

Rethinking Trend Forecasting: From Predictive Models to Regenerative Fashion Futures

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Abstract

Traditionally, trend forecasting combined intuition, cultural cues, and market analysis, and it guided creativity without dictating it. However, with the rise of social media, algorithm-driven platforms, and an accelerated global market, forecasting now operates at unprecedented speed and scale, often steering rather than supporting design innovation (Abnett, 2015). As Mahir Can Işık (2018) observes, thousands of brands now depend on the same forecasting agencies, resulting in aesthetic homogenization and eroding individuality and cultural diversity. What was once a creative compass has become a data-led mechanism that sidelines local and emerging voices.

This paper positions technology as a catalyst for transforming forecasting from a predictive, top-down model into a regenerative, community-centered system. Within the VUCA (Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, Ambiguity) context, marked by pandemics, geopolitical conflict, and blurred cultural boundaries, long-term forecasting appears increasingly unreliable. The argument advocates for an inclusive, adaptive approach that embraces fluid, global change rather than rigid predictive frameworks.

Focusing on both global fashion systems and emerging markets such as India, the paper interrogates whether current digital forecasting practices democratize creativity or reinforce Western dominance. India's layered subcultures, long-standing craft traditions, and growing consumer base remain underrepresented in global forecasts, raising questions about the true scope of democratization and the continuing need to decolonize fashion.

Using a mixed-methods approach, qualitative interviews with industry experts and designers are paired with quantitative data from Indian Gen Z and millennial consumers (aged 16–30

years). Findings, aligned with Sundar and Sriram (2020), highlight the need for inclusive, localized, and responsive trend systems.

The paper calls for a shift toward regenerative forecasting: agile, ethical, and participatory. Expanding frameworks such as WGSN's STEPIC model to embed diverse geographies, cultural epistemologies, and ecological thinking, it reimagines forecasting as a shared civic process for co-creating sustainable, expressive, and equitable fashion futures.

Keywords: Trend Forecasting, Regenerative Fashion, Digital Fashion Systems, Inclusive Innovation, Fashion Futures, Cultural Diversity, Community-Centered Design, Decolonizing Fashion

INTRODUCTION

Fashion has traditionally been a conflict between individual creative expression and industry-driven conformity. In the TED Talk titled "How Companies Predict Fashion Trends and Kill Individuality," Mahir Can Işık (2018) explores how fashion brands rely on trend-predicting agencies to create the next big thing, resulting in fashion uniformity and a reduction in innovation. He points out that over 12,000 brands get their predictions from the same firm, resulting in uniformity and a loss of individual self-expression. Işık contends that this method endangers individuality and advocates for a renaissance of self-expression to break free from the sterile prescriptions of forecasts. Has anything changed as a result of AI-driven analytics and the unparalleled presence of social media, or is fashion simply becoming more democratized? In doing so, it not only considers the integration and impact of AI but also reexamines the relevance of traditional fashion capitals in a world where cultures intersect, mobility defines identity, and global power structures are being reconfigured. This study examines how trend forecasting affects fashion today, the theories and forces that challenge these patterns, and the changing role of fashion capitals. It seeks to assess whether trend forecasting democratizes fashion by giving consumers access to global style trends, or if it remains a weapon of control, prescribing rather than inspiring fashion. With better access

to Indian data, this study aims to re-examine how much of fashion is now determined by trends, and whether there is still opportunity for innovation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Trends and forecast

Trends are current fashion styles, attitudes, or preferences that acquire popularity over time, impacting consumer decisions and business directions. They can result from a variety of factors, including societal developments, technical advancements, social media, and celebrity impact. Forecasting, on the other hand, is the process of predicting certain trends before they become widely adopted by studying data, historical patterns, and consumer behavior. While trends describe what is now popular or gaining popularity, forecasting entails identifying future trends so that businesses and designers can plan accordingly. The key distinction is in their function: trends depict current and evolving styles, whereas forecasting is a strategic tool for predicting and preparing for market transitions.

Role of trend forecasting

The fashion sector is extremely dynamic, influenced by cultural shifts, societal changes, technology breakthroughs, and environmental concerns, making it critical for businesses to keep ahead of trends.

Trend forecasting is an important technique in the fashion business, since it influences design, production, marketing, and retail by projecting future trends and consumer preferences.

Fashion trend forecasting (FTF) is critical in the textile, garment, and retail industries because it provides insights into developing trends, fabrics, patterns, and colors, allowing businesses to align their strategy with shifting customer preferences.

Historically, fashion trend forecasting evolved as a way for firms to anticipate consumer preferences while lowering financial risks connected with new designs, e.g., WGSN (World Global Style Network) and Promostyle. Forecasters can identify future trends by monitoring runway displays, trade events, and media material, allowing businesses to better align their products with market wants. However, as the industry got more data-driven, the widespread use of identical forecasts resulted in creative stagnation, reducing individual expression and making fashion more commercialized than ever.

#EnhancedNeutrals

With a 36.5% presence in the **S/S 25/26 collection** colour category and a 1.7% growth over the previous year, the pastel shade that stood out the most this season is neutral.

Like Wax Paper, a **Key Colour 26/27** highlighted by WGSN and Coloro, neutrals, in addition to bringing feelings of comfort and serenity, are ideal for brands that want to use a timeless approach and enhance classic pieces.

