumers International, 2019; Makanyeza et al 2021, Kilenga 2023).

1. 1 Consumer Rights and Liquefied Petroleum Gas

Since consumer rights encompass the entitlements of individuals who purchase goods or services to ensure a fair and ethical treatment in the marketplace, Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) a common domestic product used for cooking heating, and other purposes that involve safety, quality, and provision of accurate information to consumers.

Globally, organizations like the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) set global standards for Liquefied Petroleum Gas safety and quality, providing a framework that countries can adopt. Also, International consumer protection organizations may advocate for consistent standards and regulations globally to protect consumers using Liquefied Petroleum Gas worldwide. Around the world different countries may participate in international agreements or conventions related to the safe transportation, storage, and use of Liquefied Petroleum Gas, emphasizing the importance of adhering to common safety standards. When Liquefied Petroleum gas is imported or exported, international trade laws may come into play, ensuring that products meet certain standards and consumers are protected across borders (Østebø et al, 2018).

In Tanzania, the Weight and Measures Act (1982) includes provisions to ensure the safety of LPG products, and standards set by the Tanzania Bureau of Standards cover safety requirements for Liquefied Petroleum Gas products. Such laws require the supplier to make it clear with accurate labeling of Liquefied Petroleum Gas cylinders, providing consumers with information about the product, usage instructions, and safety precautions, and in the case of faulty Liquefied Petroleum Gas products or service issues, consumer protection laws may offer mechanisms for redress, allowing consumers to file complaints and seek resolutions (Bofin & Pedersen, 2017).

Consumer protection in LPG is crucial, given its potential impact on economic development and living standards. However, a notable lack of compliance with legal framework standards by LPG retailers persists, leading to issues such as gas leakage (Amutha, 2018). In Kenya and Tanzania, consumers face challenges like purchasing half-filled cylinders due to illegal gas refilling. The Kenyan government, recognizing this problem, has taken measures, including the ban on LPG imports from Tanzania through land routes (The Nairobi Law Monthly, 2017). In Tanzania, the issue of half-filled cylinders persists (EWURA, 2022). The consumer rights for the use of LPG though not specifically spelt in a given law, the same universal consumer rights apply. While existing legal frameworks provide a robust foundation for consumer protection, their effectiveness is contingent on consumer awareness. Several studies highlight the significance of consumer education in fostering effective protection measures (Makanyeza & Du Toit, 2015; Consumers International, 2019; Makanyeza et al., 2021; Kilenga, 2023). Empowered consumers who are

knowledgeable about their rights can make informed decisions, shielding themselves from exploitative practices and contributing to a safer LPG market. Consumers can exercise their rights in the context of liquefied petroleum gas through various actions. Currently, many consumers in Tanzania tend to exercise their rights by switching suppliers. This happens due to the presence of multiple LPG suppliers; hence they decide to switch to a different provider because they are dissatisfied with the service from the current supplier (Olowolayemo, 2023). Others can seek redress through law enforcers or consumer protection forums. These challenges highlight the importance of studying consumers' awareness of their rights under existing legislation and its impact on their behavior in the LPG sector in Ilemela District, Tanzania.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Each year, millions of consumers worldwide encounter challenges in navigating the marketplace, where their rights are often ignored or exploited. In Tanzania, despite the existence of consumer protection laws, such as the Fair Competition Act (2003) and the Weights and Measures Act (1982), consumers continue to face significant issues regarding awareness of their rights and the availability of effective recourse mechanisms. The LPG sector, in particular, has been a focal point for consumer complaints, with instances of misinformation, product discrepancies, and unfair practices that undermine consumer trust and safety. In Complaint No. GA.71/309/88, of 2018, the Energy and Water Utilities Regulatory Authority (EWURA) addressed a case where Oryx Gas Tanzania Ltd. reported unauthorized refilling and tampering of LPG cylinders. This case revealed inconsistencies in cylinder seals and weights, demonstrating how unauthorized activities compromise safety and consumer rights. EWURA imposed a fine and compliance order, underscoring the importance of adherence to LPG regulations. This example reflects a broader issue in Tanzania, where consumer exploitation persists due to limited awareness and empowerment.

The issue of consumer rights awareness, particularly among street food vendors using LPG in Ilemela District, Tanzania, is an important yet underexplored area in the context of African markets. Despite global recognition of consumer empowerment as essential for sustainable development (Mittal et al., 2012; Mittal & Gupta, 2013; Mani & Dorgan, 2023), studies examining the link between consumer rights awareness and behavior have yielded inconsistent results. For example, while high awareness levels were noted, actual exercise of consumer rights remained low in studies by Mittal & Gupta (2013) and Makanyeza et al. (2021). Furthermore, there has been limited research specifically focusing on the African context, particularly on niche sectors like street food vendors using LPG. This study aims to address this gap by examining consumer rights protection awareness and its impact on behavior, with a specific focus on knowledge of rights, access to information, and redress mechanisms among street food vendors in Ilemela District (Makanyeza et al., 2021; Mwakatumbula et al., 2015)

1.3 Research Objectives

The general objective of the study is to investigate consumers' rights protection awareness and its impact on behavior. A case of street food vendors using LPG in Ilemela District, Tanzania.

