

Dealers Opinion on Customer Preference Towards Tiles

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Abstract - This research paper focuses on understanding dealers' opinions regarding customer preferences for a specific tile brand. The study aims to explore dealers' perspectives on the factors that influence customers' decisions to choose particular brand over competitors, assess customer satisfaction based on dealer feedback, identify common complaints or issues raised by customers, and gather dealers' suggestions for potential improvements or innovations based on customer input. To analyze the data, the average mean ranking is used, followed by regression analysis to examine the relationship between overall customer satisfaction and dealer satisfaction and again another regression analysis is conducted to explore the link between customer satisfaction and dealers' willingness to continue their partnership with the brand. A questionnaire was distributed to 168 dealers of different tile brands at Chennai to gather insights into customer preferences for the tile brand. It was found that quality and durability are the most important factors influencing customers' decisions to purchase tiles. Customers are highly satisfied with the durability of the tiles; however, some customers have expressed complaints regarding the installation process. They have suggested that they would like to continue receiving high-quality tiles in the future also.

Key Words: Dealer opinions, Customer preferences, Quality, Durability, Customer satisfaction, Dealer satisfaction.

1.INTRODUCTION

The earliest use of tiles can be traced to Mesopotamia, where clay tiles were used for roofing and decorative purposes. These tiles were often glazed and featured intricate designs. The Greeks and Romans further developed tile technology, creating intricate mosaic floors and wall decorations. Roman hypocaust systems (underfloor heating) also utilized tiles to conduct heat. The 20th century saw further advancements in tile manufacturing, including the development of new materials like vinyl and linoleum. The Art Deco and Modernist movements also influenced tile design, leading to more abstract and minimalist patterns. Technological advancements have continued to transform the tile industry. Late 20th century to Present: Today, tiles are

used extensively in both residential and commercial buildings. Advances in technology have led to the production of a wide variety of tiles, including ceramic, porcelain, glass, stone, and metal. Modern tiles come in a vast range of colors, sizes, textures, and finishes, with digital printing technology allowing for highly detailed and customizable designs. Sustainability has also become a focus, with the development of eco-friendly tiles made from recycled materials and low-impact manufacturing processes. Customers often prioritize tiles that are durable and long-lasting. Tile manufacturers should ensure their products are made from high-quality materials that can withstand wear and tear. A smooth, polished finish and aesthetically pleasing designs can significantly influence customer preferences. Companies should focus on offering a variety of finishes, including matte, glossy, and textured options. Providing customization options for colors, patterns, and sizes can enhance customer satisfaction by allowing them to create unique and personalized spaces. Regularly collecting and analyzing customer feedback can provide insights into preferences and areas for improvement. Positive reviews can enhance credibility. Dealers play a crucial role in the distribution and sales of tiles, and their opinions can greatly influence the success of a brand. Dealers appreciate a brand that consistently delivers high-quality products. If a tile brand has a reputation for reliability and durability, it will positively influence dealer opinions. A diverse product range allows dealers to cater to various customer preferences. Tile companies should ensure they offer a broad selection of styles, colors, and finishes. Dealers favor brands that offer competitive pricing, as this enables them to achieve higher sales volumes. Tile manufacturers should ensure their pricing is competitive within the market. Involving dealers in decision-making processes, such as product development and marketing strategies, can enhance their commitment and loyalty to the brand. Dealers interact directly with end customers, providing them with first-hand knowledge of customer preferences, concerns, and purchasing behaviours. Customer preferences can vary significantly by region. Dealers provide localized insights, helping tile companies customize their offerings to meet regional demands and cultural preferences. informed decisions about product distribution and marketing efforts.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Jaiswal & Vishal Rai, 2024 conduct study on "Evolution and Prospects: A Comprehensive Analysis of the Ceramic Tile Industry in India" Ceramic tile industry in India is imperative in the current socio-economic context for several compelling reasons Through innovations in technology and materials, such as sector has undergone a notable transformation, integrating water recycling systems and energy-efficient kilns, manufacturers have reduced their environmental footprint significantly. Additionally, there's a heightened emphasis on sourcing local raw materials, minimizing transportation emissions. study of the ceramic tile industry in India reveals a sector that is at the crossroads of tradition and innovation, navigating challenges while welcoming radical change. Rao, 2023 conducted study on "Consumer Preferences and Dealer Insights: Evaluating the Market Position of Tiles" The reviewed studies aimed to: Investigate dealers' perspectives on customer preferences for Anuj Tiles. Identify the key factors influencing these preferences. Understand the role of dealers in shaping and responding to customer preferences. Examine market dynamics and competitive positioning of Tiles. The methodologies included In-depth interviews and focus groups with dealers to gain detailed insights into their perceptions and experiences. Verma & Anita Sharma, 2022 conduct study on dealer perspectives on emerging consumer trends regarding Tiles. Dealers reported a growing preference for tiles with advanced features such as anti-slip surfaces and high resistance to wear and tear. The study suggested that customer awareness of these advanced features, along with effective marketing strategies by Tiles, significantly influenced purchasing decisions. S. R. Mehta & M. K. Jain, 2021 conducted study on "Analyzing Dealer Opinions on Customer Preferences: The Case of Tiles" The primary objective across these studies was to investigate and understand the opinions of dealers regarding customer preferences for Tiles. The studies aimed to identify key factors that influence customer choices, the role of dealers in shaping these preferences, and the overall market perception of Tiles. The reviewed studies utilized a mixed-method approach: Qualitative Methods: In-depth interviews and focus groups with dealers to gather detailed insights into their perceptions and experiences. Mehta & Rakesh Kumar, 2021 conduct study on "Anuj Tiles: Dealer Opinions and Customer Choice" focused on dealer perceptions regarding the attributes of Tiles that attracted customers. The study found that ease of installation and the brand's comprehensive after-sales service were significant factors. Dealers reported that customers frequently cited these attributes when selecting tiles, indicating that practical benefits were as crucial as aesthetic ones. To examine dealer perceptions regarding the attributes of Tiles that attract customers. He used a mixed-method approach, combining a survey of 100 dealers with follow-up interviews to provide context and depth to the quantitative data. The study found that ease of installation and comprehensive after-sales service were significant factors influencing customer preference. Patel & Wang, M, 2020 conducted study on "Dealer Perception and Customer Preferences for Tiles: A Comparative Study" This comparative study analyzes how dealer perceptions align with actual customer preferences for Tiles, using a multi-city approach. To compare dealer perceptions with actual customer preferences across different cities. Comparative analysis based on survey data from 100 dealers and 200 customers in multiple cities. Dealers often

