A COMPARATIVE STUDY ON CONSUMER PREFERENCE TOWARDS TRENDS AND ZUDIO WITH REFERENCE TO COIMBATORE CITY

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ABSTRACT

The fashion retail industry in Coimbatore has undergone significant transformation with evolving consumer preferences and the emergence of affordable fashion brands like Trends and Zudio. This study examines consumer preferences between these two leading retail brands, analyzing key factors such as pricing, product quality, trendy designs, variety, and shopping experience that influence purchasing decisions. The research employs a structured methodology using both primary data collected from 120 respondents in Coimbatore and secondary data from industry reports, analyzed through percentage analysis, rank analysis, and weighted average methods.

Preliminary findings indicate Zudio's stronger appeal among price-conscious consumers due to its affordability and fast-fashion offerings, while Trends attracts customers seeking quality and premium designs. The study provides valuable insights into Coimbatore's fashion retail dynamics, establishing a foundation for understanding consumer behavior and brand positioning in this competitive market. These findings will help retailers refine their marketing strategies and enhance customer satisfaction in the region's evolving retail landscape.

Key words: Consumer preference, Fashion retail, shopping experience, brand comparison

INTRODUCTION

The fashion retail industry in Coimbatore has undergone significant transformation due to changing consumer preferences and the rise of affordable fashion brands. Trends (by Reliance Retail) and Zudio (by Tata Trent) are two prominent players catering to different segments—Trends focuses on stylish yet premium offerings, while Zudio targets budget-conscious shoppers with fast-fashion trends. This study compares consumer preferences between these brands, analyzing factors like price, quality, design, and shopping experience. Understanding these preferences helps brands refine their marketing strategies, enhance customer loyalty, and strengthen their competitive positioning in Coimbatore's evolving retail market.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The rapid expansion of organized fashion retail in Coimbatore has seen both Trends and Zudio emerge as prominent players, yet there exists a significant knowledge gap regarding the precise determinants of consumer choice between these competing brands. While Trends positions itself in the mid-price segment and Zudio as a budget-friendly fast-fashion alternative, the relative importance of various decision-making factors including cost considerations, perceived quality, shopping environment, and demographic influences remains inadequately explored. Furthermore, current understanding lacks empirical evidence regarding comparative customer satisfaction, brand image differentiation, and specific deterrents affecting consumer loyalty in this market context. This investigation seeks to bridge these critical knowledge gaps through systematic analysis of purchasing behavior patterns, thereby generating strategic insights for retail operators aiming to optimize their market approach in Coimbatore and comparable urban retail environments.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

> ➢ **Chawla & Kumar (2014)** – A study on consumer preferences towards textile retail outlets in Coimbatore found that variety, affordability, and brand trust influence purchasing decisions. The research highlighted that customers prefer outlets offering a mix of traditional and modern wear. Customer service and store ambiance also played crucial roles. The study suggested that competitive pricing could enhance customer retention.

> ➢ **Kotler & Keller (2016)** – Examined consumer buying behavior in retail marketing, identifying affordability, trendiness, and brand reputation as key factors influencing fashion purchases. They also highlighted the influence of psychological factors, such as personal preferences and

emotions, along with 5 cultural influences like social trends and norms. Their study emphasizes the complexity of consumer decisions and the importance of these factors in shaping brand loyalty and purchasing behavior.

➢ **Kumar & Prasad (2019)** – Studied price sensitivity in fast fashion retail and found that Indian consumers prioritize affordable pricing over premium branding. Their findings suggest that budget-friendly brands like Trends and Zudio have an advantage in attracting middle-income consumers.

➢ **Patel and Choudhury (2022)** – Analyzed the impact of advertising strategies on consumer preferences, emphasizing how promotional efforts shape buying decisions. Their research highlights that effective advertising can significantly influence brand perception. This is relevant for understanding how Trends and Zudio's marketing strategies, such as promotions and digital campaigns, affect consumer choices in Coimbatore.

➢ **Sharma & Rao (2023)** – This study focused on the factors influencing consumer preferences in fashion retail stores in Coimbatore. It found that store ambiance, staff behavior, and ease of navigation significantly impacted customer retention. Discounts and loyalty programs further enhanced shopping experiences. The research emphasized that personalized shopping experiences could improve brand loyalty.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

❖ To examine the key factors driving consumer preference towards these brands.
❖ To assess consumer awareness and preferences of these brands.
❖ To provide strategic suggestions for these brands to enhance customer loyalty, improve sales and strengthen their competitive edge in Coimbatore's fashion retail sector.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The primary data used in this study through questionnaire method. The secondary data were collected from previous researches, journals, and websites. The sample size has been taken among 120 respondents. The random sampling technique used in this study.

