

# **INFLUENCE OF FASHION IN MUSIC INDUSTRY:**

## **How much influence fashion and style have on a music artist's career**

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## **DECLARATION**

I, Moumita Tarafdar, hereby declare that the work presented is genuine work done originally by me and has not been published or submitted elsewhere for the requirement of a degree programme. Any literature, data or work done by others and cited within this paper has been given proper acknowledgement and listed in the reference section.

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## ABSTRACT

The research paper on “Influence of fashion in the music industry: How much influence does fashion and style have on a music artist’s career” would identify the audience perception and acceptance of a music artist based on their visual aesthetics and fashion sensibility.

**Objective:** This purpose of this study is to find out how much audience perception of a music artist is based on their fashion and style.

**Scope of the project:** The scope of the research is to understand the consumer behaviour and understand why certain music is popular than the others. This research would help answer the questions which arise of whether the current generation of audience is more influenced by aesthetic than by the music itself, and analyse the reason behind the findings.

**Methodology used:** A simple random sampling survey is done about the music listening habits, artist style perception, music video perception and preference. The sample size is urban mix gendered population aged 16 yrs. to 25 yrs. in Kolkata. The participants were sent an online survey questionnaire form and asked to fill it up based on their personal music choices and habits.

**Major findings and conclusion:** The results were coded under the distribution of music listening and watching habits, internet usage and interaction, music artist style preference and music video perception. From the survey, it is seen that fashion has an unconscious influence on the participants choice of music and artist selection.

**Major recommendations:** The project could be expanded by considering participants from different parts of India with different backgrounds, age groups and using different types of genres to and fashion style to better grasp the audience perception.

**Keywords:** *Music, Fashion and style, Visual Aesthetics, Audience perception and acceptance, Pop culture*

## **CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION**

Fashion can be defined as the reflection of the society's thoughts and action within a certain period of time. The study of behavior and music shows that music has an eccentric influence on fashion as manifested by the trends emulated by youths and other members of the society. This can be widely noticeable when music of a specific genre is released and attracts the attention of many listeners. It is also expressed through the radio stations that people listen to and the videos for the songs they watch. Music is an integral part of the social environment, which cannot be avoided. It has a role in dictating how young people grow up and ultimately contributes in the setting of various societal norms. This can be witnessed in the excitement created by popular music among the public and how individuals, especially teenagers decide to emulate the dressing code of a particular singer and try to copy them.

There is a saying that, "Imitation is the best form of flattery". This is clearly pointed out and illustrated by the dressing styles that people copy when they listen to a particular type of music. Music fans love to imitate the artists they admire in any way possible- most commonly seen through clothes and style. Various authors have shared their arguments and made immense contributions to indicate that indeed, music has an influence on fashion. Tortora and Eubank in their book "Survey of historic costume: a history of Western dress" argued that the industry related to fashion has always been a risky venture due to unpredictable dressing trends emulated by the society caused by the dynamics in music industry. They pointed out that people changed the ways they dressed to imitate that of the singers in any famous song within a particular period of time.<sup>1</sup>

### **1.1 INFLUENCE OF POP-STARS**

Celebrities influence fashion strongly and their styles invariably become trends. When pop stars meet fashion, a dynamic and lethal combination arises, paving way for new trends and culture. Pop stars over the years have become sensational trend setters for the fashion industry. Pop stars influence the masses and a more commercial culture. In terms of fashion, a pop icon's looks and

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<sup>1</sup> *How music influences the fashion industry.* (2018, November). Retrieved August 4, 2020, from UKEssays: UKEssays. (November 2018). How music influences the fashion industry. Retrieved from <https://www.ukessays.com/essays/cultural-studies/how-music-influences-fashion-cultural-studies-essay.php?vref=1>

styles are emulated and embraced by a larger audience, and hence encouraging designers to create a wide appeal.

Madonna has been a fashion trendsetter for industry critiques and her fans all through her career. Her fashion style was mimicked by her fans as a chain reaction to her music. Her chameleon like ability to regularly transform her look reflected both the ephemeral nature of fashion and her redefinition of femininity; her styles have encompassed everything from punk to androgynous, s-m, hip-hop, geisha, western, as well as military looks.<sup>2</sup> Among the latest sensational pop stars, Lady Gaga shows a unique style in fashion and is not afraid to push the existing boundaries. Designers like Alexander McQueen and Marc Jacobs have drawn inspiration from her unusual styles and showcased it in their collections. She has also given impetus to the revolting style of wearing jackets and tops with just underpants. This would normally be perceived outrageous, or so. But it has received a positive impact and the spring 2010 collection of Alexander Wang and Prada not just displayed the trend in lingerie, but also in their main collection.

The influence of music on fashion is quite emotional in nature. Artists' work, thoughts, and beliefs are often projected in their fashion sense. Rebellions revealed in leather, chains, and grunge style, while romantic in linen and laces, strength in denim and military jackets providing visual appeals to their music. The Punk style of fashion is known to celebrate individuality, creativity, and being fearless. Torn clothes, safety pins, metal chains, tin studs did not only influence street wear but also made rounds in couture wear by the likes of John Galliano, Zandra Rhodes, and Versace.<sup>3</sup> The hip-hop industry had a huge influence in making baggy t-shirts, chains and cool caps a popular fad among the audience.

The influence of fashion and style that an artist propagates is different to different parts of the world. Globalization and digitalization has made it possible for artists to reach out to audiences in all parts of the world. But the reach has not made the various cultural differences null. Fashion and style statement which are acceptable in the USA are hardly acceptable in the conservative society of many Asian countries, or the Middle East for that matter. For example, many female

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<sup>2</sup>Hanchett, T. W. (n.d.). *lovetoknow*. Retrieved August 20, 2020, from <https://fashion-history.lovetoknow.com/>: <https://fashion-history.lovetoknow.com/fashion-history-eras/madonnas-influence-fashion>

<sup>3</sup> *pop-stars-influencing-fashion-trends*. (2013, July). Retrieved July 29, 2020, from fibre2fashion: <https://www.fibre2fashion.com/industry-article/6988/pop-stars-influencing-fashion-trends>

pop artists' album covers feature them in revealing clothing, so the images are censored by members of the Committee for the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice, the religious police known as the "mutawa" in Saudi Arabia.<sup>4</sup>

## 1.2 VISUAL APPEAL OF MUSICAL ARTISTS

Recently though, the focus in the music industry is shifting largely towards visuals and aesthetics. Before the audience hears a single one of musical notes, they make a series of judgement about the artist based on optics. From album covers to the typeface used in the tracklist, band photos to what they wear on stage, people can't help making certain assumptions about the artist when they are first discovered. Visual presentation and the use of fashion has become a tool in achieving success to many musical artists.

Fashion has rather become a demand in today's society. Audience expect a music artist to have a personal sense of style, and to look good all the time besides having a strong musical presence. Every artist is associated with a sense of style which particularly resonates with their music style, for example Lana Del Rey has given rise to a genre of music and style which is uniquely her own- a total throwback to Hollywood's Golden Age and an homage to the 1960/70s, and yet a thoroughly 'modern woman' at the same time.<sup>5</sup> It has become mandatory for artists to create aesthetic value for themselves to catch the eye of the audience as well as record labels. This is a nightmare to certain artists who do not want to establish their credibility as musicians based on their looks. Many artists develop body image issues, depression, anxiety and trauma due to the obsessive media gossip and trolling that happens today. Billie Eilish has reinvented today's pop music, but there has always been some media speculation about her style, which is made up almost entirely of loud, brightly coloured, but defiantly non-revealing streetwear.<sup>6</sup> She has mentioned in interviews that she hides her body with clothing to avoid judgment from fans and onlookers.

