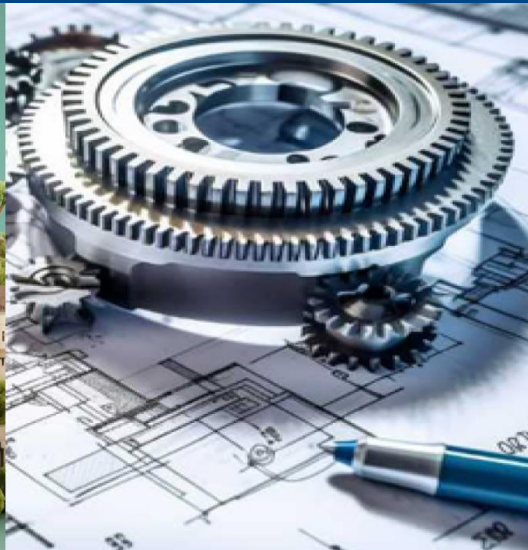
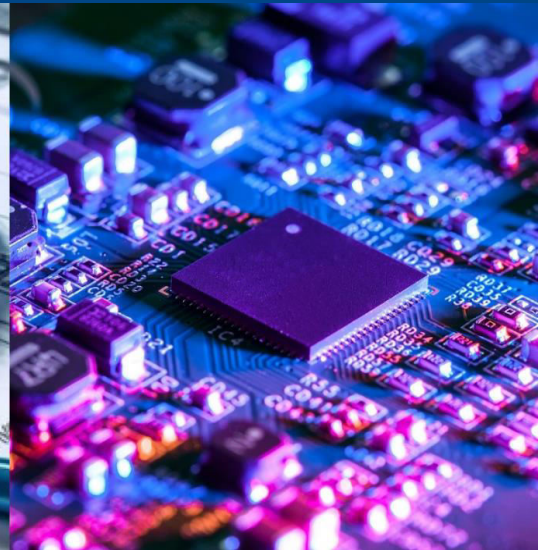
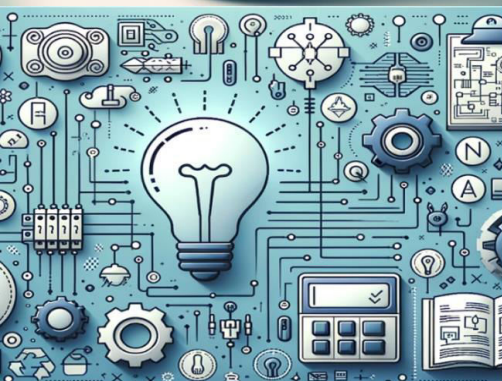




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Impact of Inventory Availability on Customer Satisfaction and Retention in the Construction Chemicals Market: A Single-Firm Empirical Study of the MYK Laticrete Dealer Network in Tamil Nadu

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ABSTRACT. Inventory availability is the most basic operational promise a manufacturer makes to the dealers that resell its products. In the Indian construction-chemicals sector, where independent dealers are the last-mile link to masons, contractors and homeowners, there is little empirical evidence on how availability shapes customer satisfaction and retention. This study examines that relationship in the MYK Laticrete dealer network in Tamil Nadu using a quantitative, cross-sectional, single-firm design. ABC analysis was applied to 48 products using monthly consumption value, and a structured 30-item questionnaire measuring four inventory-availability dimensions, customer satisfaction and customer retention produced 85 usable dealer responses. Sixteen of 48 products (33.3%) account for 69.1% of the ₹1.99 crore monthly consumption value, chiefly tile adhesives, wall putty and waterproofing systems. All scales were reliable ($\alpha = 0.874\text{--}0.912$). The availability dimensions explain 67.8% of the variance in customer satisfaction and 90.1% in retention. When satisfaction is added, $R^2 = 0.915$; order fulfilment, responsiveness and support, and satisfaction remain significant, a pattern consistent with partial mediation. Responsiveness and support is the strongest predictor of retention ($\beta = 0.417$). The paper proposes a prioritised action plan: tighter control of Class A products, faster order fulfilment and proactive dealer communication. Limitations include the single-firm, cross-sectional design, possible common-method variance and the absence of a formal indirect-effect test.

