



# Application of the Essential Look Method in the Fashion Design Development Process to Produce Creative Fashion Designs

Deny Arifiana\*, Inty Nahari, Mein Kharnolis

*Bachelor of Fashion Education Study Program, Universitas Negeri Surabaya, Surabaya, Indonesia*

\*Email: [denyarifiana@unesa.ac.id](mailto:denyarifiana@unesa.ac.id)

## ABSTRACT

Fashion design development is an important stage in making fashion designs, which is one of the problems for students, especially for those who have limited knowledge and fashion design skills. This study aims to describe the process and results of fashion design development using the essential look method according to the concepts that have been prepared. This research uses a work creation approach, which consists of 4 stages, including: (1) pre-design; (2) design; (3) realization; and (4) presentation, with several supporting theories. The data collection method of this research used a product assessment method with an assessment instrument in the form of a product assessment sheet, involving 3 expert assessors who were fashion planning lecturers. The data analysis method used descriptive method, by calculating the average value of each aspect assessed. The results of this study showed that: (1) the development of fashion design with the Essential Look method consists of 4 stages, including: (a) pre-design, which is the preparation stage, which includes the preparation of design concepts and images of models that will be used in design development; (b) design, with the results in the form of a number of alternative sketches and 4 selected designs; (c) realization, the result of this stage is a collection of selected designs that are ready to be published; and (d) presentation stage, which is the stage of assessing the product or work of the selected design collection, with the criteria set; and (2) the results of fashion design development with the essential Look method are in the form of 4 selected fashion designs according to the concept formulation, with the average score of the five aspects of fashion design at 83.23 with a good category.

Based on the results of the assessment which focused on the creative aspects of the four selected fashion designs, it can be said that the development of fashion designs using the essential look method can produce creative fashion designs.

**Keywords:** *Essential-Look-Method, Development, Creative-Fashion-Design.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In an era of increasingly rapid globalization, the fashion industry is one sector that continues to develop rapidly. Increasing consumer demand for innovative and creative fashion products encourages designers to develop new methods in the fashion design process. One approach that has received widespread attention is the Essential Look Method, a method that involves the use of essential elements in the fashion design development process [1]. The Essential Look Method has its roots in a deep understanding of the essence of design, where elements such as color, texture, silhouette and detail are considered as key components that make up a fashion design [2]. This method teaches designers to not only see, but also feel and understand these elements holistically. Thus, the Essential Look Method is not just a tool for creating aesthetic designs, but also for conveying messages and emotions through clothing.

The application of the Essential Look Method can make a major contribution to the development of more creative fashion designs. Through this approach, designers can expand conventional boundaries and create works that not only fulfill functional needs, but also become manifestations of imagination and creative expression [3]. The use of these elements allows designers to create work that is more personal and unique in nature, reminding us that fashion is not just about clothes, but also about art and self-expression [4][5]

In an era where the fashion industry continues to develop, the need for innovation in the fashion design development process is increasingly becoming the main focus. Various design methods have been introduced to facilitate designers' creativity, and one prominent approach is the Essential Look Method. In the literature, this method has been known as a holistic approach that involves a deep understanding of the key elements in fashion design [6][7].

The manufacture of a garment has a relatively long series of stages, starting with the making of a fashion design according to the concept compiled, taking body measurements, making clothing patterns, cutting materials, sewing, to the final completion of the garment. Making fashion designs for presentation purposes in visual format has several stages or steps, which consist of sketching, making fashion illustrations, and technical drawing of fashion designs [8]. Each of these stages has a specific function, as well as demands a set of requirements and also certain drawing techniques. The stages or steps in making a fashion design include: (1) preparing drawing tools and materials; (2) determine the source of ideas that will serve as the basis for making clothing designs; (3) draw the proportions of the body with the pose according to the model of the clothes being made; (4) determine the balance line, waist line, hip line, and knee line according to the calculation formula; (5) draw clothing details; (6) erasing relief lines and thinning lines to be colored; (7) coloring pictures; and (8) draw the outline [9]. The results of a survey regarding the process of making fashion designs were conducted on 64 respondents, who were Bachelor of Fashion Education students class of 2019, Faculty of Engineering, Universitas Negeri Surabaya, showed that the process of developing fashion designs, which is an important part of the fashion design process, is considered quite complicated by 32 respondents (50%). Especially for those who have limited knowledge and abilities or skills in designing fashion. In addition, it also takes quite a long time to be able to produce interesting and creative fashion designs. As a follow-up to the problems raised above, the researcher tried to provide an alternative solution through providing examples of fashion design development, using a practical method (easy to do), while at the same time being able to produce interesting and creative fashion design works, according to the concept that had been prepared.

