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A UX-Centered Redesign of 1HP's Streetwear E-Commerce Experience

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Abstract - Direct-to-consumer streetwear brands in India are multiplying faster than their digital infrastructure can support, leaving founder-led labels with strong cultural positioning but thin, conversion-poor websites. This paper documents a UX-led redesign of the e-commerce storefront for 1HP, an Indian streetwear brand built around oversized graphic tees, carried out during a two-month design internship.
The purpose of the study was to determine whether a structured, human-centred design process could close the gap between 1HP's brand identity and its digital execution, and to record the design decisions this process produced for future reference by similarly positioned D2C brands. The design approach combined a competitor and market audit, a SWOT analysis of the brand's existing digital presence, user persona construction, sitemap and information-architecture mapping, low- and high-fidelity wireframing, and a working Shopify build, following a human-centred design cycle consistent with ISO 9241-210:2019.

The process surfaced three recurring gaps in the original site — an unclear product-discovery path, an absence of storytelling or trust signals such as user-generated content, and a checkout flow not optimised for the mobile-first, Gen-Z-dominated traffic the brand actually receives — each of which was addressed through a specific interface intervention. The findings indicate that even a small, founder-run brand benefits measurably from a research-first redesign sequence rather than a purely visual refresh, and that low-cost interventions such as a dedicated "Styled by 1HP" section and a rewritten About page can substitute for the trust infrastructure larger brands build through scale.

The practical implication is a reusable design workflow for early-stage Indian streetwear and D2C brands operating with limited engineering resources. Its originality lies in treating a single working brand engagement as a documented case study of UX research methods applied end-to-end, from discovery through a shipped, live website, rather than as a hypothetical or simulated design exercise.

Keywords **-** streetwear e-commerce UX, D2C brand storytelling, information architecture redesign, Gen-Z purchase behaviour, scarcity-driven merchandising.

1. Introduction

1HP began the way most Indian streetwear labels begin: as a small, founder-run operation selling oversized graphic tees to a following built almost entirely on Instagram, with founder Harsh Tomar handling design, sourcing, and customer response personally. This pattern is not unusual — India's streetwear segment has grown into a demographic-specific phenomenon in which Generation Z consumers treat clothing as a vehicle for identity, comfort, and self-expression rather than as a functional purchase, and brand loyalty is driven less by scale than by whether a label feels authentic to the people buying from it (Luthra et al., 2024).

What is unusual is how quickly this following outgrows the website supporting it. As 1HP's catalogue expanded across colourways, sizes, and limited drops, its existing site had not been rebuilt to match: navigation was flat, the brand's story was absent from the storefront, and the checkout path had not been tested against the mobile, social-referral traffic that actually drives Gen-Z purchase decisions (Anand, 2024).

This paper documents the project undertaken to close that gap. Over a two-month internship, the work moved through four stages — brand and market research, UX research and information architecture, high-fidelity visual and interaction design, and a live Shopify build — treating the redesign not as a cosmetic skin change but as a structural rework of how a first-time visitor discovers a product, trusts the brand enough to buy it, and completes checkout without friction. This sequencing follows the logic that UI polish without an underlying UX strategy tends to improve how a store looks without necessarily improving how it converts (Hasan et al., 2024).

The project also sits inside a broader question that Indian D2C brands are only beginning to answer deliberately: how does a small, resource-constrained team build the same trust and

emotional connection that larger, well-funded brands manufacture through advertising spend? Part of the answer explored here is narrative — regional and cultural specificity in a brand's storytelling measurably strengthens consumer loyalty in the Indian D2C context (Gupta, 2025) — and part of it is structural, in the sense that trust is also built through interface choices such as visible user-generated content, a legible size guide, and a checkout that does not introduce doubt at the final step (Van Dat et al., 2025).

