



# Operational Workflows and Comparative Service Models in Personalized Styling Studios: A Case Study on KASH Studio

<sup>[1]</sup> Ratna Kumari M, <sup>[2]</sup> Ms. Nagaveni K, <sup>[3]</sup> Mr. Goutham N, <sup>[4]</sup> Dr. Mamatha Hegde, Student, Assistant Professor, Assistant Professor, Associate Professor and Head of the Department

*Department of Fashion Design, M.S. Ramaiah University of Applied Sciences, Bengaluru, India*

## Abstract

This research explores the operational workflows and comparative service delivery models within the personalized styling industry in India, using KASH Studio as a focused case study. As consumer demand shifts toward personalized, emotionally resonant fashion experiences, styling studios must balance creative intuition with structured processes and scalable systems. The study uses a mixed-methods approach, combining ethnographic observation, client interviews, artifact analysis, and a survey of 63 clients to analyze how services are delivered, what clients prefer, and how studios can operate efficiently without sacrificing human connection.

The findings highlight a five-stage operational workflow that allows for flexibility within structure, along with three dominant service models: in-person, virtual, and hybrid. Each model caters to different emotional, logistical, and cultural needs. Human stylists were found to outperform AI-driven styling platforms in areas of emotional intelligence, cultural relevance, and client satisfaction—though AI offers notable advantages in speed and basic personalization.

This paper contributes to the growing academic conversation on fashion service design and hybrid fashion-tech models. It provides practical recommendations for emerging styling entrepreneurs, fashion educators, and service designers seeking to scale personalized styling experiences while preserving empathy, intuition, and cultural nuance.

**Keywords:** Personalized Styling, Service Delivery, Workflow Design, Fashion Studio Operations, AI vs Human Styling, KASH Studio

## 1. Introduction

The rise of personalized styling services marks a significant evolution in the fashion industry — one that prioritizes individual identity, emotional connection, and bespoke wardrobe solutions over mass-market trends. In India, the emergence of boutique styling studios has created space for more culturally nuanced, psychologically aware fashion experiences. Among these, KASH Studio, based in Bengaluru, stands out for its hybrid service model that combines in-person consultation with virtual delivery, blending aesthetic expertise with operational efficiency.

As personal styling shifts from an elite service to a scalable business model, the structure and workflow of styling studios become critical. Efficient workflows not only impact client satisfaction but also influence service delivery quality, staff performance, and business scalability. While much has been written about fashion design and retail operations, the inner workings of styling studios — their processes, delivery models, and operational design — remain largely underexplored, especially in the Indian context[6].

Simultaneously, the rise of AI-powered fashion tools has introduced automated styling services through apps and platforms. These systems offer algorithmic recommendations based on body measurements, previous purchases, or uploaded photos. Although fast and scalable, they often lack the cultural sensitivity, emotional intelligence, and intuitive adaptability that human stylists provide [5][9]. The need to analyze and

compare human-centered and AI-driven models is therefore essential, especially for an industry balancing personalization with digital transformation [1][4].

This paper investigates the operational workflow and service delivery strategies of KASH Studio through the lens of studio infrastructure, client engagement, and styling process design. It also compares human-led and AI-based styling models, focusing on service customization, emotional depth, and client outcomes. Using ethnographic observation, internal documentation, and quantitative data collection, the study provides insights into how styling studios can optimize delivery without losing the human element[8].



figure 1.1 kash office



figure 1.2 founders of kash

By documenting real studio practices and client feedback, this paper contributes to the evolving conversation around fashion service design, personalization technology, and workflow innovation — offering both academic insight and practical direction for stylists, entrepreneurs, and fashion educators.

Research Through Innovation

## 2. Review of Literature

The domain of personalized styling, though rooted in aesthetic consultancy, increasingly intersects with service design, workflow management, and technology-enabled delivery models. While fashion design and retail logistics have long-standing research support, the operational backbone of styling studios — including client onboarding, profiling, delivery frameworks, and digital integrations — remains underrepresented in academic literature, especially in the Indian context[6].

