



Application of Flower-shaped Japanese Smock Technique on Evening Party Dresses

Raihanah Zahidah* and Mila Karmila

Fashion Education Study Program, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Bandung, Indonesia

*Corresponding author: raihanahzahidah16@upi.edu

ABSTRACT - Fashion design has undergone significant development, particularly in creating new innovations in the form of clothing that combines aesthetic elements from fabric manipulation techniques. One fabric manipulation technique that has regained popularity is smocking. The aim of this research is to produce clothing with a distinctive look by applying Japanese smocking techniques in the form of flowers to evening wear designs in order to create exclusive products. To achieve this objective, this study employs the Practice-led Research method, which emphasizes the following stages: exploration, realization, design, and presentation. The focal point is the floral motif created using the smock technique on satin fabric, complemented by tulle glitter accents on the peplum, resulting in an exclusive evening gown. The research results show the creation of an off-shoulder garment design with asymmetrical peplum details and an H-shaped silhouette that emphasizes a glamorous impression, complemented by Japanese smocking techniques in the shape of flowers on the shoulders with additional pearl accents, as well as the use of sateen canalli and glitter tulle materials that reinforce the luxurious impression. Expert evaluations indicate that this technique offers aesthetic and innovative value, though further development is recommended in terms of application variations and materials. This research contributes to the development of fabric manipulation designs that are not only aesthetically pleasing but also functionally and commercially relevant in the fashion industry, particularly for evening gown categories.

Keywords: Application, evening party dresses, smock technique.

INTRODUCTION

The fashion industry continues to evolve, as do current trends, bringing new explorations in textile and clothing design. One trend that has caught attention is Stylized Nature from the Women's Prints & Graphics Forecast A/W 24/25: Future Terrains report by Rose Hudson. This trend emphasizes simplified natural elements while still highlighting a striking aesthetic. This theme aligns with research that draws inspiration from flower-shaped smock techniques as the main design element, creating garments that blend natural beauty with innovative fabric manipulation, resulting in a unique appearance. This research applies flower-shaped smock techniques to create intriguing textile details on evening wear. The garments are categorized into several occasions, one of which is evening wear. Evening wear is attire worn during evening events from sunset until bedtime (2017 رزق & إبراهيم). The fashion style appears luxurious and glamorous. The choice of materials for evening party attire includes softer and smoother textures (Terescenco, 2025). The colors used are more vibrant, and the decorations are more luxurious (Junia & Prihatin, 2021). Currently, attire can be categorized into several occasions, such as attire for party occasions. Attire for party occasions typically uses *Adi busana* or *Haute couture* technology in its production. *Adi busana* or *Haute couture* is a clothing technology that uses advanced sewing techniques to produce exclusive and limited-edition

garments, as they are made 80% by hand and tailored for a single individual, with the design customized to the wearer's preferences and the occasion (Seyed, 2019).

Application is a technique of decorating fabric by attaching pieces of fabric, thread, ribbon, or lace to the surface of the garment (Burns, 2022). Applications can include various decorative embellishments, such as sequins, embroidery, smocking, lace, ribbons, and embroidery (Li, 2021). The application technique used in this garment is the smocking application technique with pearl innovation at the center of interest. Smocking is a decorative technique for attaching gathers using various stitches and decorative threads to create an attractive decorative pattern (Yezhova et al., 2024). Smocking can be done on plain fabric or fabric with a checkered or dotted pattern, depending on the type of smocking being done. There are three types of smocking: English smocking, Dutch smocking, and Japanese smocking. Japanese smocking features bubble-like or concave shapes. Japanese smocking has its own unique characteristics, as the smocking is created in regular bubble-like or concave shapes (Prihatin, 2018). Therefore, in the production process, precision and accuracy are required in selecting the type of fabric, creating guide lines, determining the size of the guide lines, and using sewing and thread-tying techniques to achieve the desired shape. Japanese smocks are used to decorate clothing or household linens. Japanese smocking can enhance the aesthetic value of clothing or household linens due to its decorative appeal.