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<sup>4</sup> Lakritz, T. (2017, July 17). [www.insider.com](https://www.insider.com/women-album-covers-censored-middle-east-2017-6). Retrieved August 20, 2020, from Insider: <https://www.insider.com/women-album-covers-censored-middle-east-2017-6>

<sup>5</sup> Couturesquemag. (2017, July 20). Retrieved August 22, 2020, from [www.couturesquemag.com](https://www.couturesquemag.com/single-post/lana-del-rey-style-icon): <https://www.couturesquemag.com/single-post/lana-del-rey-style-icon>

<sup>6</sup> Snapes, L. (2019, November 25). *The Guardian*. Retrieved September 1, 2020, from [www.theguardian.com.com](https://www.theguardian.com/music/2019/nov/25/destruction-of-female-pop-role-model-decade-in-music): <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2019/nov/25/destruction-of-female-pop-role-model-decade-in-music>

In the recent years, especially in the K-pop Industry it has been noticed that artists are media bullied to the point of dire consequences. There has been news of various K-pop artists committing suicide due to public and media bullying. Idols like Kim Jonghyun, Goo Hara and Sulli have been some of the victims among the various others who were pushed to the edge.<sup>7</sup> Many artists have opened up about the traumas they go through due to the public criticism they face not on their music but on their appearance and fashion sense.

### **1.3 THE INDIAN MUSIC INDUSTRY**

India is a country which is rich in terms of musical heritage as well as artistic musicians. The country has been blessed with various world-renowned musicians and has a plethora of music genres or styles- Classical, Indipop, Sufi, etc; to choose from. Although the most favoured genre among Indian audience is definitely Indian Film Music or popularly called Bollywood music. "The Digital Music Study 2019 has revealed some illuminating trends in India: the 80% music fandom base, the highest in the world, is the main reason for the 21.3% growth rate India achieved over the past years. The top 2 favourite genres are Bollywood New and Bollywood Old." Blaise Fernandes, president and CEO, IMI, has stated to the media.<sup>8</sup>

Bollywood music aesthetic has been the dictating factor in the music consumption of Indian audience. Unlike the Western culture of music videos featuring the music artists, Indian audience have always been catered by song videos from movies which feature popular actors and actresses lip syncing and dancing to recorded songs. The visual build up in Bollywood music has always been a key factor to attract the Indian audience, as reflected by the fact that every year the biggest hits are always lip-synced songs. As Amit Trivedi said, this trend has been around for almost 100 years and he doesn't see it changing in the near future.<sup>9</sup>

Despite how the Indian music aesthetics are mostly governed by Bollywood standards, there are a certain examples of artists who have broken apart from this mould and created their own

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<sup>7</sup> Su-Hyun, L., & Choe, S.-H. (2019, November 25). *The New York Times*. Retrieved September 11, 2020, from [www.nytimes.com/2019/11/25/world/asia/goo-hara-kpop-suicide.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/25/world/asia/goo-hara-kpop-suicide.html)

<sup>8</sup> ETBrandEquity. (2019, September 18). Retrieved September 12, 2020, from <https://brandequity.economictimes.indiatimes.com/: https://brandequity.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/industry/imireleases-digital-music-study-2019-report-copyright-infringement-remains-a-challenge/71278590>

<sup>9</sup> Trivedi, A. (2017, February 4). *Mint*. Retrieved September 15, 2020, from [ivemint.com/Consumer/BCyD5VVhl9KYal8vdNdIO/When-its-Bollywood-songs-can-never-go-out-of-fashion.html](http://ivemint.com/Consumer/BCyD5VVhl9KYal8vdNdIO/When-its-Bollywood-songs-can-never-go-out-of-fashion.html)

signature style. Take for example Indian Ocean band, Alisha Chinai and Sona Mohapatra; these artists have unique stage personalities that are in sync with their music style. More recently, singers like Badshah, Honey Singh, Raja Kumari have been on the India media front for their exclusive and unique fashion statements. They have millions of followers and are now widely regarded as fashion influencers in the music Industry.

#### **1.4 STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

It has been noticed that in the recent years music has surpassed from being an audio experience to a visual one. Audiences expect to see their preferred artists to be all styled up and flawless when they come up to perform on stage. Artists are expected to always have a good public appearance, not conforming to the expected image leads to malicious media backlash and public trolling as well as cyber bullying. Music artists like Rihanna, Lana, Billie Eilish, etc., have all set up their own standards of aesthetics in their music as well as personal style, divulging seldom from which. Closer home, Sona Mahapatra, Honey Singh, Raja Kumari have shown the same. This study will be an attempt to find out to what extent the visual style has impacted on the minds of the audience rather than the music itself. Furthermore, how has the Indian audience perception of a music artist based on their visual changed over the last decade. This research paper will analyse the reasons behind such perception.

#### **1.5 OBJECTIVE OF STUDY**

Previous research and study has led to the hypothesis that in order to attract public attention and loyalty music artists need to create a persona which is heavily influenced by fashion and has a personal distinct style. This study will be an attempt to find out how much audience perception of a music artist is based on their fashion and style. The questions that arise are –whether the focus is more on aesthetics than actual content in music videos these days? Has the visuals in music videos made the public more focused on the aesthetics than the music? How does this affect an artist's mental health? Has it become mandatory for music artists to now be well versed with fashion? How does the audience who listen and follow the artist react to their fashion sense? Is it important for the audience to now find aesthetic to value music?

## **1.6 SIGNIFICATION OF THE STUDY**

The study will help gain insight in the existing knowledge of the inter-dependency and correlation of fashion and the music industry. Most of the previous studies have focused on the influence music artists have on the public fashion influence, whereas this study will attempt to understand if fashion and style too have an influence on the audience perception of a music artist. This might also provide an insight on the consumer perception and behaviour.

## **1.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter gives a brief introduction on the inter-relation of music and fashion. Fashion and music are both art forms which facilitate self expression and are a reflection of the society at any given point. Music especially has an influence on fashion, as it can be observed in the trends that audiences follow and their yearning to dress like their adored artists. Many musicians are associated with a certain genre of style in both their music as well as fashion. Audiences form their judgments on an artist even before listening to the music they make, based solely on aesthetics. This has led to various instances of media and cyber bullying on the music artists sometimes even leading to fatal incidences. The objective of this paper is to find out the importance of style and fashion that helps a music artist to be accepted by the audience.

## **CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

In his paper “Fashion Trends and its impact on society”, Dr. D. Saravanan talks about how the fashion that is accepted in the society has several driving factors. Today’s consumer culture is driven by aspirationalism that diminishes the gap between the rich and economically volatile sections when it comes to accepting and adopting a trend.<sup>10</sup> Audiences want to feel connected to the artist they listen to, and they see the fashion endorsed by them as a mirror of philosophies and theme they believe in. Hence, they start accepting these trends.