### 2.1 Fashion Service Delivery Models

Fashion service delivery has evolved from traditional boutique fittings to multi-platform experiences involving both physical and digital consultations. According to Solomon & Rabolt (2004), fashion consumption is shifting from product acquisition to experience-based interaction, where clients expect timely, seamless, and emotionally resonant services. Studies in customer journey design (Bitner, 1992) highlight the

importance of backstage operations — scheduling, spatial design, and workflow — in shaping service perception[2].

In styling studios, this includes not only the aesthetics of the physical environment but the *sequence and structure* of the service itself: how the consultation is initiated, how body and color analysis is performed, and how looks are curated and delivered. The shift to hybrid delivery models—combining online assessments with in-person fittings—requires a new level of operational fluidity, as seen in KASH Studio's client model.



figure 2.1 kash office lighting and environment

## 2.2 Studio Workflow and Client Journey Mapping

Studio workflows play a critical role in ensuring consistency, client satisfaction, and repeat engagement. Researchers like Davis (1992) and Entwistle (2000) have emphasized the spatial and social choreography of fashion environments — how layout, lighting, and stylist behavior shape the client's emotional response[3].

In Indian boutique studios, where styling often incorporates cultural norms, religious contexts, and occasion-based dressing, workflows must adapt to the complexities of symbolic dressing and family involvement. Mapping the client journey — from initial intake forms to final outfit delivery — provides actionable insights into process improvement[7].

KASH Studio, for instance, segments its workflow into five operational stages: initial profiling, analysis (body, color, event), moodboarding, client consultation, and delivery. The structure not only ensures flow but also allows stylists to balance emotional responsiveness with time-efficient styling.

## 2.3 Comparative Analysis: Human vs AI Styling

With the rise of AI-powered fashion platforms like Stitch Fix, StyleCracker, and Lookiero, styling services are becoming increasingly automated. AI models use machine learning to predict client preferences, suggest outfits, and build digital capsules. However, researchers such as Adam & Galinsky (2012) and McKinsey (2023) argue that algorithmic styling lacks the intuition and cultural sensitivity required for complex styling decisions — especially in emotionally or socially high-stakes scenarios like weddings or career transitions[1][5].

Human stylists, particularly in the Indian context, offer a multi-layered approach that blends intuition, cultural fluency, and real-time adaptability. Comparative studies show that while AI performs well on speed and cost-efficiency, human-led models consistently score higher in emotional satisfaction, personalization accuracy, and repeat client engagement (Wadhwa, 2016; Nielsen, 2020)[9].

## 2.4 Gaps in Current Research

There is a clear gap in:

- Operational studies of styling studios (workflow, staff training, studio design)
- Hybrid delivery model evaluations
- Post-pandemic service adaptation in styling
- AI vs human service effectiveness in the Indian fashion ecosystem

This paper addresses those gaps by providing a grounded, studio-specific study of how a mid-sized Indian styling firm structures its workflow, delivers services, and balances emotional styling with operational consistency[8].

### 3. Methodology

This research adopts a mixed-methods case study approach to examine the operational workflows and service delivery models of KASH Studio, a Bengaluru-based personalized styling studio. The methodology combines ethnographic immersion, semi-structured interviews, artifact analysis, and client survey data to provide a 360-degree understanding of the studio's functioning and its position within the evolving landscape of human vs AI-driven styling.

#### 3.1 Case Study Framework

A case study was selected as the primary research design to explore the internal processes, infrastructure, and service models of a single entity in depth. KASH Studio was chosen due to its hybrid business structure, blending digital tools with personalized human interaction, making it an ideal example of contemporary styling service evolution in India.

#### 3.2 Ethnographic Observation

The researcher conducted participant observation over a 3-month period, attending in-person styling sessions, shadowing client consultations, and documenting internal workflow practices. Field notes were taken on:

- Space utilization
- Sequence of styling steps
- Client-stylist dynamics
- Emotional and decision-making cues
- Time taken per session, tools used (e.g., swatches, analysis cards, lookbooks)

This immersive approach helped reveal hidden operations — including the use of unstructured emotional labor and real-time improvisations that shaped service quality.

#### 3.3 Interview-Based Insights

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with:

- 3 senior stylists
- 2 studio assistants
- 1 co-founder
- 10 clients

Interview topics included workflow challenges, tech tool usage, service breakdowns, decision bottlenecks, and client satisfaction levels. The client interviews also focused on how they perceived efficiency, personalization, and emotional connection.