Development is synonymous with the term action (the act), process (process), or the result of developing new ideas that are interesting. Meanwhile, in the KBBI, the term development is interpreted as a process, way, or act of developing gradually and regularly leading to the desired target. Based on these two definitions, the term development can be interpreted as the action, way, process, or result of developing new and interesting ideas, gradually and regularly according to the desired target. Meanwhile, fashion design is a sketch or fashion design, which is broadly defined as a design of clothing that looks organized, consisting of lines, shapes, sizes, and colors [10]. Based on the definition of development and fashion design, it can be explained that what is meant by fashion design development in this study is interpreted as the action, method, process of developing new and interesting ideas from a fashion design.

In general, fashion design development can be carried out on the shape of clothing (including silhouettes, sizes, and details), clothing design lines (cut lines and clothing seam lines), clothing materials (fiber types, textures, motifs), manipulating fabrics, and clothing colors. The

process of developing each of these design elements can be done separately or simultaneously, with a variety of forms and quantities tailored to the needs. The selected (best) design from the development of the fashion design will be realized or embodied.

The emphasis on the fashion design development process lies in the designer's ability to visually express his aesthetic ideas or ideas with originality, based on the concept that has been compiled. Therefore, starting from the pose of the model image (illustration) used to the results of fashion design development must be able to communicate technical and aesthetic information [11].

In order for the process of developing fashion design to be more directed according to the concept and design rules, so that it can produce aesthetic and creative works, the right method is needed to realize it. [12], suggested 2 design development methods consisting of: (1) Essential Look Method and (2) Mix and Match Method. The Essential Look Method is a design development method that is done directly, starting with the creation of a basic design that becomes the style key elements, which is the basis for further design development. As shown in Figure 1 below.



**Figure 1.** Design Development Process with Essential Look Method.

Mix and Match Method is a method of creating or developing a fashion design collection that is conducted in stages (per-part or per-model containing style key elements). The results of the development of each part are then combined to create a variety of different looks. The design development steps with Mix and Match Methods are shown in figure 2.



**Figure 2:** Design Development Process with Mix and Match Method.

The results of the survey regarding the preference for fashion design development methods showed that design development with the Essential Look method was favored by 36 respondents (56.25%) because it was considered more practical, while 28 respondents (43.75%) preferred design development with the Mix and Match Method. The results of this survey are the basis for the researcher in determining the type of fashion design development method used in this study.

This study specifically aims to: (1) describe the process of fashion design development with the essential look method and (2) describe the finished results of fashion design development according to the concept that has been made. Hopefully, the results of this study can be an alternative reference (especially for beginners), in developing clothing designs according to the concept that has been prepared.

## 2. RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a work creation approach, which consists of 4 stages, including: (1) pre-design; (2) design; (3) realization; and (4) presentation [13], with several supporting theories.

The pre-design stage in this research is the preparatory stage before designing or developing fashion designs. The design stage is the visualization stage of ideas based on the formulated concept, in the form of two-dimensional alternative sketches as a result of designing and developing fashion designs. The activities in this design stage refer to the idea of Gustami's [14], which consists of 2 steps, including: (a) the design stage, to pour ideas or ideas from the verbal description of the results of the analysis into visual form within the limits of two-dimensional design; and (b) the visualization stage of ideas from the selected alternative sketches or designs into a form of prototype model. The embodiment stage in this research is the stage of realizing the prototype of the selected fashion design collection. It includes the making of fashion designs, including finishing and packaging of fashion designs in preparation for presentation. The presentation stage is the stage of assessment (evaluation) of the realization of the presented fashion design work, to determine the suitability between the idea and the results of its realization. Evaluation is done to criticize the achievement of the quality of the work (both physical and non-physical aspects), including its personal function, physical function, and socio-cultural function. If various considerations based on functional work criteria have been fulfilled, the work is ready to be produced and released to the public.

