

I ASKED CHATGPT WHAT THE NEXT TREND WOULD BE THIS IS WHAT IT TOLD ME

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Abstract

This critical review explores AI's impact on trend research within fashion, scrutinising its capacity for ethical and nuanced analysis amidst industry reliance on its speed and perceived neutrality. Highlighting the risks of oversimplification and ethical oversight, it questions AI's role in shaping a future that should reflect diverse cultural and professional integrity. It argues for a responsible AI utilisation that respects cultural nuances and social equities, urging for co-designing with diverse voices to ensure equitable and inclusive futures. Through a conversation with ChatGPT, this study underscores the need for a deeper understanding of AI's application in creative processes, advocating for a thoughtful approach beyond mere replicating trends.

Keywords: *Trend Research; AI; Fashion; Pluriversality; Ethics*

Introduction

The art of predicting the future, particularly in fashion, is invaluable for gaining a strategic advantage through foresight, enabling the anticipation of market trends and informed decision-making. As industries and design realms become more volatile, trend research is critical for staying ahead in a mercurial landscape. Advancements in technology, especially AI, have revolutionized trend forecasting, providing analysts and designers with powerful tools to process vast data, discern patterns, and obtain rapid insights. AI's role has become foundational, influencing every facet of the fashion system from logistics to creative decision-making, and reshaping industry paradigms. This review critically assesses

ChatGPT's capabilities in forecasting trends within the complex legal and ethical landscape it operates. It explores the risks of AI-induced oversimplification and the pressure for swift creative processes, prompting the question of AI's suitability for qualitative trend analysis. By examining conversations with ChatGPT, the paper critically navigates the intersection of AI's convenience with the integrity of human-led creative evaluation.

Methodology

The core of this paper is a dialogue with ChatGPT, powered by GPT-4, shaped by research into ethics, AI, and fashion, encompassing extensive literature review and thematic investigation. This preparatory work fostered the creation of incisive questions that

challenged ChatGPT to demonstrate its analytical and self-reflective abilities. Sohail et al. (2023) reflect a prevalent research methodology with ChatGPT, where questions target specific themes for response analysis. ChatGPT's utility is often debated in terms of its prospective impact and functional capabilities, notably in academic and educational contexts. Its role in predictive research and the ethical implications of its use merit attention. This underscores the potential to delve deeper into ChatGPT's effects on creative industries such as fashion, where its influence is yet to be fully understood.

Conceptual framework

On how fashion shapes the future

The interplay between trend research, fashion, and the future is a multidimensional relationship that shapes each component significantly. Trend research meticulously observes contemporary culture to identify early change indicators or weak signals, which are essential for understanding shifts in behavior and consumption patterns (Naisbitt, 1982; Hiltunen, 2006; Vejlgard, 2008; Celi & Colombi, 2020). This process is not just about recognizing what is, but about envisioning what could be, providing designers with the insights needed to explore new meanings and design possibilities (Celi & Colombi, 2020; Raymond, 2019). Fashion's system, historically reliant on color and fabric forecasting, now thrives in a digital era where global platforms offer immediate access to analyzed data, promoting a proactive approach to consumer behavior (Blaszczyk & Wubs, 2018; Rodriguez Schon & Colombi, 2023). This evolution showcases the industry's push to mitigate risks and adapt to dynamic markets.

Qualitative cultural analysis, pivotal to understanding the cultural dimensions of trend research, is now complemented by quantitative methods that appraise products' perceptual qualities and market performance, integral for product launch timing and risk minimization (Colombi & Zindato, 2019). Horizon scanning, which investigates cultural factors without geographical constraints, dives into societal zeitgeist and socio-political systems, affecting collective behaviors and values (Fuel4Design, 2021). Trend research thus frames the conceptual groundwork for creative journeys in fashion, guiding design processes from inception (Celi & Rudkin, 2016). Trend research in fashion balances

commercial and creative objectives, leveraging innovation and obsolescence (Blaszczyk & Wubs, 2018). Design scapes emerge from this practice, where scenario planning and strategic foresight in fashion design are crucial for navigating future social and economic challenges, preparing for stakeholder engagement, and informing design decisions (Colombi & Zindato, 2019). In essence, trend research in fashion transcends mere aesthetic prediction; it involves strategic planning and visualization to explore and prepare for alternative futures, thereby shaping the industry's evolution and its response to market and societal transformations.