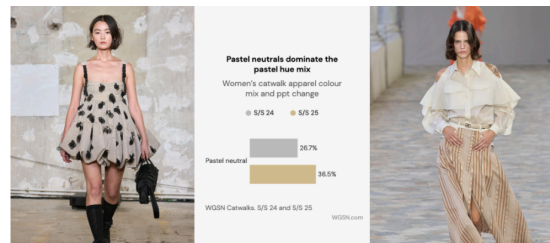


Fig. 1 WGSN website showing data analysis of the trend

WGSN's STEPIC forecasts analyze the forces that are influencing society, technology, the environment, politics, industry, and creativity. Their reports further focus on the 12 or more sub-areas of innovation that will change the way fashion is designed, consumed, and connected in the projected future, from AI surrealism and adaptive design to the rise of conscious subcultures and the end of abundance.

STEPIC Innovations index

The 12 areas of innovation for 2026 are mapped using WGSN's STEPIC methodology, which tracks developments in society, technology, the environment, politics, industry and creativity. Each links to a theme in our STEPIC Drivers forecast, which outlines the six forces that will drive global progress in 2026.

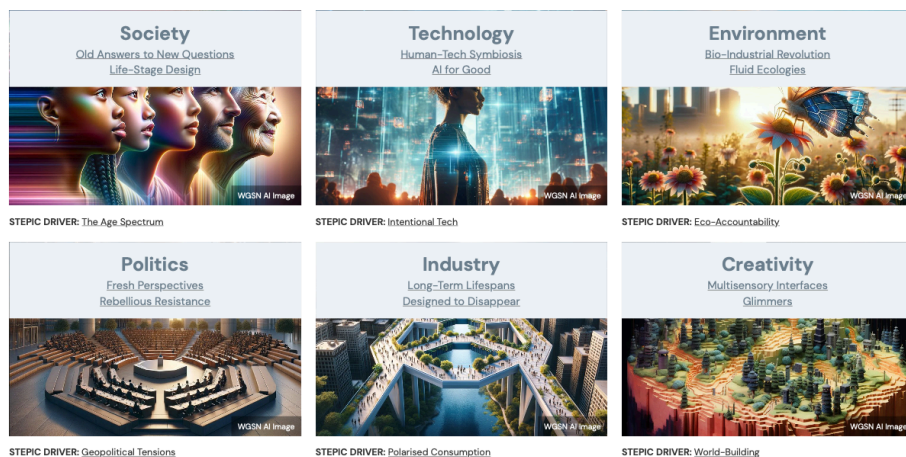


Fig. 2 WGSN STEPIC Innovations report for 2026

However, globalization and social media have disrupted this structure, rushing trend cycles beyond the control of traditional forecasting firms. Marc Worth, co-founder of WGSN, points out that traditional forecasting methodologies have become useless as online platforms define

trends that can rise and fall overnight. This transition has resulted in a more fragmented fashion scene, with consumers affected by a myriad of micro-trends rather than a unified, seasonally driven fashion story. (2014) Kate Abnett's article "Do Fashion Trends Still Exist?" (2015) investigates this change in the digital era. The Indian Institute of Art and Design's (IIAD, 2024) paper "Analysing the Influence of High-End Trends: Trickle-Down Effect in Fashion" investigates the trickle-down theory in fashion, demonstrating how trends originate with luxury designers and gradually reach mass markets. This narrative is being challenged by the advent of social media, AI, and data-driven markets, where the focus is now on trickle-up or trickle-down theories. Giving the control and power into the hands of the masses globally. Today, with social media, everyday consumers are also directing trends by their clicks and data creation. There is no one reference point from where a trend can/may originate. The paradigm has transformed the way trends are developed and consumed, making fashion more immediate while undermining traditional ideals of innovation and sustainability.

Fashion industry and forecast challenges

Trend forecasting has a number of issues as the fashion business advances. The increased demand for quick reactions from retailers and brands has put a strain on forecasting firms. Fast fashion has disrupted traditional seasonal fashion cycles, necessitating the development of new forecasting models capable of keeping up with rapidly changing consumer desires. The advent of celebrity culture and social media has complicated the forecasting process by making trends more unpredictable and shortening their life cycles. Furthermore, plagiarism and a lack of originality have become major concerns, as large shops frequently utilize trend forecasts to reproduce designs, resulting in homogenization and eroding brand identity and differentiation. This overreliance on projections not only undermines creativity but also raises worries about industry sustainability. While technological breakthroughs like wearable technology and digital platforms provide more precise insights, flaws in trend forecasting and unexpected customer behavior continue to be important issues.

Impact of forecasting on society

The study paper "Fashion Trends and Their Impact on Society" (2015) investigates how fashion trends shape society's ideals and individual behavior. It underlines that, while fashion trends change, a society's ideals are strongly ingrained in its beliefs and traditions.

According to the study, fashion is a form of nonverbal communication that conveys information about an individual's social standing, ideals, and lifestyle. It also explores the evolution of fashion communication, highlighting how it has progressed from simply projecting an image to transmitting emotional experiences through interactive aspects in clothes. It emphasizes the importance of consumer culture, driven by aspirationalism. Additionally, it points out that the youth play a pivotal role in determining the lifespan of a fashion trend, given their likelihood to explore, experiment, and embrace new styles, and the need to close the trend adoption gap between different income groups.

