

Application of Cottagecore Visual Development Motifs on Modest Fashion Product

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Abstract

The cottagecore trend has been growing and increasing since 2020, this has made many brands adopt cottagecore as their brand concept, and indicates that there is interest from the market to develop cottagecore style clothing in Indonesia, for example, as the Himeka Vintage brand with fairy style clothes such as flowy dresses with floral motifs, Hankaaa.id with dreamy and magical clothes such as fluffy dresses full of lace and ruffles, then the Sausan Official brand with its vintage and elegant clothing characterized by signature patterns and textures. This study aims to explore the potential and develop cottagecore visual elements in modest fashion wear through a design thinking approach, observation data collection, and literature review. The design of motif elements for visual development in fashion products combining several visual representations typical of cottagecore icons, such as mushrooms, homemade bread, strawberry motifs, and butterflies. The motif composition development technique uses the spot repeat grids concept, while in the process of designing fashion products using design theory with the SCAMPER method approach. The outcome of this study is to offer innovation, particularly in motif visuals for clothing that adapts the cottagecore style in the Indonesian fashion industry.

Keywords

cottagecore, modest fashion, motif, visual development, SCAMPER

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INTRODUCTION

Cottagecore is an aesthetic trend that mixes elements of traditional Western clothing styles with modern dress designs with a back-to-nature concept (Umami & Ayufananie, 2021). Embracing themes closely associated with nature, such as rural life and typical countryside activities. The 'cottagecore' phenomenon is a visual aesthetic trend that has been popular on social media since March 2018, this trend romanticizes the rural lifestyle which then inspires fashion, food, and recreation, the term cottagecore first appeared on the social media platform Tumblr in 2018 then experienced a sharp increase in popularity during 2020 (Ramachandran, 2021). The cottagecore trend is growing worldwide, generating demand in cottagecore-

related fields and aspects, especially in fashion (Dewayanti & Andhini, 2023). Current cottagecore clothing designs keep up with trends and innovations while maintaining their classic and traditional ambiance by adopting themes closely tied to nature. Cottagecore is an aesthetic with the impression of old-fashioned clothing design by having puff sleeves, wide variations in the neckline of clothing, and ruffles on parts of the dress. The concept of nature is shown from floral motifs, as well as a color palette that has warm shades such as white, brown, gold, pink, orange, sky blue, yellow, and other similar colors (Umami & Ayufanie, 2021).

The presence of several brands that have the cottagecore concept in their product collections, such as Himeka Vintage, Sausan Official, and Hankaaa.id, shows that there is market interest in this concept. In addition, through observation and visual analysis, it is known that the three brands only highlight floral and geometric motifs, even though the visual representation of cottagecore is not limited to that. As the cottagecore trend rises, various visual representations have emerged, such as images of cottages surrounded by climbing plants, tea parties with homemade cakes, and women wearing cottagecore-style dresses with a bouquet of flowers in a glass jar. These scenes epitomize the increasingly popular 'cottagecore' aesthetic, characterized by simplicity and nostalgia (Johnston, 2022). Cottagecore is predicted to be one of the dominating core designs in 2024 (Mendoza, 2023). This prediction shows that the cottagecore concept has a potential market in the future.

In response to the market, this research seeks to develop cottagecore concepts, especially visual representations that have not been found in cottagecore fashion brand products in Indonesia. The combination of various textile craft elements, especially decorative elements, is an innovation that can be used as a product differentiator, so it is important to be part of a more appropriate business concept to suit the needs of the target market (Febriani et al., 2021). This development intends to create visual novelty in cottagecore products because visual novelty is the first signal that consumers receive when looking at products (Gumulya, 2022). This visual development is achieved through the processing of textile motifs.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative approach method with data collection techniques that use a design thinking approach. Subsequently, an exploration was carried out for the visual development of cottagecore-themed motif elements which resulted in the visualization of new digital motifs that can be printed to be applied to various types of fashion products. The

design sketches for the products are created using the SCAMPER method, specifically the adapt and modify techniques.