On how to train an AI model

In the landscape of technology and fashion, weak signals such as the emergence of ChatGPT indicate a paradigm shift in the utilization of AI. ChatGPT, which operates on OpenAI's GPT-4 technology, has become a significant innovation, offering interactive dialogues through a user-friendly interface that demonstrates advanced reasoning and creative capabilities (Chen et al., 2023; Sohail et al., 2023). Initially developed from InstructGPT, this model is trained on extensive datasets, enabling it to recognize patterns and provide predictive responses. ChatGPT's ease of use has contributed significantly to its widespread adoption (Murray et al., 2023). GPT-4's deep learning algorithm facilitates multimodal communication, which has been applied to various sectors, including aiding visually impaired individuals and improving search and retrieval processes in fashion (OpenAI, 2023c; Chen et al., 2023). The training regimen of GPT-4 incorporates vast datasets and human feedback, which helps in generating contextually relevant and factually accurate responses. Despite comprehensive pre-training on internet text, potential biases in the training data are addressed through a fine-tuning phase under human supervision. This phase ensures adherence to ethical standards and improves the model's output quality (OpenAI, 2023d). ChatGPT's conversational abilities are further enhanced through reinforcement learning, which leverages feedback to fine-tune its responses (Sohail et al., 2023; Chen et al., 2023).

ChatGPT was meticulously trained to enhance its dialogue skills, and it stands alongside other LLMs like Microsoft's Bing and Google's Bard that have also made remarkable progress in recent years. ChatGPT's usage has expanded beyond its initial creative writing applications, attracting over a

billion monthly users and generating substantial user engagement, as evidenced by the volume of user-created content and tutorials (Bender et al., 2021; Sohail et al., 2023). However, there is a noted opacity in the model's workings and application, with most knowledge about its operation being user-generated (Murray et al., 2023:84). ChatGPT, while capable, is not without its shortcomings; it may not consistently deliver nuanced answers and is subject to errors due to its dependency on statistical training data. These limitations have guided the hypothesis and investigative approach of the current study. This exploration into ChatGPT's capabilities and its role within the broader scope of AI's influence in fashion and design highlights the need for a nuanced understanding of its operational mechanisms and ethical implications. The findings point to the essentiality of human oversight and the integration of diverse perspectives to ensure that AI tools like ChatGPT serve the collective good and contribute positively to the evolution of creative industries.

Experiment

Conversation with ChatGPT

The aim of the experiment was to understand under what values ChatGPT operates, the sources used, and how it understood the questions. The chat snippets are summarised for clarity, alternated with the research's analysis.

Researchers: Can you predict the future?

ChatGPT: I cannot predict the future. My responses are based on a vast amount of information and data available up to my last training completed in April 2023.

The practice of any anticipatory discipline works with possible, probable, plausible, and preferable futures, through a qualitative and quantitatively supported interpretation of possible trajectories that describe scenarios (Voros, 2015; 2003). Spotting trends includes observation, data scraping, analysis, archiving, diving into relevant concepts, and recognizing patterns (Raymond, 2019). Several tools support this process, such as data scraping and analysis or AI-powered platforms that interpret patterns into formalised trends. The combined work of AI and expert analysis enhances the understanding of social consumption behaviours

in depth (Powers, 2019); also bringing competitive advantages since data support enhances the decision-making process (Holland & Jones, 2017). The AI is based "on historical data and observable trends" (ChatGPT, 2023); nevertheless, it stated:

ChatGPT: The future is inherently uncertain; unexpected events can drastically alter trajectories. Predictions are only as good as the data and models used to make them, inaccurate or biased data can lead to erroneous conclusions. Most predictions are probabilistic; it's about understanding the range of possible futures. Human behaviour is complex, making it challenging to predict with high accuracy.

