



Customer preferences towards Zudio in Bilaspur City Chhattisgarh

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Abstract

This study examines the factors influencing consumer preferences for Zudio, a value-fashion retailer owned by the Tata Group, among customers in Bilaspur, Chhattisgarh. A structured questionnaire survey (n=391) was administered to local Zudio shoppers, yielding demographic and behavioral data. Analysis revealed that the typical Zudio customer in Bilaspur is a young (18–22 years), budget-conscious female (69% female) and student (88%). Most customers (72%) shop at Zudio seasonally or during promotional periods, primarily purchasing clothing (95% of respondents). Key determinants of preference included product variety (42%), low price (30%), and convenience (28%). Major challenges cited were difficulty finding the right size (45% faced this issue) and inadequate stock availability (majority rated stock as poor). Notably, 70% of respondents were unaware of Zudio's online shopping facilities, and 80% encountered problems when attempting online purchases. Despite these issues, high levels of overall satisfaction were reported: 87% were satisfied with billing processes, and 94% would recommend Zudio to others. The findings suggest that Zudio's appeal in Bilaspur derives from its affordability and product range, but also highlight operational and service gaps (e.g. staffing, stock, online experience) that should be addressed. Based on these results, recommendations are offered to improve customer experience and loyalty.

Keywords: Zudio, tata-trent, size, fast-fashion, brand perception, quality product

Introduction

Zudio is a fast-growing fashion retail brand launched in India in 2016 under the Tata Group's Trent Ltd., specializing in trendy, affordable apparel for men, women, and children. Since its inception, Zudio has expanded rapidly, adding 93 stores in FY2023 alone and contributing over 40% of Trent's sales. It operates in 42 Indian cities and offers a wide range of products – from tops, shirts, and jackets to footwear and accessories – at value-oriented price points. In Chhattisgarh, Zudio currently operates five outlets (including one in Bilaspur), serving a growing base of cost-conscious consumers.

Given its brand positioning, understanding customer preferences toward Zudio is important for sustaining its market share. Prior research indicates that consumer choices in value-fashion retail are influenced by factors such as product quality, price, brand reputation, and marketing strategies. However, most studies focus on established brands or urban markets. To date, there is little published research on Zudio specifically, especially in Tier-2 cities like Bilaspur. This gap motivated the present study. By surveying Zudio customers in and around Bilaspur, we aim to identify the demographic profile, key preference drivers, and challenges faced by these consumers. The insights are intended to help Zudio improve customer satisfaction and loyalty in regional markets.

Literature Review

Omnichannel experience & retention. Large-sample studies in 2024–2025 show that seamless cross-channel journeys (search online → buy offline; social → store pickup) significantly lift satisfaction and retention, including for Gen-Z cohorts entering the industry 5.0 era. Determinants include channel consistency, transparency, and frictionless returns.

AI/predictive analytics

Systematic reviews and industry studies report that using ML for demand forecasting, assortment planning, and pricing can materially reduce overstock and markdowns, improving margins (typical ranges reported: 30–50% lower overstock, 20–40% lower markdowns). In fashion e-commerce, AI personalization is increasingly central to conversion and CX outcomes.

India's Tier-2/3 surge & value fashion

The fastest growth in new shoppers and branded fashion penetration is now outside the metros; three in five new e-retail shoppers since 2020 come from Tier-3+ cities. Value chains (e.g., Zudio) are expanding aggressively and crossing major revenue milestones, indicating strong demand for trend-led, affordable apparel.

In the Indian context, there is evidence that domestic retail brands hold an advantage by aligning offerings with local tastes and cultural preferences. The India Brand Equity Foundation (2020) reports that many Indian consumers favor home-grown textile brands over international ones, as local brands tailor products to Indian styles. Complementing this, Nielsen (2017) ^[9] observed that over 60% of Indian shoppers are increasingly brand-conscious, willing to pay premiums for reputable brands. Brand trust and reputation play a significant role: Bindu (2020) ^[5] found that consumers rely heavily on brand credibility and word-of-mouth recommendations, while strong advertising campaigns enhance brand awareness and positive attitudes. These studies suggest that Zudio's success may hinge on perceived value (price-quality), brand image, and effective promotion.