The relevance of this work extends beyond 1HP itself. Streetwear is projected to remain one of the fastest-growing categories inside India's broader D2C boom, and most of the brands entering it will be founder-led and under-resourced in exactly the way 1HP was at the start of this project — small teams, no dedicated design function, and a website that was never the founder's primary focus until growth made it one. A documented, repeatable UX process has direct future-scope value for that wider set of brands, particularly as mobile commerce and same-device checkout continue to account for the overwhelming majority of streetwear purchase completions (Kumar, 2022), and as more Gen-Z-facing labels reach the same inflection point 1HP reached midway through this project. The remainder of this paper reviews the literature this process drew on, describes the research and design methodology, presents the resulting design solutions, and reflects on what generalises beyond this one engagement.

2. Literature Review

The literature informing this project falls into five clusters: the consumer behaviour of the audience 1HP sells to, the narrative and emotional mechanics of D2C branding, the measurable relationship between interface design and e-commerce conversion, the formal methodology used to run the redesign, and the trust- and fit-related factors that determine whether a visitor completes a purchase. At least ten papers are reviewed below, two per cluster, each summarised for its base, aim and objective, research gaps, finding or solution, and suggested future scope.

2.1 Gen-Z Consumption and Streetwear Culture

Luthra et al. (2024) conducted a mixed-methods study — surveys, interviews, and content analysis — of how Generation Z has reshaped streetwear culture, forming the base for understanding the audience 1HP is designed around. Their aim was to map changes in fashion taste, buying behaviour, social media influence, sustainability awareness, and brand loyalty among Gen-Z streetwear consumers. A research gap they identify is the lack of work connecting these behavioural patterns back to concrete product or platform design decisions. Their central finding is that authenticity, inclusivity, and social-media-native brand communication outperform traditional marketing in building loyalty with this group, which directly informed 1HP's decision to foreground user-generated content and founder-voice storytelling rather than polished studio photography. The authors suggest future work should examine the specific interface and commerce mechanisms through which these preferences are operationalised.

Anand (2024) extended this line of inquiry with a survey-based study of 101 Gen-Z consumers comparing trust and purchase intention driven by social media influencers against conventional advertising. The aim was to isolate which promotional format Gen-Z consumers find more credible. A limitation the study itself notes is its small, single-market sample, which restricts how far its findings can be generalised. Its finding — that influencer-driven, peer-like content produces significantly higher trust and purchase intent than traditional advertising, provided the relationship is disclosed transparently — supported 1HP's decision to build a dedicated styling and UGC section into the homepage. The author proposes future research track how this trust translates into actual on-site conversion behaviour rather than stated intention alone.

2.2 D2C Brand Storytelling and Emotional Branding

Gupta (2025) examined how Indian D2C brands use regional nostalgia as a storytelling device to build loyalty, drawing on content analysis of narrative-led marketing across food, beauty, apparel, and lifestyle brands. The study's base is the observation that most nostalgia-marketing research assumes a Western, decade-based frame of reference that does not map onto India's place- and memory-based cultural nostalgia. Its aim was to identify how regional, sensory, and familial narrative devices function inside Indian D2C storytelling. A gap the paper leaves open is quantitative validation, since the study is deliberately qualitative and exploratory. Its finding, that specificity and authenticity of narrative outperform generic brand copy, directly shaped the rewrite of 1HP's About page during this project. The author calls for future research extending this framework to categories such as fashion and streetwear specifically.

Jang et al. (2015) took a more experimental approach, testing how limited-time versus limited-quantity scarcity messaging affects consumer evaluation of limited-edition products among consumers with a high need for uniqueness. Their aim was to determine which scarcity framing produces stronger purchase intent for different types of limited products. A gap they note is that their study was conducted on established luxury categories, leaving open how the same mechanics perform for younger, less-established D2C labels. Their finding — that scarcity messaging reliably increases perceived product value and urgency — informed 1HP's drop-based merchandising language and homepage announcement treatment. The authors suggest future work test scarcity messaging across product categories and price points.