### 3.4 Client Survey Data

Quantitative data was collected using a Google Form circulated among recent clients (N=50). The survey evaluated:

- Delivery satisfaction
- Session structure
- Ease of communication
- Styling model preference (human vs AI)
- Repeat engagement likelihood

Charts from these responses (Figures 4.1–4.15) were used to quantify the client experience and identify service gaps.

### 3.5 Artifact & Process Analysis

Studio materials such as:

- Workflow posters
- Client intake forms
- Color & body analysis kits
- Internal stylist documentation
- Moodboarding templates

were examined to understand how stylists organize, prioritize, and standardize service steps.

### 3.6 Ethical Considerations

All participants gave informed consent prior to observation or interview. Personal identifiers were removed to preserve anonymity. The studio permitted photographic documentation for research purposes, provided no private client images were published without consent.

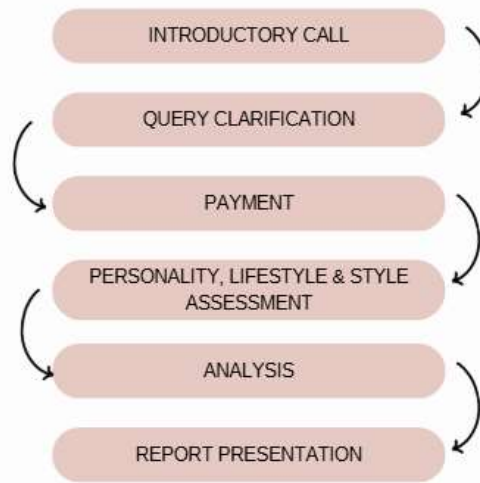
This mixed-methods strategy ensures the findings are both rich in lived experience and grounded in operational reality — capturing the invisible labor, systemic structure, and technological adaptations within a modern Indian styling studio.

## 4. Key Findings and Discussion

The operational analysis of KASH Studio reveals how personalized styling can be successfully systematized without compromising the emotional and aesthetic depth of service. The studio's balance of structured workflow, flexible delivery formats, and human intuition illustrates a scalable yet sensitive model in a space where both visual outcomes and emotional experiences are paramount. Several core findings emerged from field observations, client interviews, internal workflow study, and a structured survey conducted with 63 participants.

### 4.1 Structuring the Styling Workflow

KASH Studio follows a five-stage styling process that allows for both consistency and personalization. Beginning with client profiling and body-color analysis, the workflow moves into a collaborative ideation phase, styling trials (in-person or virtual), and concludes with lookbook delivery and post-session follow-up. Each stage has specific tools, spaces, and communication methods designed to ensure clarity and customization.



**figure 4 kash analysis process**

One of the key advantages of this structured approach is that it builds trust and predictability into an otherwise subjective and emotional service. At the same time, the workflow allows stylists to pivot in real-time, adjusting recommendations based on tone of voice, posture, or sudden shifts in client confidence. This ability to move fluidly within a structured process is a defining strength of the studio's operational model.

#### 4.2 Service Delivery Model Preferences

Clients at KASH access the studio's services through three main formats: in-person styling, virtual consultations, and a hybrid model combining both. Each format caters to a specific type of client need and emotional readiness.

In-person styling was favored for emotionally significant moments — such as bridal styling or post-transformation rebranding — where clients desired personal attention, hands-on guidance, and in-the-moment emotional validation. Virtual styling was preferred for clients outside the city or those seeking convenience over depth. The hybrid model gained popularity for its balance — allowing initial discussions and ideation to happen virtually, followed by physical fittings and touchpoint sessions.

The survey showed that clients overwhelmingly valued a delivery model that made them feel understood and comfortable — with the hybrid approach being cited as a strong middle ground between accessibility and emotional engagement.

#### 4.3 Human vs AI Styling Experience

The rise of algorithm-based styling platforms has introduced automation into the fashion space, promising quick, data-driven outfit suggestions. However, clients consistently reported that while these platforms provided basic styling support, they often failed to understand the nuances of body comfort, emotional triggers, or cultural context — echoing critiques raised by scholars of fashion psychology and service personalization [1][5][9].

