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Theoretical and Methodological Aspects of Basic Professional Hairstyle Training for Stylists

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Abstract

The article is devoted to the theoretical and methodological structure of basic professional hairstyle training for stylists. The relevance of the topic is related to the restructuring of hairdressing education under the influence of increasing complexity of client requests, digital training tools, expanding communicative requirements and increasing dependence of training on the cultural environment. The novelty of the work is to explain the internal connection between the craft, cognitive, emotional-communicative, digital and culturally adaptive levels of learning, which are often considered separately. The text describes how the learning action moves from reproducing an operation to recognizing a professional situation and designing a solution. Special attention is paid to the correlation of demonstration training, algorithmized training materials, virtual training, emotional regulation and gender-labeled norms of professional behavior. The purpose of the work is to explain the structure of stylists' training as an interconnected system of professional development and to clarify the mechanisms of its pedagogical restructuring. To solve this problem, an analytical review, a comparison of studies, a conceptual interpretation of the identified relationships, and a structural synthesis were applied. The final part describes the stable mechanisms that define the modern training model. The material will be useful for professional education researchers, beauty industry teachers, and practitioners involved in training aspiring professionals.

Keywords: *Professional Training, Hair Stylists, Hairdressing Education, Pedagogical Models, Emotional Regulation, Digital Training, Professional Competence, Cultural Adaptation.*

INTRODUCTION

Basic professional training of hair stylists is undergoing a noticeable internal restructuring. Previously, a craft-based logic prevailed: the educational process was organized around the demonstration of a technique followed by its repetition. Such a scheme no longer proves sufficient. Contemporary hairdressing practice requires from a novice not only precision of movement, but the capacity to interpret face shape, hair type, the client's daily routine, hairstyle durability, visual image, emotional dynamics of interaction, and time constraints. Professional action emerges through the convergence of heterogeneous lines. As a result, the educational system loses its linear organization.

The relevance of the topic stems from the simultaneous layering of several transformations. On one hand, the beauty industry rapidly expands its technological repertoire, introduces digital training tools, and intensifies demand for flexible solutions. On the other hand, training continues to rely on stable service norms, where emotional regulation, communicative adaptability, and gender-coded behavioral patterns occupy a substantial place. Cultural environments, local aesthetic forms, and the diversity of hair types increasingly shape the content of training. What occurs is not merely an expansion of curriculum content; the very logic of professional formation shifts.

The purpose of this study is to develop a conceptual model of basic professional training for hair stylists that ensures the integration of multiple levels of professional formation and overcomes the fragmentation of training.

To achieve this aim, three research tasks were addressed. The first involved identifying the internal components of professional training and describing their functional interrelations. The second focused on determining the pedagogical mechanisms through which demonstration-based instruction, algorithmized learning materials, digital training environments, and emotional regulation reshape

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the structure of professional action. The third examined the limitations of existing training models and clarified the domains where cultural specificity, gender norms, and the heterogeneity of client situations require revision of foundational educational solutions.

The research hypothesis assumes that the effectiveness of basic professional training increases when craft-based, cognitive, communicative, digital, and cultural components are integrated into a unified pedagogical system.

The novelty of the study derives from two considerations. First, existing publications tend to examine individual elements of training—technical skills, digital tools, service behavior, cultural components, and instructor identity—in isolation. Second, their interdependence and combined influence on the structure of a foundational course remain insufficiently articulated. The proposed approach eliminates this fragmentation and reorients analysis toward an internally coherent process of professional formation.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The literature base was assembled through systematic search procedures across international scientific databases and open academic repositories, primarily Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, ERIC, Crossref, SpringerLink, and MDPI, with emphasis on publications from the past three to five years. The search strategy relied on several clusters of terms combined through AND/OR operators: professional training in the beauty industry, hairdressing education, vocational training, emotional labour, virtual reality, creative problem solving, textured hair care, local wisdom, teacher identity. The initial corpus comprised approximately forty publications; after removing duplicates, excluding texts with low analytical density, and selecting studies that explicated training mechanisms, the analytical core consisted of eight sources.