Given that Zudio markets itself as a value brand with a wide product variety, factors such as affordability, product range, store experience, and promotional activities are likely to

influence customer preference. However, few academic studies have specifically examined emerging brands like Zudio. This study thus contributes to the literature by focusing on customer preferences and issues in the context of a regional value-fashion retailer.

Research Gap

Despite rapid expansion of value fashion in Tier-2 India, there is limited empirical research linking stated customer preferences to specific analytics-enabled levers (availability, discount cadence, checkout speed) at store level. Prior omnichannel and AI studies focus on metros, premium tiers, or platform-level outcomes. There is a need for city-specific, value-segment analyses with Gen-Z-heavy samples that (a) quantify relative driver importance and (b) can be triangulated against store analytics (sell-through, stock-outs). The present study addresses this by surveying Zudio shoppers in Bilaspur post-2023 expansion, providing contemporary evidence from a Tier-2 context.

Research Methodology

A quantitative survey was conducted to gather empirical data on customer preferences and experiences with Zudio in Bilaspur. The research objectives were to (1) evaluate factors influencing customers to choose Zudio, (2) identify issues faced by customers while shopping at Zudio, and (3) assess customer satisfaction levels with Zudio's services. A descriptive research design was adopted, employing a structured questionnaire administered via an online Google Form.

Sample and data collection: Convenience sampling was used to reach Zudio shoppers in Bilaspur who were willing to participate. The sampling unit comprised individuals who had recently purchased from Zudio stores in the region. A total of 400 responses were collected; after data cleaning and validation, 391 responses were retained for analysis. Demographic items (age, gender, occupation) and closed-ended questions on shopping habits, preference factors, and satisfaction (mostly using Likert scales) were included. A few open-ended questions solicited qualitative feedback.

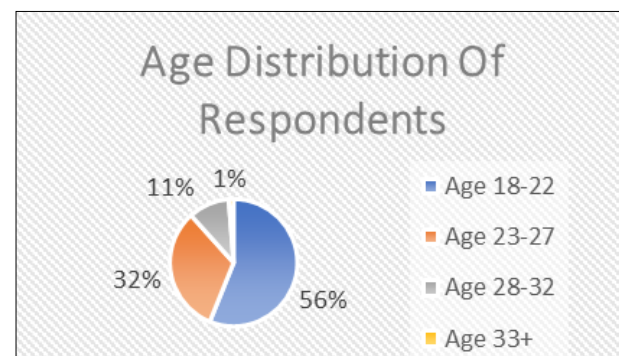
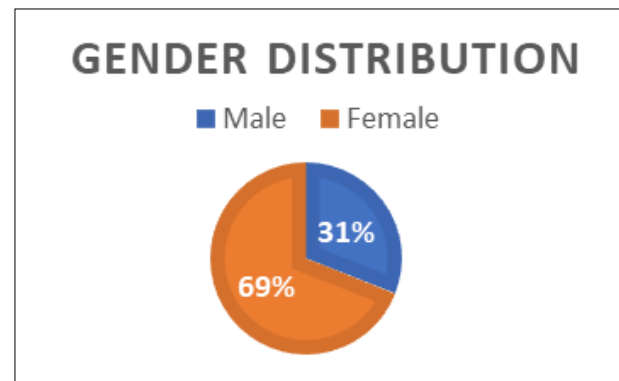
Data analysis: The collected data were coded and analyzed using descriptive statistics. Frequency distributions, percentages, bar charts, and pie charts were used to summarize the findings. This approach enabled identification of predominant customer segments (e.g. age, gender) and quantification of preference factors (e.g. price sensitivity, product variety), as well as calculation of satisfaction metrics. Secondary data from company reports, journals, and websites were also consulted to contextualize the survey findings.