The most popular genre of music in India has for long been Indian film music. Bollywood films are mostly musicals and are therefore expected to contain catchy music in the form of song-and-dance numbers woven into the script. A film’s success often depends on the popularity of such musical numbers. Accounting for approximately 72% of music sales in India, film music has few serious rivals in India. Genres like rock, folk and indie have never matched up to the hype of Indian film music. The reason for this genre to be such hit among the Indian audiences is the fact that film songs permeate class, creed and language, making it the lingua franca of most Indians.<sup>11</sup> However, recent times have brought about a statistical rising in the engagement and interest of young Indian audiences in niche market music of Hip-hop, with rappers like Badshah and Honey Singh entering the commercial movie market. Music lovers now anticipate watching not just Bollywood dance numbers but also the music videos put out by the music artists themselves.

The relationship between fashion and popular music is often abundant and mutually creative, as both are seen as means to show individuality and uniqueness. But music and fashion are also complementary to one another- they both influence as well as restrict each other. As Hai Yan Guo states in his report, “One aspect is that music production and matching is based on the theme of the clothing and design concept are expected on the premise of specific performance style; Another aspect; Music structure also influence to shape of the clothing style positioning

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<sup>10</sup> Venkatasamy, N. (2015). *Fashion trends and their impact on the society*. . Retrieved August 4, 2020, from researchgate: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/282571020\\_Fashion\\_trends\\_and\\_their\\_impact\\_on\\_the\\_society](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/282571020_Fashion_trends_and_their_impact_on_the_society)

<sup>11</sup> Academy, S. M. (2014, June 4). *Shankar Mahadevan Academy*. Retrieved August 8, 2020, from [www.shankarmahadevanacademy.com](http://www.shankarmahadevanacademy.com): <https://www.shankarmahadevanacademy.com/blog/Indian-Film-Music---The-Most-Popular-Music-Genre-in-India/>

and deduce.<sup>12</sup>” Reciprocal influences have resulted in some of the most dynamic apparel visualizations ever created in popular culture. Some exist as memorable creations for the stage and music video while others become long-lasting fashion trends, which settle in the culture to become noteworthy, referential, and lasting. There are three types of collaborations that exists in the industry. One is when fashion designers and entertainment celebrities engineer fashion to fit a declared project; the other collaboration occurs when youth subcultures articulate themselves through fashion. The third is when the fashion industry interprets a music-led theme or trend.

Music artists have always been in the forefront as fashion icons in the West, but the trend is fairly new in India. During the 70s and 80s, the Indian music industry was ruled by the likes of Kishore Kumar, Asha Bhonsle, Usha Uthup, Bappi Lahiri, etc. Each of these singers were associated with their trademark style - Kishore Kumar for his loose fitted printed shirts, Asha Bhonsle with her white saris and big bindis, Bappi Lahiri with his gold chains and Usha Uthup with her Kanjeevaram saris, bangles and large bindis. They stood out due to their unique sense of style which was predominantly Indian ethnic. Costume and fashion designer Neeta Lulla believes this was due to the fact that back in the days inspiration mainly came from film stars as there weren't many fashion magazines; also music events occurred far and fewer.<sup>13</sup> These artists mostly followed their instincts and seldom deviated from their signature style, since the idea of reinvention and rebranding wasn't a part of the industry then.

As the music industry witnesses growth, it is natural for artistes to be more aware of how they should project themselves to the audience. With their reach of audience also transcending to global levels, musicians are becoming more and more sensitive to fashion and styling. Consider the cases of Raja Kumari, Diljit Dosanjh and Guru Randhawa. Kumari has a Instagram following of more than 500k followers. Her fashion sense and style is as much talked about as her music. She caters to her followers' interest regularly with Instagram feed detailing her looks, designers and stylists- be it hand-painted sari for Diwali to fusion sari with shorts for the Vogue Women of the Year Awards. On the other hand, actor and singer Diljit Dosanjh with his 7.7m followers flaunts his love for luxury brands in his choice of sneakers, jackets and T-shirts but adds a *desi* element through his *pagdis* and *chadras*. Singer Guru Randhawa has more than 11m

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<sup>12</sup>Guo, H. Y. (2015). *About the fashion show music*. Wuhan: Atlantis Press.

<sup>13</sup> Samal, C. M. (2019, November 4). *The Voice of Fashion*. Retrieved September 17, 2020, from thevoiceoffashion.com: <https://thevoiceoffashion.com/centrestage/features/the-fashion-melodies-of-indian-musicians-3302>

Instagram followers, who are extremely tuned to his every fashion move. Rather than being too risky and experimental Randhawa likes to keep it safe with classics like suits and kurtas with occasional athleisure looks.

All these current crop of musicians are known for their exuberant sense of style fashion, recognized not just as music artists but also as fashion influencers. What is interesting and distinct is the fact that most of them like to have a blend of Western and Eastern silhouettes and sensibilities. This resonates with idea that Shakuntala Rao talks about in her article -“I Need an Indian Touch”: Glocalization and Bollywood Films- that in order to be popular among Indians, having “an Indian touch” is very important even while exhibiting global influences.<sup>14</sup> The audiences always seem to expect some amount of Indian authenticity even with music. Although lately many rappers and singers flaunt their love for foreign luxury brands like Prada and Gucci in their song lyrics, they also try to offset it by keeping their own style closer home wearing Indian designers and ethnic accessories. As Honey Singh states, “Our audience today knows fashion well. Due to social media people are aware of what's in trend and not. So it is more important now as an artiste to stand out and have a distinct style rather than just slap on brands to blend in with the crowd.”<sup>15</sup>

Today everything revolves around social media and digital platform. Any public appearance, on part of music stars are heavily observed and critiqued by both their followers as well as media. “How a musician is styled depends on the genre of music, the audience they engage and the lyrics they write. Raja has a specific market, she is not meant for the masses. Whereas someone like Raftaar dresses up for the masses. His style is hip hop and spunky,” says Sallony Mahendru, costume designer and stylist, who styles Raja Kumari.<sup>16</sup> Instagram, public appearances, concerts offer them a vivid, more visual medium to connect with their audience and increase their fan base. Artists’ now understand the importance of fashion and the fear of media backlash has resulted in them depending on stylists and image managers to orchestrate their looks.

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<sup>14</sup>Rao, S. (2010). “I Need an Indian Touch”: Glocalization and Bollywood Films. *Journal of International and Intercultural Communication*, 19.

<sup>15</sup> Samal, C. M. (2019, November 4). *The Voice of Fashion*. Retrieved September 17, 2020, from thevoiceoffashion.com: <https://thevoiceoffashion.com/centrestage/features/the-fashion-melodies-of-indian-musicians-3302>

<sup>16</sup> Samal, C. M. (2019, November 4). *The Voice of Fashion*. Retrieved September 17, 2020, from thevoiceoffashion.com: <https://thevoiceoffashion.com/centrestage/features/the-fashion-melodies-of-indian-musicians-3302>

According to the findings of the Digital Music Study 2019, brought out by the Indian Music Industry (IMI), about 62 per cent of the Indians surveyed used social media sites or apps to listen to music or watch music videos. Music listening is up. Respondents typically spend 19.1 hours per week listening to music – higher than the global average of 18 hours. This equates to about 2.7 hours – or the equivalent of listening to 54 three-minute songs – daily. The highest rate of growth for engagement is in the 16 – 24-year-old age group, with 97% of that group accessing a music streaming service.<sup>17</sup> This could be a result of the various shows and performances taking place in India now. With college sets and events like music festivals and concerts growing exponentially, audiences are getting interaction with their music artists more than ever before. This engagement is also reflected in the increasing number of stage musical nights in resto bars and cafes.

