



Application of Ribbon Quilling Sakura Flower Embellishment on Daytime Party Dress as a Center of Interest

Riza Afriliah* and Cucu Ruhidawati

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

*Corresponding author: risaaafrr@upi.edu

ABSTRACT - This study aims to explore the application of ribbon quilling technique as a decorative element in fashion design, focusing on cherry blossom motifs applied to a daytime party dress. Quilling, originally a 17th-century European paper craft, is adapted using grosgrain ribbon to create flower-shaped ornaments with a soft and elegant visual character. The novelty of this research lies in the use of ribbon-based quilling as an alternative approach for decorating formal wear, which has been scarcely explored in fashion design practice. This study employs a practice-led research approach through four main stages: exploration, design, realization, and evaluation. The exploration stage involves gathering visual references and adapting the quilling technique to the characteristics of grosgrain ribbon; the design stage includes sketch development and ornament placement; the realization stage covers the creation and application of quilling on the dress; and the evaluation stage is conducted based on the principles of unity, balance, and proportion by a fashion design expert. The results demonstrate that ribbon quilling technique can enhance the aesthetic value of formal wear by combining handcrafted skills with contemporary design approaches. These findings open opportunities for further development in accessories, costumes, and bridal wear, as well as contributing to fashion education and the preservation of handcraft-based decorative techniques.

Keywords: Ribbon quilling, cherry blossom, textile decoration, practice-led research.

INTRODUCTION

Putri cites Ningrum, stating that "decoration in fashion is anything that is adorned with the purpose of enhancing the aesthetic value of the structural form of a garment" (Putri, 2022). Additionally, she references Ernawati, who define the term "decoration," derived from the English verb to decorate, as the act of adorning or beautifying. In the context of fashion, decoration refers to the embellishment of garments or accessories, either for personal or domestic use. In the contemporary fashion industry, characterized by rapidly changing trends, decorative techniques play an increasingly significant role by combining craftsmanship with modern aesthetics, as well as driving innovation in textile and garment design (Putri, 2022). Recent studies also emphasize that adapting traditional craft techniques into fashion decoration offers an innovative pathway to blend craftsmanship practices with modern aesthetics, thus ensuring cultural relevance and creative sustainability (El-Dosuky, 2024).

Decoration in fashion is aimed at enhancing the aesthetic appeal of garments by adding visual interest and highlighting structural elements. Various decorative techniques have been developed to achieve this, involving a wide range of materials and methods. Common materials used for surface embellishment in textiles include mirrors, beads, sequins, threads, wires, and buttons, which contribute to making fabrics more attractive and graceful (Nimbhorkar, 2023). These embellishments not only enhance the beauty of clothing but also often carry cultural and symbolic meanings. The use of traditional techniques such as mirror work and bead embroidery in Indian textiles exemplifies

the deep-rooted history of surface decoration, which continues to inspire contemporary fashion design (Han, 2011). These traditional techniques demonstrate that ornament application historically served not only aesthetic purposes but also symbolic ones, inspiring contemporary designers to integrate craft methods into modern fashion. One of the most captivating and enduring motifs in fashion design is the floral motif. Floral motifs are often valued not only for their symbolic meaning but also for their strong visual appeal (Buami et al., 2024). Similarly, designers continue to draw inspiration from natural forms, as reflected in the Women's Prints & Graphics Forecast A/W 24/25: Future Terrains by Hudson, which predicts a growing presence of nature-inspired motifs, especially simplified botanical shapes. This development aligns with design research that adapts specific flower characteristics to achieve thematic relevance while strengthening visual impact.

One flower that holds significant cultural and aesthetic importance is the cherry blossom (*Prunus serrulata*) from the Rosaceae family. In the East Asian context, particularly in Japan, Korea, and China, the cherry blossom symbolizes beauty, elegance, and renewal. In Japanese culture, cherry blossoms also represent the transience of life, characterized by delicate forms and a color palette ranging from white to pale pink. Its cultural and visual qualities make it a compelling source of inspiration for fashion ornaments, especially in formal and special occasion wear.