Futurists have long advocated the plurality of futures, recognising the multiplicity of its potential (Candy & Potter, 2019). Various scholars explore this perspective (Candy, 2010; Dunne & Raby, 2013; Yelavich & Adams, 2014; Candy & Dunagan, 2017; Escobar, 2018), emphasising the importance of considering diverse possibilities. "[P]redictions should be viewed as educated estimates." (ChatGPT, 2023). Acknowledging the inherent limitations within ChatGPT includes challenges like bias and discrimination, privacy and security, potential misuse, and the overarching need for accountability and transparency (Sohail et al., 2023).

When asked about possible future trends regarding personal finance and furniture design, the responses included evaluations that generalised applications across the world, what does it mean for blockchain technologies to penetrate regions without internet reception?

Researchers: Did you base your information on a particular region? What cultural values do you find to be responding to? Do you find the same response you gave me would be valuable for trends in the United States and Argentina, for instance?

Detailed lists of the difference between personal finance, furniture design, and cultural values both in the United States and in Argentina followed, showing that the AI recognises that local conditions may vary the outcomes, "The same broad trend can take on different characteristics in different regions" (ChatGPT, 2023).

Researchers: Can you predict fashion trends for the next summer season?

Chat GPT: Predicting fashion trends for the next summer season involves considering current trends, cultural influences, and emerging design innovations. Here are some potential trends: sustainability and eco-conscious fashion, bold colours and patterns, relaxed and comfortable silhouettes, retro and vintage revivals, etc.

Most of these are already well-established trends; including general claims with no differentiation between style, macro trends, or micro trends, with different penetrations in the number of users and duration (Vejlgaard, 2008). The disclaimer on regional variations brings the question: is there such a thing as localised trends? What does it mean when a trend is global? The prevailing methodology behind trend research, predominantly emanating from hegemonic contexts of the Global North, threatens to dictate single-sided futures that may reinforce existing inequalities and the status quo. The bias inherent in the networking mechanisms of trends leads to a homogenisation of culture, where novelty is not about uniqueness but similarity, and trends become tools to summarise and commodify visions of the future (Powers, 2019). Trends, deeply embedded in consumer culture and capitalism, have the power to dictate future ways of being, integrating past, present, and future into a complex dynamic (Dator, 2019; Powers, 2019). However, this dynamic, as Dussel (1993) points out, often serves as a tool for modernity to legitimise itself, with trends acting as cultural colonisers in their pursuit of the new and edgy (Powers, 2019). The critique of trend research is thus twofold: it's a manifestation of global futurity and proactive optimism- which idealises the future and can result in self-fulfilling prophecies that replicate superficial values and miss the intricacies of modernity (Dussel, 1993)- that remains geographically and socially biased, and risks perpetuating inequities and cultural homogenisation as forecasters inadvertently shape the very trends they predict (Lantz, 2016; Powers, 2019).

Researchers: how did you weave into the response your interpretation of the collected data from which you based your answer?

ChatGPT: When formulating predictions about

future fashion trends, I integrate and interpret data from various sources: Historical fashion trends, current fashion industry developments like fashion shows or collections, consumer behaviour and preferences to understand habits, cultural and social influences like popular culture and social movements, technological advances, global events and economic factors, media and fashion influencers, industry forecasts and research reports.

Researchers: being more particular, what could be the most popular colours for the next summer season?

ChatGPT: For the next summer season, based on recent trends and forecasts, the following colours could be particularly popular: vibrant and bold hues, earthy and natural tones, pastels and soft neutrals, etc. It's important to note that colour trends vary by region and demographic.

The response lacked critical perspective and creative spark, offering predictable suggestions such as “refreshing aquatic shades: colours that evoke a sense of water, like aqua or turquoise, might be popular, for beachwear” (ChatGPT, 2023). The increasing reliance on AI for inspiration risks leading to a creative plateau where new ideas are less frequent, and outputs become predictable. Despite this, AI acknowledges the importance of originality, suggesting individual designers and brands can still pioneer influential trends (Rogers, 2003). Yet, the prevalence of algorithms in shaping digital content may lead to a uniformity in visual expression, potentially diminishing the richness of the creative landscape (Blond, 2023).