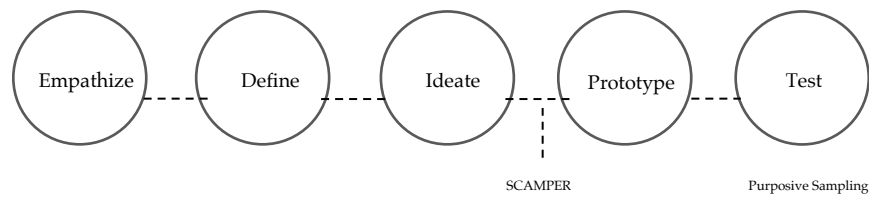


Image 1. Design Thinking Framework
(Source: Author, 2025)

DISCUSSION

EMPATHIZE

In the first stage, we get a general picture of Cottagecore fashion product, where in the main points are the clothing's material, motif, and silhouette. Materials commonly used in Cottagecore style clothing are cotton, linen, and knitting yarn. Clothing that characterizes cottagecore includes dresses, long and wide skirts, and blouses adorned with embroidery, ruffles, ribbons, and braids (Dewayanti & Andhini, 2023). Lace, ribbons, white linen, and voluminous dresses inspired by nature also strongly typify cottagecore fashion (Bremer, 2022). Observation is carried out indirectly, online, by observing the Instagram accounts of brands that adopt the cottagecore concept in their product collections. The three brands observed were Himeka Vintage, Sausan Official, and Hankaaa.id, that mostly use floral motifs for their collections.

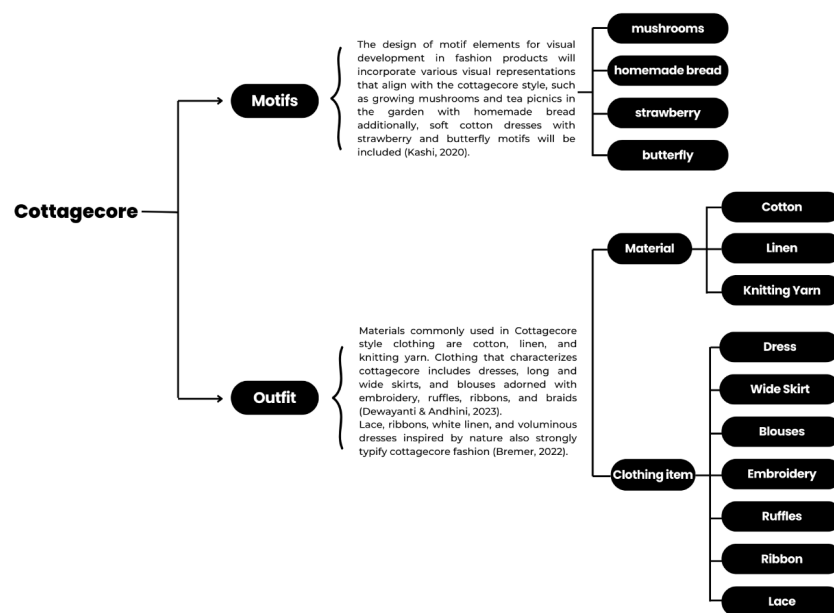


Image 2. Mind map
(Source: Author's Document, 2024)



Image 3. Dress Product by Himeka Vintage Brand
(Source: <https://www.instagram.com/himeka.vintage/>)



Image 4. Dress Product by Sausan Official
(Source: https://www.instagram.com/sausanofficial_id/)



Image 5. Dress Product by Hankaaa
(Source: <https://www.instagram.com/hankaaa.id/>)

DEFINE

At the define stage, we collect good ideas for building features and other elements so that they become the solutions offered for the development of this Cottagecore fashion product,

and the focus is on developing visual aspects. The design of motif elements for visual development in fashion products incorporating various visual representations that align with the cottagecore style, such as growing mushrooms and tea picnics in the garden with homemade bread additionally, soft cotton dresses with strawberry and butterfly motifs (Kashi, 2020) included as mentioned in Image 6. Therefore, novelty motifs used in the development of cottagecore visual motifs for application in fashion products. The motif element objects that applied are butterflies, strawberries, pretzels, plants, and mushrooms. The motif processing using the spot repeat concept, half-drop repeat, and brick repeat technique from Kight (2011).