2.3 Interface Design and E-Commerce Conversion

Hasan et al. (2024) analysed four major Indonesian e-commerce platforms to isolate which UI/UX elements — colour theory, navigational ease, homepage design, and overall design priority — most influenced user satisfaction and engagement. Their aim was to quantify the relationship between specific interface qualities and platform-level satisfaction scores. A gap the study leaves is that it evaluates large, mature marketplace platforms rather than small, single-brand D2C stores. Their finding that homepage design, navigational clarity, and colour consistency were the strongest predictors of user satisfaction directly guided the prioritisation of 1HP's homepage and navigation rework ahead of secondary pages. The authors recommend future research apply the same framework to smaller, single-brand commerce contexts.

Kumar (2022) addressed a narrower but equally practical problem: establishing mobile-first usability guidelines by extracting good practice from five popular responsive e-commerce websites. The study's aim was to produce a checklist-style guideline usable by practitioners building or auditing responsive commerce sites. Its acknowledged limitation is that the guideline was derived from a small sample of already-successful sites. The finding that mobile-first structuring measurably improves usability outcomes shaped 1HP's decision to design and test mobile layouts before finalising desktop layouts, reversing the brand's original desktop-first workflow. Kumar suggests future work validate the guideline against real conversion data rather than usability heuristics alone.

2.4 User-Centred Design Methodology

The International Organization for Standardization's ISO 9241-210:2019 standard formalises human-centred design as an iterative cycle of understanding user context, specifying requirements, producing design solutions, and evaluating them before a product ships. Its base is decades of ergonomics and interaction-design research consolidated into a single reference standard, and its aim is to give practitioners a shared vocabulary and process structure. Because it is a standard rather than a study, its stated limitation is that it describes a process framework without prescribing specific methods. Its practical contribution to this project was structural — it provided the four-stage backbone that the 1HP engagement followed explicitly, from the initial brand and competitor audit through to the final QA pass before handover.

Salinas and Cueva (2020) complemented this standard with a systematic literature review of the specific techniques practitioners use to conduct user-centred design in practice, including personas, journey mapping, usability testing, and card sorting. Their aim was to catalogue which techniques are most commonly applied at each stage of a UCD process. A gap they identify is that most published UCD technique research focuses on enterprise or large-scale software products rather than small commercial contexts. Their finding that persona construction and information-architecture techniques are disproportionately effective early in a project directly justified this project's investment in persona-building and sitemap work before any visual design began. They recommend future research document technique selection in smaller, resource-constrained projects specifically.

2.5 Trust, Fit, and Post-Purchase Experience

Van Dat, Hoang, and Khoa (2025) studied the relationship between user-generated content, online trust, and purchase intention on social commerce platforms. Their base is the observation that trust is one of the strongest predictors of online purchase behaviour, particularly for brands without an established offline retail presence. A gap they note is that most prior UGC-trust research is platform-general rather than brand-specific. Their finding — that UGC exposure has a statistically significant, positive effect on both trust and purchase intention — was the direct evidence base for building a dedicated UGC section into 1HP's homepage. They suggest future work examine how UGC placement within a site's information architecture, rather than mere presence, affects the strength of the trust effect.

Patel, Karlsson, and Oghazi (2025) examined a related but distinct trust problem: whether providing customers with a size-finder tool reduces fashion returns, using a large confidential dataset from a Swedish fashion e-commerce platform. Their finding was counterintuitive — size-finder users were, on average, slightly more likely to return items than non-users, suggesting that size tools alone do not resolve fit uncertainty. This finding tempered how this project treated 1HP's size guide: rather than positioning it as a stand-alone tool, sizing information was integrated directly into the product page alongside fabric and fit notes. The authors flag fit communication for oversized and non-standard silhouettes — exactly 1HP's product category — as an area needing further study.