Researchers: How would these colours change from one region to the other? For example, in Scandinavian or Caribbean countries.

ChatGPT: Scandinavian fashion often aligns with minimalist and functional design principles, using soft neutral tones, nature-inspired hues, etc. Caribbean fashion is known for its vibrant and lively aesthetic, using vibrant and bold hues, cultural and artistic influences from their rich heritage, etc.

Researchers: Do you find a gap between the first so-called global trends and the locally-based ones?

ChatGPT: Yes, this gap arises due to several factors: cultural influences, climatic conditions, economic and market factors, historical and artistic backgrounds, consumer preferences and lifestyles, and media and influencer impact. While global trends provide a broad overview of where fashion is heading, local trends offer a more nuanced view that reflects a region's specific tastes, values, and conditions. This gap between global and local trends underscores the diversity and complexity of fashion as a form of cultural expression.

Researchers: Do you consider global fashion to be focused on some specific places? What does global mean? Where is global?

ChatGPT: "Global" in fashion denotes widespread trends and practices adopted across cultures. It originates from fashion capitals hosting pivotal events, while digital media has democratized trendsetting, allowing global diffusion of styles from anywhere. Cultural exchanges and aesthetic blends inform designs, with prominent markets and brands influencing global trends. The sustainable fashion movement is redefining industry standards. Global fashion, unfixed and ever-changing, encapsulates a shared fashion consciousness beyond geographic limits.

AI mirrors its data environment, often presenting a Western-centric view that can skew consumption behaviors in non-Western societies, creating a mismatch with local histories and contexts. This is compounded by an overreliance on automation, which may neglect the intricate differences across cultures (Mohamed et al., 2020; Gebu, 2020). Fashion, historically perceived as a universal evolution of dress styles, faces criticism for its Western-dominated narrative (Welters & Lillethun, 2018). Simmel (1905) contrasts the rapid changes in European fashion with the static nature of other traditions, suggesting a narrow definition of fashion centered on Western practices. The capitalist dynamics of Western urban culture are often seen as the nexus of fashion, with a focus

on constant innovation and consumption (Lillethun et al., 2012). The term world fashion typically denotes everyday apparel influenced by Western styles (Eicher, 1995; Eicher & Sumberg, 1995). Yet, considering Spivak's (1997) concept of planetarity, the global fashion system is problematic, as it may marginalize indigenous knowledge and production systems, leading to a simplified, binary view of global dress that favors a Westernized aesthetic. This perspective risks losing the richness of global clothing traditions and alternative fashion futures, relegating non-Western dressing practices to a 'timeless' past. Furthermore, the fashion industry's anthropocentric focus, prioritizing human desires over environmental concerns, contributes to its growing unsustainability (Jansen, 2020). Niessen (2020) introduces Sacrifice zones, areas bearing the brunt of the clothing lifecycle's environmental and social costs, often located in regions disregarded by the fashion narrative. These areas illustrate the stark disparities within the fashion industry, highlighting the need for a more equitable and ecologically responsible approach.

Researchers: Do you find this description of how the global fashion system works somewhat biased?

ChatGPT: The global fashion narrative, traditionally centered around Western cities and consumer markets, tends to overlook the diversity of fashion practices worldwide. This bias marginalizes non-Western cultural contributions and allows major brands to dominate the conversation, overshadowing regional trends. Issues of cultural appropriation exemplify underlying power imbalances. Emerging markets like Mumbai and São Paulo are gaining recognition, contributing perspectives that challenge traditional hierarchy. The proliferation of digital platforms democratizes fashion discourse, enabling a broader range of voices to reshape the narrative.

Researchers: What about predicting digital technology use in places with limited access to it or feeling reluctant about it? Would this be a positive change or an innovative solution? It's close to proactive optimism or a technological deterministic view.

ChatGPT: The assumption that adopting digital technology is inherently positive and a one-size-fits-all solution can be seen as technologically deterministic and overlooks essential cultural and social nuances.