Image 6. Motif Elements
 (Source: Author's Document, 2024)

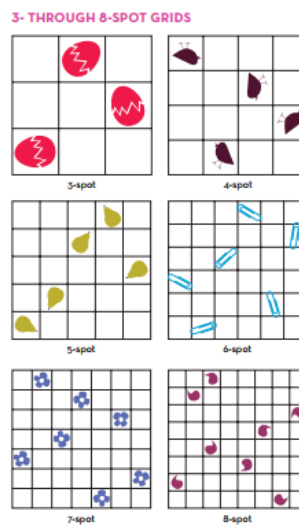


Image 7. Spot repeat grids
 (Source: Kight, 2011)

IDEATE

Based on previous observations, the target market was bored with Cottagecore's flowers motifs and small object element scales to large ones. Therefore, the development of this motif design uses a small scale. Several motif processing explorations using the spot repeat grids concept were provided in image 8 to image 13, as follows:

1. 3 Spot

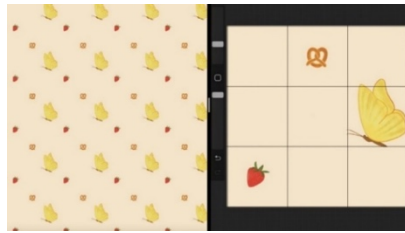


Image 8. 3 Spot repeat grids
(Source: Author's Document, 2024)

2. 4 Spot

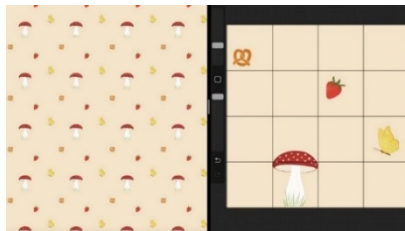


Image 9. 4 Spot repeat grids
(Source: Author's Document, 2024)

3. 5 Spot



Image 10. 5 Spot repeat grids
(Source: Author's Document, 2024)

4. 6 Spot

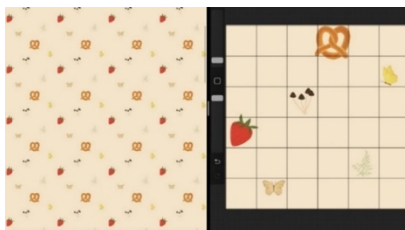


Image 11. 6 Spot repeat grids
(Source: Author's Document, 2024)

5. 7 Spot

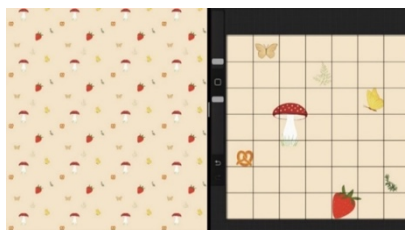


Image 12. 7 Spot repeat grids
(Source: Author's Document, 2024)

6. 8 Spot

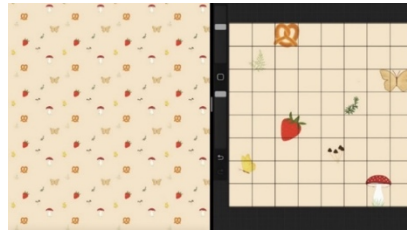


Image 13. 8 Spot repeat grids
 (Source: Author's Document, 2024)