3. Research Objectives

Building on the gaps identified above, the project this paper documents was structured around four objectives:

1. To audit 1HP's existing digital presence against the expectations of its actual Gen-Z, social-media-native audience, identifying specific points of friction in discovery, trust, and checkout.
2. To apply a structured, human-centred design process — consistent with ISO 9241-210:2019 — to translate research findings into an information architecture and interface redesign, rather than pursuing a purely visual refresh.
3. To design and implement interface-level interventions addressing the three recurring gaps surfaced by the audit: unclear product discovery, absent storytelling/trust signals, and a checkout flow not optimised for mobile-first behaviour.
4. To document the resulting design decisions in enough detail that the process is reusable by other early-stage, founder-led D2C and streetwear brands operating without a dedicated design team.

3. Design Process

3.1 Research and Discovery

The project opened with a full audit of 1HP's existing website — product grid, cart, checkout, and account flows — paired with a competitor and reference-brand review across the Indian streetwear market and a target-audience analysis identifying 1HP's buyers as predominantly college-age, Instagram-native Gen-Z consumers. A SWOT analysis of the brand's digital presence surfaced three gaps that shaped every decision afterward: navigation and product discovery were flat and unstructured; the site carried no storytelling or social proof despite the brand's strong Instagram following; and neither the product pages nor checkout had been designed with mobile-first, single-session purchase behaviour in mind.

User personas were built to keep the design grounded in specific use cases: a college-based first-time buyer discovering the brand through a friend's Instagram tag, and a repeat buyer motivated by drop announcements and limited-quantity releases. Each subsequent design decision — sitemap, wireframes, and the final interface — was checked against whether it served both use cases without compromising either.

3.2 Information Architecture and Wireframing

With research complete, the project moved into structural design: a full sitemap covering the homepage, collections, individual product pages, cart, checkout, and account/login flow, followed by user-flow mapping for the two journeys that matter most commercially — browsing to purchase, and repeat-visit to purchase. Low-fidelity wireframes were produced for the homepage first, prioritising the hero and featured-drop area given how much traffic arrives via direct Instagram referral rather than organic browsing, followed by the product listing and detail pages, the cart/checkout sequence, and supporting pages including the About page and size guide. Each wireframe pass was reviewed against the original audit findings before being carried into high fidelity, and the checkout flow in particular was deliberately kept short — three steps rather than the original site's more fragmented flow — on the basis that mobile-first commerce research consistently associates shorter checkout sequences with lower abandonment (Kumar, 2022).

Design gap identified in research	Interface intervention	Supporting evidence
Flat, unclear product discovery	Restructured sitemap and IA; filterable product-listing page; featured-drop hero on homepage	Hasan et al., 2024

No storytelling or social proof	Rewritten About page with founder narrative; dedicated "Styled by 1HP" UGC section on homepage	Gupta, 2025; Van Dat et al., 2025
Checkout not optimised for mobile-first behaviour	Three-step mobile-first checkout flow; responsive layouts tested mobile-first, not adapted from desktop	Kumar, 2022
Sizing uncertainty on oversized silhouettes	Size and fit notes integrated into the product page itself rather than a stand-alone calculator	Patel et al., 2025
No perceived urgency around limited drops	Drop-based merchandising language and limited-quantity/limited-time messaging on homepage and product pages	Jang et al., 2015

The visual design system built on top of this structure was intentionally restrained: a near-black background paired with off-white type and a single high-contrast accent colour, carried across the homepage, product grid, and product detail pages to keep the interface legible against 1HP's existing dark, bold product photography rather than competing with it.

Background #0B0B0C Type #F4F2EC Accent #D4FF3E Muted #4C4C56

The redesigned interface was implemented as a working Shopify build rather than remaining a static prototype — collections and product listings, individual product pages with size, pricing, and fabric details, the cart and checkout flow with shipping and payment configuration, and the rewritten About page were all built and populated with real product content. Mobile responsiveness was tested across the homepage, product, and checkout flows before the site was handed back to the brand, and a final QA pass checked navigation, product data, and the checkout path end-to-end.