The data collection method of this research used a product assessment method with an assessment instrument in the form of a product assessment sheet, involving 3 expert assessors who were fashion planning lecturers. Product assessment (the results of clothing design development), focused on aspects of creativity in drawing or designing fashion. Creativity in drawing is a person's ability to produce a new form in the form of drawings or in solving problems in a new way [15].

The assessment aspects of creativity in drawing or designing clothes in this study include: (1) creativity in creating variations or managing clothing shapes; (2) creativity in creating variations or managing clothing design lines; (3) creativity in creating variations or managing clothing materials; (4) creativity in creating variations or managing clothing colors; and (5) creativity

in creating variations or managing manipulating fabrics on clothing. Product assessment was carried out by three expert assessors who are Fashion Design lecturers. The data analysis method of this research uses a descriptive analysis method, by calculating the average of each aspect of product assessment (fashion design), with the following formula.

$$\text{Final Grade} = \frac{\text{Sum of Grade Averages}}{\text{Number of Raters}}$$

The final grades for this fashion design assessment are classified into 5 categories, as follows.

**Table 1.** Score Categories.

Score	Categories
91-100	Very good
81-90	Good
71-80	Adequate
61-70	Less
<	Very Less

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

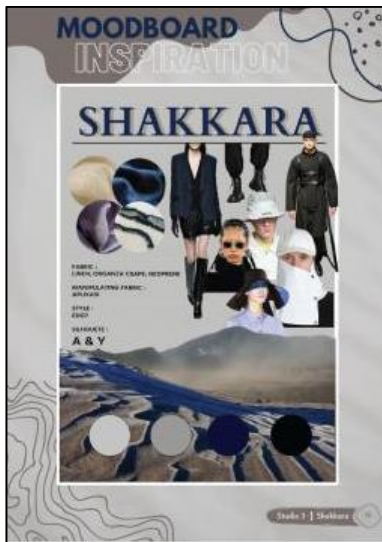
### 3.1 Fashion Design Development Process Using the Essential Look Method

The development of fashion design using the Essential look method is based on the stages of Work Creation, which consist of: (a) pre-design; (b) design; (c) realization; and (d) presentation, which is described as follows:

#### 3.1.1 Pre-Design

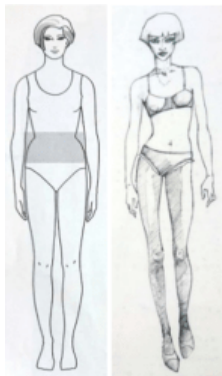
The pre-design stage is the preparation stage before designing or developing fashion designs. Preparation for designing or developing fashion designs, in general, includes: (1) preparation of design concepts that will serve as the basis for designing or developing designs; and (2) preparation of model drawings that will be used as media (tracing) in making and developing fashion designs, as shown in figures 1 and 2.

The design concept in the form of a moodboard, containing themes, inspiration images, identity, color plan, fabric plan, and others, is the result of an analysis of the results of extracting reference sources that include data on materials, tools, techniques, construction, and others, used as a foothold in visualizing creative ideas into the form of this fashion design, which has been compiled in the previous stage.



**Figure 2.** Design Concept.

Figure models used in designing or developing fashion designs can be: (1) model drawings with standard anatomical proportions of the body with a size of  $7\frac{1}{2}$  x Head Height (TK), with upright poses looking front, back,  $\frac{3}{4}$ , or side (depending on the needs of design variations) and (2) illustrative model drawings with a size of  $8\frac{1}{2}$  to  $10$  x TK, either with upright poses or like the following example.