It was guided by three specific objectives:

- i. To assess the impact of the level of consumers' rights protection awareness on behavior of street food vendors using LPG.
- ii. To examine the impact of consumers' knowledge of accessing information of consumer rights protection on-behavior of street food vendors using LPG.
- iii. To assess impact of the level of consumers' knowledge regarding redress mechanisms of consumer s' rights protection on behavior of street food vendors using LPG.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Consumer Rights and Consumer Rights Awareness

Consumer rights are now a global weapon for consumers to demand quality that is fit for consumption. Consumer rights mean the rights of the consumer to be informed about the quality, safety, potency, quantity, standard purity, and price of goods to protect the consumer against unfair trade practices (Makanyeza et al., 2021). It also implies that the consumer should insist on getting from the producer or seller all the information about the product or service before making a choice or a decision (Njuguna et al., 2014). Thus, consumer rights are an entitlement that a consumer enjoys at the marketplace and are enshrined in most countries' constitutions. In 1982, Consumer International's Charter of Consumer Rights came up with eight consumer rights: the Right to basic needs, to information, to safety, to choose, to be heard, to redress, to education, and to a healthy environment. These Rights were further reinforced by the adoption of UN Guidelines on Consumer Protection in 1985 and 1999. These eight rights, though they vary from country to country due to the diversity of consumers, form the foundation of consumer legislation in many parts of the world (Consumer Council of Zimbabwe, 2019; Consumers International, 2019; Donoghue et al., 2015; K.B. Bello et al., 2016; Larsen & Lawson, 2013; Kilenga, 2023). Consumer rights (CR) in Tanzania are entrenched in the Fair Competition Act 2003.

The right to safety stipulates those consumers have a right to be protected against marketing activities that are harmful to their health and life. The right to be informed stipulates those consumers have a right to be given enough information to make informed decisions in the marketplace. Thus, consumers should be protected against misleading marketing communications. The right to choose states that consumers have a right to choose goods and services that are of reasonable quality and price. Consumers should be protected from business practices that can potentially prejudice consumers such as unfair pricing, profiteering, and artificial shortages. The right to be heard is also known as the right to representation. Consumers have a right to express themselves

without fear or favor in influencing government policies that impact consumer welfare.

The right to basic needs is also known as the right to satisfaction of basic needs. Consumers have a right to access goods and services that are deemed necessities of life such as food, shelter, and basic education. The right to redress is concerned with the compensation of consumers when they are wronged as a result of unfair business practices. The right to consumer education stipulates those consumers have a right to be educated to gain the knowledge and skills required to make informed decisions in the marketplace. The right to a healthy environment requires that consumers live and work in an environment that does not threaten their well-being (Consumer Council of Zimbabwe, 2019; Consumers International, 2019; Bello et al., 2016; Makela & Peters, 2004; Makanyeza et al., 2021).

A ninth consumer right has been added and is called the consumer right to privacy, as identified in Guo (2012). The right to privacy is concerned with the protection of consumer privacy when consumers conduct transactions such as online. This is especially important in e-commerce businesses where consumers tend to divulge large amounts of personal information to the seller. This is particularly relevant in the hotel industry where consumers provide a lot of personal information, most of which can be provided online and is retained by service providers. Payments can also be made online using debit and credit cards. Consumers have a right to protection of such valuable personal information. This study focuses on consumer rights in relation to LPG as a product used by street food vendors in Ilemela District, Tanzania.

Consumer rights awareness is at the height of consumerism. It refers to the extent to which an individual consumer is knowledgeable and understands his/her rights in the marketplace (Makanyeza et al., 2021, p. 18). As the most critical factor in consumerism, consumer rights awareness empowers consumers to make informed purchase decisions. It also enables consumers to pressure companies to produce quality products (Bello et al., 2016).

Bello et al. (2020) argue that consumers with higher knowledge of rights are better positioned to make evaluative judgments about a company and its products/services. Furthermore, consumers will exhibit a high degree of satisfaction and continue to patronize businesses that prioritize consumer rights.

Awareness of consumer rights empowers consumers to seek redress when dissatisfied. Conversely, consumers unaware of their rights are less likely to seek redress against violators, regardless of product or service dissatisfaction (Donoghue et al., 2015).

Consumer complaints stem from dissatisfaction with a company's products/services. If these complaints are ignored, they can escalate into consumer activism, such as boycotts and mass protests, negatively impacting the company's reputation and image (Anadol et al., 2015; Makanyeza et al., 2021). Similarly, earlier studies by Garman et al. (1992)

emphasized the importance of consumer rights knowledge for informed decision-making, leading to improved consumer well-being and greater accountability among producers and sellers.

2.2 Consumer Behavior

Consumer behavior is related to consumers' attitudinal reaction towards deviation from or conforming to consumers' rights. It also entails consumers responding to behaviors consistently and predictably. Consumer attitude represents a general evaluation of an object, which can be a product, service, or brand, which is a crucial predictor of behavioral intention. Consumer attitude comprises three elements with hedonic and utilitarian implications, namely beliefs (the cognitive component), feelings (the affective component), and behavioral intention (the conative component). Beliefs represent knowledge and perceptions that are acquired by consumers through a combination of direct experience with the attitude object and related information from various sources. Consumer beliefs about an object such as a hotel are the characteristics that they ascribe to it. Feelings represent the effects or emotions of consumers toward a particular object such as a hotel. Feelings are believed to be central to the study of consumer attitude because they provide a summary of the consumer's predisposition towards a particular object (Makanyeza, 2014; Yeung & Leung, 2007). Consumer attitude directly influences consumers' behavioral intention to purchase, which in turn directly influences behavior (Ankrah 2013' Kolkailah et al 2012; Makanyeza, 2014; Wang et al., 2020).

Purchase intention is a component of an attitude which is also known as behavioral intention. It refers to an individual's motivation in cognition to expend effort in pursuing and implementing a specific behavior (Paul et al., 2016; Kotler & Armstrong 2017). Purchase intention represents the intention to rebuy a product or patronize a service provider. Consumer intention represents what a consumer thinks will purchase in the future or will take redress action. It is a consumer's conscious plan to purchase or repurchase a good or service depending on previous interaction with the seller or producer. Consumers' attitudes in terms of purchase/repurchase or Intention to seek redress in case getting dissatisfied product or service are the indicators of customer behaviors/utilization in this study.