Human stylists at KASH, by contrast, were seen as active collaborators — not only interpreting physical needs but also uncovering deeper emotional motivations. Clients reported higher satisfaction when stylists were able to pick up on silent discomfort, guide them through body image struggles, or balance cultural expectations with personal style goals.

The emotional intelligence displayed by human stylists gave them a clear edge in client trust, adaptability, and long-term engagement. Clients expressed that in emotionally complex scenarios — such as styling after a life transition — human input felt irreplaceable[4].

#### 4.4 Operational Strengths and Workflow Challenges

KASH's strength lies in its ability to deliver high-touch, emotionally intelligent styling within a clearly defined process. The studio uses basic digital tools to streamline client communication, track progress, and ensure team coordination — enabling a smooth client journey from consultation to final delivery.

However, challenges persist. Emotional labor is significant and often invisible, contributing to stylist fatigue. Manual documentation and lack of centralized data systems can slow down follow-up processes. Last-minute cancellations and scheduling overlaps occasionally disrupt session flow. Additionally, while the studio's low-tech approach is functional, it may limit future scalability unless supported by integrated tech tools.

These operational challenges are not uncommon in boutique styling setups and offer valuable insights for emerging studios seeking to balance human touch with growth readiness.

#### 4.5 Emerging Patterns

Across observations, interviews, and survey responses, the following patterns were consistently observed:

- Clients are looking for styling experiences that go beyond clothing — they are seeking identity validation, emotional reassurance, and personal transformation[1].
- The relationship between the client and the stylist is central to satisfaction, often outweighing the clothes themselves[6].
- Workflow structure enhances client confidence, while emotional flexibility within the process strengthens client-stylist rapport[4].
- AI-driven models still fall short on emotional complexity, especially in contexts like Indian weddings, career reinvention, or body-image healing[5][9].

This chapter affirms that the success of personalized styling services depends not just on creative expertise, but on the design and emotional execution of the workflow. KASH Studio's model offers a strong case for how boutique fashion services can blend efficiency with empathy in a highly individualized and emotionally sensitive domain.

#### 4.6 Survey Insights: Visual Data from Client Questionnaire

A questionnaire was sent to people between the age group of 18-60 out of which 63 responses were recorded.

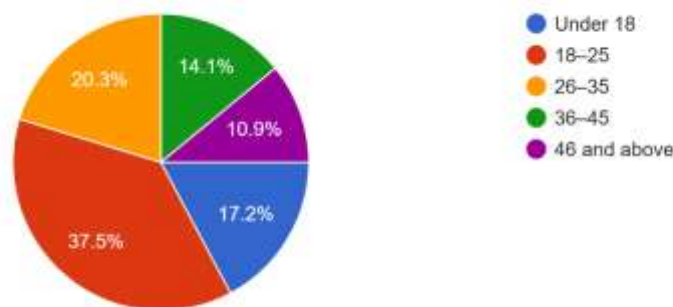
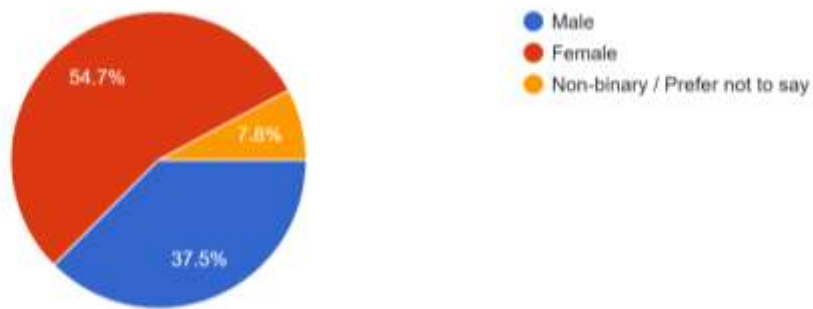