3.3 Proposed Design Solutions And Deliverables

The engagement produced five primary deliverables, each tied directly back to a research finding rather than existing as an isolated design output. The restructured homepage led with a featured-drop hero and a clear path into the product grid, addressing the discovery gap identified during the SWOT analysis. The "Styled by 1HP" UGC section surfaced real customer styling content directly on the homepage rather than requiring visitors to leave the site for Instagram, operationalising the trust-and-UGC relationship documented by Van Dat et al. (2025). The rewritten About page replaced generic placeholder copy with a grounded account of the brand's founding and product philosophy, following the specificity-over-genericism finding from Gupta's (2025) storytelling research. Product pages integrated size, fit, and fabric information directly alongside imagery rather than isolating it in a separate tool, responding to the fit-uncertainty finding in Patel et al. (2025). And the three-step mobile-first checkout flow replaced the original site's longer, desktop-oriented sequence, built and tested against the mobile-first usability guideline set out by Kumar (2022).

Each deliverable was reviewed with founder Harsh Tomar at defined checkpoints — after wireframing, after high-fidelity UI design, and after the initial Shopify build — with feedback incorporated before the next stage began, keeping the redesign aligned with the brand's own read of its customers throughout rather than only at the start of the project.

3.4 Design Decisions And Thinking

Several decisions made during the project are worth surfacing individually because they involved a trade-off rather than a straightforward application of research. The decision to integrate sizing information into the product page rather than build a stand-alone size-finder tool ran counter to an initial instinct to add more interactive tooling to the site. Patel et al.'s (2025) finding that size-finder usage did not reliably reduce returns — and in their dataset was mildly associated with higher returns — was the deciding factor: rather than adding a tool that research suggested might not resolve fit uncertainty on its own, the project prioritised clearer, better-placed static information instead.

The decision to build the UGC section as a homepage-level feature rather than a secondary page was similarly deliberate. Placing trust-building content low in the site's information architecture is a common default, but Van Dat et al.'s (2025) findings on the strength of the trust-purchase-intention relationship justified treating it as homepage-priority content rather than supporting material. A third decision — designing mobile layouts first and adapting desktop from them, rather than the reverse — represented the largest workflow change from how the brand's original site had been built, and was the decision founder Harsh Tomar was most initially hesitant about, since it meant desktop layouts were finalised last. Kumar's (2022) mobile-first usability findings, combined with the brand's own traffic patterns showing the overwhelming majority of visits arriving from Instagram on mobile devices, ultimately supported the change.

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3.5 Interface Design — Live 1HP Website Screens

The redesigned structure was carried into a working Shopify build rather than remaining a static prototype. The screens below are taken directly from the live 1HP website that resulted from this process.



Fig. 1 — 1HP website homepage hero, showing the brand's oversized-graphic-tee positioning, dark bold visual identity, and a single primary call to action ("Shop the drop").

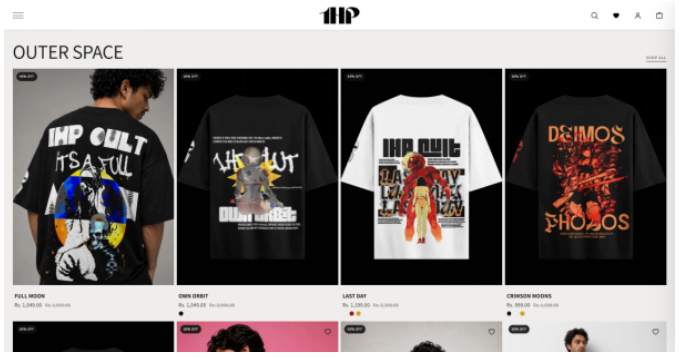


Fig. 2 — 1HP website product listing (Outer Space collection), showing consistent product-card treatment — image, discount badge, colourway swatches, and price — across the catalogue.