The exploration of motifs has the elements of design: lines, colors, and shapes forming mushrooms, butterflies, leaves, strawberries, pretzels, and plants with principles of design: unity, balance, and repetitive rhythm. The image above is the result of exploration using the digital software Procreate, following the spot repeat concept technique module in the book. The motif is made more dynamic in its motif elements with different sizes of each object by considering aspects of design principles. The grid is created according to the number of spots to be used. For example, using 5 spots on a 30 cm x 30 cm canvas means each grid box is 6 cm x 6 cm (Image 14). The motif elements follow how many spots used as well if 5 spots then use 5 motif object elements, if 6 spots then 6 motif elements, and so on. Image 14 depicted the variant motifs and the result of respondent selection (Diagram 1).

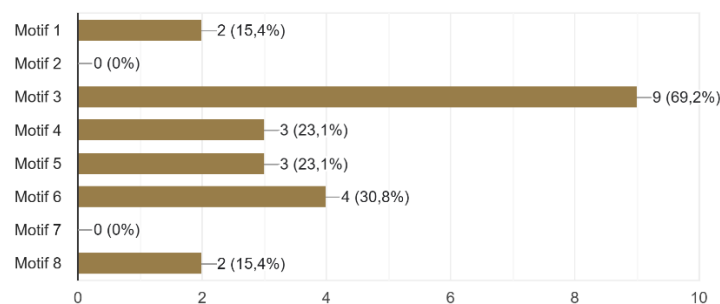


Diagram 1. Questionnaire Results
 (Source: Author's Document, 2024)

Based on the results of observation, exploration, and brand analysis, the sketch design concept inspired by the aesthetic style of cottagecore. The fashion design characterized the cottagecore style. The first step in designing after determining the concept is to create a mood board. The mood board has a feminine character, with a back-to-nature concept featuring flowy white dresses with ruffles that depict the cottagecore character, along with some images of supporting elements for visual motif development. Additionally, a naturalistic color palette that illustrates the concept of nature.

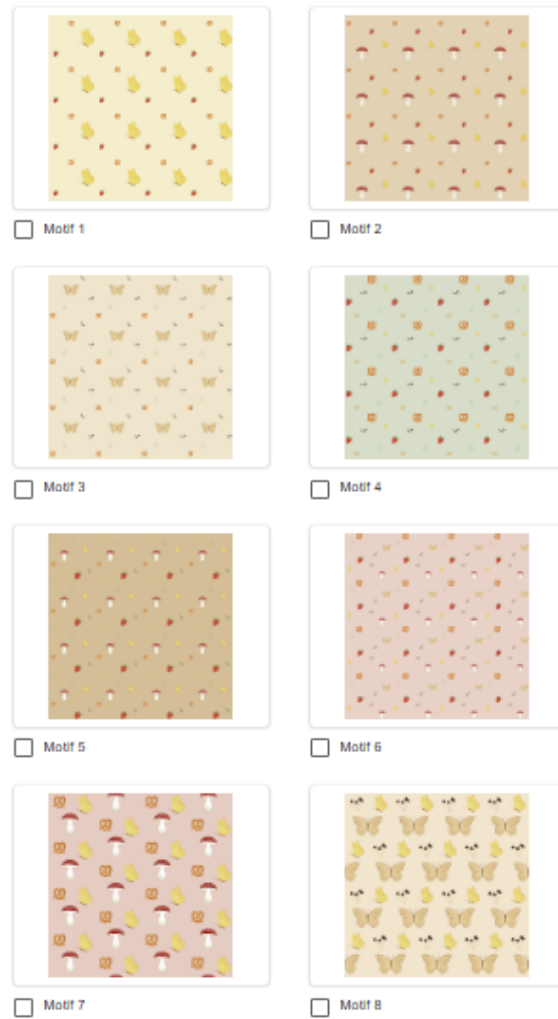


Image 14. Questionnaire Results
(Source: Author's Document, 2024)



Image 15. Mood board
(Source: Author's Document, 2024)