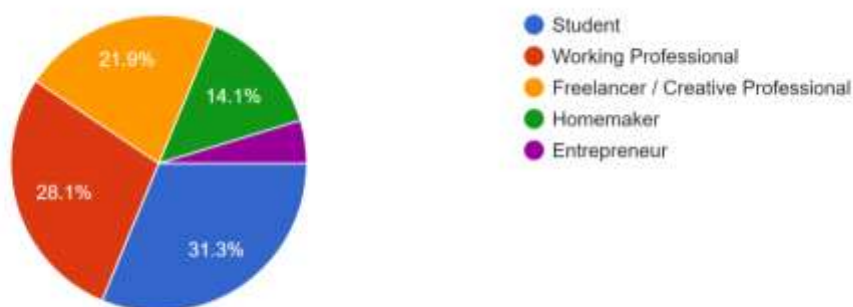
figure 4.1 age group

The figure 4.1 shows that the majority of respondents belong to the 18–25 age group, indicating a younger demographic engagement with styling services.



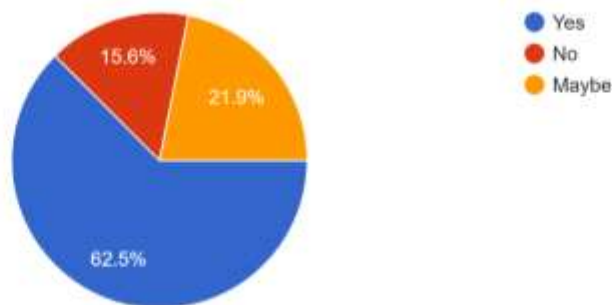
**figure 4.2 respondents gender**

The figure 4.2 shows that most respondents identify as female, reflecting a higher female interest or awareness in personal styling services.



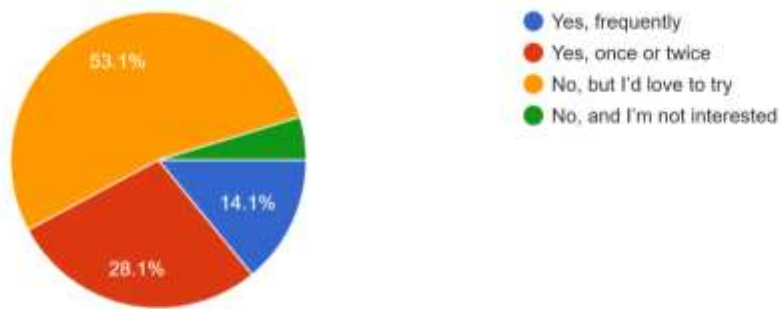
**figure 4.3 participants gender**

The figure 4.3 shows that 31.3% of respondents are students and 28.1% are working professionals, highlighting the study's successful targeting of both young learners and career-oriented individuals.



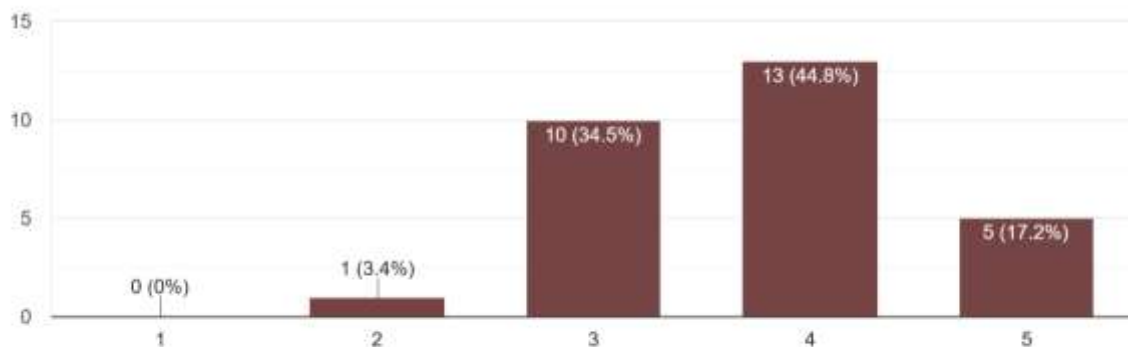
**figure 4.4 knowledge of personal styling services**

The figure 4.4 shows that 62.5% of respondents are aware of personal styling services, indicating a high general awareness in the population surveyed.