2.3 Rights Awareness and Consumers Behavior

It has been shown that there is a relationship between awareness of consumers' rights and rational consumer behavior (Kairyu 2023; Yasodha & Sukasini 2021; Vaishnav & Routiya 2022). The results also demonstrated that awareness is a prerequisite to consumer behaviors while unawareness leads to ignorance and a reduction of individual capacity in protecting and upholding their rights against sellers' exploitation (Ishak & Zabil 2012). It has also been found that among the various consumer rights, the highest awareness was observed for the right to choose, and the lowest awareness regarding the right to safety. The right to information was found to be utilized by most consumers and the lowest utilization was observed for the right to health and

environment (Mittal et al 2012). Also, Makanyeza et al (2021) found that consumers' rights awareness had a positive effect on both consumer attitude and behavioral intention to exercise their rights while consumer attitude has a positive effect on consumer behavioral intention. These studies demonstrate that consumers' awareness of Consumer Rights Protection influences customers' attitudes and behaviors towards goods and services.

2.4 Theoretical literature review

This part reviews the theory which explains the study problem which in the case, the Theory of Planned Behavior developed by Ajzen (1985) was the appropriate theory for the study.

2.4.1 Theory of Planned Behavior

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), proposed by Ajzen in 1985, provides a framework for understanding and predicting human behavior based on specific contexts, emphasizing both volitional and perceived control over actions. Unlike the earlier Theory of Reasoned Action, which focuses solely on voluntary control, the TPB expands its scope by incorporating the idea that perceived control over behavior also influences decision-making (Ajzen, 1985, 1991). In the context of consumer rights, this theory suggests that awareness of consumer rights can shape attitudes and intentions, ultimately influencing actual behavior, such as seeking redress or making purchase decisions (Ishak & Zabil, 2012). Studies like those by Zulkupri et al. (2022) and Makanyeza et al. (2021) have successfully applied TPB to explore how consumer rights awareness impacts attitudes and behaviors, highlighting its relevance to understanding consumer decision-making in diverse sectors, including the hospitality and street food industries.

2.4.1.1 Central Concepts of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) is a psychological theory that aims to predict and explain human behavior in specific contexts. TPB posits that individual behavior is influenced by three primary factors: attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control (Ustadi, 2023).

Attitude, in the context of TPB, refers to an individual's overall evaluation or appraisal of performing a particular behavior (Ajzen, 2020). It reflects the individual's beliefs about the consequences of the behavior and the extent to which they perceive these consequences as favorable or unfavorable. Attitude is determined by a combination of beliefs about the behavior's outcomes and the subjective importance or value attached to these outcomes (Moon, 2021). In the context of this study, consumers' awareness of their rights regarding LPG cylinder weight and labeling plays a crucial role in shaping their attitude toward purchasing such products. If consumers believe this awareness empowers them to make informed choices and protects their interests, it fosters a positive attitude towards seeking accurately weighed and labeled LPG cylinders.

In the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control (PBC) are key psychological factors that influence individual behavior. Subjective norm refers to the social pressure individuals perceive from significant others to perform or avoid a particular behavior, encompassing both social approval (injunctive norms) and the prevalence of behavior among peers (descriptive norms) (Choi & Chung, 2013). In the context of LPG purchasing decisions, the influence of dealers, agents, and society can shape consumer behavior, particularly when social circles emphasize the importance of informed and responsible decisions regarding LPG use. Perceived behavioral control (PBC) reflects an individual's perception of their ability to perform a behavior, factoring in both internal (skills, resources) and external (environmental constraints) elements (Shufiana et al., 2021). For LPG consumers, challenges like access to weighing scales or unclear labeling can impede their perceived control, affecting their purchasing choices. Together, these three constructs—attitude, subjective norm, and PBC—offer a comprehensive framework for understanding LPG consumers' behavior and decisions (Lim & Weissmann, 2023).

2.4.1.2 Underlying assumptions about human behavior and decision-making

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) is grounded in several key assumptions that enhance its ability to predict and explain human behavior. It assumes that individuals are rational decision-makers who carefully consider the potential outcomes of their actions, attitudes, and social norms before forming behavioral intentions (Vorobyova et al., 2022). TPB also posits that individuals possess volitional control over their behavior, meaning they can choose to engage or not engage in specific actions, even though external factors may influence their decisions (Ajzen & Schmidt, 2020). Social influence plays a significant role, as individuals' intentions are shaped by the perceived expectations and norms of important others, such as family and peers (Ajzen, 2020). Additionally, the theory acknowledges that perceived behavioral control—an individual's perception of their ability to perform a behavior, along with any external barriers or facilitators—greatly impacts both their intentions and actual behavior (Rausch & Kopplin, 2021).

2.4.1.3 Strengths of TPB as a model include:

Predictive Power: TPB has been widely used in research to predict a variety of behaviors across different contexts (Hasan & Suciarto, 2020). Its ability to capture the influence of attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control on behavioral intentions makes it a robust model for understanding human behavior.

Applicability: TPB can be applied to a wide range of behaviors, from health-related behaviors such as exercise and dieting to social behaviors such as voting and recycling. Its flexibility and adaptability make it a valuable tool for researchers and practitioners in various fields (Ajzen, 2020).

Modifiability: TPB allows for the incorporation of additional variables or moderators that may enhance its predictive ability.

or explanatory power for specific behaviors (Dalila *et al.* 2020). Researchers can modify the model to better fit the context or population under study, increasing its relevance and utility.