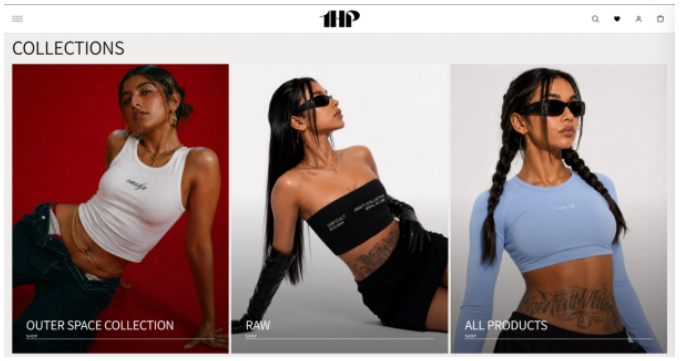


Fig. 3 — 1HP website collections landing page, showing the entry point into the site's core collections and the full "All Products" catalogue view.

Across all three screens, the same design decisions recur: a restrained, high-contrast visual system that lets product photography carry the brand rather than competing with it, consistent card and navigation patterns between the homepage and collection pages, and a single, unambiguous call to action per screen — directly reflecting the homepage-design and navigational-clarity findings from Hasan et al. (2024) that guided this stage of the project.

4. Conclusion

This paper set out to determine whether a structured, human-centred design process could close the gap between a founder-led Indian streetwear brand's cultural positioning and its digital execution, using 1HP as a working case study. The redesign process — moving from brand and market research through information architecture, wireframing, high-fidelity design, and a live Shopify build — surfaced three recurring, addressable gaps in the original site: unclear product discovery, an absence of storytelling and trust signals, and a checkout flow not built for mobile-first traffic. Each gap was resolved through a specific, evidence-backed interface decision rather than a general visual refresh, from a homepage-level UGC section grounded in trust research to a rebuilt mobile-first checkout sequence grounded in usability guidelines for responsive commerce.

The broader conclusion is that the constraints facing a small, founder-run streetwear label are not primarily a lack of design ambition but a lack of structured process — the same research techniques used on larger commerce platforms apply directly to a single-brand D2C store, provided they are scoped to the team's actual resources. For 1HP specifically, the result was a shipped, functioning website rather than a design artefact left unimplemented. Neither the SWOT-driven prioritisation of homepage and navigation work, nor the decision to design mobile layouts before desktop ones, nor the choice to fold sizing information into the product page required additional budget or specialist tooling — each was a sequencing decision made possible by research completed before any interface was drawn. That is, arguably, the paper's most transferable finding: for brands at 1HP's scale, the binding constraint on UX quality is rarely design skill or resources, but whether research happens before design decisions are locked in rather than alongside or after them. That distinction is easy to state and

easy to skip under deadline pressure, which is precisely why documenting it as a repeatable sequence — audit, persona and information-architecture work, wireframe, build, test — matters more for brands like 1HP than any single interface decision on its own.

5. Future Scope

Three directions extend naturally from this work. First, the redesigned site's actual performance — conversion rate, mobile checkout completion, and return rate on the newly integrated size information — has not yet been measured against the original site's baseline; a follow-up quantitative study comparing pre- and post-redesign metrics would test this paper's design decisions against real outcomes, addressing the evaluation gap Kumar (2022) leaves open. Second, a more granular study of how UGC placement within the site's information architecture affects the strength of the trust effect, as Van Dat et al. (2025) suggest, would refine this project's homepage decisions further. Third, this paper documents a single brand engagement; a comparative study across several early-stage Indian streetwear or D2C brands would test how much of this process generalises versus how much was specific to 1HP's particular audience and constraints — directly extending the future-scope questions raised by Luthra et al. (2024) and Anand (2024).

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