KEYWORDS: Inventory availability; customer satisfaction; customer retention; dealer network; ABC analysis; construction chemicals; channel relationships; Tamil Nadu

I. INTRODUCTION

Availability of the right product, in the right quantity, at the right time is the most basic promise a manufacturer makes to its channel partners. In building-materials markets the promise is tested daily at the dealer's counter, because the end buyer, whether a mason, contractor or homeowner, often makes the brand decision there and then. If the requested product is not on the shelf, the sale is lost or switched to a competing brand that happens to be in stock.

India's construction-chemicals industry (tile adhesives, grouts, waterproofing systems, repair mortars, screeds and allied products) is expanding rapidly, supported by public housing and urban-development programmes and by a shift from site-mixed mortars to prepackaged products, with continued growth projected through 2034 (IMARC Group, 2025). The route to market is dealer-driven. For a manufacturer such as MYK Laticrete, which competes with Pidilite, Fosroc, Saint-Gobain Weber, Sika and Ardex, the dealer is both a customer who buys from the company and a channel through which the company reaches the market. Dealers in Tamil Nadu report shortages of fast-moving products, erratic replenishment and demand-forecast mismatches, and unmet orders push price-sensitive buyers towards competitors.

Logistics service quality is well studied in business-to-business (B2B) and FMCG channels, but empirical evidence on Indian construction chemicals is scarce. This study addresses three questions: (i) how can the product range be classified by consumption value, and which products need the tightest availability control; (ii) to what extent do the



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dimensions of inventory availability influence customer satisfaction and retention, and does satisfaction mediate this relationship; and (iii) what action plan follows from the findings. Throughout, “customer” refers to the dealer who purchases from MYK Laticrete, so “customer satisfaction” and “customer retention” denote the satisfaction and retention of these B2B buyers, consistent with the title of the study.

II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESES

2.1 Theoretical background

Mentzer, Flint and Kent (1999) conceptualise logistics service quality as a determinant of customer satisfaction; within this tradition inventory availability is operationalised through order fill rate, stock-out rate, replenishment lead time and safety-stock availability. Uvet (2020) confirms availability and timeliness as significant drivers of B2B customer satisfaction, and Gupta et al. (2023) support decomposing service performance into separate dimensions. Anderson and Narus (1990) model the distributor–manufacturer relationship as a working partnership in which the distributor’s satisfaction depends on the outcomes the manufacturer delivers relative to expectations. Under the expectation–confirmation perspective (Oliver, 1980), repeated stock-outs create negative disconfirmation, and from the resource-based view (Barney, 1991) reliable supply is an operational capability that rivals cannot easily imitate.

Commitment–trust theory (Morgan and Hunt, 1994) holds that commitment and trust convert good relationship performance into cooperation and a lower propensity to leave. Satisfaction plays the equivalent intermediate role here: reliable availability builds satisfaction, and satisfaction sustains the dealer’s willingness to stock, display and sell the brand. Tedja et al. (2024) provide recent B2B evidence that satisfaction, rather than perceived value, drives the intention to continue a partnership. Related work shows that the reason given for a stock-out affects buyer responses (Ezhil Kumar, Sharma and Tapar, 2021), that customer satisfaction can be indexed and segmented within Tamil Nadu (Ramarathnam and Siva Rama Prasad, 2022), and that digital vendor-managed inventory can improve satisfaction through shared stock information (Osarenkhoe et al., 2024).

2.2 Research gap

Prior research concentrates on petroleum, FMCG, third-party logistics and organised retail; construction chemicals remain unexamined from a customer-retention perspective. Existing models also tend to treat operating performance as one undifferentiated construct, and B2B retention studies are typically single-company and cross-sectional. This study responds by studying construction chemicals in Tamil Nadu, decomposing availability into four dimensions, and combining an ABC classification of the product range with a dealer survey.

2.3 Hypotheses

The conceptual framework (Figure 1) positions inventory availability, measured through four dimensions, as the independent variable, customer satisfaction as the intermediate variable and customer retention as the dependent variable. The following hypotheses are tested:

- H1: Inventory availability has a significant positive relationship with customer satisfaction. This is examined dimension by dimension: H1a Availability & Fill Rate (IDV1), H1b Delivery & Order Fulfilment (IDV2), H1c Replenishment & Stock Planning (IDV3) and H1d Responsiveness & Support (IDV4).
- H2: Customer satisfaction significantly mediates the relationship between inventory availability and customer retention.