Role of fashion capitals

Frédéric Godart's "The Power Structure of the Fashion Industry: Fashion Capitals, Globalization, and Creativity" investigates the geographical impact on the fashion industry's power dynamics. The study focuses on how cities such as New York, London, Milan, and Paris have developed 'oligarchic' dominance in fashion, influencing global trends and creative outputs. Godart investigates the possibility of a more 'polyarchic' structure, asking whether growing fashion hubs in Brazil, Russia, India, and China could democratize the industry landscape. The article investigates the relationship between location, globalization, and innovation, questioning the future distribution of power in the global fashion arena. Emerging fashion capitals such as Seoul (Image 3) exemplify how subcultures continue to redefine global fashion narratives. Rooted in the interplay of street style, youth culture, and music, Korea's fashion scene demonstrates how creative communities can challenge dominant Western aesthetics while cultivating a distinct cultural identity. Much like historical fashion subcultures that democratized expression and gave marginalized voices visibility, Seoul's fusion of K-pop, digital influence, and local craftsmanship has transformed fashion into a collective language of self-representation. This evolution underscores that fashion has never belonged to one geography or ideology—it thrives where culture, creativity, and rhythm converge.

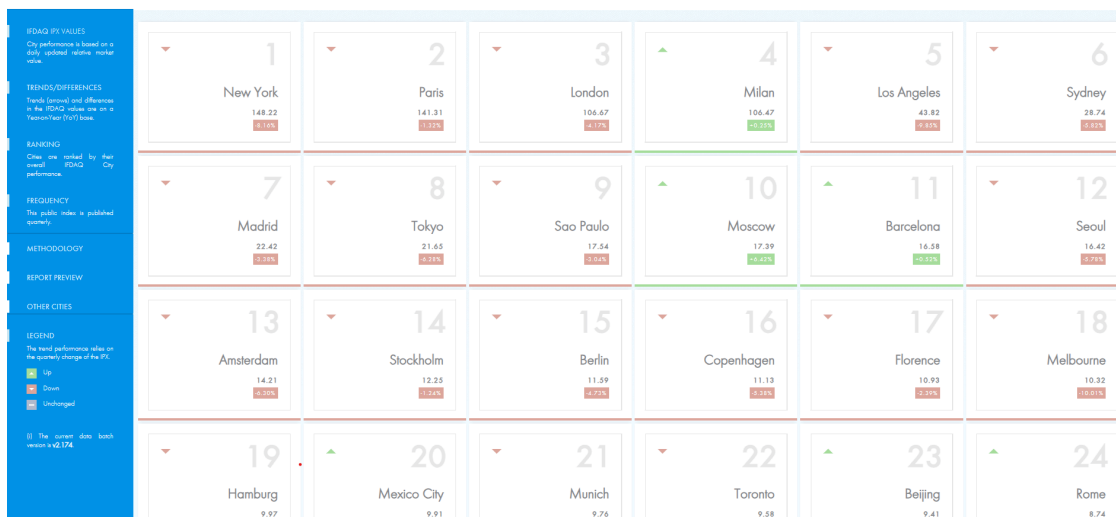


Fig. 3 List of fashion capitals

The IFDAQ's Global Fashion & Luxury Cities IPX Index (Q2 2024) was released under the Creative Commons CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license.

Areas for adaptation

The industry must strike a balance between innovation and forecasting, empowering independent designers while employing trend analytics for inspiration rather than imitation.

- Sustainability:** Initially, each cycle of fashion was represented in the season it was meant for, e.g., A/W (Autumn/Winter) & S/S (Spring/Summer), establishing trends that dominated fashions for several months and were eagerly awaited by customers around the world. In contrast, the rise of micro-seasons has brought forth a more dynamic approach, with labels producing smaller, more frequent collections, approximately 52 mini-bursts per year. (Jan 2025) This move enables brands to respond fast to developing trends and increase consumer interaction.

To remain unique in an increasingly competitive industry, brands must prioritize sustainability and creativity. However, the fast fashion model's emphasis on speed and price frequently leads to overproduction, with serious environmental consequences. Brands face ethical quandaries, attempting to balance the quick turnover of trends with the need for sustainable and responsible activities.

- Tech adaptation:** Modern trend forecasting relies significantly on advanced technologies such as data analytics and social media monitoring, allowing firms to respond swiftly to changing customer preferences. Real-time data analysis provides the early detection of

developing trends, allowing for faster product creation and market responsiveness. Brands should prioritize originality and creativity, using trend forecasts to inspire rather than homogenize, from bottom up rather than top down.

- **Cultural boundaries and shifts and climate change:** Fashion today also challenges and, through global access, gets inspiration from everywhere, bending the boundaries of culture. While this brings attention to global aesthetics, it also raises questions of cultural appropriation as seen through cases like Prada taking inspiration from the Indian Kolhapuri chappals, without duly crediting the community that traditionally manufactures the leather footwear.
- **VUCA**