Intervention Design: TPB provides insights into the determinants of behavior, allowing researchers and practitioners to develop targeted interventions aimed at changing attitudes, subjective norms, or perceived behavioral control to promote desired behaviors (Van *et al.* 2020). By addressing the key constructs of the model, interventions can effectively influence behavioral intentions and outcomes.

2.4.1.4 Limitations of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)

While the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) is a widely used and valuable model for understanding human behavior; **Limited Predictive Power:** TPB may not fully capture all factors influencing behavior. It primarily focuses on cognitive determinants such as attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control, potentially overlooking emotional, situational, or contextual factors that may also play a significant role in behavior (Yuriev *et al.* 2020).

The Complexity of Behavior Human behavior is often complex and multifaceted, influenced by a myriad of factors beyond those considered in TPB (Hosen *et al.* 2023). Individuals may exhibit inconsistent or contradictory behaviors due to competing motivations, conflicting beliefs, or situational constraints, which TPB may not adequately address.

Measurement Challenge: Assessing the key constructs of TPB, such as attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control, can be challenging. Self-report measures may be subject to biases or social desirability effects, leading to inaccuracies in data collection and interpretation (Hagger *et al.* 2022).

Limited Generalizability: TPB's applicability may vary across different populations, cultures, and contexts. The theory was developed primarily in Western contexts and may not fully capture the cultural or social nuances influencing behavior in diverse populations (Sun *et al.* 2020). Additionally, individual differences in personality, cognitive styles, and social identities may affect the relevance and generalizability of TPB.

Behavior is not static but rather dynamic and subject to change over time. TPB may not adequately account for the dynamic nature of behavior, including fluctuations in attitudes, social norms, and perceived control, as well as the influence of life events, experiences, and interventions (Mayo & Gordon, 2020).

2.4.1.5 Application for this Research

Generally, the theory of Planned Behavior was used in guiding this study to illustrate, and offer justifications that there is a need for the right to be informed choice through enforcement of weight, measures, and labeling of LPG cylinder and cross-checking weight with the buyer (consumer) when it comes to the purchase of gas for cooking and heating

purposes. This is vital in ensuring that consumer is well informed about the LPG weight status prescribed by legal metrology and to allow them to make informed choices before proceeding to purchase and use the gas. Besides that, the notion of protecting consumer rights and interests always lies in the responsibility of the government agency to enforce laws and regulations. Therefore, imposing a labeling and measurement gas cylinder requirement in the legal metrology legislation is the correct approach to upholding consumers' rights (Astuti *et al.* 2019).

Table 1: Relevance of Planned Behavior Theory (PBT) Assumptions and Research Objectives

PBT Elements	Relevance	Research Objectives
Attitudes	Consumers' level of awareness may influence their attitudes towards exercising consumers' rights protection.	To assess the impact of the level of consumers' rights protection awareness on behavior of street food vendors using LPG in Ilemela District Tanzania.
Subjective Norms	Consumers' perception of social pressure regarding their knowledge of consumers' rights protection can influence their behavior.	To examine the impact of consumers' knowledge of accessing information about consumers' rights protection on behavior of street food vendors using LPG in Ilemela District Tanzania.
Perceived Behavioral Control	Consumers' knowledge of redress mechanisms affects their perceived control over addressing LPG-related issues.	To assess impact the level of consumers' knowledge regarding redress mechanisms for consumers' rights protection on behavior of street food vendor using LPG in Ilemela District Tanzania.

Source: Researcher (2024)

2.5. Empirical Literature Review

This part explores empirical literature regarding consumers' rights awareness, redresses procedures, and effective behavior and discusses by drawing from studies across different countries.



2.5.1 Level of Consumer Rights Awareness and Consumer Behavior

Consumer rights awareness in this research is depicted in terms of the extent to which individual is knowledgeable and understands of his/her consumer rights and duties as consumer protection is stipulated in the Fair Competition Act (FCA) of Tanzania (2003). That level of awareness has an influence on how a consumer reacts towards consumer rights. protection Njuguna et al (2014) in their study of level of consumer rights awareness and its effect of consumer rights awareness on consumerism in Kenya, concluded that consumer rights awareness had a significant effect on consumerism and that most household consumers were aware of their consumer rights but the majority of them were not effectively utilizing the established consumer protection mechanisms or avenues to exercise their rights regarding issues of consumer products. However, our study within the context of street food vendors using liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) in Ilemela District Tanzania.

Chaudhury (2017) conducted a study to gauge the consumer awareness level of the Consumer Rights and Protection Act 1986 among college students in Assam, India. The findings of the study were unsatisfactory (low) awareness level of students as consumers. Some of the Degree level students did not even know that they were consumers and their knowledge told them that only the one who pays for the goods/service is a consumer. The study, however, focused on a specific demographic (college students) and did not explore consumer awareness across different educational backgrounds as the current study explores a broader range of demographics in Tanzania

Arora & Soni (2018) carried out a study to determine the awareness of consumers towards their Rights and Consumer Protection Act, 1986 in Punjab India. It was found that consumers become aware of their consumer rights through television, radio, newspapers, and other sources. It further found that at television was the principal media through which they came to know about their rights. That study focused on media channels, while this study on consumer awareness among food street vendors using LPG in Ilemela District, Tanzania.