overestimate the importance of price and underestimate the significance of design variety and brand reputation. Gupta & Vikram Desai, 2020 conduct study on "Sustainability and Customer Preferences: Dealer Perspectives on Tiles" To explore how sustainability practices of Tiles influence customer preferences, as perceived by dealers. Gupta and Desai conducted a survey of 120 dealers, supplemented by interviews focusing on sustainability aspects of Anuj Tiles. They also reviewed company sustainability reports. Prakash & Dr. R. Sasikumar, 2019 conduct study on "Dealers' Opinion on Customer Preference towards Anuj Tiles" The objective of the literature review was to explore dealers' opinions regarding customer preferences for Anuj Tiles. Specifically, it aimed to identify factors influencing customer choices and the perceptions of dealers regarding these factors. Both qualitative and quantitative methodologies were employed in the reviewed studies. Qualitative methods included interviews and focus groups with dealers to understand their perspectives in-depth. Quantitative methods involved surveys distributed among dealers to gather data on customer preferences, buying patterns, and brand perceptions. Brand Image Anuj Tiles' brand image was found to significantly influence customer preferences, with dealers acknowledging its reputation for quality and variety. Mehta & Sanjay Kapoor, 2019 conduct study on "Impact of Dealer Networks on Customer Preferences for Anuj Tiles" "To assess how dealer networks influence customer preferences and purchasing decisions for Anuj Tiles. Mehta and Kapoor used a combination of surveys and case studies involving 140 dealers. They analyzed the impact of dealer recommendations and customer service on purchasing decisions. The study found that strong dealer networks and positive dealer recommendations significantly influenced customer preferences. Dealers noted that personalized customer service and timely product availability were crucial in driving sales. The research concluded that investing in dealer relationships and training could enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty. Gupta & Priya Singh, 2019 conduct study on "Dealer Perspectives on Customer Preferences for Tiles" an extensive survey of tile dealers across India to understand their insights into customer preferences for Tiles. The study revealed that dealers overwhelmingly believed that customers favoured Tiles for their aesthetic appeal and durability. Additionally, the report highlighted that customer preferences were strongly influenced by the tiles' affordability and the brand's reputation for quality. The study aimed to investigate dealer insights into why customers prefer Anuj Tiles and identify key factors influencing their purchasing decisions. Gupta and Singh conducted a survey involving 200 tile dealers across various regions of India. J & Gupta R, 2018 conducted study on "The factors influencing dealers' opinions on customer preferences for Anuj Tiles. It highlights the importance of design variety, price, and quality in customer decision-making. To identify the key attributes that customers consider when purchasing tiles and to understand dealers' perspectives on these preferences. Surveys and interviews with 50 tile dealers across urban and rural areas. Design and quality were the top preferences among customers, with price sensitivity varying significantly between urban and rural customers. Sharma & Anjali Verma, 2018 conduct study on "Dealer Insights into the Popularity of Anuj Tiles: A Regional Analysis" To evaluate dealer perceptions of Anuj Tiles in comparison to competitors and to understand the factors