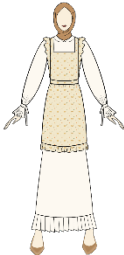
The mood board above refers to making a sketch design. After the mood board is finished, the next step is to create the SCAMPER. SCAMPER is a brainstorming technique that uses

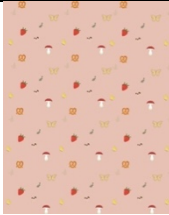
direct questions to solve a problem or encounters with opportunities that can turn ideas into something new and different(Serrat, 2017). Here are the instructions for the SCAMPER technique:

1. **S – Substitute.** Thinking about changing some parts of the product or process for something.
2. **C – Combine.** Think about combining two or more parts of a product or process to create something new.
3. **A – Adapt.** Thinking about the inside of the product or which processes can be adapted.
4. **M – Magnify/Modify.** Thinking about changing part or all of a product or process unusually.
5. **P - Put to other used.** Think about how to use the product or process for other uses such as reusing it in different places.
6. **E – Eliminate.** Thinking about what might happen if you removed part of the product or process and realizing what would happen in that situation.
7. **R – Rearrange/ Reverse.** Think about what you would do if the parts of the product or process were reversed or ordered differently.

PROTOTYPE

Table 1. SCAMPER for creating fashion designs

	Mood board	Front View	Back View
Design 4			
SCAMPER		Adapt: adapt the fabric material commonly used to characterize Cottage-core fashion which is cotton, adapt the cottage-core dress silhouettes and ribbon. Put the Cottagecore motif area on the apron symmetrically.	Modify: change the motif on a fabric that is usually geometric and floral motifs into novelty motifs

	Mood board	Front View	Back View
Design 5			
SCAMPER		Adapt: adapting a part of the Cottagecore fashion style, such as ruffles, frilled skirt, ribbons and adapting fabric material that is commonly used to characterize cottagecore fashion which is cotton. Put the Cottagecore motif area on the top of the product.	Modify: changing the motifs on the clothes from geometric and floral motifs into novelty motifs.
Design 6			
SCAMPER		Adapt: adapting a part of the cottagecore fashion style, such as ruffle sleeves, ribbon, and long dress and adapt the fabric material commonly used to characterize cottagecore fashion which is cotton.	Modify: changing the motifs on the clothes from geometric and floral motifs into novelty motifs.

(Source: Author's Document, 2024)