Surender & Reeramulu (2020) provide valuable insights into the challenges consumers face in asserting their rights under the Consumer Protection Act (CPA) in Hyderabad, Telangana. Their findings those consumers are aware of their rights but struggle to utilize legal avenues for redress underscore the need for more accessible consumer protection mechanisms. This study's recommendation to integrate consumer education into school curricula is relevant, but its focus on urban consumers with access to formal education does not consider the informal sector, where consumers, like street food vendors, may lack basic literacy and awareness of their rights. By focusing on street food vendors in Tanzania, my study addresses this critical gap, exploring how informal market participants can be empowered to assert their rights, despite their lower levels of education and formal access to legal mechanisms.

2.5.2 Consumers' Knowledge to Access Information and Consumer Behavior

Consumer knowledge refers to familiarity, awareness, or understanding of someone or something which could be facts, information, or descriptions that is acquired through experience or education or learning that aids to access information such as that consumer protection rights (Vocabulary Dictionary, 2024). Consumer knowledge in the current situation of LPG consumers are familiar of understand of where to get information pertaining what is expected of LPG suppliers and users responsibilities. The level of such knowledge is expected to influence consumers' behavior.

Ishak & Zabil (2012) examined the relationship between consumers' awareness and knowledge of their rights and consumer behaviors in Malaysia, employing a survey technique to measure awareness, knowledge, and behaviors. While their use of correlation analysis provided insight into the significant relationship between awareness and consumer behavior, the study's reliance on self-reported data raises concerns about potential biases. Additionally, while the research indicates that urban dwellers were less aware of their rights compared to rural residents, this finding might not be generalizable to contexts outside Malaysia. The study does not differentiate between types of awareness (e.g., general awareness of consumer rights vs. specific knowledge about consumer protection laws)

Kulkarni & Mehta (2013) focused on consumer rights awareness among management students in Ahmednagar City, India, highlighting that while students were aware of their rights, they often did not lodge complaints against businesses. This study provides valuable insight into the disconnect between awareness and action but is limited by its focus on educated, urban students, who likely have more access to consumer rights information compared to street food vendor in the current study who are more mostly less educated. While current study is dealing consumers' rights protection in food and beverage

Makanyeza et al. (2021) examined the effect of consumer rights awareness on consumer attitudes and behavioral intentions in Namibia, using structural equation modeling to establish a positive relationship between awareness and behavior. The study's sophisticated use of regression analysis provides strong empirical evidence but its focus on hotel guests, a relatively privileged and educated demographic, limits the generalizability of its findings to populations with lower literacy or income levels, such as street food vendors in Tanzania. Moreover, while the study explored the moderating effects of education, gender, and age, it did not account for other socioeconomic variables, such as income or access to resources, that could play a significant role in consumer behavior. Thus, study extends this line of inquiry by examining how consumer rights awareness among street food vendors—who may have limited formal education—affects their purchasing decisions, particularly in relation to LPG use, where safety and cost are significant concerns.

2.5.3 Knowledge of redress procedure of CRP and Consumer Behavior

Zeithaml et al. (2018) define a complaint as an expression of dissatisfaction with products or services. Complaints are linked to consumers' right to express dissatisfaction and to seek redress when businesses engage in unfair practices. Despite these rights, many consumers do not act on them, which is a critical issue in consumer protection.

Studies on consumer rights awareness across various contexts highlight a recurring theme: while awareness of rights is often present, the utilization of redress mechanisms remains low due to barriers such as complexity, lack of knowledge, and perceived inefficiencies. For instance, Mittal et al. (2012) found that women in Bhiwani City, India, were aware of certain consumer rights but rarely used complaint procedures due to their perceived time-consuming nature. Similarly, Mittal & Gupta (2013) observed high awareness in Haryana, India, yet a significant gap in the use of formal redress mechanisms, partly due to a lack of knowledge about the necessary documentation. Ankrah (2013) further confirmed this trend in Ghana, where consumers often opted for private actions like boycotting, rather than engaging with formal complaint channels. These findings underscore the importance of not only raising awareness but also improving access to and understanding of redress mechanisms. In the context of Tanzania, especially among street food vendors using LPG, further research is needed to identify specific barriers to redress and develop strategies to enhance consumer engagement with formal complaint processes.

Research on consumer rights awareness and the utilization of redress mechanisms across different contexts consistently reveals that while awareness of rights is often high, structural and psychological barriers prevent consumers from taking action. Gurusamy et al. (2014) found that in India, despite high awareness of consumer rights, fears of legal procedures, time constraints, and costs discouraged consumers from filing complaints. Similarly, Tamilmani (2023) identified insecurity, fear of courts, and time pressures as key barriers to consumer action in Coimbatore, emphasizing the need for simpler and more accessible complaint processes. Vaishnav and Routiya (2022) further highlighted that, despite strong consumer protection laws in India, many consumers remained unaware of their rights and how to seek redress, leaving them vulnerable to exploitation. These findings suggest that similar challenges may exist among street food vendors in Tanzania, particularly those using LPG, where complex procedures and lack of awareness can hinder access to redress. This underscores the need for targeted education, simplified processes, and legal reforms to empower consumers and improve the effectiveness of consumer protection systems.