**Figure 3.** Example of Model Drawing.

In the preparation stage, especially the preparation of the design concept, there were no significant changes or obstacles, as well as the preparation of the model drawings. It can be assumed that the preparation stage has been carried out well. However, it was observed during the preparation process that the types of model drawings used were quite varied, ranging from model drawings with standard sizes and poses (standing upright with views from the front and back) commonly used in making technical drawings, to illustrative model drawings with various poses.

### 3.1.2 Design

The design stage is the visualization stage of ideas based on the formulated concept, in the form of two-dimensional alternative sketches as the result of design. Activities carried out at the design stage include: (1)

sketching the development of fashion designs directly, according to the concept formulated; and (2) selecting or determining the best sketch from a series of alternative sketches made, as a reference in making clothing design prototypes.

Design development begins with developing the shape and lines of the clothing design, followed by the development of clothing materials and manipulating fabrics, either gradually (by parts) or all at once in each design, followed by the creation of the next design. The development of clothing design is based on the principles of design, to emphasize the part that will be the center of attention, see the unity, harmony, and/or balance between one design and another in one collection created.

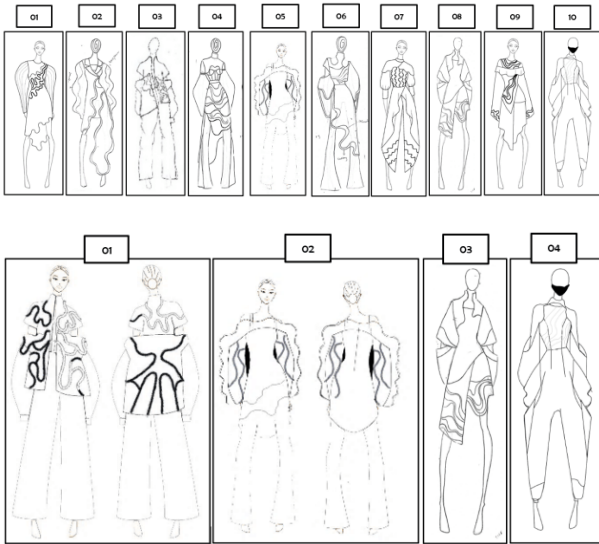
Development of fashion shapes can focus on determining the silhouette to be used, making variations in clothing details, variations in clothing sizes, and so on. Development on the shape can be done by adding or reducing, enlarging or reducing, widening or shortening, expanding or narrowing, and other ways, to produce creative, unique, and interesting variations of silhouettes, sizes, and clothing details, according to the design concept. The development of clothing design lines, among others, can focus on selecting variations in the type and position of clothing cut lines, variations in the stitching lines of the kupnad or clothing fold lines, and also variations in clothing stitching lines. Development of clothing materials, can be done through managing variations in fabric fibers, textures, motifs of clothing materials. Among other things, by folding, rolling, pinching, cutting, or even damaging the surface of the fabric. It is also necessary to make alternative combinations of clothing materials, both textures and motifs, until an interesting, creative, and/or unique variation of clothing materials is found as the characteristics of the concept. The development of manipulating fabric in clothing design, among others, can focus on: (a) the size and location on the clothing, by applying the elements and principles of design; and (b) alternative techniques for making the manipulating fabric itself.

The results of fashion design development at this stage are in the form of two-dimensional rough sketches (black and white), with a variety of poses (front view, back view,  $\frac{3}{4}$  view, back view, or made front and back view at once), with a fairly diverse and unlimited number of variations, until the results of design development are deemed to have adequately represented the design concept.

The best sketch is determined or selected from a series of alternative sketches made, according to the need for design variations and the number of clothing design collections that will later be realized. In this research, 4 best clothing designs were selected, as a reference in making fashion design prototypes at the realization stage. The selection of the best sketches in this study focused

on assessing the aspects of creativity in the management of clothing designs, including the uniqueness and harmony between one design and another in one collection

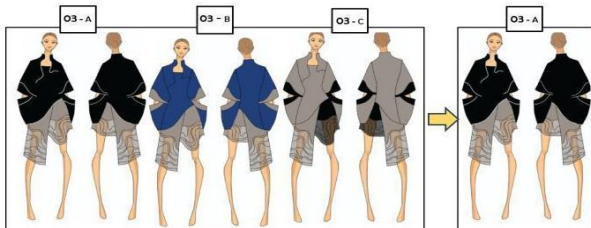
**Design Development Results (Shapes, Lines, Colors, And Fabric Manipulation)**



**Figure 4.** Results of Fashion Design Development.

The color development of the fashion design collection is conducted after the best design is selected. An unlimited number of alternative types and color combinations of each selected garment design can be made until the best color variation is found (interesting, unique, and/or creative), based on the predetermined color plan.