As is the norm, fashion trends are dictated by people in limelight. It comes as no surprise that recently music artists are being roped in for brand collaborations. Music today is an amalgamation of thoughts, beliefs and ideas; in addition to solely being a means of entertainment. Musicians are public figures with individualistic expression and the clothes they wear are also a part of it. The look or image is crucial to deliver their message to the following audience. “Brand integration with a music artiste is better than a movie star as for the latter you are just an option. Music stars on the contrary choose clothes that sync with their personality. There is a level of personal connect between the brand and the artiste,” says Paatni.<sup>18</sup> He also points out it’s a cultural evolution. Fans start following the artistes if they love their art and like how they dress, that’s how they become trend setters.

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<sup>17</sup> ETBrandEquity. (2019, September 18). Retrieved September 12, 2020, from <https://brandequity.economictimes.indiatimes.com/>: <https://brandequity.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/industry/imি-releases-digital-music-study-2019-report-copyright-infringement-remains-a-challenge/71278590>

<sup>18</sup> Samal, C. M. (2019, November 4). *The Voice of Fashion*. Retrieved September 17, 2020, from thevoiceoffashion.com: <https://thevoiceoffashion.com/centrestage/features/the-fashion-melodies-of-indian-musicians-3302>

## **2.1 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter gives an insight into the current scenario of the Indian music industry which this study is going to focus on. The acceptance of any trend in a society- be it fashion or music is dependent on the consumers. Unless the consumer feels a sense of aspiration and connection to an artist, they would not be given a chance of acceptance. It is important that music artists understand the nuances and expectation of their audience in order to be capable of catering to their demands.

For a long time, Indian music industry has largely been monopolised by Bollywood music with other genres hardly getting a chance to enter the market and reach the masses. Resulting in the major influence of Bollywood witnessed in music video aesthetics. Recently though, the emergence of interest in hip-hop and rap music has been growing. Rappers like Badshah and Honey Singh are getting more fame and their followers anticipate their songs and music videos as much as the mainstream Bollywood music.

The audience associates music with individualism and uniqueness, which is also reflected in the style sense and clothing choice that an artist indulges in. Fans follow artists only when they like the art offered and the brand image of a musician appeals to them. Social media, especially Instagram plays a very important role in letting the audience take a deeper look into an artist's personal style. Many musicians use this platform to effectively keep the fans indulged and interested. Interestingly, the Indian audience is also big on the idea of glocalisation. Despite loving the Western culture charm, it has been observed that acceptance among the audience is higher when given an "Indian" touch.

## **CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

The main purpose of this paper is to obtain knowledge about how much influence does fashion and style have in a music artist's career and audience perception. On the basis of literature review, following question needed to be addressed:

- Is the focus more on aesthetics than actual content in music videos these days?
- Has it become mandatory for music artists to now be well versed with fashion?
- How does the audience who listen and follow the artist react to their fashion sense?
- Is it important for the audience to now find aesthetic to value music?

### **3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN**

From the literature review, it has been noticed that there is a gap area in the understanding of audience focus on visual aesthetics and perception in music as well as their acceptance of music artists. Therefore, a survey has been done for the collection of the current data on music listening habits, visual music popularity, music artist style and acceptance based on visual interpretation by the audience. Such information has been used to analyse the different types of views and the perception towards music artists in the music industry. The test has been done to analyze the various aspect that most of the audience put focus on while following and choosing to listen to a particular artist or music. The results of such analysis may be further used to improve the knowledge about the audience perception on the music industry as well the popularity of certain kinds of music in the market.

The study on which the survey has been done is focused on the research questions such as:

- i. The internet and social media usage
- ii. Use of visuals to conceptualize music.
- iii. The focus on fashion and style in music videos.
- iv. The amount of fashion consciousness among the listeners.

### **3.3 POPULATION AND SAMPLING DESIGN**

The key technique for attaining data in the study includes questionnaires and observation methods. In the survey design, decent questions would be reliable in providing valid answers and further help in interpreting the data. The survey consisted of 20 multiple choice questions and 6 question with a rating scale with the use of images. There is a simple random sampling done on the survey who are randomly selected where a subset of individuals were chosen from the population. In the survey, usually various information was collected from a fraction of the population, in other words, survey a sample rather than from everyone in the population. Therefore, the sample frame is from the population aged between 16 yrs. – 25 yrs. in Kolkata. Such target group is of very active music listeners as either they are college students or working individuals. Therefore, they are the group most digitally interactive as well as avid followers of music in their day to day life. This is an unbiased surveying technique, so there is a same probability of each individual to be chosen. The suitable sample size of 50 participants was adapted.

## CHAPTER 4. SURVEY ANALYSIS

The following data was collected through a questionnaire form used for the survey on the basis random sampling:

Fig.1

Age  
56 responses

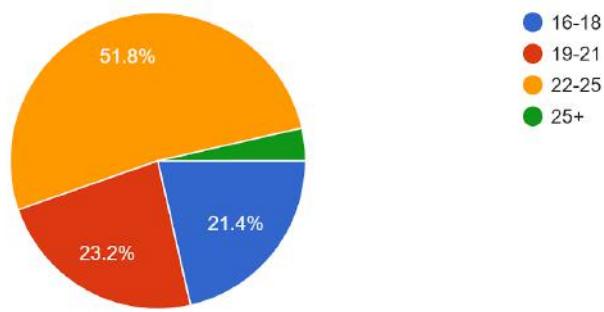


Fig. 2

What kind of music do you like listening to?  
56 responses

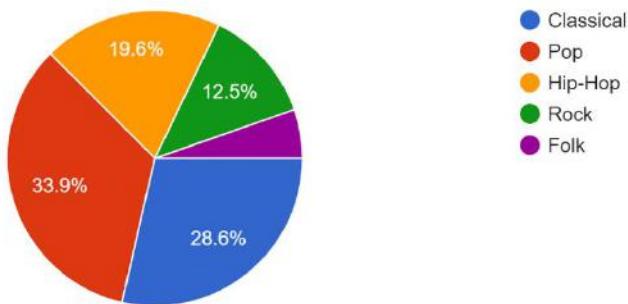


Fig 3.

Which platform do you use to listen to music?

56 responses

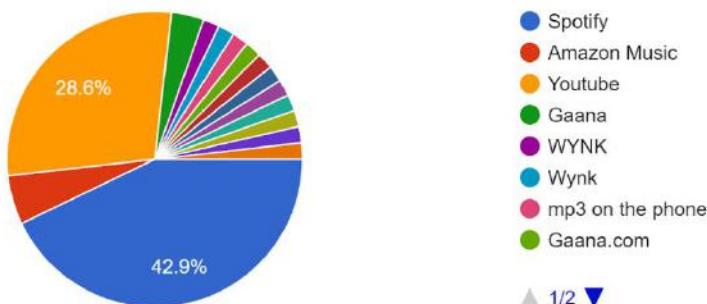


Fig 4.

How often do you listen to music? (In 24 hrs)

56 responses

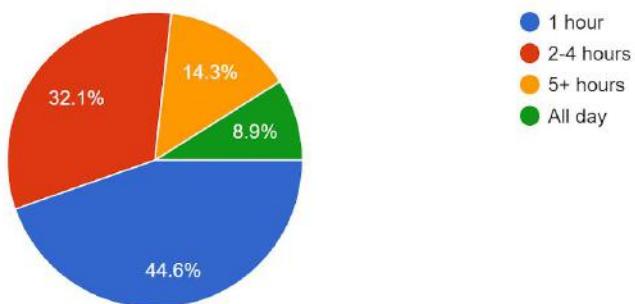


Fig 5.