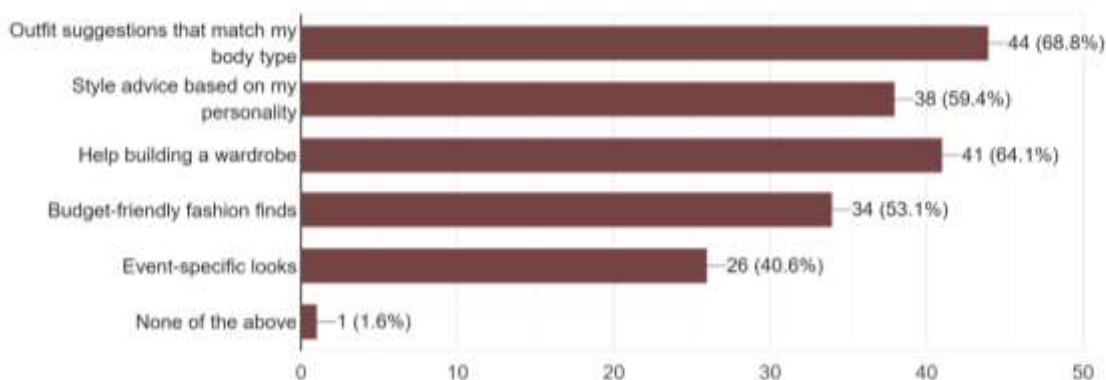
**figure 4.5 participants usage of styling services**

The figure 4.5 shows that 53.1% of respondents have never used styling services but are willing to try, highlighting a gap between awareness and actual usage.



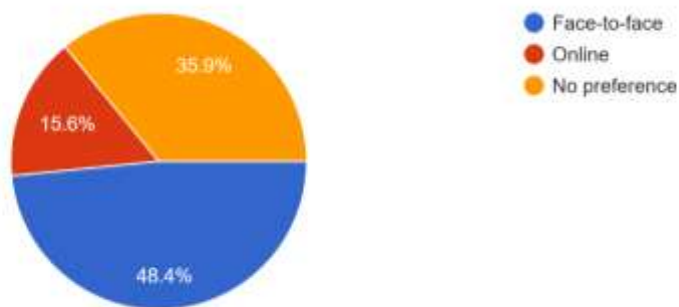
**figure 4.6 participants rating personal styling services**

The figure 4.6 shows that 44.8% of respondents rated their personal styling service experience as 4 out of 5, indicating a generally positive perception of the service.



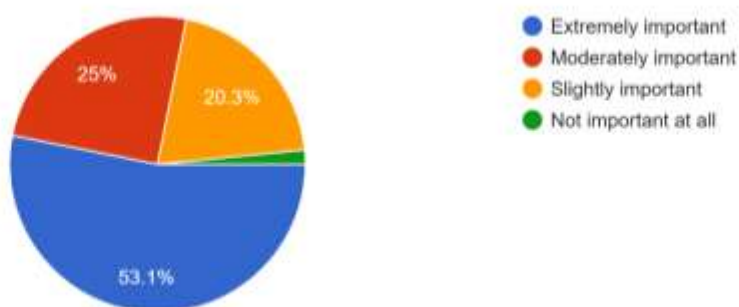
**figure 4.7 participants preferences for personal styling services**

The figure 4.7 shows that 68.8% of respondents seek outfit suggestions tailored to their body type, and 64.1% want assistance in building a functional wardrobe, indicating key motivations for opting for styling services.



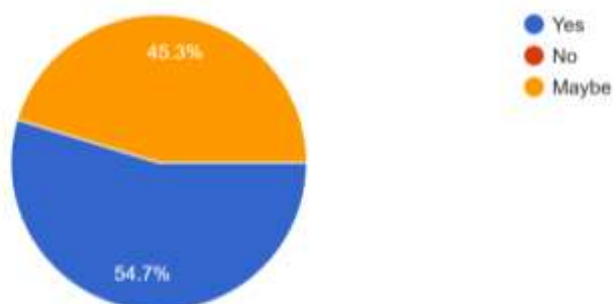
**figure 4.8 participants preferences for styling consultations**

The figure 4.8 shows that 48.4% of respondents prefer face-to-face styling consultations over virtual alternatives.