TOOLS FOR ANALYSIS

Tools used in the study for the purpose of analysis are:
✓ Rank Analysis
✓ Weighted Average Source Method
✓ Percentage Analysis

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

➢ The data was collected with reference to Coimbatore city.
➢ Only 120 respondents have participated in the survey.
➢ The accuracy of the study relies purely on the data provided by the participants.

ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION OF DATA

Table showing the Awareness of Trends and Zudio of the Respondents

AWARENESS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE %
Social media	20	16.67
Advertisements	39	32.50
Word of mouth	33	27.50
Visiting the store	27	22.50
online search	1	0.83
Total	120	100.00

INTERPRETATION

Above table shows that advertisements are the most common source of awareness (32.50%), followed by word of mouth (27.50%) and visiting the store (22.50%). Social media accounts for 16.67%, while online search is negligible (0.83%).

Table showing the Improvements suggested by the respondents

IMPROVEMENTS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE %
More clothing variety	25	20.83
More discounting and offers	11	9.17
Better in store experience	9	7.50
Improved customer experience	26	21.67
Online shopping options	36	30.00
Exclusive collections	13	10.83
Total	120	100.00

INTERPRETATION

The above table interprets the online shopping options (30%), followed by improved customer experience (21.67%) and more clothing variety (20.83%). Exclusive collections (10.83%), more discounts (9.17%), and better in-store experience (7.5%) are also desired.

WEIGHTED AVERAGE SOURCE METHOD

Table showing the Overall Satisfaction level of both the retail brands by the respondents

PARTICULARS	VERY SATISFIED	SATISFIED	NEUTRAL	DISSATISFIED	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE	RANK
Zudio	63	37	19	1	402	3.35	1
Trends	19	76	24	1	353	2.94	2

INTERPRETATION

Above table shows customer satisfaction Zudio ranks highest with a weighted average of 3.35, as 63 respondents are very satisfied. Trends follows with a weighted average of 2.94, having more neutral and satisfied customers.

RANK ANALYSIS

Table showing factors influences the respondents to shop

PARTICULARS	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	RANK
Price	45	1
Variety of Product	18	3
Quality of Product	26	2
Brand Reputation	14	4
Store Ambience and Experience	11	5
Proximity / Locations	6	6

INTERPRETATION

Price is the top priority (45 respondents, Rank 1), followed by product quality (26 respondents, Rank 2) and variety of products (18 respondents, Rank 3). Brand reputation (14 respondents, Rank 4) and store ambience (11 respondents, Rank 5) have moderate importance, while proximity/location (6 respondents, Rank 6) is the least influential factor.

FINDINDS OF THE STUDY

Weighted Average Source Method

➤ From the above analysis, Zudio has the highest satisfaction level (Weighted Average: 3.35, Rank 1), with most respondents being very satisfied (63) or satisfied (37). Trends follows (Weighted Average: 2.94, Rank 2), with a majority being satisfied (76) but fewer very satisfied (19). Both brands show minimal dissatisfaction, but Zudio outperforms Trends in overall satisfaction, making it the preferred choice among respondents.

Rank Analysis

➢ From the above analysis, price is rated highest (Rank 1), followed by quality of product (Rank 2) and variety of product (Rank 3). Brand reputation (Rank 4), store ambience/experience (Rank 5), and proximity/locations (Rank 6) are less prioritized.

SUGGESTIONS

1. Both Zudio and Trends should focus on maintaining competitive pricing and offering discounts to attract price-sensitive consumers, as affordability is a top priority.

2. Improving product quality is essential to meet consumer expectations and enhance satisfaction, as quality is a key factor influencing preferences for both brands.

3. Investing in trendy and fashionable designs will help attract style-conscious consumers, especially for Zudio, where this feature is highly preferred.

4. Expanding store locations and improving accessibility can address convenience concerns, making it easier for consumers to access products and boosting satisfaction.

5. Regularly collecting and analyzing customer feedback will help identify areas for improvement, such as product variety and store experience, to enhance overall satisfaction and loyalty.

CONCLUSION

The comparative study of Zudio and Trends in Coimbatore highlights that Zudio enjoys higher consumer satisfaction, mainly due to its affordability, quality, and fashionable offerings. Although Trends is positively perceived, it slightly trails behind in delivering overall satisfaction. Price and quality are the most influential factors in shaping consumer preferences, followed closely by trendy designs. To improve customer loyalty, both brands should focus on competitive pricing and enhancing product appeal. Expanding store presence and acting on customer feedback can further elevate satisfaction. Aligning with evolving consumer expectations will help both brands strengthen their market position in the city.

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