The design color development process can be done manually or digitally. Manual color development, starting with duplicating a certain amount of each clothing design (for example 3 alternative colors for each clothing design) and placing it on one page of paper, then variations of color combinations are made. Meanwhile digital color development is done with a computer or smartphone that is equipped with design software or applications to be used, such as CorelDraw, Photoshop, Ibispaint, and so on. The color development of fashion designs is carried out after the best design selection process. The color development of each selected design was made in 3 alternative clothing color combinations, which in the end also selected the best color from the 3 color choices made.



**Figure 5.** Selected Design Color Development.

**3.1.3 Realization**

The realization stage in this research is the finishing and packaging stage of the fashion design, in preparation for presentation or publication. Finishing is the stage of completing the fashion design, which includes activities: (a) smoothing, emphasizing, and completing design lines, including outlines, clothing details, and clothing accessories; and (b) coloring or completing the coloring of the design as a whole, starting from the skin of the model image, clothing, to clothing accessories. The final finishing of the garment design can be done manually (using wet, dry, or a combination of both) or digitally.

The practice of finishing the final image (fashion design) is also seen using a combination of two techniques, especially in the coloring of the skin of the model image is done manually (using skin-colored markers) and digitally, while the coloring of the clothing design is done digitally.



**Figure 6.** Final Completion.

The practice of fashion design development is carried out in accordance with the stages described in the results chapter, starting from the development of shapes, lines, materials, and manipulating fabrics, to the development of fashion design collection colors, which are carried out directly in each design, then continued by making the next design, while looking at suitability, unity, and other design principles. In practice, design development is done by combining both techniques (manual and digital), both in the process of developing shapes, lines, materials, and manipulating fabrics, as well as in the process of developing fashion colors. However, during the observation of the design process, it was found that the fashion designs were initially hand-drawn in the form of black-and-white sketches, using pencils, pens, or black drawings. Selected designs are then digitally drawn. Similarly, the color development process is all done digitally.

**3.1.4 Presentation**

The finished product of fashion design development, which consists of 4 fashion designs, is presented as attractively as possible by giving the final touch to the design work, for assessment purposes. The final touch to the fashion design includes adding variations in the display of background images, writing, or other necessary information, such as the fashion design collection number or code and the designer's identity.



Figure 7. Presentation of the Selected Design Collection.

### Results of Fashion Design Development using the Essential Look Method

The results of product evaluation, which are the results of the development of selected fashion designs using the Essential look method, with a focus on the creative aspects of designing fashion, are described as follows.



Figure 8. Product Assessment Results (Selected Clothing Designs).

Based on the table of assessment results on student creativity in designing or developing fashion designs above, it is known that aspects: (1) the shape of fashion has an average score of 86.3, which is included in the good category; (2) the lines of fashion design have an average score of 83.25, which is included in the good category; (3) fashion material with an average score of 84.50, including the good category; (4) fashion color has an average score of 82.08, including the good category; and (5) manipulating fabric with an average score of 82.42 with a good category. While the average score of the five aspects of fashion design (shape, line, material, color, and manipulating fabric), obtained 83.23 with a good category. Based on the average score on the five aspects of design assessed (83.23), it can be said that the creativity of students in developing designs is in the good category.