Decoration in clothing design functions as a focal point that draws attention to specific garment elements. More broadly, embellishment refers to the application of ornaments on textile surfaces achieved through various techniques such as the use of threads, ribbons, beads, and buttons. According to Nimbhorkar (2023), as cited in Atwood "textile embellishment refers to the process of adding colour, pattern, texture or design to fabric through the use of outside mediums such as threads, ribbons, sequins, yarns, buttons and more". These decorative techniques aim to enhance the aesthetic appeal, functionality, and symbolic value of clothing, including creating a sense of luxury. Decorative applications include various methods such as tying, bead arrangement, cutting, joining, medallions, embroidery, lace, ribbons, and smocking—and can be classified by materials, including fabric, thread, lace, ribbon, and beads. However, most decorative techniques in formal wear still revolve around conventional methods like flat embroidery, bead applications, and 3D floral motifs based on appliqué. Handcraft-based modular approaches, such as the quilling technique, have not been extensively explored in textile contexts, especially in Indonesia. Originally developed using paper as a medium, the quilling technique has not been widely adapted in textiles as a decorative approach. This study aims to fill that gap by offering an innovative application of ribbon quilling techniques that provide new spatial dimensions and allow more flexible and artistic floral form explorations.

This research adopts embellishment techniques using ribbons and beads as the main decorative elements. Ribbon quilling, originating in 17th-century Europe and initially practiced with paper, has now been adapted for use on textiles. This technique involves manipulating ribbons to form cherry blossom motifs with pastel pink petals and soft, elongated shapes. Modular configurations such as tight coils, loose coils, and torn coils are arranged into coherent decorative motifs applied to fabric surfaces. The adaptation of ribbon quilling on textiles not only expands the range of decorative techniques in formal wear design but also introduces a new approach emphasizing artistic value and visual exclusivity.

Specifically, ribbon quilling is applied to a daytime party dress with an A-line silhouette as the primary decorative element. Daytime party dresses are typically characterized by smooth fabrics, soft colors, and a semi-formal, more relaxed structure compared to evening gowns. This embellishment application aims to enrich the visual appeal of the dress without compromising design harmony and proportionality. Methodologically, this research adopts a practice-led research approach, emphasizing direct experimentation with materials, techniques, and design composition to balance aesthetic considerations with garment functionality.

The creative process in this study is divided into four stages: (1) exploration, which includes collecting visual references, morphological studies of cherry blossoms, and ribbon selection; (2) design, covering sketch development, material selection, and motif placement planning; (3) realization, involving the creation of ribbon quilling and its application on the garment; and (4) evaluation, consisting of critical assessment of the final product based on design principles such as unity, balance, and proportion. Through this research, we contribute to the development of decorative fashion design, especially in integrating ribbon quilling into formal wear, focusing on daytime party dresses. This technique introduces new possibilities for fashion innovation through modular form and spatial texture exploration, enriching design options for fashion designers. Additionally, the choice of cherry blossom as the main motif serves as a cultural representation reflecting East Asian aesthetic and symbolic values, bridging visual heritage with contemporary approaches. Moreover, the use of manual techniques in quilling contributes to the revitalization of handicrafts amid mass production trends, while also opening new opportunities in fashion education and craft-based embellishment skill training. This study can also serve as a practical reference for designers, educators, and industry

professionals in exploring decorative approaches based on unconventional embellishment techniques that combine cultural meaning, artistic skill, and modern aesthetic appeal.

METHOD

This study employs a practice-led research approach, which emphasizes hands-on experimentation with materials and techniques to explore the creative application of ribbon quilling in fashion embellishment. Practice-led research, as explained by Teunissen (2022), positions the creative process itself as a source of knowledge, highlighting the reciprocal relationship between making and reflective analysis, rather than focusing solely on the final outcome. Similarly, Bourriaud (2009) and Craik (2019) argue that contemporary fashion practitioners serve as cultural and social agents, integrating ethical, social, and symbolic considerations into the creative process.

In this context, it is important to note that most research related to the quilling technique remains limited to paper or decorative handicrafts, while its application in the fashion field—particularly as an embellishment technique for ready-to-wear garments—has been minimally explored. Some studies, such as those by Prisilia et al. (2022), have discussed quilling in the context of textiles and crafts, but have yet to specifically examine its application in contemporary fashion design. Similarly, the study by Iskakova (2023) explores quilling in art therapy, which, while methodologically relevant, does not directly relate to fashion design development. Therefore, there exists a research gap in the exploration of ribbon quilling techniques as a decorative element in fashion design, particularly for semi-formal to formal dresses. In this situation, the practice-led research approach becomes especially relevant.