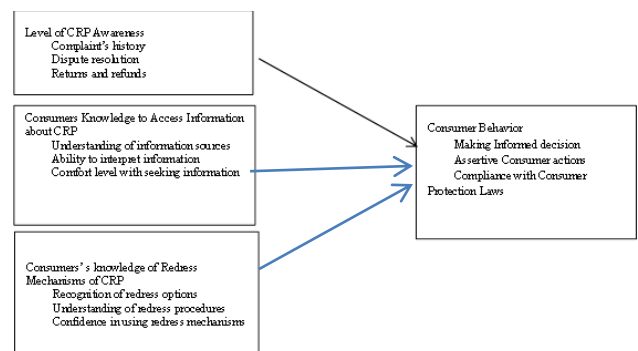
In conclusion, while studies from various countries provides valuable insights into the barriers that prevent consumers from utilizing redress mechanisms, there is a need to explore these issues specifically within the context of street food vendors using LPG in, Tanzania. Understanding level of consumers' rights protection awareness, consumer knowledge accessing information about consumer rights protection and consumer

knowledge regarding redress mechanism is critical in designing intervention that promote consumer rights protection and responsible consumer behavior

2.5 Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is a visual presentation that explains graphically or in narrative form, the main issues to be studied—such as key factors, concepts, or variables and presumed relationships among them (Miles, Huberman & Saldaña, 2013). This study is about consumers' rights protection awareness and consumers' behavior. In particular, level of Consumers Rights Protection (CPR) Awareness, consumers knowledge to access information about CRP, and knowledge of redress procedure about CRP are the independent variables which were conceptualized in terms of their experiences and perceptions regarding using CRP. Furthermore, the dependent variable is consumer behavior conceptualized as making informed decision and assertive consumer actions related to CRP. In several studies, it has been shown there is association between independent variables and dependent variables (Njuguna et al 2014; Mwakatumbula et al 2015; Chaudhury 2017; Kairyu 2023; Makanyeza et al 2021; Yasodha & Sukasin 2022; Vaishnav & Routiya 2022). The study proposed that independent variables impacted influence consumer behavior (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



Source: Researcher (2024)

4. Research methodology

In order to attain the aim of this research, quantitative approach was adopted as it enable the use of scientific methods including inferential statistics that are suitable for establishing the relationship between independent and dependent variables since it enables a multifaceted approach and allows the use of surveys that fulfill the study requirements. This approach was deemed appropriate as has been applied in consumerism studies conducted by Ardianto & Yulianti (2021) in Indonesia and Leeuwen (2017) in India and various consumer rights awareness studies in Kenya (Njuguna et al 2014; Kairyu 2023). The approach is also deemed suitable for evaluating the link between independent and dependent variables where there are limited empirical studies (Laws et al 2003). The study involved street food vendors who use LPG in the four selected wards in Ilemela District, Mwanza City. According to the ward executive officer's report (2024), Ilemela District, Mwanza City, was a

suitable study area as the population had the required data to describe consumer protection rights and their impact on consumer behavior. A stratified random sampling technique was used for sample selection, while the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table was utilized to determine the appropriate sample size of 123 respondents from a population of 184 LPG users. Data was collected using self-administered questionnaires and analyzed using multiple regression analysis with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS version 26)

5.0 Results

5.1 Reliability Analysis

To evaluate the reliability of the data collection tools, Cronbach's alpha, an internal consistency technique, was computed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). Version 26.

Table 2: Reliability statistics of the constructs in the study

Construct Variable	Cronbach's Alpha (α)	Number of items
level of consumers' rights protection awareness	0.872	14
Consumers' knowledge of accessing information regarding Consumer Rights Protection (CRP)	0.853	6
Consumers' knowledge regarding redress mechanisms about Consumer Rights Protection (CRP)	0.774	6

Consumer behavior	0.862	3
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Source: Field data (2024)

The results from the pilot study showed in Table 2 indicate that level of consumers' rights protection awareness (0.872), level of consumers' knowledge regarding redress mechanisms of CRP (0.774), Consumers' knowledge of accessing information regarding CRP (0.853) and consumer behaviour (0.862) has the highest Cronbach's alpha (α) values. An alpha coefficient greater than 0.70 shows that the data gathered have high level of internal consistency, allowing generalization to represent the opinions of all respondents within the target group, according to Cooper and Schindler (2018) All of the items in the research instrument in each variable in this study were above the 0.70 cutoff, demonstrating that the data collection's internal consistency was high and acceptable for data collection.

5.2 Analysis of impact of Consumers' rights on consumer behavior

(a) Descriptive statistics

(i) Consumers' rights awareness and its impact on behavior.

This section aimed to establish the overall consumer behavior towards products or services in usage of LPG cooking products in relation to (i) awareness of consumers' rights protection, (ii) knowledge on how to access information about consumer rights, and (iii) knowledge of redress procedures for seeking solution based on consumers' protection rights as they relate LPG usage in the study area. Table 4 presents the summary findings.

Table 4: Consumers Rights' Protection Awareness and their impacts on Consumer Behavior

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree,	Strongly Agree
Awareness of consumers' rights protection has positively influenced to make better choices	12	53	17	27	14
	9.8%	43%	13.8%	22%	11.4%
Knowing how to access information about consumer rights has made more informed and confident on matters regarding consumer rights protection	20	63	16	13	11
	16.3%	51.2%	13%	10.6%	8.9%
Knowledge of redress procedures based on consumers rights protection has positively been helpful in seeking solutions	51	37	16	10	9
	41.5%	30.1%	13%	8.1%	7.3%

Source: Field data (2024)

The findings in table 4 indicate that 52.8% of respondents disagree/ strongly disagree with the statement that the awareness of consumers' rights protection had positively influenced to make better choice and only 33.4% respondents agree/strongly agree. Also, majority (67.5%) of the respondents disagree/strongly disagree with the statement that knowing how to access information about consumer rights

had made more informed and confident on matter regarding consumer rights protection while 19.6% agree/strongly agree to that statement. Furthermore, majority (71.6%) respondents disagree/strongly disagree that the knowledge of redress procedures based on consumers' rights protection had positively been helpful in seeking solution whereas 15.4% agreed/strongly agreed with that statement. These results low level of consumers' right awareness of protection rights, low knowledge of how to access information about consumer

rights, and low knowledge of redress procedures on LPG usage have lead to consumers not being able to assertively exercise their consumers rights over usage of LPG in their street food vendor activities. These results suggest that the majority of consumers in the study area are ignorant of consumers’ protection rights and this leads to their exploitation by LPG suppliers.