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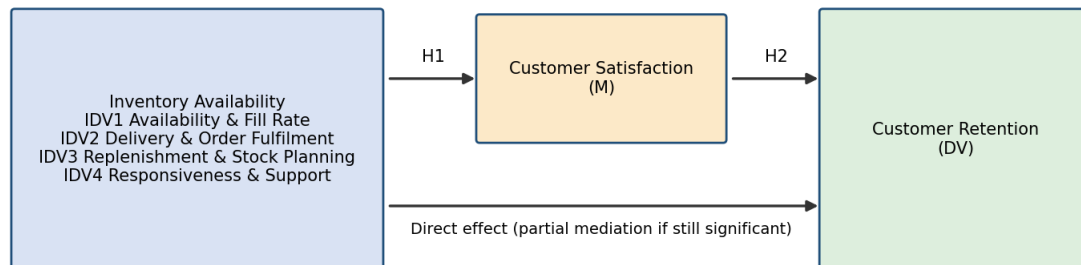


Figure.1. Conceptual framework: Inventory availability → Customer satisfaction → Customer retention

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Design and data

The study follows a quantitative, descriptive-explanatory, cross-sectional design within a positivist paradigm. It is a single-firm study: all respondents are dealers of one manufacturer, which holds brand, pricing policy and supply chain constant so that variation in perceptions can be linked to the availability dealers experience. Two data sources were used. Secondary data (rate and monthly quantity for each of 48 SKUs from dealer inventory and sales records) supported the ABC classification. Primary data came from a structured questionnaire.

3.2 Sampling and instrument

The population comprised MYK Laticrete dealers across Tamil Nadu in metropolitan, tier-2, tier-3/semi-urban and rural/highway markets. A stratified approach was adopted to represent these segments. The questionnaire was administered through Google Forms, distributed over WhatsApp and personal interaction during a one-month survey period, and yielded 85 valid responses. It contained 40 questions: dealer-profile items followed by 30 five-point Likert statements, five for each of six constructs (Table 1). Constructs and items are grounded in Mentzer et al. (1999), Uvet (2020), Anderson and Narus (1990), Morgan and Hunt (1994) and Tedja et al. (2024). Each construct score is the mean of its five items.

The minimum sample for a regression with four predictors was set by a priori power analysis in G*Power (Faul et al., 2009): $f^2 = 0.15$ (Cohen, 1988), $\alpha = 0.05$ and power = 0.80 give $n = 85$ (achieved power 0.803). Green's (1991) rule, $N \geq 50 + 8m$, gives 82. Models with a fifth predictor (satisfaction) would need 92 respondents for 0.80 power; power at $n = 85$ is approximately 0.76.

Table.1. Constructs, variable codes and reliability

Construct	Code	Items	Role	Cronbach's α
Availability & Fill Rate	IDV1	5	Independent	0.886
Delivery & Order Fulfilment	IDV2	5	Independent	0.874
Replenishment & Stock Planning	IDV3	5	Independent	0.902
Responsiveness & Support	IDV4	5	Independent	0.912
Customer Satisfaction	M	5	Mediator	0.881
Customer Retention	DV	5	Dependent	0.911
Overall scale	—	30	—	0.982

Source: Primary data (SPSS output).



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3.3 Analytical techniques

ABC (Pareto) analysis ranked SKUs by monthly consumption value (rate $\times$ monthly quantity; Silver, Pyke and Thomas, 2017). Class A covers SKUs up to roughly 70% of cumulative value, Class B up to about 90%, and Class C the remainder. Reliability was assessed with Cronbach's alpha (Cronbach, 1951; threshold 0.70, Nunnally, 1978), sampling adequacy with the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) measure and Bartlett's test (Kaiser, 1974), and common-method bias with Harman's single-factor test (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Hypotheses were tested with multiple regression in IBM SPSS, including a model with satisfaction added to the availability dimensions, a reduced model and an interaction model, with residual independence checked by the Durbin–Watson statistic (Durbin and Watson, 1951). Nested models were compared with F-tests on the change in R^2 .