The lack of literature directly addressing the application of ribbon quilling in ready-to-wear fashion calls for an experimental approach grounded in hands-on practice. Through this method, the researcher is able not only to develop visual and technical design solutions but also to directly evaluate the effectiveness of the techniques used—such as material selection, ornament attachment methods, and their impact on garment structure and comfort. Direct experimentation with materials and techniques enables the development of fashion designs that are not only aesthetically appealing but also functional and comfortable to wear—aligning with contemporary fashion needs that demand visual innovation without compromising practicality. As such, this study aims to fill a gap in fashion design literature and practice by contributing to the development of lighter, more flexible decorative techniques with rich symbolic value. Beyond offering a new alternative in textile ornamentation, this study also supports the revitalization of handcraft-based techniques within a more culturally conscious and sustainability-oriented modern fashion context. To implement the practice-led research approach in the exploration of ribbon quilling techniques within fashion design, this study was structured through a series of systematic and reflective stages. The purpose of organizing these stages is to ensure that each part of the creative process not only leads to the creation of a final product but also provides deeper understanding of material potential, aesthetic value, and its relevance to contemporary fashion practice.

By integrating visual exploration, technical experimentation, and design evaluation, this process supports an approach that is not only outcome-oriented but also rooted in learning through direct practice. The flow of practice-led research activities in this study is divided into four main stages: Exploration, Design, Realization, and Evaluation. These four stages form a continuous and interconnected creative process. The following diagram presents an overview of the sequence of stages carried out in the design process:

Practice-Led Research Flowchart

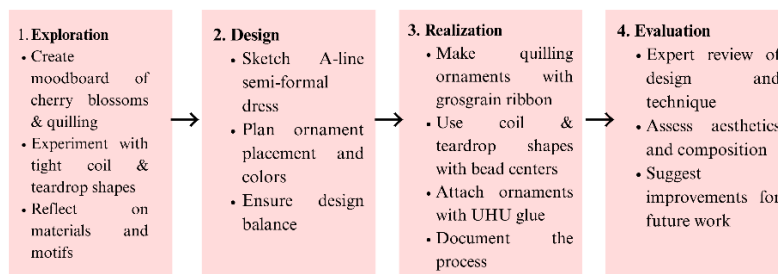


FIGURE 1. Stages of the Practice-Led research process.

Exploration Stage

Moodboard is a collection of images, colors, and objects that represent a designer's ideas to create new works and develop creativity, especially in fashion and textile craft design. Additionally, moodboards help enhance the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor abilities of designers (Indah Yuniarti Putri, 2022). The use of moodboards and morphological exploration of flowers is an essential step in developing floral-inspired fashion concepts, as demonstrated in previous studies on modular textile design (Buami et al., 2024). In this study, the moodboard functioned as a medium to collect and organize both visual and textual references related to cherry blossoms (*Prunus serrulata*) and the quilling technique. The visual references included photographs of cherry blossoms, examples of ribbon quilling, and existing applications of floral embellishments in fashion design. These references provided a foundation for experimentation with ribbon manipulation to form quilling modules, specifically the tight coil and teardrop forms. The tight coil refers to a tightly wound ribbon coil, typically used for the flower's center or other solid details, while the teardrop refers to a coil shaped with one pointed end and one rounded end, resembling a teardrop, commonly used for petals to create a blooming and natural effect (Goong.com, 2024).

As emphasized by El Dousky (2021), the exploration of quilling modules is crucial in adapting the technique from paper to textiles, ensuring that the resulting motifs maintain both structural integrity and aesthetic appeal. This stage also aligns with international practice-led research principles where the process itself generates insights into materiality, technique, and design possibilities (Teunissen, 2022; Bourriaud, 2009) and supports the notion that fashion design research benefits from incorporating practitioner-led methodologies alongside academic perspectives (Lee, 2014). Through this stage, the researcher aimed to understand the material's characteristics, motif structures, and the decorative potential of ribbon quilling on fabric. Furthermore, the moodboard served as a critical reference throughout the process, ensuring that the design remained aligned with the intended visual concept. Photographic documentation of the quilling process provided tangible evidence of material manipulation and form development, while images of the final garment illustrated the successful translation of conceptual ideas into a finished product (Nursyifa & Nurlita, 2021).



FIGURE 2. (a) Moodboard, (b) Paper quilling samples.

Design Stage

Based on the results of the exploration stage, the researcher developed a dress design sketch featuring a soft and feminine A-line silhouette, intended for a semi-formal context. The placement of quilling ornaments was strategically selected to create a visual focal point without disrupting the body's proportions. The cherry blossom motif, created using ribbon quilling, was applied from the left chest down to the waist, creating balance with the drapery positioned on the right side. The use of pastel colors supports a light and graceful visual narrative. At this stage, considerations were also given to comfort and garment structure, including the impact of ornament placement on the fabric's drape.



FIGURE 3. Fashion design.