A Guide to Approaching Events in the Four VUCA Categories

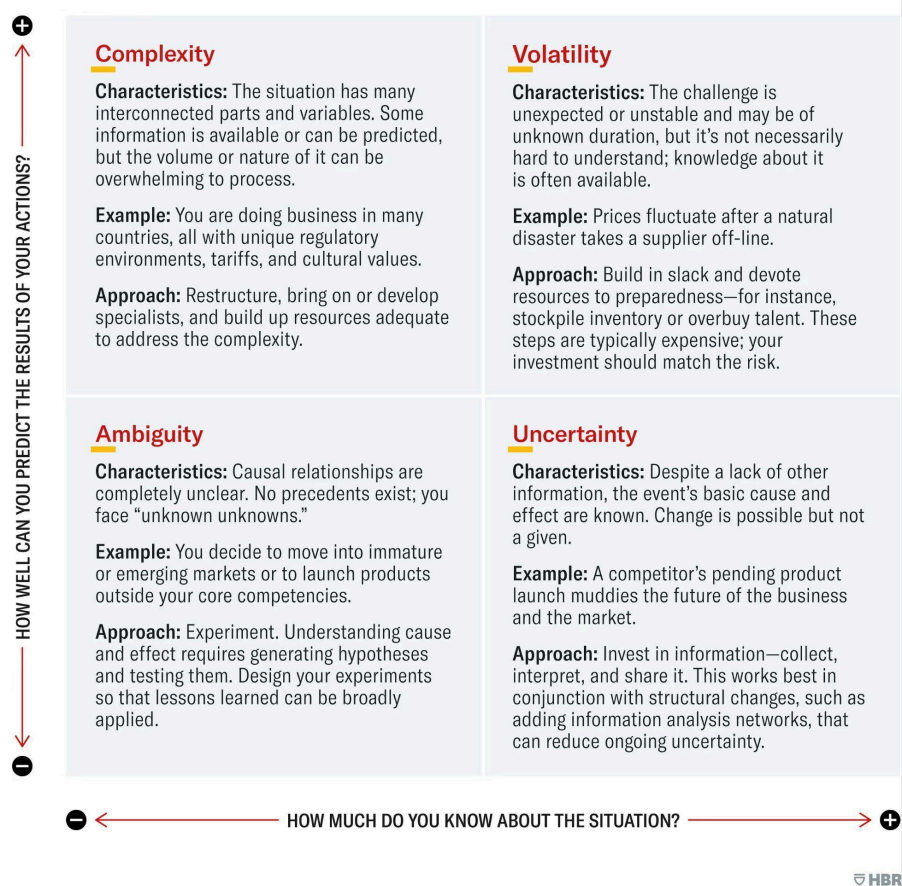


Fig. 4 VUCA breakdown by Harvard Business Review

Old ideas will be challenged, and tensions will grow at both a global and local level as more people recognize the need for urgent change in the way we treat our societies, arrange our industries, and work with our environment. Polarizations will become more entrenched, but new alliances and opportunities will also arise, and new technologies and forms of creativity

will be harnessed as agents of progress. In an increasingly volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) world, Gen Z consumers are turning to fashion as a form of escapism, creating opportunities for brands to connect emotionally through nostalgic yet innovative aesthetics. Fashion operates not merely as an aesthetic exercise but as a psychological and cultural response to global instability. The appeal of historical revival signals a collective longing for familiarity and meaning, merging the romanticism of the past with the fluid identities and performative expressions of contemporary youth.

In this VUCA-driven landscape, strategizing itself becomes a challenge, as many note that by the time a strategy is built, the world has already moved on (Moore, 2024). Yet coherence and adaptability remain essential for fashion's future resilience. Academic research reinforces this idea through the study of forecasting, which mirrors the same volatility and uncertainty observed in consumer behavior. Swaminathan et al. (2023) emphasize the systemic complexity of fashion forecasting, where multiple interdependent factors, from supply chains to social media virality, demand hybrid, AI-driven methods for more resilient predictions. Together, these insights illustrate how the fusion of technological intelligence and creative adaptability can help fashion navigate volatility, transforming uncertainty into strategic foresight.

Fashion industry in India

In 2025, the global fashion landscape reflects a growing awareness of how deeply Indian craftsmanship and textile traditions have shaped contemporary aesthetics. The influence of Indian design can be seen across major fashion houses and events, from Scandinavian scarves that draw on indigenous dyeing techniques to collections by Prada and Louis Vuitton that incorporate motifs reminiscent of Indian embroidery. For much of modern history, fashion has been perceived as a domain led by the West, with cities such as Paris and London defining global taste and prestige. However, this narrative is increasingly being questioned. The glorification of Western fashion is being critically examined in light of long-standing practices of cultural appropriation, which reveal how deeply the industry continues to be shaped by the historical and ongoing colonization of fashion.

Fashion media was a vital driver of this integration, helping to bridge the gap between global and local fashion narratives. An examination of 586 fashion articles from India's main fashion magazine over two decades found a pattern of interdiscursivity in which traditional

Indian and current Western fashion aspects coexisted and impacted one another. This merging of styles in media aided societal acceptance and broadened consumer choices. (Medium and message, 2016).

The influences of Western fashion today are deeply integrated and dominant in the Indian fashion systems, creating the need to elevate Indian culture and design globally while reducing reliance on international forecasting agencies by providing India-specific fashion insights.

VisioNxt is India's first fashion forecasting initiative, developed by the National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT) with support from the Ministry of Textiles was launched in 2024. VisioNxt maps and analyzes geo-specific trends that reflect India's cultural diversity and socio-economic landscape, offering content in both Hindi and English to support weavers, manufacturers, retailers, and designers. A key technological advancement of VisioNxt is Deep Vision, an indigenous trend forecasting system integrating Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Emotional Intelligence (EI) to generate actionable insights for the fashion industry. This system enables designers and manufacturers to create consumer-focused collections tailored to India's diverse market. Additionally, TrendOrb, a specialized training module, equips trend spotters with six key skills—Scan, Capture, Map, Cluster, Analyze, and Present—ensuring accurate trend identification and reporting. By leveraging advanced technology and localized expertise, VisioNxt is set to revolutionize India's fashion forecasting landscape, empowering businesses with real-time insights and strengthening the country's position in the global fashion industry.



Fig. 5 Cover of Paridhi, India's trend forecasting initiative

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- How has the role of trend forecasting evolved from a creative guide to a data-driven determinant in global fashion systems?
- In what ways do current digital and algorithmic forecasting models reinforce or challenge dominant Western narratives within the fashion industry?
- How can trend forecasting systems become more regenerative, inclusive, and community-centered in response to the VUCA (Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, Ambiguity) global context?
- To what extent do existing forecasting frameworks, such as WGSN's STEPIC model, address the diverse cultural and ecological dimensions of emerging markets like India?
- How can technology be repositioned as a participatory tool for co-creation rather than as a predictive mechanism for replication?
- What would a decolonized, multi-local approach to trend forecasting look like, and how might it reshape future design education and practice?