influencing customer loyalty. Malhotra and Rao conducted a comparative analysis using a survey of 180 dealers who sold multiple brands of tiles. The survey included Likert scale questions and open-ended responses. The study found that dealers perceived Anuj Tiles to have a competitive edge due to their consistent quality and reliability. Customers were noted to prefer Anuj Tiles for their wide variety of designs and competitive pricing. The study also highlighted that effective dealer support and promotional activities contributed to customer loyalty. Desai, 2018 conduct study "Insights from tile dealers on the factors influencing customer preferences for Anuj Tiles". The research highlighted that brand loyalty played a significant role, with many customers preferring Anuj Tiles due to past positive experiences. Dealers also mentioned the competitive pricing and frequent promotional offers as key factors in customer decision-making. To provide insights from tile dealers on factors influencing customer preferences for Anuj Tiles. Desai conducted a survey with 120 dealers and analyzed historical sales data to understand trends and patterns in customer purchases. Brand loyalty emerged as a significant factor, with many customers preferring Anuj Tiles due to positive past experiences. Mirfakhradini, Khalil Safari, Naser Valaei, & Khadijeh Mohammadi, 2018 conduct study on "Customer involvement in new product development of tile and ceramic industry" Understanding the related factors that influence involvement of each stakeholder is crucial for achieving a sustainable competitive advantage. Therefore, this study is aimed to examine the effect and importance of customer involvement in new product development. The theoretical model is proposed based on a rigorous literature review and hypotheses are developed. In this survey – solidarity and cross sectional sampling is selected for considering the judgment of 150 managers, suppliers; and sellers (wholesalers and retailers) in Yazd tile and ceramic industry. The data is collected through questionnaires and the partial least squares-structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) approach is applied. Malhotra & Deepiks Rao, 2017 conduct study "To evaluate dealer perceptions of Anuj Tiles" in comparison to competitors and to understand the factors influencing customer loyalty. Malhotra and Rao conducted a comparative analysis using a survey of 180 dealers who sold multiple brands of tiles. The survey included Likert scale questions and open-ended responses. The study found that dealers perceived Anuj Tiles to have a competitive edge due to their consistent quality and reliability. Customers were noted to prefer Anuj Tiles for their wide variety of designs and competitive pricing. The study also highlighted that effective dealer support and promotional activities contributed to customer loyalty. Martínez, 2017 conduct study on "Current and future challenges of the ceramic tile firms". All the topics related to the practice of the tile industry are very interesting to me since my life has always been linked to this sector. I am currently working in a ceramic tile company and, therefore, my main goal is to learn as much as I can about this industry. As the title of the paper says, I try to study the main challenges which ceramic tile companies are facing today and which may face in the future. Some of these challenges are related to environmental criteria and measures. Those were not considered entirely important in the past, but they are receiving much importance today due to the effects that gas emissions have on the environment. Another challenge that ceramic tile companies encounter