## 4. CONCLUSION

### 4.1 Fashion Design Development Process Using the Essential Look Method

Design development with the Essential Look method consists of 4 stages: (1) pre-design, which is the preparation stage, which includes the preparation of design concepts and model images that will be used in

design development; (2) design, which is the stage of visualizing ideas based on design concepts, the results of this stage are: (a) a number of alternative sketches as a result of design development (2 dimensional and black and white) and (b) selected designs with design variations and quantities according to the needs of the clothing collection; (3) realization, which is the stage of finishing and packaging of fashion designs, in preparation for presentation or publication. The result of this stage is a collection of selected designs that are ready to be published; and (4) presentation stage, which is the stage of evaluating the products or works of the selected design collection, with the established criteria.

### 4.2 Results of Fashion Design Development using the Essential Look Method

Design development with the Essential Look method resulted in 4 selected fashion designs according to the concept formulation, which were assessed in terms of creativity. Aspects of creativity assessment in designing fashion include shape, design lines, materials, textures, and manipulating fabrics. The shape aspect has an average score of 86.3 with a good category, the average score of the fashion design lines aspect at 83.25 including the good category, the clothing material with an average score of 84.50 with a good category, the clothing color has an average score of 82.08 which includes a good category; and (5) manipulating fabric with an average score of 82.42 which is also included in the good category. The average score of the five aspects of clothing design is 83.23 in the good category.

Based on the final results of the creativity assessment of the four selected fashion designs, it can be said that the results of fashion design development with the essential look method can produce creative fashion designs.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This article is the result of research in the Fashion Show course, Bachelor of Fashion Education, Faculty of Engineering, Universitas Negeri Surabaya. Therefore, on this occasion the research team would like to thank the Bachelor of Fashion Education students' class of 2019, who have agreed to be respondents to this research and especially to the Shakkara studio, for the portfolio used as an example of this research product.

## REFERENCES

- [1] A. Smith, The Essential Look Method: A Guide to Creative Fashion Design, *Journal of Fashion Innovation*, 12(2), 2020, pp. 45-60.
- [2] B. Jones, Innovative Approaches in Fashion Design: A Comparative Analysis of Methods, *International Journal of Design Studies*, 8(4), 2019, pp. 112-129.

- [3] C. Brown, Exploring the Emotional Dimensions of Fashion through the Essential Look Method, *Fashion Theory*, 15(3), 2018, pp. 275-290.
- [4] L. Wang and Q. Chen, The Application of Essential Look Method in Fashion Design: A Comprehensive Review, *Journal of Fashion Design*, 14(1), 2017, pp. 20-35.
- [5] Y. Kim, Holistic Approaches in Fashion Design: An Exploration of Essential Look Method, *Fashion Research Journal*, 9(3), 2016, pp. 210-225.
- [6] M. Lee, Essential Look Method: Bridging Art and Functionality in Fashion Design, *International Journal of Fashion Studies*, 7(2), 2015, pp. 88-105.
- [7] H. Zhang and J. Wu, Incorporating Essential Look Method into Sustainable Fashion Design Practices, *Journal of Sustainable Fashion*, 15(4), 2018, pp. 321-335.
- [8] B. Sziutnicka, *Technical Drawing for Fashion* (London: Laurence Kong Publishing). 2010
- [9] N. A. Yuliati, Peningkatan Kreativitas Seni dalam Desain Busana, vol.5, 2007, pp.173-184.
- [10] N. Himawan and Patimah, S. Siti, *Teknik Gampang Desain Busana Dari Pola Hingga Jadi* (Jakarta: Prima). 2014.
- [11] Jones, S. Jebkyn, *Fashion Design* (London: Laurence King Publishing Ltd), 2011.
- [12] Rasband, A. Judith and Liechty, L. G. Elizabeth, *Fabulous Fit: Speed Fitting and Alternation*, Second Edition (New York: Fairchild Publications, Inc.), 2006.
- [13] S. P. Gustami, *Proses Penciptaan Seni Kriya: Untaian Metodologis* (Yogyakarta: Program Penciptaan Seni, Pascasarjana, Institut Seni Indonesia), 2004.
- [14] S. S. Yufie, *Kartaatmaja dan Weda G, Dewa Made, Concept and Design*, 2021.
- [15] Anonymous, *Development: Kelas Desain Boothcamp Wastra Jatim* (Surabaya), 2022.

**Open Access** This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits any noncommercial use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.