METHODOLOGY

For this research paper, a mixed methodology approach has been adopted. Secondary research provides a comprehensive understanding of the evolution of trend forecasting and its impact on the fashion industry's creative landscape globally. Followed by a two-stage primary research that incorporates both interviews and surveys. By integrating these research methods, this study ensures a well-rounded analysis of the role of trend forecasting in fashion, balancing industry expertise with consumer perspectives.

Primary Research

Data Collection & Analysis - To gain firsthand perspectives, both qualitative and quantitative research methods were employed.

1. Qualitative Research: Interview

(i.) Sample size: 5 interviews

(ii.) Work experience:

Industry: craft, retail industry, research, education, writer, costume design

Academics: ATLAS SkillTech University, NIFT, Symbiosis, Raffles, Pearl Academy, Raheja,

Rachna Sansad, Whistling Woods

Brands (national, international, designers): Urbane, Zoo Entertainment, Spykar Jeans, Karan Berry services, Tailors Garage

(iii.) Years of work experience: 20- 47

(iv.) Method: face-to-face and telephonic interviews

(v.) Analysis: visualization as a mind-map of the key points that emerged. Notebook LM was used as a generative tool for the mind map.

2. Quantitative Research: Survey

(i.) Sample size - 101

(ii.) Place: India, primarily Mumbai

(iii.) Method: Multiple choice survey circulated using Google Forms

(iv.) Analysis: Through pie charts and graphs

(v.) Sampling technique: convenience sampling

(vi.) Sample definition: A structured questionnaire was distributed to Gen Z and Millennial consumers based in India to understand their perception of fashion trends.

The survey aimed to assess how trends influence their purchasing behavior, brand preferences, and personal style. The responses provide valuable consumer insights into the changing dynamics of trend adoption in the digital era.

RESULTS

1. Qualitative research



Figure 1(a): Interview data analysis visualized in a mind-map

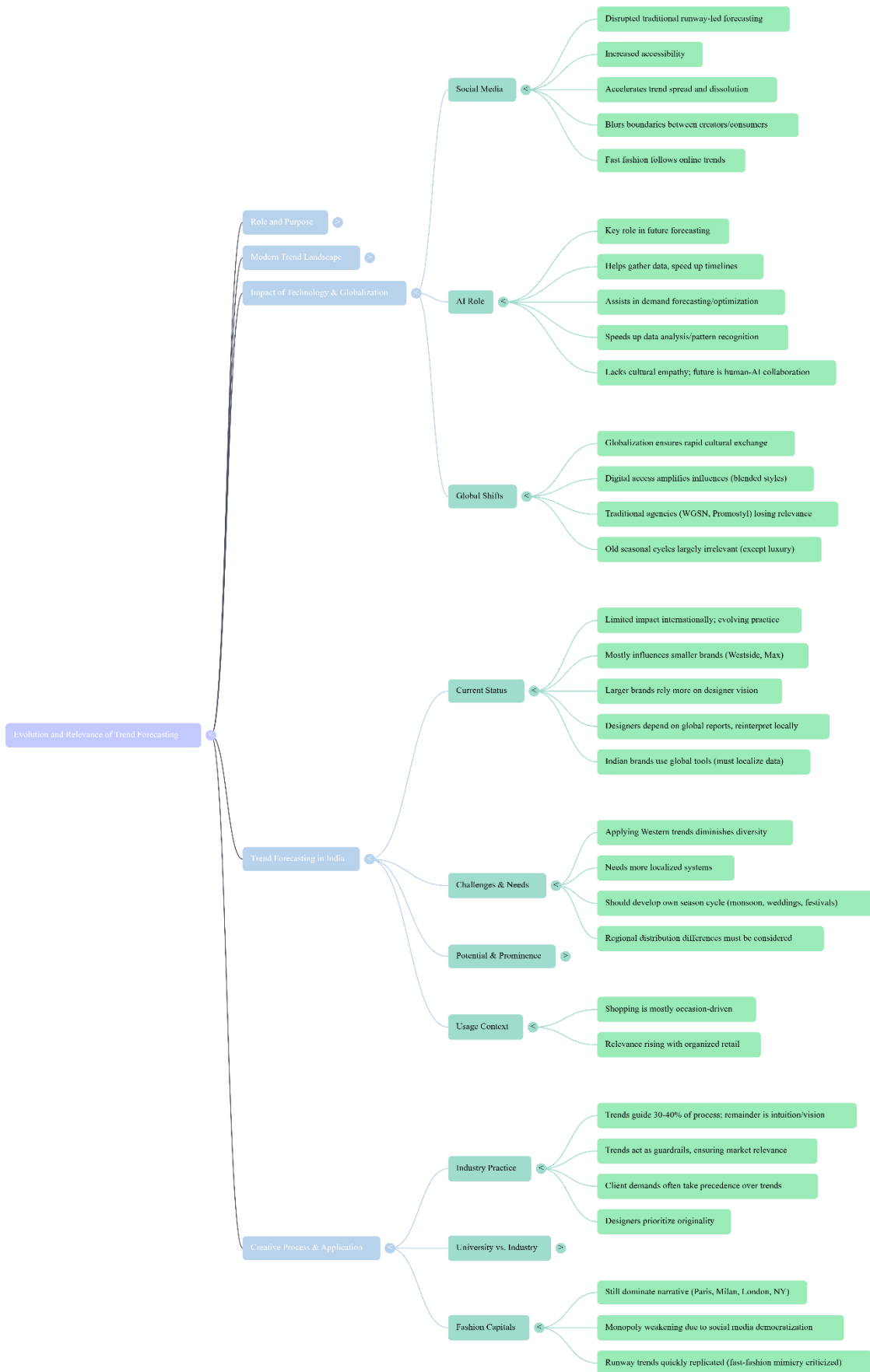


Figure 1(b): Interview data analysis visualized in a mind-map

What emerged as a prominent view through the interviews was, trend forecasting guides design and business decisions but should act as a reference rather than a rule book, supporting creativity and individuality. Traditional agencies like WGSN are losing relevance with the rise of social media, AI, and e-commerce, which have made trends more data-driven and region-specific.