Scope and limitations: The study is geographically limited to Bilaspur and nearby areas. While the sample size (n=391) provides a reasonable basis for descriptive inference, the findings may not generalize to all Zudio markets. No causal analysis (e.g. regression) was performed; rather, the study provides a descriptive profile of customer preferences and issues.

Data Analysis

Demographic Profile

Of the 391 valid respondents, a majority were female (270 respondents, 69%). Males comprised 31% (121 respondents) and no respondents identified as "Others". Age-wise, most respondents were youth: 87% were between 18 and 22 years old, with smaller proportions in older cohorts. Only 7% were aged 23–27, 4% aged 28–32, and 1% were below 18 or above 32. This indicates that Zudio's customer base in Bilaspur skews very young. In terms of occupation, the sample was dominated by students (344 respondents, 88%), followed by small fractions of non-government employees (6%), unemployed (3%), government employees (1%), and others (2%).



Shopping Behaviour

Respondents reported shopping at Zudio mainly on a seasonal or promotional basis. Specifically, 72% of customers visited Zudio only during seasonal sales or special offers, while 18% shopped quarterly and 10% on a monthly basis. Nearly all customers (95%) primarily purchased clothing items from Zudio; only 4% bought footwear and 1% bought "other accessories". No one reported buying cosmetics from Zudio.

Brand Perception and Preferences

When asked about their impression of Zudio, 61% described it as a "value store", whereas 29% saw it as "just another option" and 10% as a "one-stop shopping" destination. As for the most attractive features of Zudio, product variety emerged on top: 42% of respondents cited a wide variety of products as their primary draw, while 30% mentioned low prices and 28% cited convenience. Other features (such as brand image or sales personnel) were not selected.

Advertising and Awareness

Survey data suggest that conventional advertising has limited reach. Most respondents (42%) reported that they

only *occasionally* see Zudio advertisements, 20% see them often, 11% always, and 27% have never seen Zudio ads. Consequently, the primary source of awareness about Zudio for these customers is word-of-mouth: 53% learned about Zudio through friends and family (reference group), 22% from in-store displays, 16% via the internet, and only 9% from TV or newspapers. Notably, 70% of respondents were *not* aware of Zudio's online shopping facility (i.e. presence on e-commerce platforms), while only 30% knew about it.

Factors Influencing Purchase

Respondents rated various factors in terms of how much each influenced their decision to shop at Zudio. High agreement (strongly agree + agree) was observed for several attributes: 77% said convenience influenced them to prefer Zudio, and 72% agreed that product price was a key factor. Product quality was also important: 70% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the quality of Zudio's products influences their preference. Similarly, 70% agreed on the importance of having a good range/variety of products (sizes and styles) at Zudio. Discounts and offers were deemed somewhat less critical: 69% agreed that promotional discounts influence their decision. In contrast, factors like brand preference (66% agreement) and staff service (62% agreement) elicited lower levels of influence.

Customer Issues and Challenges

The survey identified several pain points in the customer experience. First, 80% of respondents who had tried shopping online with Zudio reported encountering difficulties, indicating that the online shopping experience is problematic. When shopping in-store, 45% of customers agreed that they have problems finding the right clothing size (5% strongly agree + 40% agree); only 36% disagreed. A large majority (87%) rated the availability of stock at Zudio poorly (classifying it as "fair" or "average"), meaning that stockouts or limited variety were common.

Service issues were also reported: 60% of respondents had *experienced difficulties with staff members* during their visits, indicating possible service or interaction problems. Payment processing was another issue: 38% agreed that they encountered difficulties in making payments at Zudio (6% strongly agree, 32% agree). About 42% of customers faced problems with Zudio's delivery and return policies (2% strongly agree, 40% agree). Other concerns included insufficient retail coverage (53% felt there were too few Zudio outlets in the city) and contention over extra charges (52% disagreed with being charged for shopping bags, while 26% agreed). A long queue at the trial rooms was a common complaint: 64% of customers agreed that long queues before fitting rooms are problematic.