Which do you prefer more?

56 responses

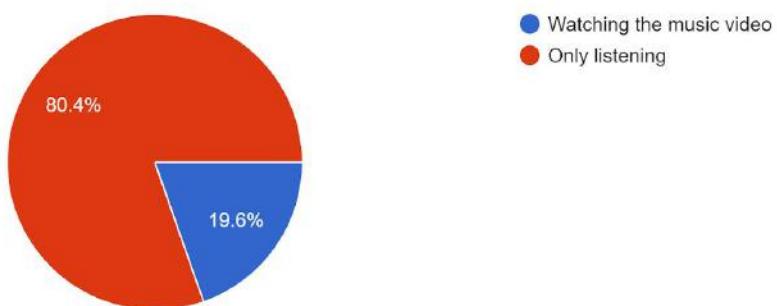


Fig 6.

Do you follow your favourite music artists on social media platforms?  
56 responses

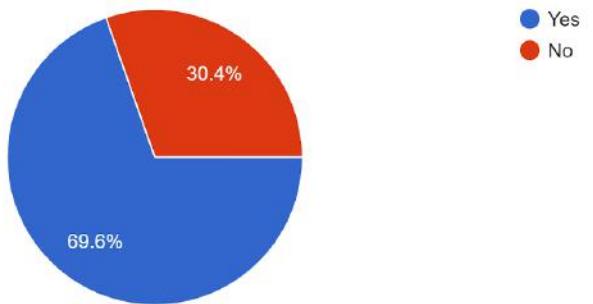


Fig 7.

How likely are you to follow your favourite music artist's style?  
56 responses

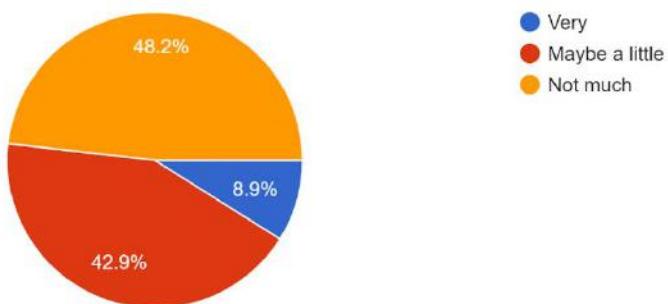


Fig 8.

While watching a music video what are you most impressed by?  
56 responses

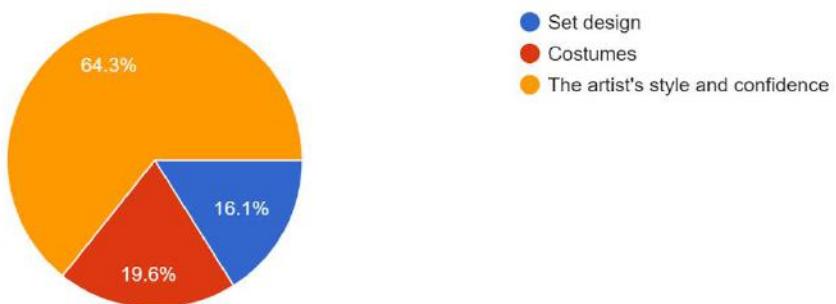


Fig 9.

Have you ever been impressed by a music video but not really the music?  
56 responses

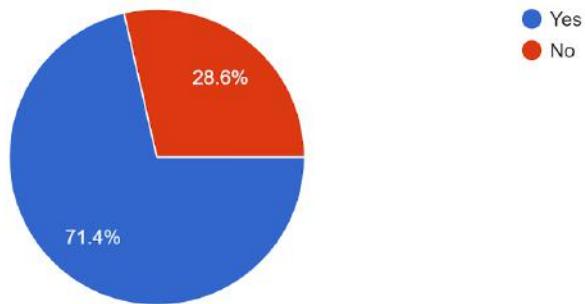


Fig 10.

Do you favour a music artist to have a specific fashion style to compliment their music?  
56 responses

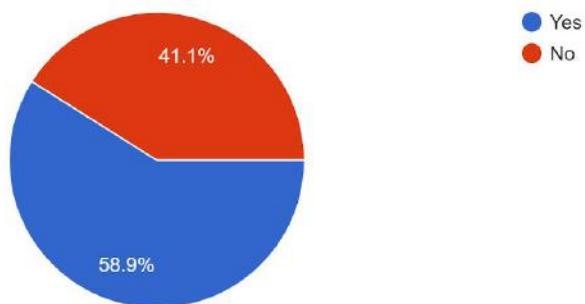


Fig 11.

What is the most likely reason for you to re-watch a music video?  
56 responses

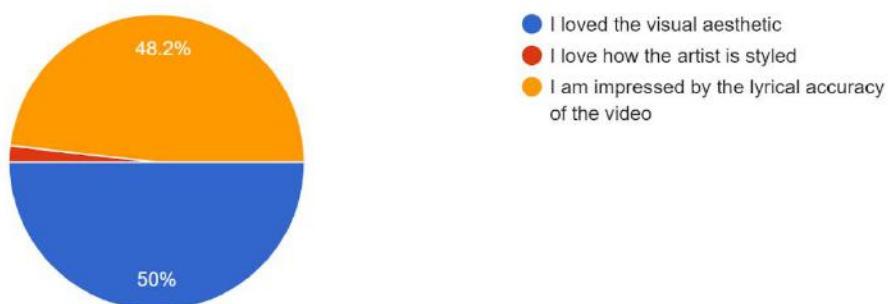


Fig 12.

Does it bother you if a music artist isn't well-groomed while attending shows and concert?  
56 responses

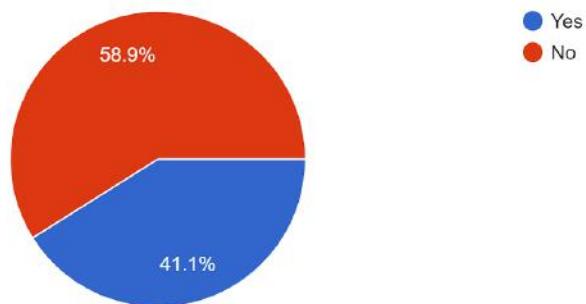


Fig 13.

Do you like it if your favourite music artist has a unique fashion sense?  
56 responses

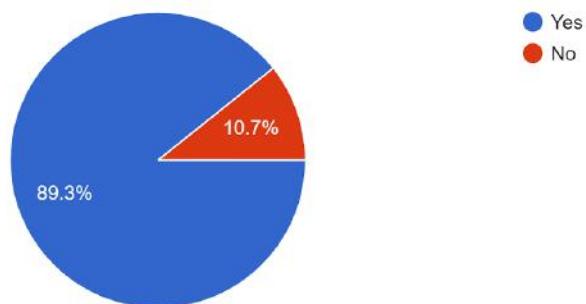


Fig 14.