The results of research by Marlianti & Handayani (2017) show that embroidery techniques can be transformed into decorative elements on fabric surfaces, which greatly enhances their novelty and aesthetic value. The creative and innovative drive of individuals over time to continuously experiment and explore in creating unique and innovative visual designs for textile surfaces. Floral motifs are often used in fashion design as symbols of beauty, life, and harmony with nature (Chuprina et al., 2021). Flower-shaped smocking techniques reflect a harmonious blend of textile innovation and inspiration from nature, aligning with nature-themed or eco-fashion design trends. Eco-fashion represents a paradigm shift in the fashion industry. It is about following trends and making conscious and responsible choices toward the environment and society. By adopting eco-fashion principles, we support environmental sustainability and contribute to creating a more just and humane fashion industry (Youn & Jung, 2021). The application of floral smocking techniques on evening wear requires special attention in terms of design, patterns, and material selection to produce products that are not only aesthetically pleasing but also functional. Sulisty & Ningrum (2011) explains in his book that smock is not a new technique in the world of sewing; it has been known to the general public for decades.

Preliminary studies show that explorations of Japanese smocking techniques have been conducted by several designers, but most are still limited to common motifs, such as fish scales. There has been little in-depth exploration of Japanese smock techniques with floral motifs, especially in the category of evening wear for women. The limited use of Japanese smock techniques with floral motifs in evening wear indicates a gap in design practices that can be utilized as a space for innovation. This underscores the need for development that not only emphasizes visual aspects but also considers aesthetic and artistic value, as well as relevance to the needs of the contemporary fashion market.

This research aims to develop evening wear with floral smocking techniques using a practice-led research methodology to explore the creative process in creating clothing. This approach allows designers to integrate direct practical experience in producing designs that are not only aesthetically pleasing but also have artistic and innovative value. By placing smocking techniques as the main element, this research not only focuses on the production process but also provides innovative solutions in the application of fabric manipulation techniques in the evening wear category. Through this research process, it is hoped that the final results will serve as a reference for the development of fabric manipulation techniques, particularly within the fashion industry, especially in creating evening party wear that combines artistic elements, innovation, and natural themes. Additionally, this research aims to provide new inspiration for designers and fashion industry professionals in exploring smocking techniques as a design element.

METHOD

The author uses a practice-led research method. The research focuses primarily on gaining new insights into practice, and since it is practiced, it is called practice-led research. This research employs the design thinking practice-led research method proposed by Hendriyana (2021), which explains that the research is based on the discovery of new objects that did not previously exist and is closely related to the realm of creative practice in the application of medium, materials, techniques, and forms within an organization. This method consists of several stages: exploration, design, implementation, and presentation.

1. Exploration stage,

In this stage, ideas and concepts are explored through soul-searching, field observations, and the collection of various references and information. This exploration aims to identify themes, issues, and the purpose of creating the work. Subsequently, literature sources, theoretical foundations, and visual references—both two-dimensional (2D) and three-dimensional (3D)—are explored to enrich the design foundation.

2. Design stage.

At this stage, the results of the analysis of the phenomena that have been collected are processed into verbal descriptions, which are then translated into visual ideas. These visual designs are developed by considering various supporting aspects relevant to the concept of the work's creation. The visual ideas that have taken shape are then realized in the form of prototypes, such as sketches or models, as an initial representation of the final form of the work.

3. Realization stage.

After the design phase, the next stage is realization. Here, the prototype that has been created is visualized in detail. Every design detail considers size, aesthetic value, function, and the meaning intended to be conveyed through the work. After the work is fully realized, an evaluation process is conducted on the form and quality of the work. The author also involves two experts in fashion design to provide feedback through an evaluation form. The evaluation results are used as a basis for refining the work to align with the aesthetic and innovative objectives of this research, identifying any issues or potential improvements.