nowadays is the new market trends that force companies to innovate and to expand their product portfolio with new measures and formats to compete in a market where rivalry is very high. Yarahmadi, Raheb Bagherpour, Sayed-Ghahreman, & Luis M.O. Sousa, 2016 conduct study on this paper proposes a "(three dimensional) and products from stone processing plants (two-dimensional). This factor, which shows the uniformity and esthetic index of a piece of stone, is determined based on the shape quality (a), number, size, and esthetic quality (b) of the pieces and the discontinuity factor (c) that separates the pieces. The quality factor is defined in a way that each previously mentioned characteristic of a piece is involved in the quality factor formula calculation. The quality factor ranges between 0 and 1 and can be expressed as a percentage. The proposed quality factor was calculated for a number of different stone blocks, slabs, and tiles to examine the validity of the quality factor formula. Baraldi, 2016 conduct study on "World production and consumption of ceramic tiles" The fifth edition of the publication "World production and consumption of ceramic tiles" produced by the Acimac Research Department has been released in November. Consisting of 260 pages of charts, tables and commentary, it provides detailed analysis of the ten-year trends up to 2016 in industry, markets, per capita consumption and export flows in large geographic regions and in the 76 largest tile producer, consumer, exporter and importer countries. After an essentially stationary 2015, 2016 saw a recovery in global production and consumption of ceramic tiles with growth of 5.7% and 5% respectively. Import/export flows were less dynamic with an upturn of 1.7%, a slight improvement on the +1.5% of 2015.

3. OBJECTIVES

- To identify the dealers' opinion on factors influencing the customer decisions to purchase tiles.
- To identify the customers' satisfaction with tiles based on dealer opinion.
- To identify common complaints or issues raised by customer regarding tiles.
- To know dealers' suggestions regarding potential improvements or innovations in tiles based on customer feedback.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

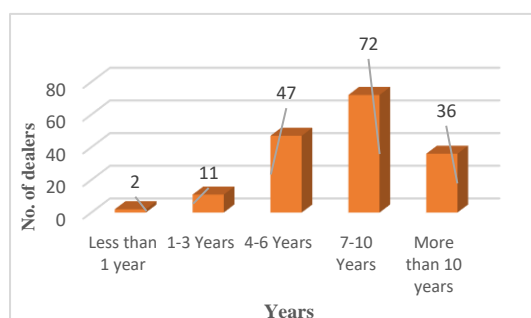
The research design used in this study is Descriptive in nature. Both primary and secondary data are used for the research. The primary data was collected by direct survey method from the dealers of the tiles. Secondary data for this research was obtained from the journals, literature and the various website. Structured Questionnaire was used as the data collection instrument. Population size is unknown. Population represents dealers of tiles. The sampling method used in this research is convenience sampling method. Sample size is 168 dealers of tiles. Various tools/methods are used for the purpose of analyzing the Dealers response towards various factors. Average mean ranking is used to find dealers' opinion on factors influencing the customer decisions to purchase the tiles, then to identify common complaints or issues raised by customer regarding tiles, to identify the customers' satisfaction with tiles based on dealers' opinion and to know dealers' suggestions regarding potential improvements or innovations in tiles based on customer feedback. Regression is used to find relationship between customers' satisfaction and dealer satisfaction and also to find the Relationship between customer satisfaction and dealers want to continue their dealership with tiles.

5. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Data analysis means put the data in full meaningful tables that is tabulation of data so as to make it convenient enough to analyze and draw results. Data obtained from 200 consumers entered into tables and cross tabulation had done for further analysis.

5.1 Demographic Profile

In order to know about the respondent's demographic details such as dealers' years in business were collected through questionnaires. The number of respondents under several groups of demographics is presented below



From the figure above, it can be seen that the majority of the dealers (72) have been in the business for 7-10 years, followed by 48 dealers who have been in business for 4-6 years. Only 2 dealers are relatively new to the business (less than 1 year).

5.2 Identify the dealers 'opinion on factors influencing the customer decisions to purchase the tiles.

From the above table it is inferred that quality and durability of the most important factors influencing

S.No	Factors influencing the customer decisions	Mean	Rank
1	Quality and Durability	4.2381	I
2	Aesthetic Appeal	4.1472	II
3	Designs and Colors	4.1301	III
4	Eco-friendly products	3.811	IV
5	Availability	3.644	V
6	Customer service	3.6330	VI

customer decisions to purchase tiles, according to dealers' opinion. Design and colors moderately influence customers, while customer service has less influence on their purchase decisions.