Please rate the look below

56 responses

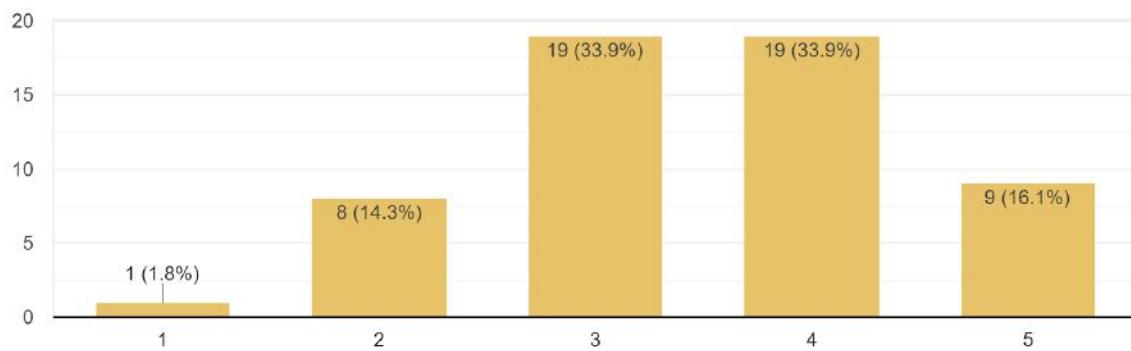


Fig 15.



Please rate the look below

56 responses

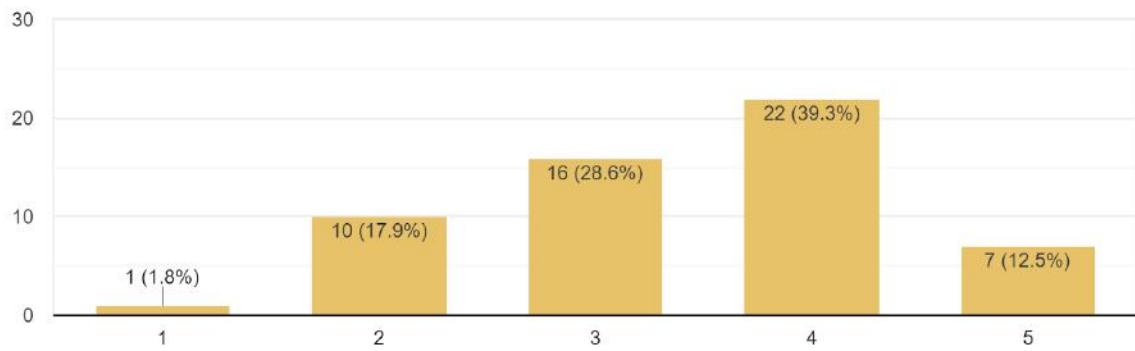


Fig 16.



Please rate the look below

56 responses

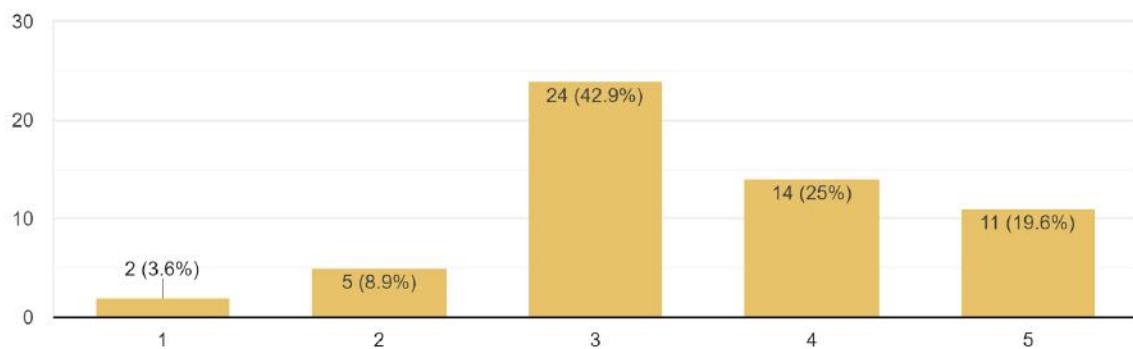


Fig 17.



Please rate the look below

56 responses

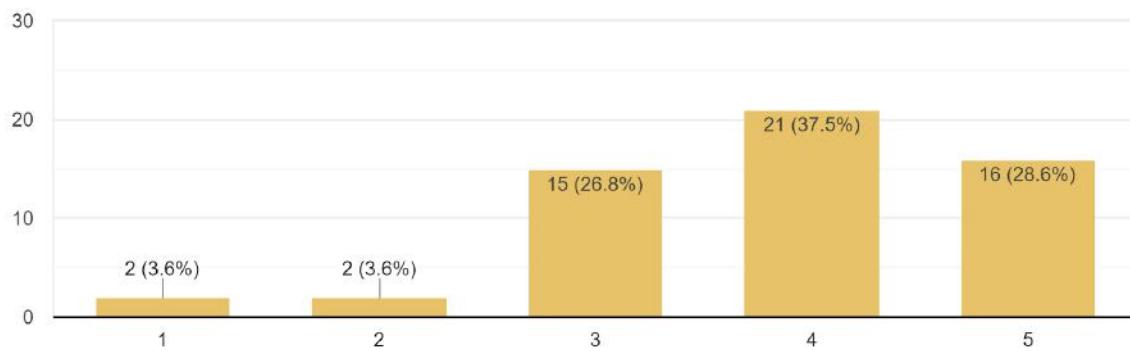


Fig 18.



Please rate the look below

56 responses

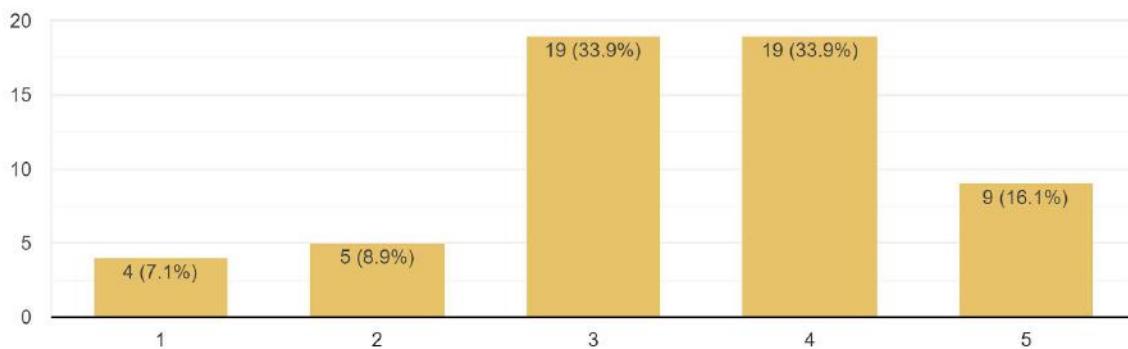


Fig 19.



Please rate the look below

56 responses

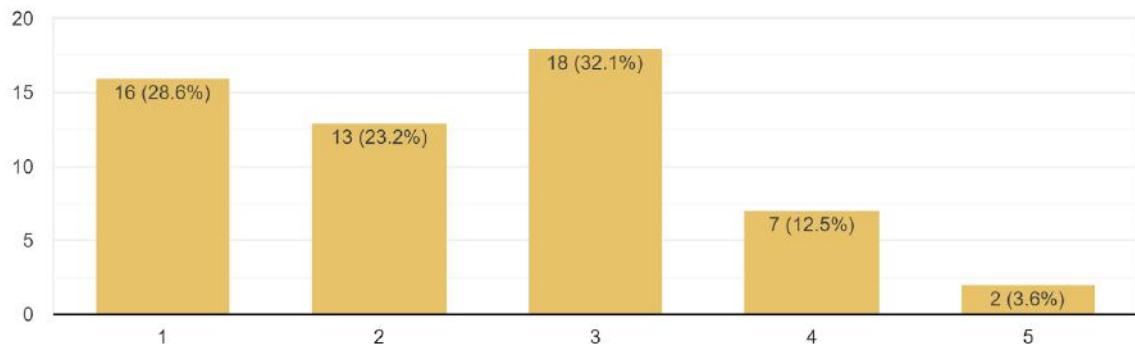


Fig 19.