4. Presentation stage.

In this final stage, the completed work is presented to the public through various forms of communication and appreciation. In this stage, the meaning, value, function, and relevance of the work to society at large are presented. This presentation process also serves as a means of reflection on the purpose of creation and the impact of the work in a socio-cultural context (Hendriyana, 2021)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The effort to create this evening gown responds to the global Stylized Nature trend from WGSN's Autumn/Winter 2024/2025 fashion forecast, which emphasizes artistic interpretations of natural elements through structured shapes, curated motifs, and rich colors. The choice of black as the primary color conveys an elegant and profound vibe, aligning with the trend's focus on natural dark tones such as Midnight Plum and Deep Emerald. The application of Japanese smock techniques in floral shapes on the off-shoulder section represents a simplified yet artistic exploration of natural motifs, reflecting the crafted look approach highlighted in this trend. The combination of fabric manipulation techniques and asymmetrical silhouettes offers a contemporary interpretation of stylish natural aesthetics, in line with the exploratory and innovative spirit at the core of Future Terrains.

This research refers to previous studies that have applied Japanese smocking techniques, including one by Mawarni et al. (2021), who developed evening bags using fish fin and ocean wave smocking motifs (**FIGURE 1**). The resulting visualizations highlight the richness of decorative forms in accessory products; however, few have explored Japanese smocking with floral motifs, particularly in the context of women's evening wear. The experiments in this study aim to fill this gap by exploring floral-shaped smocking as the primary design element. This approach not only expands the application of smocking techniques but also promotes innovation in fashion design through the integration of natural aesthetics, fabric manipulation techniques, and the glamorous character of evening wear.

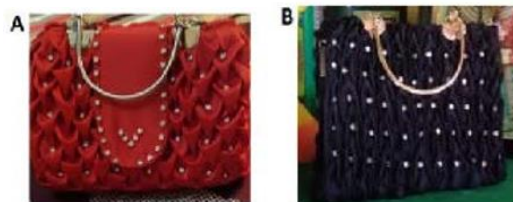


FIGURE 1. a) Finished smocked party bag with ant pattern b) Finished smocked party bag with ocean wave pattern.

The design development process followed the Practice-led Research methodology, and the stages were carried out:

1. Exploration Stage.

This stage involves exploring themes and topics relevant to issues in the field to be raised as creative ideas and rationalizing them through references to library data, theories, and previous similar works, so that the objectives and basic concepts of creation are obtained (Hendriyana, 2021). Activities in this stage are carried out through concept exploration in the form of a design moodboard, which serves as a reference for design inspiration to align with the theme being conveyed.

The moodboard created in **FIGURE 2** serves as the source of inspiration for the creation of this evening gown. This moodboard includes inspiration from evening gown models, color themes, materials, fabric with smock techniques, and other supporting elements.



FIGURE 2. Fashion design mood board

Source: Pinterest (2024)

2. Planning Stage

This stage is carried out by translating the ideas generated during the exploration stage into two-dimensional visual forms. This stage involves translating the ideas generated during the exploration phase into two-dimensional visual forms, taking into account the aspects and elements relevant to the creative process (Hendriyana, 2021).

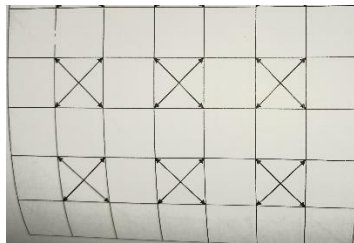


FIGURE 3. Smock pattern

Source: Prihatin P (2018)

Based on the mood board that has been made, the design stage of this research determines the design chosen by paying attention to the design principles of clothing.