The answer explained how different cultures have varying relationships with technology, its unequal accessibility, overlooking of sustainable and ethical implications in pursuit of technological modernity, and how in many cultures, traditional methods of fashioning the body are integral to cultural identity, where digitalisation might not be compatible. Techno-determinism posits technological progress as a universal driver of change, such a narrow focus on progress can marginalise diverse cultural and social futures, creating exclusion and inequality.

Researchers: Considering this, can you predict next summer's fashion styles?

ChatGPT: Predictions account for global and regional interpretations of trends. Sustainable fashion's uptake will vary, with some areas preferring local materials and others high-tech solutions. Regions with vivid traditions may favor bright colors, while areas with muted aesthetics could opt for bright accents. These trends, shaped by global currents, are tailored by fashion's cultural diversity.

Critical analysis and insights

The conversation revealed intrinsic and usage-related issues with AI models like ChatGPT (Sohail et al., 2023). Intrinsic problems involve generating plausible yet incorrect or fabricated responses, often due to biased training data and outdated algorithms. This can lead to misinformation, reinforcing stereotypes and ethical issues. Usage issues include unethical applications, potential violations of copyright, and dependency on AI without critical evaluation. Mitigating these risks requires refining algorithms, updating training data, and educating users about AI's capabilities and limitations.

Ethical considerations, especially regarding the role and responsibilities of the AI platform and its users bring questions like: "Can a chatbot truly provide approval for work and be held accountable for its content?" (Sohail et al., 2023:11). Users

must approach these platforms with an informed perspective, the interface must provide clear instructions and contextual information about their capabilities and limitations. Despite efforts to educate users about the risks of employing language models, there remains a gap in ensuring users are fully aware of these issues (Murray et al., 2023). It is crucial that platforms alert users to the potential for generating erroneous content and guide them on using AI responsibly and understanding its outputs critically.

OpenAI is addressing AI challenges by diversifying DALL-E's image generation to better reflect global demographics (OpenAI, 2022b). Increased training data and user feedback are broadening AI's cultural and regional understanding, as seen with ChatGPT, which now tailors dialogue by learning from user interactions and new trends, aiming for more culturally nuanced responses (Sohail et al., 2023). Commitment to ethical data use, advanced computing, and continual updates ensures AI aligns with moral standards, bolstered by policy regulations and auditing for reliable decision-making. Virtue ethics and pluriversal approaches address AI's ethical dimension, promoting harmony between technology and moral values (Vallor, 2016; Escobar, 2018). Such frameworks advocate for AI that is fair, transparent, and adaptable, supporting diverse perspectives and cooperative design practices (Sohail et al., 2023). Moving away from a monolithic progress model, these methods prioritize inclusivity and contextual sensitivity, ensuring AI benefits all stakeholders equitably (Geburu, 2020; Mohamed et al., 2020; Rodriguez Schon & Colombi, 2023).

Conclusion

In addressing the dual aspects of user engagement with AI platforms and their design, three critical issues emerge: the simplification of complex topics, the deceptive appeal of rapid AI-generated solutions perceived as unbiased, and the replacement of nuanced analysis with AI's interpretation. As trend research is foundational in setting future creative directions (Celi & Rudkin, 2016), the reliance on AI for qualitative analysis poses risks to ethical and critical judgment, potentially leading to homogenized and superficial outcomes. Users must also recognize their responsibility for the tool's results, as the increasing adoption of these platforms often correlates with the allure of swift,

cost-free outputs mistakenly equated with fairness and justice.

To counter these challenges, it is vital to scrutinize and dismantle hegemonic legacies in design, empowering a future that respects diverse ways of knowing and being. Design transcends mere aesthetics, involving knowledge creation practices that honor cultural nuances and address social disparities (Joyce et al., 2021). By integrating the perspectives of marginalized groups into the design process, AI can be directed towards more inclusive and beneficial outcomes for society at large (Luján Escalante et al., 2021). Such an approach ensures that design meaningfully contributes to a future that is equitable and embraces diversity. As AI's influence grows, its responsible and informed application becomes ever more crucial.

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