What kind of contents do you like in a music video?

56 responses

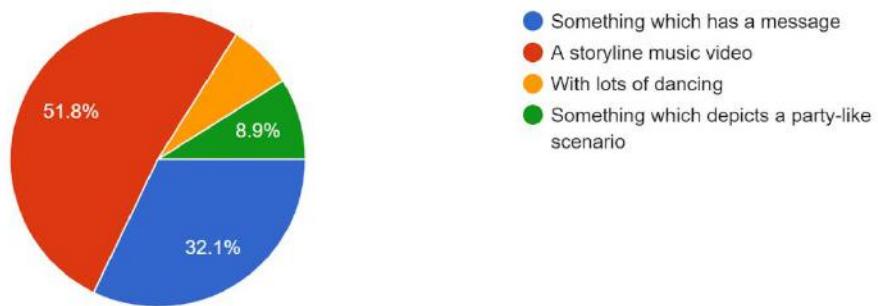


Fig 20.

Do you like if musicians constantly try out new styles?

54 responses

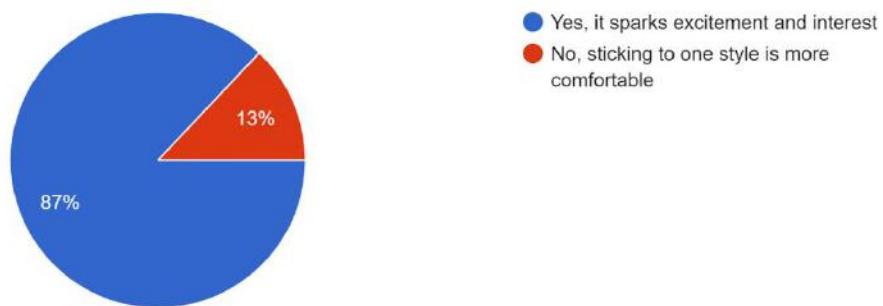


Fig 21.

Have you ever dressed up inspired by some look you saw in a music video?

55 responses

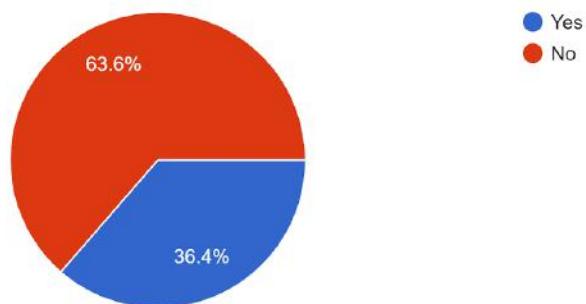


Fig 22.

Who do you prefer watching in music videos?

55 responses

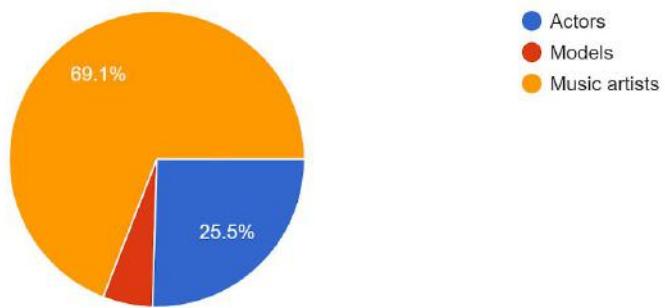


Fig 23.

Do you think you are more interested in a music video than the music?

55 responses

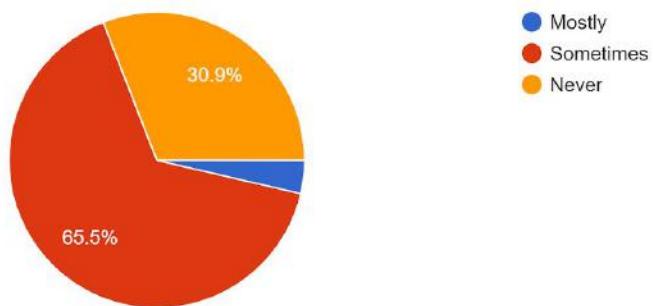


Fig 24.

Are you aware of cyber trolling of music artists?

55 responses

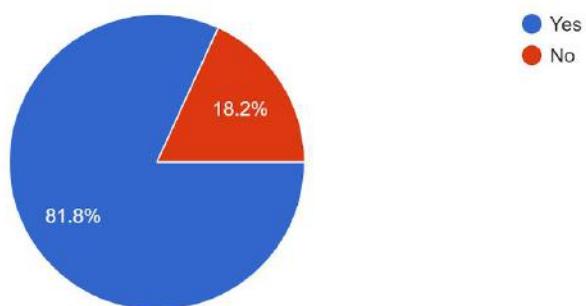
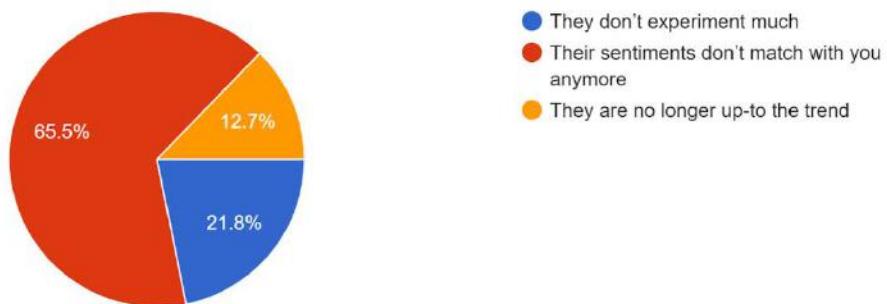


Fig 25.

What is the most likely reason for you to stop following an artist (other than the music they make)?  
55 responses



## **CHAPTER 5. ANALYSIS FINDINGS**

The analysis findings chapter is basically to analyze how fashion and style affects a music artist's career and their audience perception. After the survey, the main gap area is that women were unaware of their respective bra size that perfectly fits them but end up choosing the wrong size. The process for analysis of the survey includes various percentage charts based on the participants' answers.

### **Music listening habits**

The survey graphs were collected using random sampling, and the target population chosen was millennials who were mostly students or working individuals. Fig.1 shows that the majority of the sample population that responded were among the 22-25 age group with 51.8%. In the genre of music that the participants most listened to 33.9% chose Pop music, followed by 28.6% choosing classical music, 19.6% choosing hip-hop, 12.5% choosing rock music and 5.4% choosing folk music. The platform most preferred by the sample population to listen to music was found Spotify with 42.9% selection, closely followed by Youtube with 28.9%. In response to their music listening time, 44.6% of the respondents chose 1 hour, 32.1% chose 2-4 hours, 14.3% chose more than 5 hours and the rest 8.9% chose all day. Majority, i.e., 80% of the population chose listening to music over watching the music video.

### **Music Artist perception**

In response to the question of following music artist on social media 69.6% participants chose yes while 30.4% chose no. in response to following their favourite artist's style majority of the participants responded with the Not much option. While watching a music video 64.3% participants are impressed by the artist's style and confidence, 19.6% are impressed by the costumes and 16.1% by the set design. The participants responded that about 71.4% of them have been impressed by a music video more than the music in it. On asking whether they preferred a music artist to have a specific fashion style to compliment their music, 58.9% participants answered with Yes while 41.1% answered with No.