Selection criteria were not based on formal thematic proximity but on the capacity of each publication to reveal the internal organization of the phenomenon under investigation: how educational action is structured, which relations generate professional behavior, which pedagogical tools alter the quality of task execution, and how instructor positioning, digital environments, cultural codes, and client heterogeneity influence training structure. Priority was given to studies documenting implementation details, transitions between levels of training, and observable effects rather than external course descriptions. The limited sample size reflects the narrow specialization of the topic and the orientation toward in-depth analysis of training mechanisms rather than statistical representation.

Comparative analysis of the selected studies revealed several groups of materials. The first group described the cognitive restructuring of learning action through problem-based approaches and creative resolution of professional tasks. The second focused on algorithmized instructional tools that support psychomotor stability and clarity of action pathways. The third examined digital training environments, where repetition, immersion, and reduced error risk transform learner engagement. The fourth addressed the social mechanics of training, including emotional regulation, service norms, gender-coded expectations, and the fragmentation of the instructor's role. The fifth connected the learning process with local cultural practices, while the sixth addressed the heterogeneity of client situations, particularly in relation to diverse hair textures.

Comparison of these materials revealed a stable yet uneven recurrence of similar patterns. Technique is increasingly transmitted not as an autonomous skill but as part of situational recognition and solution design. Algorithmization does not reduce training to mechanical repetition; rather, it frees cognitive resources for analyzing form and outcome. Digital environments enhance independent practice while preserving the need for demonstration. Emotional regulation shifts from a peripheral supplement to a central component of professional behavior. Cultural specificity and variability of client demands alter the understanding of a foundational course.

The sources differed significantly in scale, depth, and analytical orientation, ranging from ethnographic observations and qualitative studies to quasi-experimental models and mixed-method designs. Such heterogeneity complicates direct comparison of quantitative findings, yet it reveals a more valuable pattern—the recurrence of internal mechanisms across diverse educational environments.

A prominent gap emerges from the tendency to treat technique, digital training, emotional and communicative behavior, cultural components, and instructor positioning as separate fragments. Their interdependence remains insufficiently explored. The synthesis of these dispersed lines necessitates viewing basic professional training of hair stylists as a unified, internally connected process.

RESULTS

The internal organization of basic professional training for hair stylists unfolds as a system in which craft-based action no longer retains a monopoly over the meaning of training. The focus shifts from an isolated technique to the mode of its integration within a broader architecture of professional behavior. Haircutting, coloring, styling, consultation, material handling, verbal presentation, and evaluation of client response begin to operate as interdependent elements of a single educational model. As a consequence, training moves away from the accumulation of discrete operations toward the formation of the ability to recognize situations, process their parameters, and translate them into professional decisions [3]. At this level, a transformation in the logic of competence becomes clearly observable.

Table 1. Structural components of professional training for hair stylists and their functional interrelations (compiled by the author based on [2–5, 8])

Training Component	Process Content	Functional Role in the Learning System	Type of Interaction with Other Components
Technical	Execution of operations (cutting, styling)	Forms the foundation of professional actions	Connected with cognitive interpretation
Cognitive	Analysis of form, structure, outcome	Ensures selection and design of solutions	Coordinates technical and communicative blocks
Communicative	Interaction with the client	Transmits professional behavior	Integrated with the affective component
Affective	Management of emotions and reactions	Regulates perception of the service	Enhances communicative strategies
Digital	Use of simulations and platforms	Expands the training environment	Supports cognitive and practical processes
Cultural-adaptive	Consideration of local traditions	Provides contextualization of training	Connects learning with the social environment

This structure does not consist of a single layer. Technical precision intertwines with cognitive processing of the task, while the latter depends on communicative and affective regulation. The learner no longer reproduces a predefined scheme in a fixed manner. Instead, interpretation precedes action: face shape, hair type, expected visual outcome, time constraints, hairstyle durability, and the nature of the client's request are analyzed prior to selecting a course of action. In a situation requiring adjustment of a client's image with fine hair and a round face shape, the training task transforms into an analytical problem of balancing volume and proportions rather than a simple selection of a styling technique [8]. Professional thinking, therefore, begins to operate before the manual phase is initiated. This shift is reflected in quantitative terms (Figure 1).