IV. RESULTS

4.1 Measurement quality

All six scales exceed the 0.70 reliability threshold ($\alpha = 0.874$ – 0.912 ; overall 0.982). KMO is 0.936 and Bartlett's test is significant ($\chi^2 = 2885.17$, $df = 435$, $p < 0.001$), so the data are suitable for multivariate analysis. Durbin–Watson values of 1.879 to 2.014 indicate no meaningful autocorrelation, and all model F-tests are significant at $p < 0.001$. Harman's first unrotated factor explains 66.07% of variance, above the 50% benchmark, so common-method variance cannot be ruled out; this is treated as a limitation.

4.2 ABC classification of the product range

The 48 SKUs have a total monthly consumption value of ₹1,98,58,270 (about ₹1.99 crore). Value is highly skewed: the median per SKU is ₹2,40,000 against a maximum of ₹18,37,500 (LATAFINISH Wall Putty). Sixteen SKUs (33.3%) form Class A and account for 69.1% of value; 18 SKUs are Class B (20.8%) and 14 are Class C (10.1%) (Table 2, Figure 2). The top three SKUs (wall putty, L315 Plus and L307) contribute 25.7% of value and the top eight, one sixth of the range, contribute 50.6%. Nine of the 16 Class A SKUs are tile adhesives, four are waterproofing solutions, and the rest are wall putty, a screed and repair mortars. Tile adhesives alone contribute 45.9% of value, and together with wall putty 55.2%; waterproofing adds 14.3%.

Table.2. ABC classification summary

Class	No. of products	% of items	Monthly value (₹)	% of value
A (high)	16	33.3%	1,37,21,100	69.1%
B (medium)	18	37.5%	41,38,920	20.8%
C (low)	14	29.2%	19,98,250	10.1%
Total	48	100%	1,98,58,270	100%

Source: Computed from dealer inventory and sales records.



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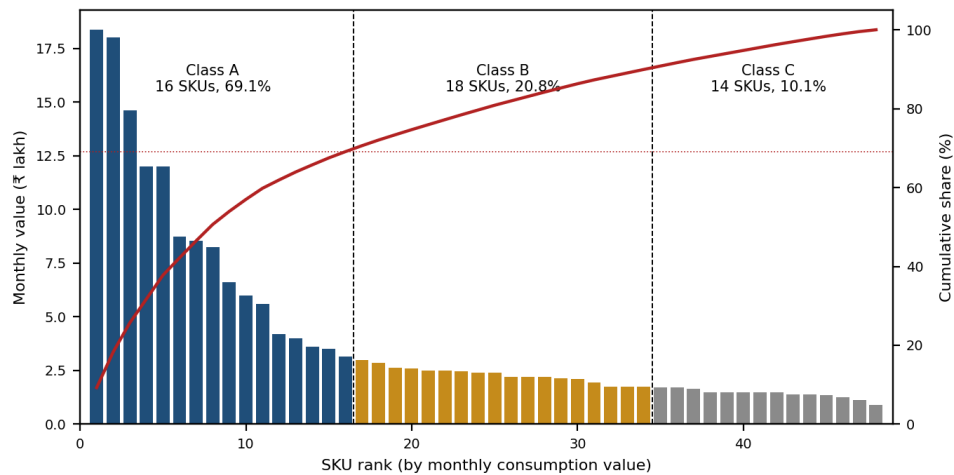


Figure.2. Pareto chart of SKU consumption value with ABC class boundaries

4.3 Availability, satisfaction and retention

Six regression models were estimated (Table 3). The four availability dimensions jointly explain 67.8% of the variance in customer satisfaction (S-1: $F(4, 80) = 42.19$, $p < 0.001$), supporting H1. A reduced model with only Availability & Fill Rate and Delivery & Order Fulfilment explains almost as much (S-2: $R^2 = 0.673$; $\Delta R^2 = 0.005$, $F(2, 80) = 0.62$, $p = 0.54$), so these two dimensions are the core drivers of satisfaction. The four dimensions explain 90.1% of the variance in retention (R-1).