Realization

This stage involved the creation of quilling ornaments using grosgrain ribbon. The ribbon was shaped using coiling and folding techniques, then arranged into floral motifs with beads as their centers. The ornaments were then attached to the dress fabric using UHU glue, a common adhesive in handicrafts known for its strong bond and fast drying time, ensuring the ornaments adhered securely without damaging the textile surface. The process of creating and applying the ornaments was thoroughly documented as part of reflective learning.



FIGURE 4. The process of coiling the ribbon and adhering it using adhesive.

The ribbon quilling motifs used consisted of two main shapes: tight coils and teardrops. Tight coils were used as the flower centers, providing a dense and solid appearance, while the teardrop shapes formed the petals with soft contours that reflect the delicate and organic characteristics of cherry blossoms. The addition of pearl beads as flower centers enhanced the luxurious impression and enriched the visual dimension of the design. The use of floral motifs as design inspiration aligns with previous research on flower-themed fashion design. This combination of techniques results in rich texture and strengthens the overall aesthetic appeal.

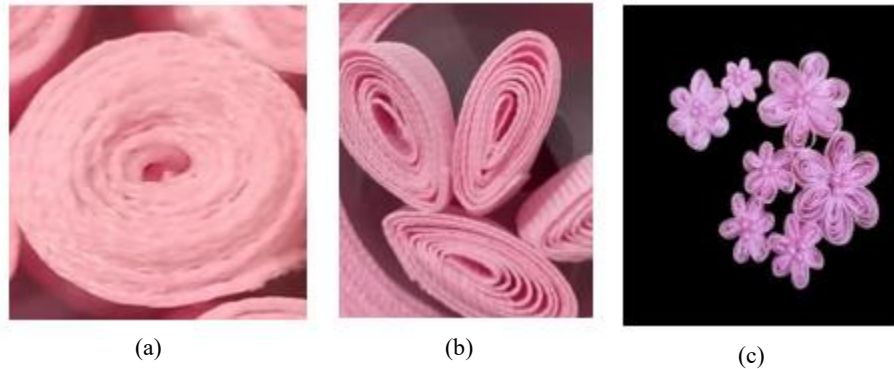


FIGURE 5. (a) Tight coil, (b) Teardrop, (c) Quilling forms combining tight coil and teardrop shapes.

Internal Evaluation

The product evaluation was conducted by Mandhe Sekar Nurindah, S.Ds., M.Ds., a lecturer in Fashion Education at Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia and an expert in fashion design. Based on the provided validation sheet, the ribbon quilling technique was deemed appropriate and successfully visualized the form of cherry blossoms, and was optimally applied to the day party dress in terms of ornament formation and placement. The placement of the ornaments was considered successful in creating a strong visual focus as the center of interest, with an asymmetrical composition that supported balance and visual rhythm between the quilling and tulle drapery.

This assessment also reflects design principles such as unity, balance, proportion, rhythm, and emphasis, as outlined in the conceptual framework of fashion design by Lamb & Kallal (1992). The fashion product achieved a high aesthetic value and effectively captured attention as an elegant and graceful party dress. Nevertheless, the evaluator suggested that the embellishment technique could be further explored through other methods to enrich decorative variation and enhance the effectiveness of its application in fashion design. This feedback serves as valuable input for future creative and research development.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The creative process in this study resulted in a dress design with an A-line silhouette inspired by the shape and character of cherry blossoms. The decorative element in the form of ribbon quilling was applied asymmetrically from the left side of the chest down to the lower part of the dress, creating a strong visual focal point. This technique combines traditional design principles with a contemporary approach, forming a dynamic visual composition while maintaining overall balance. The placement of the quilling embellishment was adjusted to ensure an even distribution of visual weight, balanced by tulle drapery details on the right side of the chest. This principle aligns with design theories that emphasize the role of decorative elements in enhancing the basic form of garments without disrupting their main silhouette. As explained by Darisman (2012), design elements in the art world play an important role in creating visual balance and aesthetics in artworks. Similarly, Ismail and Hassan (2012) highlight that the beauty in the design of traditional Malay fabric motifs can be analyzed formally to understand the structure and meaning contained within.



FIGURE 6. Final dress result.

From a design principles perspective, visual unity was maintained despite the cherry blossom motif being applied only on the left side of the dress, thanks to the consistent use of form, color, and purposeful placement. The harmonious color coordination between the ribbons, beads, and base fabric strengthened the overall cohesiveness of the design. The proportions of the quilling elements were carefully maintained to complement the A-line silhouette, avoiding excessive decorative buildup. The floral motifs were arranged vertically along the left side of the dress, creating a flowing visual rhythm that naturally guides the eye from top to bottom (Bella & Wiana, 2022; Kartikasari et al., 2021). The pre-prepared moodboard functioned as the main visual guide throughout the design process.