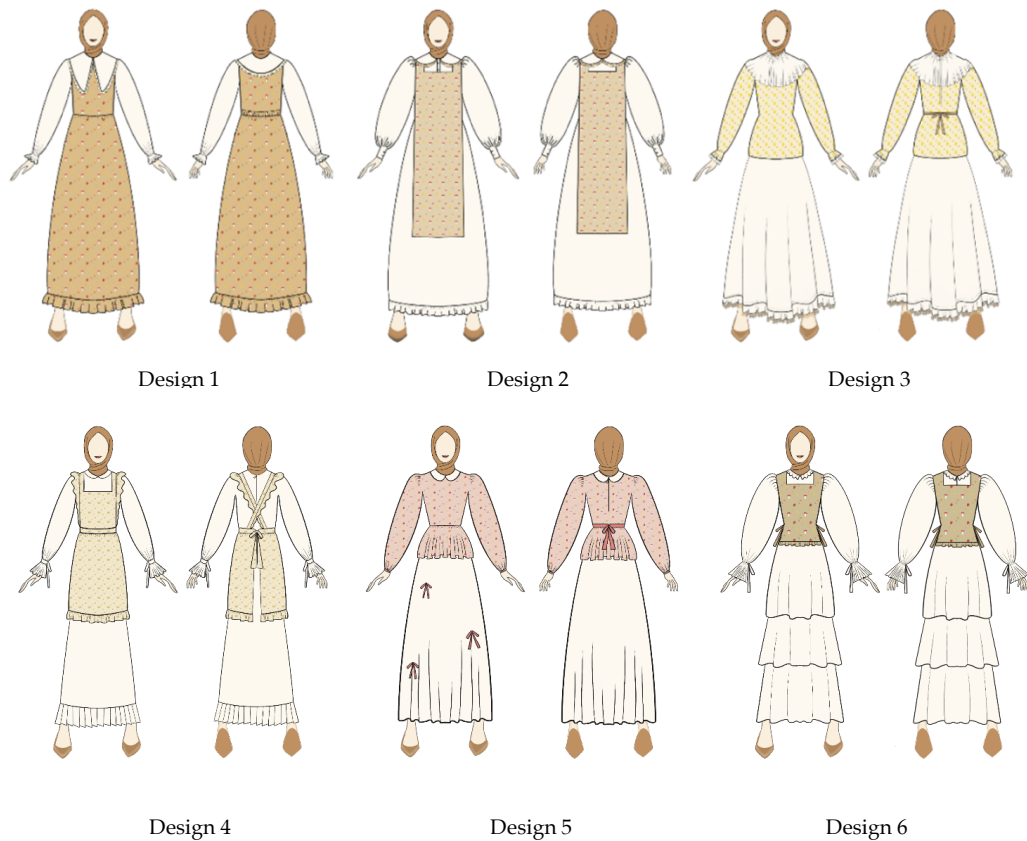


Image 16. Cottagecore Style Design Sketches
 (Source: Author's Document, 2024)

TEST

After the product design is complete based on previous data analysis, the motifs and product design sketch results are tested on potential target markets to get feedback using Alpha customer test. Alpha testing is the initial phase of validating whether a new product performed as expected. Derived from respondents opinion, two highest preferred design were number 5 and 6 (Diagram 2). With the customer segments geographic is who living in urban areas such as Bandung, Jakarta, and Malang. Female, age 20 – 26 years old. Middle class with buying power for fashion products average IDR 500.000 – IDR 1.000.000.

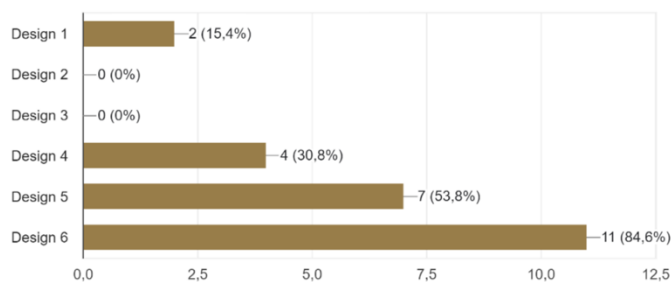


Diagram 2. Questionnaire Results
 (Source: Author's Document, 2024)



Image 17. Cottage Butterflies Design Collection, Design 4
(Source: Author's Document, 2024)



Image 19. Ribbon Blush Design Collection, Design 5
(Source: Author's Document, 2024)



Image 21. Cottage Umber Design Collection, Design 6
(Source: Author's Document, 2024)

CONCLUSIONS

Processing the visual development of motifs using the spot repeat grids technique by setting how many spot grids are desired and the object elements followed by the number. Using the Spot repeat grids technique module in the book “A Field Guide to Fabric Design: Design, Print & Sell Your Own Fabric; Traditional & Digital Techniques; For Quilting, Home Dec and Apparel” written by Kim Kight in 2011 also be beneficial for beginners who want to create their motifs because the process is straightforward and easy, just follow the module in the book and input the motif element objects that have been designed. This study uses procreate software tools, where using digital media were easier to design motifs such as color selection

and adjusting the size of objects and positions that also consider design principles as a result, making motifs more effective and efficient. Using mood board and the SCAMPER technique is also very helpful in designing, as the motifs arranged and repeated can be directly applied to fashion design sketches made using the SCAMPER technique.

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