In India, forecasting mainly influences retail brands, while larger design houses and labels rely on designers' intuition and cultural interpretation. Applying Western models risks reducing diversity, emphasizing the need for localized systems rooted in festivals, climate, and craft. Social media has democratized forecasting, shifting influence from traditional fashion capitals to a collective process driven by designers, consumers, and data. To further understand the role of Gen Z and Millennial consumers in shaping current fashion cycles, their consumption patterns, and sources of inspiration, a primary survey was conducted to address the research questions.

2. Quantitative Research

Respondent profile

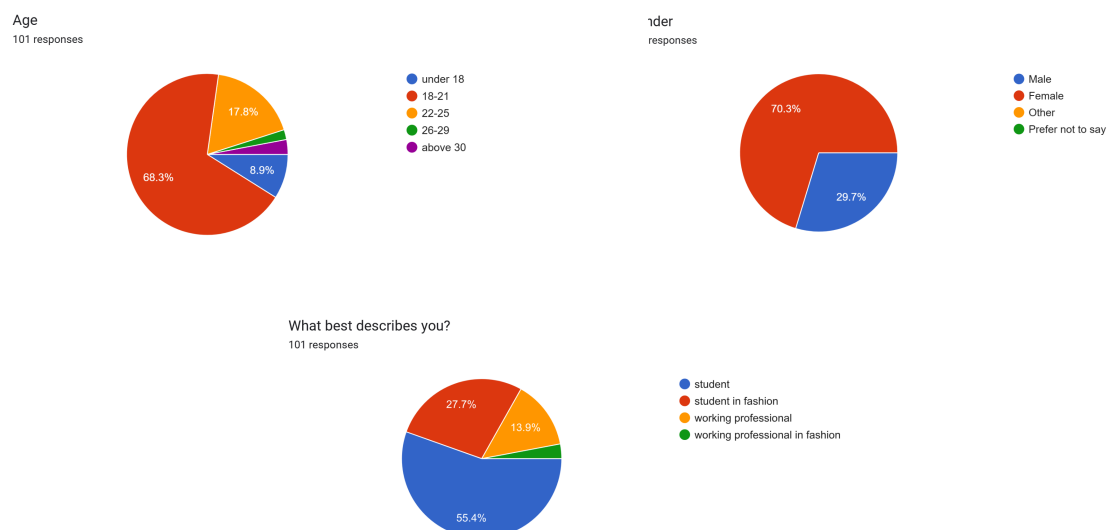


Fig. 6 Profile: Age, Gender and Profession

- . The respondents were Gen Z and Millennials, with the majority 68.3% being 18-21years old.
- . The respondents are a mix of females at 70.3% and males at 29.7%.
- . The respondents are also a diverse group, with the majority being students at 83.1% and 27% are students in fashion.

Fashion engagement and interest level

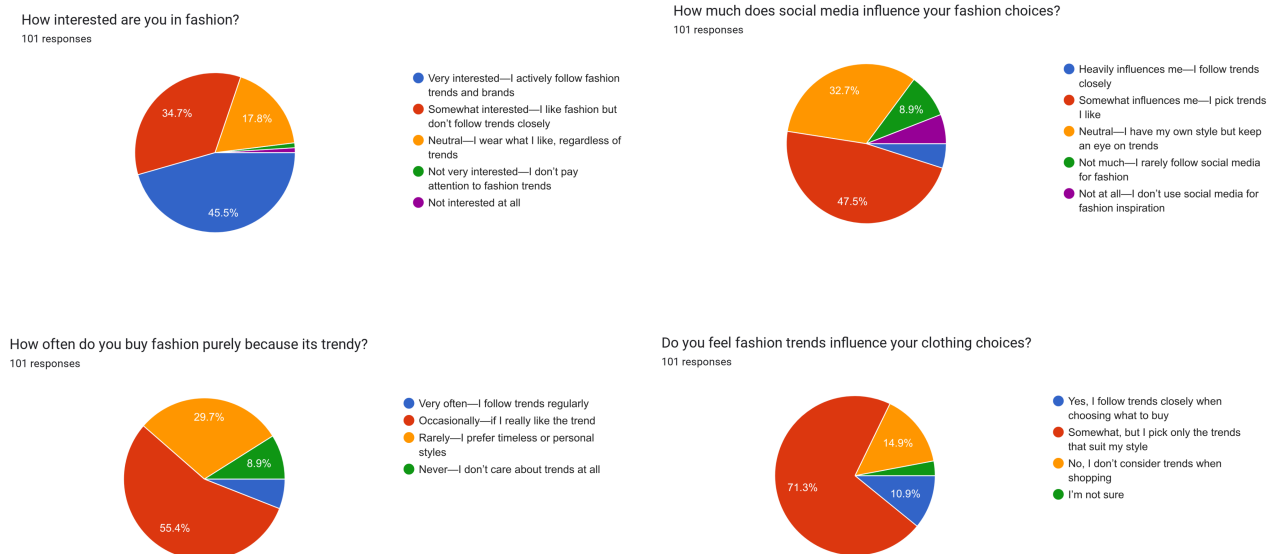


Fig. 7 Respondents interest in fashion and influence of social media trends on purchase

- . 45.5% of the respondents actively follow fashion trends and brands thereby reflecting their interest in fashion.
- . The majority of respondents, 47.5%, are somewhat influenced by social media whereas 32.7% have their own style but do keep a keen eye on trends.
- . 55.4% of the respondents only buy trends that they really like.
- . 71.3% respondents only choose trends if they suit their personal style.