5.3 Identify the customers' satisfaction with tiles based on dealers' opinion.

S.No	Customers' satisfaction with tiles	Mean	Rank
1	Satisfied with durability	4.173	I
2	Satisfied with Value for money	4.048	II
3	Perceive the pricing of tiles	3.565	III

From the above table, it is evident that customers are highly satisfied with the durability of Tiles. They are moderately satisfied with the value for money and less satisfied with the pricing of tiles.

5.4 Identify common complaints or issues raised by customer regarding tiles.

S.No	Complaints or issues raised by customer	Mean	Rank
1	Difficulties with the installation of tiles	4.077	I
2	Complaints about tiles being slippery when wet.	4.006	II
3	Complaints about the color fading	3.994	III
4	Complaints about the availability of tiles in stock.	3.982	IV
5	Problems with the design and pattern consistency of tiles..	3.851	V
6	Issues with the durability of tiles	3.833	VI
7	Complain about the quality of tiles	3.780	VII

From the above table, it is evident that customers have fewer issues or complaints regarding the quality and durability of the tiles. However, they have moderate issues with the color fading of Tiles and more significant issues with the installation process of the tiles.

5.5 Know dealers' suggestions regarding potential improvements or innovations in tiles based on customer feedback.

S.No	Dealers suggestion based on customer feedback	Mean	Rank
1	Improving overall quality of tiles	4.414	I
2	To increase variety of designs and patterns	4.274	II
3	Make tiles easier to install.	4.190	III
4	To enhance the durability of tiles.	4.167	IV

From the above table, we know that the majority of customers feel it is very important to improve the quality of tiles in the future. Although the current quality is good, customers desire further improvements. Additionally, they believe it is moderately important to make the tiles easier to install. This inference is based on dealers' opinions according to customer feedback.

5.6 Relationship between customer satisfaction and dealer satisfaction.

H0: There is no significant relationship between customer satisfaction and dealer.

H1: There is a significant relationship between customer satisfaction and dealer satisfaction.

Independent Variable: Overall customer satisfaction.

Dependent Variable: Overall satisfaction of dealers in dealing with branded tiles.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Constant	2.386	.268		8.918	.000
Overall customer satisfaction	.357	.066	.387	5.404	.000

From the above table, we can see that $F=0.000$

$$Y = 0.387x + 0.268$$

From the table, it is evident that the significance value is 0.000, which is significantly below the conventional threshold of 0.05. This strong statistical evidence leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This shows that there is a significant association between overall customer satisfaction and dealers' satisfaction with dealing with Tiles Therefore, we can conclude that dealers are satisfied by the satisfaction of customers.

5.7 Relationship between customer satisfaction and dealers want to continue their dealership with tiles.

H0: There is no significant relationship between customer satisfaction and willingness of dealers to continue their dealership with tiles.

H1: There is a significant relationship between customer satisfaction and willingness of dealers to continue their dealership with tiles.

Independent Variable: Overall customer satisfaction.
Dependent Variable: Dealers want to continue the dealership with tiles in future also

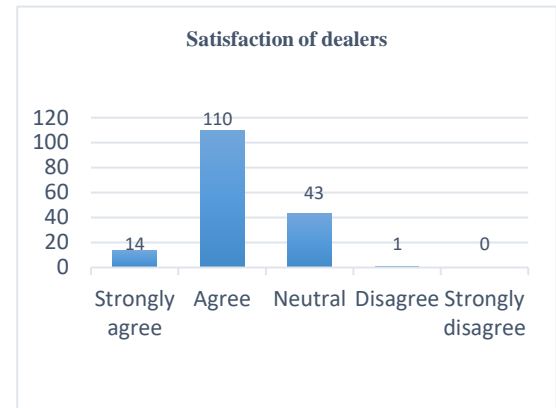
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Constant	1.652	.359		4.605	.000
Overall customer satisfaction	.527	.088	.420	5.955	.000

From the above table, we can see that $F=0.000$

$$Y = 0.420x + 0.35$$

From the table it is evident that, the regression analysis results reveal a significance value of 0.000, which is well below the conventional threshold of 0.05. Hence it is rejected. It shows that there is a significant association between overall customer satisfaction and dealers want to continue dealership with tiles in future also. Therefore, we can conclude that dealers want to continue their dealership with tiles by the satisfaction of customers.