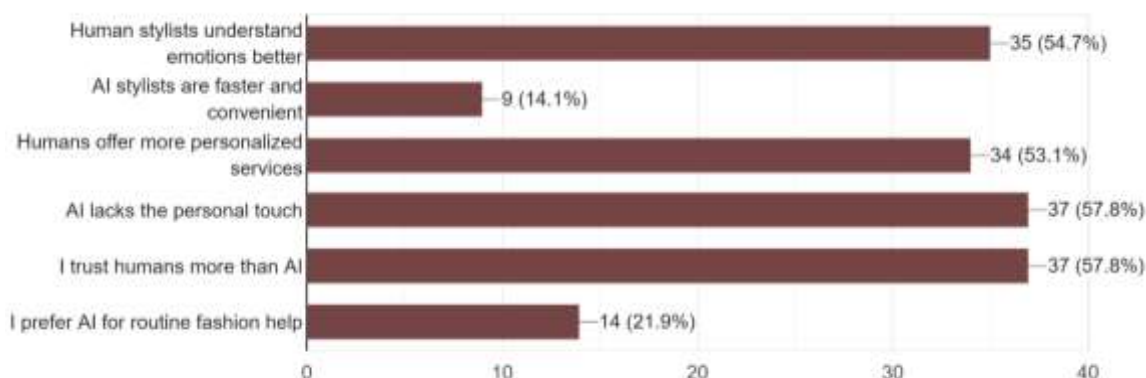
**figure 4.9 participants preferences for personalisation**

The figure 4.9 shows that 53.1% of respondents believe that personalization skills are extremely important in delivering effective styling services.



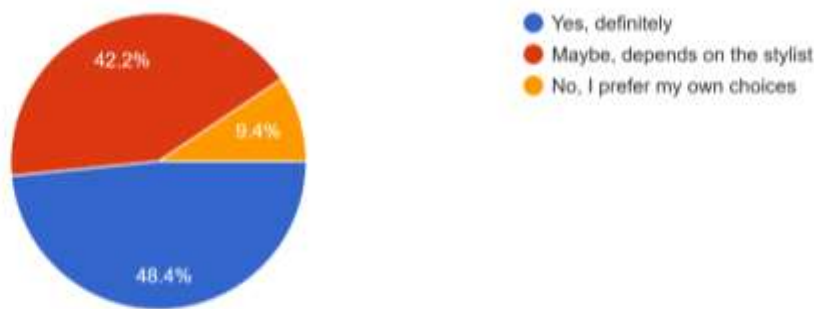
**figure 4.10 participants willingness for the payment**

The figure 4.10 shows that 54.7% of respondents are willing to pay for personalized styling services, indicating a healthy market potential.



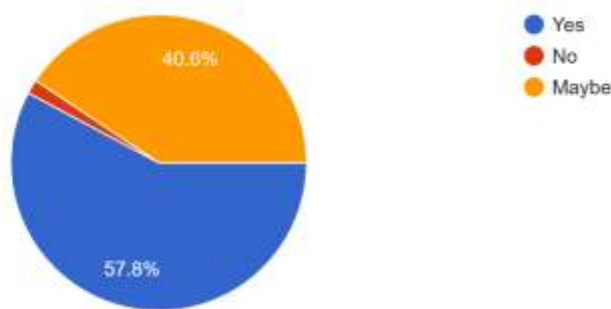
**figure 4.11 participants perspective between ai and human based services**

The figure 4.11 shows that over half of respondents feel more confident when styled using personalized inputs than by a generic fashion assistant.



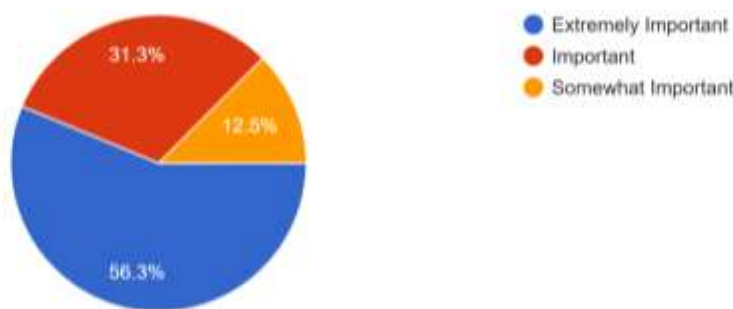
**figure 4.12 participants confidence impact**

The figure 4.12 shows that 48.4% of respondents stated they would definitely feel more confident being styled by a professional stylist, reflecting trust in expert-driven guidance.