Customer Satisfaction

Despite the issues noted above, overall satisfaction levels were high for many aspects of the Zudio experience. For example, 87% of respondents indicated they were satisfied with Zudio's billing process (i.e. checkout). Most customers also rated the store environment positively: 73% were satisfied with the *customer assistance process* (staff helpfulness), and 68% agreed that the *store layout* was easy to navigate. A large majority (79%) felt that *maintenance and cleanliness* of Zudio stores were very good. The majority (70%) believed that Zudio *offers quality products*

at reasonable prices, and 73% agreed that Zudio is *updated with the latest fashion*.

In terms of policies, half of respondents (51%) were satisfied with Zudio's exchange policy (49% were dissatisfied). Sixty-seven percent of customers were satisfied with Zudio's online shopping facility (30% dissatisfied). Crucially, **all** respondents rated their *overall shopping experience* at Zudio as satisfactory (excellent, good, or average). Finally, 94% indicated they would recommend Zudio to friends or family, suggesting strong overall approval.

Findings

The analysis yields several key findings:

- **Customer Profile:** Zudio's clientele in Bilaspur is predominantly young and female. The modal customer is an 18–22-year-old student, reflecting Zudio's appeal to youth and budget shoppers.
- **Shopping Behavior:** Most customers visit Zudio only during sale seasons or promotional events (72%), and almost all purchases are clothing (95%).
- **Brand Perception:** A majority (61%) view Zudio as a "value store" offering good deals. Top attributes attracting customers were variety of products (42%), low price (30%), and convenience (28%).
- **Sources of Awareness:** The largest influence on awareness is personal networks (friends/family, 53%). Traditional advertising has limited impact, as 69% of customers only see Zudio ads occasionally or never. Most customers are unaware of Zudio's online presence (70% unaware).
- **Influencing Factors:** The strongest drivers of preference were convenience (77% agreement), price (72%), and product quality (70%). Variety of size and style was equally important (70%). Discounts and offers (69%) also matter, though brand image and staff service had somewhat lower influence (66% and 62% respectively).
- **Problems Faced:** The most common issues included difficulty finding the right clothing size (45% experienced this) and insufficient stock availability (majority rated stock as poor). Many customers (60%) reported problems with store staff. A significant majority (80%) encountered problems with Zudio's online shopping. Other notable pain points were long queues at trial rooms (64% agreed this is a problem) and disagreement with carrying-bag charges (52% opposed extra charges).
- **Satisfaction Levels:** Despite the above challenges, satisfaction was high in key areas. Large majorities were satisfied with billing (87%), customer assistance (73%), store layout (68%), and cleanliness (79%). Most felt Zudio offers quality clothing at good prices (70%) and carries current fashion (73%). Overall, every respondent rated their shopping experience as positive (none rated it "bad"), and nearly all (94%) would recommend Zudio to others.

These findings indicate that Zudio's value proposition (affordability and variety) resonates strongly with its Bilaspur customer base. However, operational issues—especially service and stock management—as well as limited online engagement, reduce customer satisfaction in specific areas.

Discussion

The results align with general market trends in value-oriented fashion retail. The preponderance of young students is consistent with Zudio's positioning as a budget-friendly, youth-focused brand. High female participation (69%) reflects broader retail patterns where women are often primary clothing shoppers. The dominance of seasonal shopping implies that promotional events drive traffic more than routine store visits.

The emphasis on product variety, low prices, and convenience as preference drivers supports the literature on value retailing: consumers in this segment seek a wide selection at the best price (consistent with IBEF, 2020, and Nielsen, 2017 findings)^[9]. The strong effect of price and variety (70–72% agreement) underscores that Zudio's fast-fashion, cost-leadership strategy is well-targeted. In contrast, factors like staff service and brand prestige had lower impact; this suggests that for these customers, functional attributes outweigh experiential ones.

