

Abstract: **SmartTecStyle conference 2021**

Forecasting virtual fashion trends in emerging economies

Walter Chipmabwa¹

¹*Chinhoyi University of Technology, Zimbabwe*

*Walter Chipambwa: wchipambwa@cut.ac.zw

The fourth industrial revolution has ushered a number technological changes across all manufacturing sectors. This study looks at how the virtual fashion concept is developing with specific emphasis in emerging economies. The paper focuses on the aspect of virtual fashion in Zimbabwe's fashion industry looking at the fashion consumers, fashion retailers and fashion designers. The study explores the concept in three dimensions namely virtual shopping, virtual fitting and virtual fashion shows in trying to understand and forecast the developments of the of the fashion sector from an emerging economy perspective. A total of 5 fashion designers and 5 fashion retail companies were purposively sampled for this study. Twenty-five fashion consumers were also surveyed so that they could give their input on the three dimensions of virtual fashion. From the study challenges and opportunities in the fashion sector were highlighted and these were ranked according to their level of impact. From the study it was highlighted that the high level rates of mobile phone penetration provided a good base for the adoption of the fashion 4.0 concepts. This also had a positive effect on the usage of social media platforms as means and methods of getting access to latest information about the developments in the fashion industry. The study concludes by coming up with a model to be adopted for the successful implementation of fashion 4.0 in emerging economies.