Table.3. Summary of regression models

Model	Dependent variable	Predictors	R ²	Adj. R ²	F (df)
S-1	Satisfaction	IDV1–IDV4	0.678	0.662	42.19 (4, 80)
S-2	Satisfaction	IDV1 + IDV2	0.673	0.665	84.53 (2, 82)
R-1	Retention	IDV1–IDV4	0.901	0.896	181.13 (4, 80)
R-2	Retention	IDV1–4 × M (interactions)	0.899	0.894	177.35 (4, 80)
R-3	Retention	IDV1–IDV4 + M	0.915	0.909	169.39 (5, 79)
R-4	Retention	IDV2 + IDV4 + M	0.912	0.908	278.91 (3, 81)

Source: Primary data (SPSS output). All models significant at $p < 0.001$. M = customer satisfaction.

Adding satisfaction to the retention model raises R^2 from 0.901 to 0.915 ($\Delta R^2 = 0.014$; $F(1, 79) = 13.01$, $p < 0.001$). In Model R-3 (Table 4), satisfaction is a significant predictor of retention ($\beta = 0.261$, $p = 0.009$), as is Responsiveness & Support ($\beta = 0.316$, $p = 0.009$), while Delivery & Order Fulfilment is marginal ($\beta = 0.204$, $p = 0.051$). Dropping the two non-significant dimensions leaves explanatory power virtually unchanged (R-4: $R^2 = 0.912$; $\Delta R^2 = 0.003$, $F(2, 79) = 1.36$, $p = 0.26$), and all three remaining predictors are significant: Responsiveness & Support ($\beta = 0.417$, $p < 0.001$), Satisfaction ($\beta = 0.287$, $p = 0.004$) and Delivery & Order Fulfilment ($\beta = 0.279$, $p = 0.003$).



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Table.4. Regression of customer retention on availability dimensions and satisfaction

Predictor	B	SE	β	t	p
Model R-3					
IDV1 Availability & Fill Rate	0.018	0.095	0.019	0.188	0.851
IDV2 Delivery & Order Fulfilment	0.207	0.105	0.204	1.982	0.051
IDV3 Replenishment & Stock Planning	0.178	0.122	0.186	1.457	0.149
IDV4 Responsiveness & Support	0.323	0.121	0.316	2.683	0.009
M Customer Satisfaction	0.271	0.101	0.261	2.673	0.009
Model R-4 (reduced)					
IDV2 Delivery & Order Fulfilment	0.283	0.092	0.279	3.082	0.003
IDV4 Responsiveness & Support	0.427	0.094	0.417	4.544	< 0.001
M Customer Satisfaction	0.297	0.099	0.287	2.988	0.004

Source: Primary data (SPSS output). R-3: $R^2 = 0.915$, $SE = 0.209$, $DW = 1.879$. R-4: $R^2 = 0.912$, $SE = 0.210$, $DW = 1.953$. Constants omitted.

In the interaction model (R-2), only the product of Responsiveness & Support and satisfaction is individually significant ($\beta = 0.632$, $p = 0.006$), suggesting that the contribution of responsiveness and support to retention is larger where dealers are more satisfied. Because product terms were entered without their constituent main effects, this is not a full moderation test, and R-3 remains the better basis for interpretation.

Hypothesis decisions are summarised in Table 5. H1 is supported overall. H1a and H1b are supported as core drivers, whereas H1c and H1d are not supported as unique predictors of satisfaction in the reduced model. H2 is supported in a partial-mediation pattern: satisfaction is significant, and the direct effects of order fulfilment and responsiveness and support persist.

Table.5. Summary of hypothesis testing

Hypothesis	Evidence	Decision
H1	S-1: $R^2 = 0.678$, $p < 0.001$	Supported
H1a	Retained with IDV2 in S-2	Supported
H1b	Retained with IDV1 in S-2	Supported
H1c	Not retained in S-2	Not supported as unique predictor
H1d	Not retained in S-2 (strongest retention predictor in R-4)	Not supported as unique predictor
H2	Satisfaction significant in R-3 and R-4; direct effects of IDV2 and IDV4 persist	Supported (partial mediation pattern)

Source: Compiled from the regression results. H1a–H1d decisions are inferred from the reduced Model S-2.