5.8 Overall satisfaction of dealers in dealing with tiles.



From the table it is inferred that 64% of the dealers (110) agree that they are satisfied with dealing with Tiles. Additionally, 25% of the dealers (43) are neutral about their satisfaction, and 8% of the dealers (14) strongly agree that they are satisfied with dealing with Tiles. No dealers are dissatisfied with dealing with Tiles.

5.9 Dealers readiness to continue their dealership with tiles.



From this table, it is inferred that 40% of the dealers (68) agree to continue their dealership with Tiles in the future. Additionally, 37% of the dealers (64) are neutral about continuing their dealership with Tiles, and 19% of the dealers (32) strongly agree that they want to continue their dealership with tiles in the future. Very few dealers are not ready to continue their dealership with Tiles in the future.

5.10 Dealers willing to convey the customer preferences, opinions and suggestions to the company.



From this table it is inferred that 38% of the dealers (65) are sometimes willing to convey their customers' preferences, opinions, and suggestions to the company. Additionally, 16% of the dealers (28) are often willing to convey this information, and 3% of the dealers (5) are never willing to convey the customer preferences opinions and suggestions to the company.

6. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

❖ Demography of respondents

- ✓ By using bar chart it was found that majority of the dealers (72) have been in the business for 7-10 years. Only 2 dealers are relatively new to the business (less than 1 year).

❖ Dealers' opinion on factors influencing the customer decisions to purchase tiles.

- ✓ From the average mean ranking it is found that, quality and durability are the most important factors influencing customer decisions to purchase according to dealers' opinions.

❖ Dealers opinion on customers' satisfaction with tiles.

- ✓ From the average mean ranking it is found that, according to the dealers' opinion customers are highly satisfied with the durability of Tiles.
- ✓ Regression finding implies that the level of overall customer satisfaction has a substantial impact on the satisfaction of dealers who deal with Tiles. When customers are more

satisfied with the tiles, it positively influences the dealers' own satisfaction with their business relationship with Tiles. This highlights the importance of maintaining high customer satisfaction to ensure that dealers remain content and motivated to continue their business dealings with the company.

- ✓ Regression finding implies that the level of overall customer satisfaction has a notable impact on whether dealers choose to continue their association with tiles. Dealers are likely influenced by how satisfied their customers are with the products, and higher customer satisfaction translates into a greater likelihood of dealers wanting to maintain their dealership in the future. This underscores the importance of ensuring high customer satisfaction to retain dealer loyalty and support long-term business relationships.

❖ Common complaints or issues raised by customer regarding tiles.

- ✓ From the average mean ranking it is found that, customers have more significant issues with the installation process of the tiles and customers have fewer issues or complaints regarding the quality and durability of the tiles.

❖ Dealers' suggestions regarding potential improvements or innovations in tiles based on customer feedback.

- ✓ From the average mean ranking it is found that, according to dealers' suggestions regarding potential improvements or innovations in tiles based on customer feedback majority of the customers feel it is very important to improve the quality of tiles in the future.

❖ By using bar chart, it was found that,

- ✓ Majority of the dealers are satisfied in dealing with tiles.
- ✓ Majority of the dealers are agreed to convey their dealership with tiles in future also.
- ✓ Majority of the dealers are willing to convey the customer preferences, opinions, suggestions and complaints to the company.

7. CONCLUSION

Thus, in this study, it was found that, according to dealers' opinions, customers prefer Tiles for its quality and durability. Customers are satisfied with both the quality and durability of Tiles, as well as the value for money they provide. However, customers face some issues with the installation process and express a desire for further improvements or innovations in Tiles. Dealers also indicated satisfaction with their dealings with Tiles. A majority of dealers agree to continue their dealership with Tiles in the future. Additionally, many dealers want to convey their customer preferences, opinions, suggestions, and complaints to the company. This feedback loop helps Tiles in continuously improving its products and services to better meet customer expectations and enhance overall satisfaction. In conclusion, dealers play a pivotal role as intermediaries between Tiles and its customers, providing valuable insights into customer preferences, satisfaction levels, and areas for improvement. Through structured feedback mechanisms and regular engagement, Tiles can leverage dealers' frontline perspectives to enhance product offerings, customer service, and overall customer experience. By fostering a collaborative relationship with dealers and actively integrating their feedback into strategic decision-making processes, tiles can strengthen its market position, improve customer loyalty, and achieve sustained growth in a competitive industry landscape.

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