This category helped in understanding the influence of trends on the respondents and how keenly they follow them for inspiration and purchase decisions.

Understanding of trends

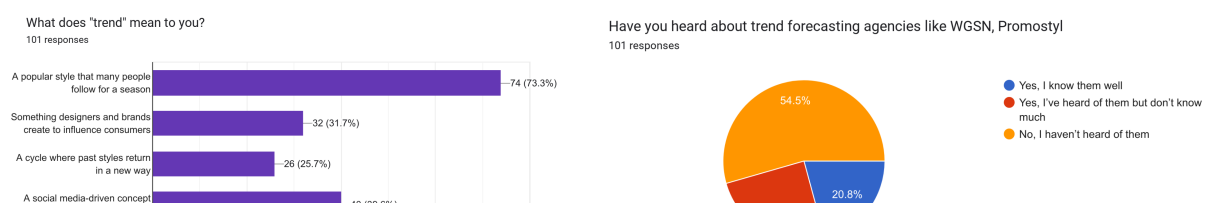
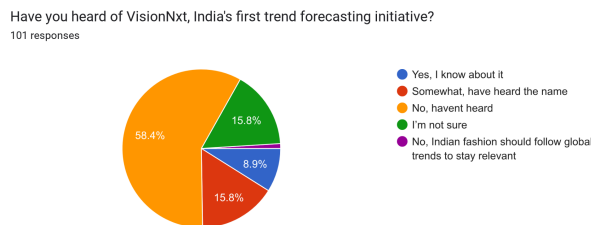


Fig. 8
trends and fashion
agencies



Understanding of
forecasting

. A larger group of
number, define
style that many people follow for a season.

participants, 74 in
trend as a popular

. However, when asked 54.5% of the participants hadn't heard about global fashion forecasting agencies such as WGSN and Promostyl.

. An even smaller portion of only 8.9% had heard of VisionNXT, an Indian fashion forecasting initiative.

These categories helped understand the extent of the respondents' interactions and knowledge of fashion trends.

Sources of trend awareness

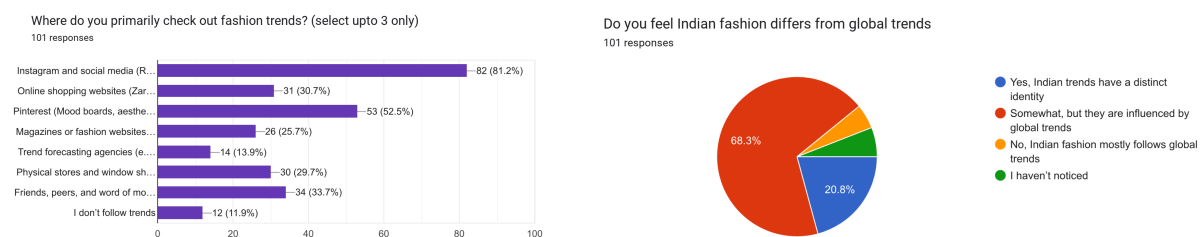


Fig. 9 Sources of Trends and Global Awareness

. 81.2% of respondents keep a check on trends through social media platforms like Instagram.

. 20.8% respondents believe Indian fashion has a distinct identity, but 68.3% are influenced by global trends.

This data set helps to know the sources and bifurcation of trends today with the sample group.

Influence of trends on personal style

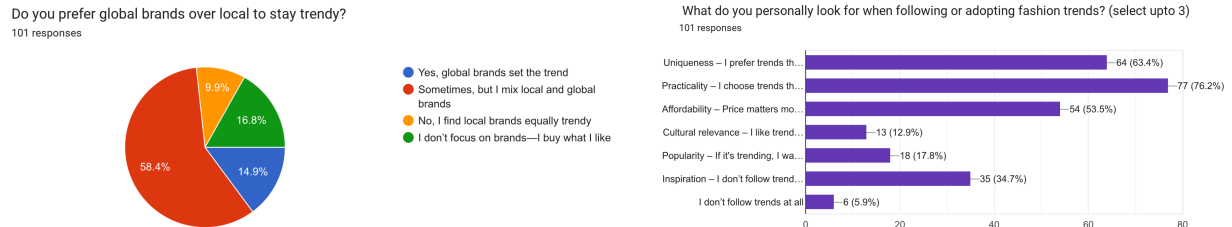


Fig. 10 Influence of global and local Trends on Personal Style

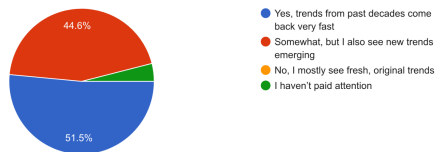
. 58.4% respondents believe in mixing local and global brands to complete their wardrobe.

. Practicality 76.2%, uniqueness 63.4% and affordability 53.5%, are the three most looked for things when shopping by the respondents.