(b) Relationship between consumers’ rights awareness and consumer behaviors

(i) Multiple linear regression

The study utilized multiple linear regression to analyze the impact of consumer rights protection awareness on the behavior of food street vendors using LPG. The results are presented in the following tables

Model Summary

The results of model summary are presented in table 5.

Table 5: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.688 ^a	.473	.460	2.28600
a. Predictors: (Constant), B, C, D				

R-squared is a statistical measure that represents the proportion of the variance in the dependent variable that can be explained by the independent variables in a regression model (Field, 2018).

R-squared (0.473): The model explains approximately 47.3% of the variation in consumer behavior (Y) based on consumers’ rights protection awareness, knowledge of accessing information, and knowledge of redress mechanisms (B, C, D). This indicates a moderate level of explanatory power. The adjusted R-squared of 0.460 suggests that about 46% of the variation in consumer behavior (the dependent variable) can be explained by the combined effects of the level of consumers’ rights protection awareness, knowledge of accessing information, and knowledge of redress mechanisms (independent variables). This suggests that the model is moderately effective in predicting consumer behavior.

The results in Table 5 also suggest that the predictors (independent variables) were considerably strong, as R = 0.688 indicates the strength of the relationship. Thus, there is a significant correlation between the independent variables. Ibidunni et al. (2017) and Ibidunni (2019) specified that the summary model could account for 52% of the changes, and this specification is supported by the current findings.

ANOVA Test

According to Fisher (1918) the aim of ANOVA is to test for differences among the means of responses from the population through examining to what extent variation is within each sample of the population. This test is utilized in showing whether there are few or many statistical differences between the means of three or more variables that being examined as presented in Table 6

Table 6: AVOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	558.665	3	186.222	35.635	.000 ^b
	Residual	621.872	119	5.226		
	Total	1180.537	122			
a. Dependent Variable: \bar{Y}						
b. Predictors: (Constant), B, C, D						

As shown by initial findings in Table 6 as a whole, there is a statistical difference between the groups. This significance is verified by the F test statistics value of 35.635 at p-value = 0.000, < 0.000 which suggests a strong positive correlation between the research (independent and dependent) variables). That is to say that, the overall model is statistically significant (p-value < 0.000), meaning it is unlikely that the observed relationship between the independent variables and consumer behavior occurred by chance.

Regression Coefficients

The multiple linear regression analysis is a dependable model strategy for assessing which one of the studied independent variables has a statistical influence on the dependent variable.

Table 7: Final Regression Results (Regression Coefficients)

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.064	.835		.077	.939
	B	.096	.027	.328	3.487	.001
	C	.122	.040	.241	3.065	.003
	D	.152	.059	.246	2.580	.011
a. Dependent Variable: \bar{Y}						

From Table 7, the final regression results can be presented in the following equation as; $\bar{Y} = 0.064 + 0.096B + 0.122C + 0.152D + 2.286$.

The regression results display that B (Beta=3.487, p<.001) this information displays positive relationship between level of consumers rights protection awareness and consumer behavior that have strong significant impact. Also, C (Beta=3.065 p, <.003) which also represents the strong relationship between Consumer Knowledge of Access Information and consumer behavior which display positive relation. Additionally, D (Beta 2.580 p, <.011) which represents the existence of strong relationship between Consumer Knowledge of Redress Mechanism and consumer behavior. Therefore, all variables used to determine consumer behavior were positively related and statistically significant.

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(ii) Bayesian Correlation Summary

A Bayesian analysis was also conducted to examine the correlations between the level of consumer rights protection awareness (B), consumer knowledge of access information

(C), consumer knowledge of redress mechanisms (D), and consumer behavior among street food vendors. The results in Table 8.

Table 8: Bayesian Correlation results

Posterior Distribution Characterization for Pairwise Correlations ^a						
			Level of consumer rights	Access information	Redress mechanism	Consumer behavior
Level of consumer rights	Posterior	Mode		.558	.689	.612
		Mean		.548	.679	.603
		Variance		.004	.002	.003
	95% Credible Interval	Lower Bound		.424	.590	.489
		Upper Bound		.667	.778	.709
	N			123	123	123
Access information	Posterior	Mode	.558		.583	.552
		Mean	.548		.574	.544
		Variance	.004		.004	.004
	95% Credible Interval	Lower Bound	.424		.456	.417
		Upper Bound	.667		.690	.664
	N			123	123	123
Redress mechanism	Posterior	Mode	.689	.583		.591
		Mean	.679	.574		.582
		Variance	.002	.004		.004
	95% Credible Interval	Lower Bound	.590	.456		.467
		Upper Bound	.778	.690		.696
	N			123	123	123
Consumer behavior	Posterior	Mode	.612	.552	.591	
		Mean	.603	.544	.582	
		Variance	.003	.004	.004	
	95% Credible Interval	Lower Bound	.489	.417	.467	
		Upper Bound	.709	.664	.696	
	N			123	123	123

a. The analyses assume reference priors (c = 0).

The Bayesian analysis reveals strong positive correlations among the variables:

A strong positive correlation exists between Level of Consumer Rights Awareness and Redress Mechanism and with a posterior mean correlation of 0.679 (95% credible interval: 0.590-0.778). A moderate positive correlation exists between Level of Consumer Rights Awareness and consumer

knowledge of access information, with a posterior mean correlation of 0.548 (95% credible interval: 0.424-0.667).