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V. DISCUSSION

Three patterns stand out. First, availability is a very strong correlate of both satisfaction and retention, in line with Uvet (2020) and Anderson and Narus (1990). Second, satisfaction retains its own significant relationship with retention after availability is controlled, consistent with Tedja et al. (2024) and the satisfaction–commitment–retention logic of Morgan and Hunt (1994). Third, because Responsiveness & Support and Order Fulfilment keep significant effects alongside satisfaction, the pattern is consistent with partial rather than full mediation. Inventory availability thus works as a relational signal: dealers who can rely on the supplier's stock read that reliability as evidence that the supplier values the relationship.

The very high R^2 with only two or three individually significant predictors is the typical signature of strongly intercorrelated predictors. Coefficients should therefore be read as indicating relative importance rather than precise effect sizes.

5.1 Managerial implications

Combining the ABC results with the regression findings gives the following prioritised plan for MYK Laticrete (Table 6). A phased roll-out is suggested: foundation (months 0–3: adopt the ABC policy, set Class A safety stock and reorder points, baseline fill rate by dealer), service improvement (months 3–6: shorter Class A lead times, stock-out alerts, priority for high-value dealers) and review and scale (months 6–12: all dealer categories, quarterly satisfaction pulse). Timelines are indicative.

Table.6. Action plan for improving availability and customer satisfaction

#	Recommended action	Evidence	Indicative KPI
1	Prioritise the 16 Class A SKUs with dedicated safety stock, tighter reorder points and continuous review, starting with wall putty, L315 Plus, L307, L310 and HYDRO BAN	Class A = 33.3% of SKUs, 69.1% of value	Class A fill rate; stock-out days per dealer
2	Improve order fulfilment: shorter lead time and higher fill-rate targets, starting with high-value dealers	IDV2 significant in R-4 ($\beta = 0.279$)	Fill rate; cycle time; on-time-in-full
3	Strengthen dealer communication: proactive stock-out alerts, delivery-status updates, fast escalation route	IDV4 strongest predictor ($\beta = 0.417$)	% stock-outs communicated; response time
4	Differentiate control: periodic review for Class B, min–max or order-on-demand for Class C	Class B and C = 30.9% of value	Inventory turns; active SKUs
5	Run a quarterly pulse survey using the validated 30-item instrument	Satisfaction predicts retention ($\beta = 0.261$)	Satisfaction index; retention rate

Source: Developed by the authors from the empirical findings.

VI. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The study covers one manufacturer in one state, so generalisation is limited. Its cross-sectional design shows association, not causation. With $n = 85$, the sample meets the power requirement for four predictors but is modest for five-predictor models and segment comparisons. All constructs were self-reported by the same respondents, and Harman's first factor (66.07%) exceeds the 50% benchmark. Variance-inflation factors were not reported, probable multicollinearity affects the coefficients, and the overall alpha of 0.982 hints at item redundancy. Mediation rests on nested regression comparisons without a bootstrapped indirect effect, and the interaction model omitted main effects.



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Classification used consumption value alone, and retention reflects reported behaviour and intention rather than observed repurchase.

Future work should (i) test the indirect effect with bootstrapping or structural equation modelling such as PLS-SEM; (ii) compare metropolitan, tier-2, tier-3 and rural dealers using multi-group analysis; (iii) report variance-inflation factors and use regularised or latent-variable approaches; (iv) link survey measures to stock-out logs and actual repeat-purchase and switching records in a longitudinal design; (v) test stock-out attribution as a moderator (Ezhil Kumar et al., 2021) and digital replenishment practices such as vendor-managed inventory (Osarenkhoe et al., 2024); and (vi) validate findings on multi-firm, multi-state samples.

VII. CONCLUSION

Availability risk in the MYK Laticrete range is concentrated: 16 of 48 SKUs carry 69.1% of consumption value. Across 85 dealers, the four availability dimensions are strong predictors of satisfaction ($R^2 = 0.678$) and retention ($R^2 = 0.901$), and satisfaction has its own significant relationship with retention ($\beta = 0.287$ in the reduced model) alongside direct effects of order fulfilment and responsiveness and support. The evidence supports treating inventory availability as a relational signal rather than only a logistics metric. A targeted effort on Class A control, reliable fulfilment and proactive dealer communication offers the most efficient route to stronger satisfaction and retention, subject to the limitations above.

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