The visual impact of the ribbon quilling embellishment clearly conveyed elegance and softness, in line with the symbolic meaning of cherry blossoms as representations of beauty and seasonal transformation. The asymmetrical placement added visual interest and established a strong focal point without disrupting the base silhouette and shape of the dress. Compared to other decorative techniques such as embroidery or full bead application, ribbon quilling provided a unique three-dimensional effect and richer texture. However, this technique requires more careful handling to maintain the integrity of the motif. In contrast, embroidery and beading tend to be more durable and easier to care for, though they do not offer the same level of texture and volume.

The finished garment was presented in a fashion show held as part of a course activity at a shopping mall. During the wearing and runway performance, the model reported that the dress felt lightweight and did not restrict movement. The quilling ornaments placed from the left chest to the waist caused no discomfort or pressure, even during walking or movement on stage. The UHU glue used as adhesive also did not leave any disturbing residue on the fabric or skin. This demonstrates that the functionality and comfort aspects were well-maintained, proving that decorative techniques like ribbon quilling can be successfully adapted to contemporary fashion without compromising wearability.

This feedback supports the notion that the design successfully integrates technical skill with creative expression and highlights the potential of ribbon-based decorative techniques in modern fashion (Hidayah & Puspitasari, 2022). For future research, experimenting with ribbons made from recycled or eco-friendly fabrics could offer an interesting alternative. This approach has the potential to reduce environmental impact without sacrificing the aesthetic strength of the quilling technique, while supporting the increasingly important trend of sustainable fashion. This study also holds significant implications in the field of fashion design education, especially in textile embellishment and fashion detailing curricula. The introduction of ribbon quilling as a decorative technique can be used as teaching material to enhance students' understanding of integrating traditional handicrafts into modern fashion design. The hands-on approach and material experimentation used in this research serve as an effective learning model to enhance both technical skills and student creativity. The study demonstrates how traditional decorative techniques like ribbon quilling can be innovatively adapted in contemporary fashion design. Comprehensive documentation—from moodboard to motif development and final outcomes—provides a valuable reference for designers and fashion educators seeking to expand their knowledge of textile embellishment techniques.

This approach also opens up opportunities for further experimentation in bridalwear, costumes, and accessories. Additionally, the study paves the way for broader development in textile decoration techniques, including the potential integration of digital motif translation. While ribbon quilling is inherently manual and artistic, digitalizing its motifs could offer expanded design applications—such as in embroidery—enabling increased precision and mass production efficiency without sacrificing aesthetic quality. However, the essence of ribbon quilling lies in its uniqueness and handcrafted value, which cannot be fully replaced by digital processes.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this research contributes to fashion design development by blending traditional craftsmanship with contemporary techniques, fostering artistic innovation and offering new approaches in fashion design education. It underscores the importance of merging creativity, sustainability, and cultural value in creating relevant and meaningful fashion works within the modern industry. This study successfully demonstrates the potential of ribbon quilling techniques, originally from paper crafts, when adapted to textile-based fashion design. By applying the cherry blossom motif—rich with Japanese cultural symbolism—on an A-line party dress, the research harmoniously integrates cultural values, traditional handcrafted skills, and modern design principles. The creative process, carried out through a practice-led research method, produced a final design with optimal visual balance, unity, rhythm, and proportion. The asymmetrical placement of the quilling motif combined with tulle drapery creates a strong visual appeal without disrupting the overall design balance. From a functional perspective, the choice of materials and application techniques ensure the dress's comfort and durability, making it suitable for semi-formal occasions. Aesthetically, the consistent cherry blossom motif, harmonious color combination, and the addition of pearl ornaments reinforce an elegant impression and thematic coherence.

Expert feedback suggests that ribbon quilling techniques can be combined with other embellishment methods to enrich texture and enhance visual appeal. Furthermore, the researcher recommends using eco-friendly ribbons made from recycled materials or natural fibers to support sustainability without compromising design aesthetics. Additionally, digitalizing quilling motifs is encouraged to improve precision and production efficiency through computerized embroidery technology, while maintaining the artistic value of handmade craftsmanship. Looking ahead, ribbon quilling has the potential to become part of the slow fashion movement, emphasizing meaningful, sustainable, and durable clothing by integrating traditional handcrafts into contemporary design. This technique can also serve as innovative teaching material within fashion design education curricula to develop students' technical skills and creativity. Thus, this research makes a significant contribution to the development of modern fashion design that prioritizes sustainability, cultural values, and aesthetic innovation in line with the needs of today's fashion industry.

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