50% of the sample participants chose the visual aesthetics to be reason for their re-watching a music video while 48.2% responded with impressed by lyrical accuracy of the video and a mere

1.8% chose the styling of an artist. When asked whether it bothered them if a music artist isn't well-groomed while attending shows and concert, 58.9% participants answered No while 41.1 % answered Yes. In response to the question of liking an artist with a unique fashion sense 89.3% responded with Yes while 10.7% responded No.

### **Artist fashion style perception**

While rating the 3 female and 3 male music artist's fashion look from least to most attractive, the data shows that most of the participants found Fig 14. and Fig 15. to be mostly attractive while they Fig 16. was given an intermediate rating. For Fig 17. and Fig 18. most participants found them of the attractive spectrum while most found Fig 19. on the less attractive end.

### **Music video perception**

Fig 20. shows the preference of the participants in accordance with the contents shown in music videos. 51.8% prefer music videos with a storyline, 32.1% prefer music videos with a message, 8.9% like party scenarios in music videos while 7.1% like music videos with lots of dancing. When asked if they liked musicians to constantly try out new styles, 87% answered Yes while 13% answered No. 63.6% participants responded that they have never been inspired by music videos to dress up while 36.4% responded No. in response to who they preferred watching in a music video 69.1% chose music artists, 25.5% chose actors while 5.5% participants chose models.

When asked whether they were more interested in a music video than the music, 65.5% responded Sometimes, 30.9% responded Never and 3.6% responded Mostly. 81.8% of the sample participants seem to be aware of cyber trolling of music artists, while 18.2% responded negatively. When asked the most likely reason for them to stop following an artist (other than the music they make) 65.5% responded that their sentiments don't match anymore, 21.8% responded that the music became less experimental and 12.7% responded that they were no longer up to the trend.

## **CHAPTER 6. CONCLUSION**

This chapter is to discuss the outcomes of the research paper in comparison to the past studies done which is written about in the literature review. There are various recommendations which could be used in the future study followed by the conclusion which is obtained by the survey done. Previous research and study had led to the hypothesis that in order to attract public attention and loyalty music artists need to create a persona which is heavily influenced by fashion and has a personal distinct style. This study was an attempt to collect data and find out how much audience perception of a music artist is based on their fashion and style. The various questions that arised were:

- Is the focus more on aesthetics than actual content in music videos these days?
- Has it become mandatory for music artists to now be well versed with fashion?
- How does the audience who listen and follow the artist react to their fashion sense?
- Is it important for the audience to now find visual aesthetic to value music?

The survey consisted of 20 multiple choice questions and 6 question with a rating scale with the use of images. There is a simple random sampling done on the survey who are randomly selected where a subset of individuals were chosen from the population. In the survey, usually various information was collected from a fraction of the population, in other words, survey a sample rather than from everyone in the population. Therefore, the sample frame is from the population aged between 16 yrs. – 25 yrs. in Kolkata.

Many results were compared and analyzed. Some of the results included the participants' music listening habits, music Artist perception, artist fashion style perception, as well as music video perception. It has been seen that artists with experimental temperament in both their fashion and music are preferred by the audience. From the survey, it has been seen that even though the audience do not particularly follow the artist's style personally they want the artist to create a unique look.

It has been observed through this research paper that along with the musical abilities of an artist, audience also wants them to be fashion conscious and have a unique style. The reason for this could be the idea of individuality and uniqueness that the audience wants to connect with while

choosing to listen to the artist. The data analysis of the survey shows that unconsciously the perception of an artist is influenced along the lines of their visual aesthetics and music videos with strong visual appeal attract more audience than music videos which solely focus on music. Visual appeal creates a more lasting impression in the viewers' mind and stimulates them, leading them to rewatch the music videos repeatedly. This also leads to some music being more popular than the others. Pop music was the most favored genre of music based on the survey findings. This popularity can be assigned to the fact that pop music rely on heavy visual aesthetic of both the music videos as well as music artists. However, the analysis also points out the audiences' heavy focus on lyrical connect and musical expression, a disconnect to which ultimately leads to the audience loosing interest in artist.

By analyzing all these details it can be said that fashion and style are important aspects in a music artists' career, though it does not precede their musical abilities. Regardless a considerable amount of influence is created by the visuals an artist indulges in. Musical ability creates the base followers for a singer but it is through their fashion and visual aesthetic which builds them as a brand and widens their audience reach. It also helps them keep their audience interested and excited. Even though the survey has been done in the research paper, from this some useful findings and results were obtained but there is still a requirement for further investigation to analyze the market and delve deeper into the audiences' mind to fully understand their behavior and choices.

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## **APPENDIX: 1**

### **Survey Questionnaire**

#### **HOW MUCH INFLUENCE DOES FASHION AND STYLE HAVE IN A MUSIC ARTIST'S CAREER AND AUDIENCE PERCEPTION**

1. Age
2. Profession
3. What kind of music do you like listening to?

- Classical
- Pop
- Hip-hop
- Folk
- Rock

4. Which platform do you use to listen to music?

  - Spotify
  - Savn
  - Amazon music
  - Youtube
  - Other-

5. How often do you listen to music? (In 24 hrs)

  - 1 hour
  - 2-4 hours
  - 5+ hours
  - All day

6. Which do you prefer more?
  - Watching the music video
  - Only listening
7. Do you follow your favourite music artists on social media platforms?
  - Yes
  - No

8. How likely are you to follow your favourite music artist's style?

- Very
- Maybe a little
- Not much

9. While watching a music video what are you most impressed by?

- Set design
- Costumes
- The artist's style and confidence

10. Have you ever been impressed by a music video but not really the music?

- Yes (specify which)
- No

11. Do you favour a music artist to have a specific fashion style to compliment their music?

- Yes
- No

12. What is the most likely reason for you to re-watch a music video?

- I loved the visual aesthetic
- I love how the artist is styled
- I am impressed by the lyrical accuracy of the video

13. Does it bother you if a music artist isn't well groomed while attending shows and concert?

- Yes
- No

14. Do you like it if your favourite music artist has a unique fashion sense?

- Yes
- No

15. Please rate the look below (1 being least attractive; 5 being most attractive)



16. Please rate the look below (1 being least attractive; 5 being most attractive)



17. Please rate the look below (1 being least attractive; 5 being most attractive)



18. Please rate the look below (1 being least attractive; 5 being most attractive)



19. Please rate the look below (1 being least attractive; 5 being most attractive)



20. Please rate the look below (1 being least attractive; 5 being most attractive)



21. What kind of contents do you like in a music video?

- Something which has a message
- A storyline music video
- With lots of dancing
- Something which depicts a party-like scenario

22. Do you like if musicians constantly try out new styles?

- Yes, it sparks excitement and interest
- No, sticking to one style is more comfortable

23. Have you ever dressed up inspired by some look you saw in a music video?

- Yes
- No

24. Who do you prefer watching on music videos?

- Actors
- Models
- Music artists

25. Do you think you are more interested in a music video than the music?

- Mostly
- Sometimes
- Never

26. Are you aware of cyber trolling of music artists?

- Yes
- No

27. What is the most likely reason for you to stop following an artist (other than the music they make)?

- They don't experiment much
- Their sentiments don't match with you anymore
- They are no longer up-to the trend