- Look: glamor look
- Style: sexy alluring
- Model: fashion dress, off shoulder with smock technique, asymmetrical peplum that dangles to one side that has an H silhouette.
- Fashion occasion: evening party
- Decorative textile: decorative trims or fabric applied (smock & pearl)
- Color: black
- Fabric type: canalli sateen and glitter tulle

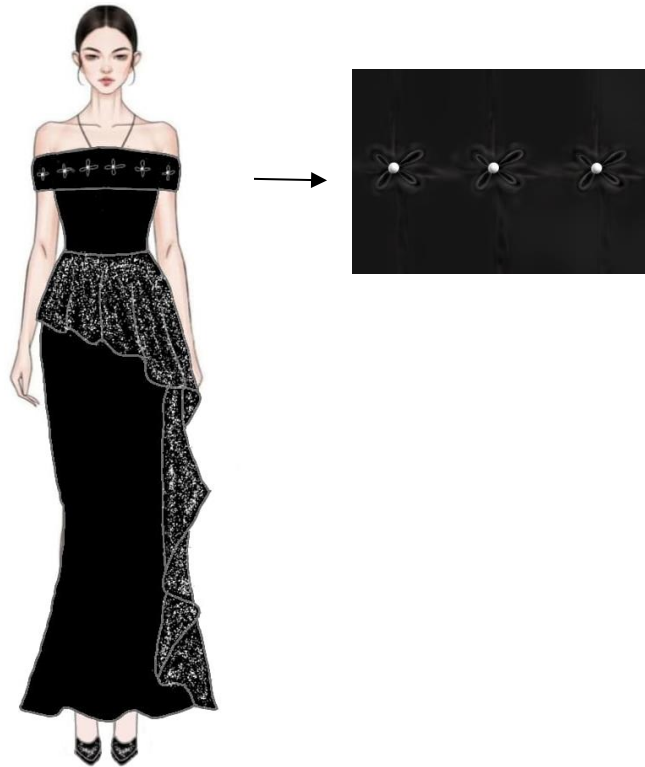


FIGURE 4. Fashion design based on the smock design.

According to Kumar & Noble (2016), a good design must be functional and carry a certain aesthetic value. In this concept is the making of evening party clothes by giving aesthetic value to unique fashion details that can add value to an outfit.

3. Embodiment Stage

This stage is carried out by translating the ideas generated during the exploration stage into two-dimensional visual forms, taking into account aspects and elements relevant to the creative process (Hendriyana, 2021). The garment production process begins with the creation of basic patterns according to the design, including front and back body patterns, skirt patterns, and asymmetrical peplum details. The patterns are created at a 1:4 scale as an initial planning stage before being made in actual size. Pattern adjustments are made to the off-shoulder section to accommodate the Japanese smock technique with a floral motif. After the patterns are adjusted, the fabric cutting and construction assembly stages are carried out in the order of completing the upper section, peplum, and lower section of the garment.

TABLE 1. Documentation of evening party dress patterns on a 1:4 scale.

Pattern Image	Pattern Description
	Top dress pattern (body & off shoulder)
	Mermaid skirt pattern
	Peplum pattern

In the process of making a smock, tools and materials are required, including scissors, tailor's chalk, hand needles, thread, fabric, and pearl beads. This smock is made using hand-sewn stitches (handmade) following a pattern. This dress is made in Women's Size M:

- Bust size : 86 cm
- Waist size : 100 cm
- Hip size : 68 cm
- Hip size : 91 cm
- Back length : 37 cm
- Hip height : 20 cm
- Skirt length : 120 cm

The implementation process in the design stage involves several techniques, namely:

- a. Making smock must increase the width and length of the fabric to take into account the folded fabric, so the fabric made smock expanded 2 x length and 2 x width. The smock pattern is drawn on the surface of the bad part of the fabric that has been expanded earlier using sewing chalk. with a size of 3x3 cm each box, made lengthwise according to the off-shoulder pattern.

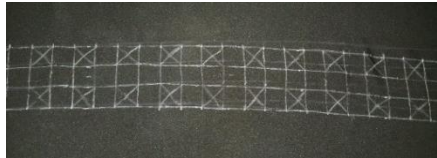


FIGURE 5. Smock pattern on fabric.