A strong positive correlation exists between Level of Consumer Rights Awareness and Consumer Behavior, with a posterior mean correlation of 0.603 (95% credible interval: 0.489-0.709). A moderate positive correlation exists between knowledge of consumer Access to Information and Redress Mechanism, with a posterior mean correlation of 0.574 (95%

credible interval: 0.456-0.690). A moderate positive correlation exists between consumer knowledge of Access to Information and Consumer Behavior, with a posterior mean correlation of 0.544 (95% credible interval: 0.417-0.664). A moderate positive correlation exists between consumer knowledge of Redress Mechanism and Consumer Behavior, with a posterior mean correlation of 0.582 (95% credible interval: 0.467-0.696).

5.3. Discussion and conclusion

The study examined the impact of consumers' rights protection awareness on the behavior of street food vendors using LPG in Ilemela District, Tanzania. The study revealed a generally low level of awareness regarding consumer rights, access to information, and redress mechanisms among street food vendors in the study area. This low awareness negatively impacts their ability to make informed decisions and seek redress, when necessary, in the course of exercising their rights. These results contrast with the findings by Njuguna et al. (2014) in their Kenyan study, which concluded that consumer rights awareness had a significant effect on consumerism and that most household consumers were aware of their consumer rights but the majority of them were not effectively utilizing the established consumer protection mechanisms or avenues to exercise their rights regarding issues of consumer products. The results were nonetheless concurred with those of Chaudhury (2017), who found a lack of awareness among Indian students regarding consumer rights and protection measures, leading them not to seek redress when wronged by sellers.

The results indicated that respondents had low knowledge across all indicators regarding access to information about consumer rights protection. Furthermore, the study has revealed that a significant positive relationship exists between consumer rights protection awareness and consumer behavior. Thus, an increase in the level of consumer awareness of their protection rights leads to effective and rational consumer behavior of LPG products. Moreover, consumers' ability to access information about their protection rights had a significant positive influence on their behavior. Hence, well-informed consumers are more likely to adopt safe and efficient practices when using LPG products. These results agree with those of Makanyeza et al. (2021) in their study of consumer rights awareness in Namibia, who indicated that consumers' rights awareness had a positive effect on both consumer attitude and behavioral intention to exercise their rights, while consumer attitude had a positive effect on consumer behavioral intention.

The results indicate that respondents had low knowledge across all indicators regarding redress mechanisms about consumer rights protection with LPG usage. Additionally, findings further expose that there is a strong positive correlation between the level of consumer rights protection awareness and knowledge of redress mechanisms. These findings are in line with those of Vaishnav and Routiya (2022) regarding the awareness of consumers on consumer rights as prescribed in related laws in India. Their findings

inferred those consumers needed to be aware of their redress procedures so that consumers become aware of their rights and obligations. Tamilmani (2023), in his study of the level of consumer awareness on Consumer Rights on consumer goods, with reference to Coimbatore City, India, revealed that although consumers may be aware of redress procedures, other factors such as money power, level of confidence, and position in society may preclude wronged consumers from taking action. Nevertheless, consumers who are aware of how to address grievances are more proactive and confident in ensuring dealers of LPG products conform with expected standards for safe use of LPG products. Overall, the low awareness of consumer rights has led to low access to information and redress mechanisms during their use of LPG products in the study area.

5.4 Recommendations

With respect to the obtained research findings through the questionnaire with street food vendors using LPG, the study has arrived at the following recommendations.

The results showed a low level of consumer rights protection awareness. The Ilemela District Commissioner, in collaboration with national consumer protection bodies such as the Fair Competition Commission and the Weights and Measures Agency, should develop and run consumer rights education programs for all street food vendors using LPG. This could be a precondition for acquiring business permits. The programs should focus on educating street food vendors about their rights, safety protocols, and redress mechanisms to improve their overall awareness and consumer behavior.

Also, the study has shown low knowledge of accessing information about consumer rights protection. Firstly, the Ilemela District Commissioner, in conjunction with consumer protection bodies such as weights and measures agencies, should design booklets containing information about consumer protection rights in Swahili for distribution to all LPG users. Secondly, the Ilemela District Commissioner, in conjunction with consumer protection bodies such as weights and measures agencies, should engage community leaders, NGOs, CBOs, and FBOs in regular, targeted public awareness campaigns. These campaigns should focus on informing street food vendors about their consumer rights and the safe use of LPG. Through media platforms (radio, social media, etc.) and community workshops, vendors will be better equipped to protect their rights and handle LPG safely.

The results from the study further showed low knowledge of the consumer accessibility of redress mechanisms regarding consumer protection rights. The Ilemela District Commissioner, in collaboration with government protection agencies, should improve the visibility and accessibility of redress mechanisms. This can be achieved by setting up help desks, providing hotlines, and offering legal assistance to help vendors navigate the process of seeking redress. National government and regulatory bodies should run campaigns on how LPG users in general should lodge complaints regarding substandard LPG products.

By implementing these recommendations, the overall awareness and behavior of street food vendors regarding LPG usage in the Ilemela District can be significantly improved, leading to safer practices and better consumer protection.

5.5 Suggestions for Future Research

This study has led to the discovery of new issues that need to be addressed in future studies to add more knowledge to consumers' protection rights. Research should be conducted to assess the economic impact on street food vendors of complying with safety regulations and consumer protection laws.

Also, research should be carried out on the influence of government policies and regulations on the behavior of street food vendors using LPG, aiming to provide insights into effective policy formulation and implementation.

This research was carried out in a few Wards in Ilemela District. More studies on the same topic should be carried out in other Districts/Regions before generalizing the results to entire populations.

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