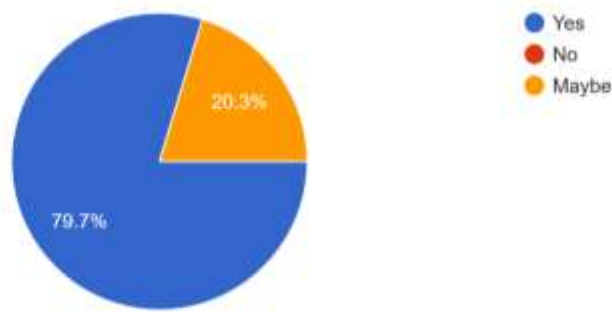
**figure 4.13 participants willingness for the enrolment in styling course**

The figure 4.13 shows that 57.8% of respondents would consider enrolling in a styling course focused on personalization, indicating significant educational interest.



**figure 4.14 participants expectations**

The figure 4.14 shows that 56.3% of respondents rated aspects like comfort, trendiness, affordability, personalization, and body positivity as extremely important in styling, indicating a holistic expectation from fashion services.



**figure 4.15 participants recommendation**

The figure 4.15 shows that 79.7% of respondents would recommend personalized styling services to their friends and family, highlighting a strong overall satisfaction and perceived value.

## 5. Implications and Conclusion

The operational study of KASH Studio offers a critical lens into how personalized styling services can scale without losing their human essence. As client expectations shift toward emotionally intelligent experiences and adaptive service formats, styling studios must rethink how their internal systems, workflows, and delivery models are designed. This chapter outlines the broader implications of these findings for the fashion styling industry, and concludes with key insights for future research, education, and practice.

### 5.1 Implications for Styling Studios and Entrepreneurs

The success of a styling studio lies not only in creative talent but in its behind-the-scenes workflow structure. KASH Studio demonstrates that even a boutique-sized team can deliver high-quality, deeply personal experiences when their workflow is clearly defined, emotionally flexible, and supported by lightweight digital tools[6].

For emerging stylists or studio founders, the case reveals the importance of:

- Mapping each service stage with intention
- Building emotionally aware client profiling methods
- Training stylists in both aesthetics and soft skills
- Using digital tools (however simple) to maintain documentation and client history

Investing in workflow clarity allows creative professionals to focus more on client engagement and less on operational guesswork — improving both service quality and stylist well-being[2].

### 5.2 Implications for Fashion Education and Industry Practice

Traditional fashion curricula often focus heavily on design, draping, and merchandising — but the real-world operation of personalized styling services demands a blended skillset: creative intuition, emotional intelligence, and logistical competency[3][4].

This study suggests the need to integrate:

- Modules on service design and client journey mapping[7].
- Emotional labor training and boundary-setting practices[4].
- Familiarity with low-cost digital workflow tools.
- Case studies on hybrid service models.

As the industry embraces personalization, styling education must evolve beyond aesthetics to prepare students for service-led, emotionally complex roles[6].

### 5.3 Future of Human vs AI Styling Models

While AI has made significant progress in clothing recommendation systems, it remains transactional and impersonal. Styling, especially in emotionally charged contexts, requires subtle cues — the shift in a client’s body language, the hesitation in their voice, the symbolic significance of color or drape[1][5].

This does not mean AI has no role. In fact, the future lies in hybrid styling ecosystems where:

- AI handles base-level suggestions, past history, and efficiency
- Human stylists bring narrative, intuition, and emotional responsiveness[9]

Studios that can design workflows to incorporate both — using AI as a tool, not a replacement — will be best positioned to scale while preserving depth.

### 5.4 Conclusion

The findings from KASH Studio confirm that personal styling is both an art and a service operation — one that must be treated with the same process rigor as any hospitality or wellness experience[8]. Efficiency and empathy are not opposites, but partners in delivering high-impact styling.

By organizing their workflows, empowering their stylists, and honoring the emotional complexity of their clients, studios can move beyond one-time transactions and build lasting transformation — not just in wardrobes, but in confidence, identity, and self-expression.

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