- b. After the pattern is made, the process begins using hand stitching according to the pattern that has been marked with an X until it forms a flower-like shape (FIGURE 6a). Folding and sewing the pattern is done with a hand needle using *jelujur* stitch with a small distance of 2mm. Then the fabric is turned to the good part of the fabric and the bubbly fabric is opened until it is shaped into a flower with a different size and shape than the previous one (FIGURE 6b). And add pearl beads as accents (FIGURE 6c).



a)



b)



(c)

FIGURE 6. (a)(b) The process of making smocks on fabric, (c) Pearl beads.

- c. In the making of the smock this time in sewing at the same time tucked pearl beads to give the impression of sparkle and texture to the motif as well as innovation centre of interest in clothing (FIGURE 7). The stitches are pulled so that they form wrinkles according to the pattern. After the smock making is finished on the entire surface of the fabric, then sew according to the pattern of the off-shoulder part then sewn on the evening party outfit so that it blends with the body of the outfit.



FIGURE 7. The finished Japanese smock is shaped like a flower.



FIGURE 8. The finished Japanese smock in the shape of a flower on evening wear.

To strengthen and review the feasibility of the ideas and design appearance of the clothing in this article, the author involved two lecturers who are experts in the field of fashion as resource persons to provide assessments through a written evaluation sheet. This evaluation covers several important aspects such as the accuracy of the design ideas, the application of techniques, aesthetics, material selection, and the suitability of the design for evening wear. The evaluation results indicate that, overall, the fashion design aligns with the objective of creating an exclusive appearance through the use of Japanese smock techniques in the shape of flowers. This technique is deemed to offer strong aesthetic and innovative value; however, there are still notes for reflection and design refinement, as follows:

- **Expert Evaluation 1:**

- The application of Japanese smocking is still minimal and should be expanded, particularly on the skirt, waist, or train to emphasize artistic and exclusive value.
- The use of pearls should be increased in quantity and variety to strengthen the design's aesthetic appeal. There is a discrepancy between the design and the product's realization, especially in the beadwork details, which tend to be minimal in the final result.

- **Expert Evaluation 2:**

- It is recommended to further explore smock techniques by adding material variations to enhance the volume of the floral shape.
- User comfort should also be considered from an ergonomic perspective regarding the fabric material used.

The feedback from both experts serves as important reflection material for refining the work and supports the assessment that the garment aligns with the design objectives within the evening gown category.

4. Presentation Stage

This stage is an effort to establish communication, appreciation, and meaning of the work that has been made to the general public, especially in accordance with the targets and objectives (Hendriyana, 2021). At this stage, researchers made presentations in seminars or documented fashion exhibitions, as well as journal publications.



FIGURE 9. Final dress result.

The entire process, from exploring ideas to presenting the final product, shows that creating evening wear is not only about the end result, but also about how the experience of designing, exploring techniques, and receiving feedback are important parts of producing a piece that has aesthetic value, functionality, and innovation.

CONCLUSION

In accordance with the findings and objectives of this research, this work produced evening wear with an exclusive look by applying a fabric manipulation technique in the form of Japanese smocking in the shape of flowers. The creation process was carried out through the stages of exploration, design, realization, and presentation. Thus, this research produced a garment that features an off-shoulder dress style with asymmetrical peplum details, as well as an H-shaped silhouette that emphasizes an elegant and glamorous impression. The smocking technique is predominantly applied to the shoulder area (off-shoulder) as the center of interest, complemented by pearl embellishments to reinforce the luxurious and exclusive feel. The fabric chosen is sateen canalli, which has a smooth texture, making it easy to form smocks, and standard boutique sewing techniques are used. The creation process is done manually to create textures and visual dimensions resembling flower shapes on the fabric surface. The garment's finishing stage is executed with meticulous detail to ensure a harmonious integration between the smock technique and the garment's construction pattern. This garment can serve as design inspiration and an alternative choice for women seeking an elegant appearance at evening events, while also providing new references for designers and fashion industry professionals in exploring the smock technique as part of innovative and artistically valuable fabric surface design.

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