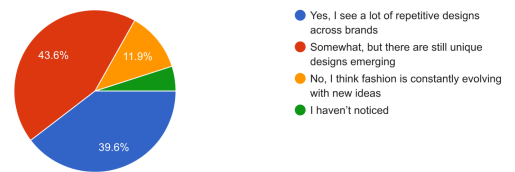
This category reflects the role of the local and diverse trends in addition to the global scenarios in influencing the respondent's personal style.

Trend cycles and creativity in fashion

Have you noticed fashion cycles (old trends coming back) happening more frequently?
101 responses



Do you feel fashion (seen in retail and brands) has become less creative in recent years?
101 responses



Do you think trend forecasting in India should focus more on Indian aesthetics rather than global influences?
101 responses

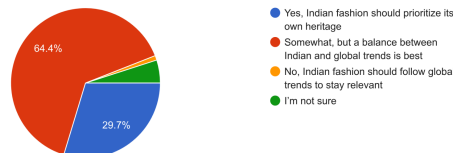


Fig. 11 Trend Cycles and Creativity in Fashion: an Indian perspective

. 51.5% of respondents feel there is a frequent repetition of pre-existing trends, whereas 44.5% see a balance of old and new trends emerging nowadays.

. 39.6% of respondents see a lot of repetitive designs across retail and fashion brands, whereas 43.6% also responded positively to the emergence of unique designs in the market.

. 64.4% of respondents feel the need for a balance between Indian and global fashion aesthetics.

The fashion cycles have overall seen a lot of recycling and repetition though the cultural and unique designs are also appreciated for the creative variation and inclusion it brings.

FINDINGS

Table 1. Findings from Primary Data analysis - Industry and Consumer

Research Objective	Industry Insights	Consumer Insights
Transformation of trend forecasting from intuition-based creativity to algorithmic prediction.	- Forecasting has shifted from intuition to data-driven models powered by AI and e-commerce. - Traditional agencies like WGSN are losing dominance to real-time, social media-led forecasting. - Designers now balance algorithmic data with creative instinct.	- Forecasting is now faster and more micro-trend focused. - Designers and consumers still value intuition over rigid prediction. - AI aids prediction but can't replace creative vision.
Implications of digital forecasting systems on cultural diversity, innovation, and representation.	- Western-style digital forecasting risks cultural homogenization and fast-fashion tendencies. - AI tools lack cultural sensitivity, often flattening diverse aesthetics. - Social media is decentralizing fashion influence beyond Western capitals.	- Overconsumption and conformity undermine individuality. - Trend overload creates hybridized, diluted cultural identities. - Consumers increasingly seek authenticity and representation.
Models for regenerative and inclusive forecasting integrating community voices and local knowledge.	- India's potential lies in localized forecasting cycles reflecting monsoons, weddings, and festivals. - Initiatives like VisionNxt point toward regionalized forecasting systems. - Subcultures and crafts can guide inclusive, community-based trend formation.	- Consumers respond strongly to locally rooted, culturally relevant fashion. - Occasion-driven shopping highlights the need for Indianized fashion cycles. - Authentic, craft-forward approaches build trust and connection.
Adaptability of frameworks like STEPIC in accommodating non-Western perspectives.	- Global tools like WGSN lack contextual depth and rely on Western metrics. - Forecasting frameworks require localization to remain relevant. - Indian designers reinterpret global data through local cultural values.	- Consumers want forecasts reflecting local seasons and traditions. - Western models often misalign with Indian consumer realities. - Flexibility and cultural adaptation are key to relevance.

Reimagined forecasting paradigm: ethical, participatory, and ecologically responsive.	- The future lies in human - AI collaboration balancing efficiency and empathy. - Sustainability and cultural responsibility are becoming forecasting priorities. - Industry is moving toward collaborative and slower forecasting models.	- Consumers demand sustainability and authenticity over speed. - Participatory and localized forecasting increases trust and reduces waste. - Ethical forecasting aligns with consumer values and ecological awareness.
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CONCLUSION

As the boundaries between technology, culture, and creativity continue to blur, trend forecasting stands at a critical inflection point. Once an intuitive, craft-informed discipline, it has evolved into a hyper-accelerated, data-driven enterprise that too often prioritizes prediction over participation (Abnett, 2015; Işık, 2018). The evidence presented through both industry insights and consumer research highlights a widening gap between the homogenizing tendencies of algorithmic forecasting and the desire for authentic, culturally grounded design expression. While global systems such as WGSN's STEPIC model offer valuable macro frameworks, their Western-centric lens frequently overlooks the pluralism of fashion ecologies in markets like India, where regional festivals, climate cycles, and craft economies form living systems of trend evolution (Sundar & Sriram, 2020).

To remain relevant in a VUCA world, marked by volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity, forecasting must evolve from being predictive to regenerative. A regenerative model reframes forecasting as an ethical and participatory process, one that amplifies local knowledge, acknowledges ecological boundaries, and empowers communities as co-creators of cultural and material value (Costanza-Chock, 2020). Initiatives such as VisionXt demonstrate the potential for hybrid human–AI systems that combine emotional intelligence with indigenous insight, positioning India as a testbed for plural, decolonized forecasting frameworks.

Ultimately, the future of fashion forecasting lies in restoring its original role, not as a determinant of taste but as a dialogue between intuition and intelligence, data and diversity, past and possibility. The regenerative turn calls for forecasters, designers, and technologists

to move from extraction to reciprocity, from predicting what will sell to nurturing what should survive. In doing so, forecasting can reclaim its creative, civic, and ecological responsibility: shaping fashion futures that are not only inclusive and expressive but genuinely sustainable.

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