The prominence of word-of-mouth over formal advertising is noteworthy. Given that 53% learned of Zudio through personal contacts and most have rarely seen ads, Zudio's current marketing strategy may rely on organic buzz. This finding is in line with studies highlighting the power of peer recommendations in Indian consumer markets (Bindu, 2020)^[5]. The lack of awareness about online shopping (70%) is a gap, especially as more retailers expand e-commerce. Improving online presence could tap into unmet demand and alleviate in-store congestion.

The customer issues identified (size/stock problems, service gaps, online difficulties) highlight operational weaknesses. For example, nearly half of customers face fitting-room bottlenecks and limited size availability. These concerns suggest the need for better inventory management and store layout. The fact that 60% experienced staff difficulties indicate training or staffing shortages. Interestingly, even with these issues, baseline satisfaction and willingness to recommend remain very high. This implies that, while there are areas for improvement, Zudio's core value offer generates strong customer loyalty.

In comparison to other fashion retailers, these findings fit known patterns: youth-driven, price-sensitive customers (Kariappa, 2016)^[8] favor brands that update collections quickly (Jaakkola & Alexander, 2014)^[7]. The high recommendation rate (94%) suggests Zudio has achieved significant brand advocacy, akin to trends noted by Shah & Iyer (2020)^[10] in Indian retail. However, given the competitive landscape (e.g., McKinsey reports on organized retail), addressing service and e-commerce gaps will be critical for Zudio to sustain growth.

Conclusion

This study provides a comprehensive profile of Zudio's customers in Bilaspur and identifies the main drivers of their preferences. The predominant factors attracting customers are product variety, low pricing, and convenience –

reflecting Zudio's value-oriented branding. Demographically, the brand appeals mainly to young, female students. Despite Zudio's popularity, the research uncovered several customer service and operational issues (size/stock availability, staffing, and online shopping difficulties) that could erode satisfaction if unaddressed. Overall, the high levels of reported satisfaction and the willingness of customers to recommend Zudio indicate a strong base of brand support. To maintain its competitive edge, Zudio must build on its strengths in affordability and fashion relevance while improving the shopping experience through better inventory management, enhanced customer service, and a stronger omnichannel presence.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed for Zudio's management:

- **Enhance Product Quality and Variety:** Continue expanding the range of sizes, styles (including formal/ethnic lines), and related products (e.g. footwear, cosmetics) to meet diverse consumer needs. Improving garment quality will reinforce the perception of value.
- **Improve Store Operations:** Address queue bottlenecks by adding more trial rooms and billing counters during peak times. Optimize stock management so that popular sizes and items are consistently available, reducing customer frustration over out-of-stock issues.
- **Strengthen Customer Service:** Invest in staff training to ensure helpful, efficient service. Implement feedback mechanisms so that customer complaints are handled promptly, building positive service relationships.
- **Increase Marketing and Awareness:** Expand promotional activities to raise brand visibility beyond word-of-mouth. This could include regional advertising campaigns, social media engagement, and in-store events. Also, actively publicize the online shopping facility through digital marketing and signage.
- **Expand Retail Footprint:** Given that customers noted insufficient retail coverage in Bilaspur, consider opening additional outlets in the region or setting up kiosks/shops-in-shop in adjacent cities to improve accessibility.
- **Review Policies:** Eliminate or subsidize charges for carry bags to align with customer expectations (52% disagreed with bag fees). Simplify return/exchange policies to increase the current 51% satisfaction rate.
- **Enhance Omnichannel Experience:** Given the high rate of issues in online shopping (80% faced difficulties), Zudio should improve its e-commerce platform's usability and logistics, and provide dedicated customer support for online orders.

Implementing these measures should help Zudio strengthen customer satisfaction and loyalty in Bilaspur's value-fashion market.

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