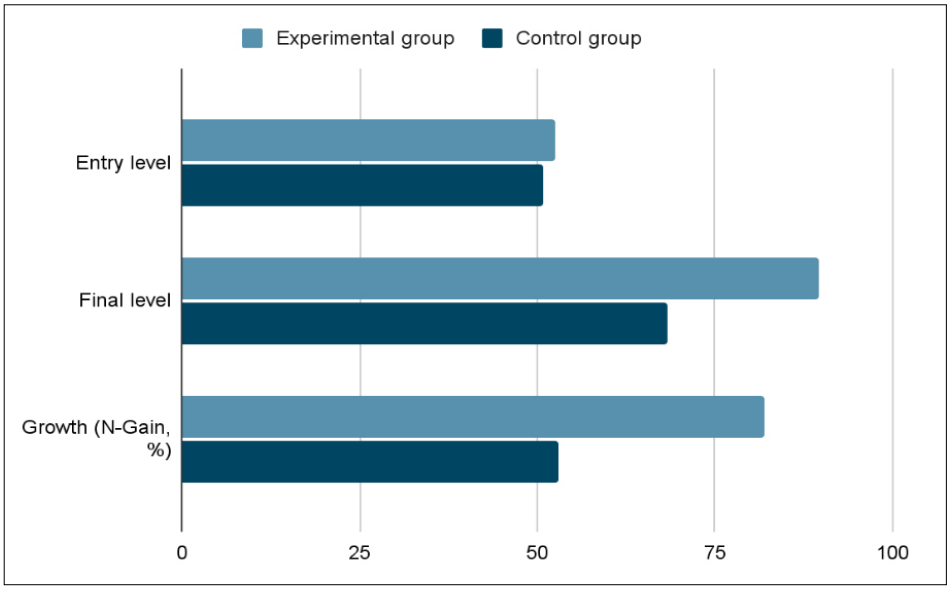

Figure 1. Dynamics of changes in the level of professional competence under different training models (compiled by the author based on [8])

In the group trained through a creative problem-solving model, the average score increased from 52.4 to 89.6, while the growth indicator reached 82%, which corresponds to a very high level. In the control group, the increase remained within the range of 50.8–68.2 with a value of 53%, interpreted as a medium level [8]. The difference reflects not merely higher academic performance but a different configuration of cognitive activity, where the student no longer reproduces a solution but constructs it from several semantic blocks. The transition from task to action acquires a staged structure (Figure 2).

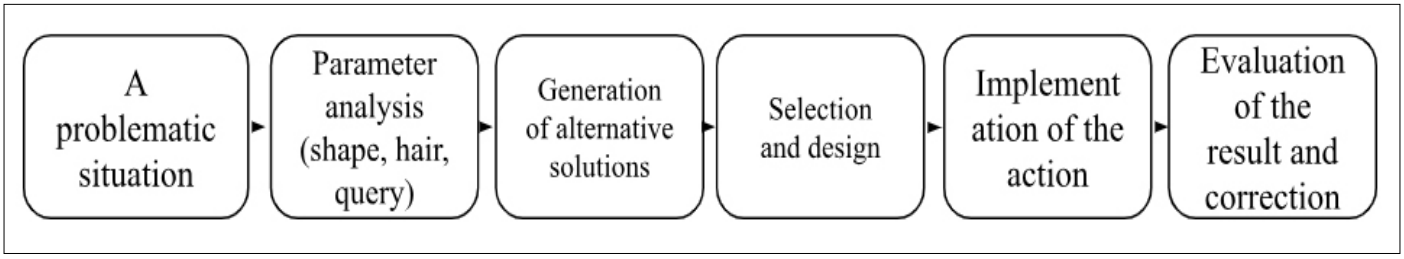

Figure 2. Model of transforming a learning task into professional action in stylist training (compiled by the author based on [8])

At the initial stage, problem understanding is formed. This is followed by idea generation. Next comes the phase of selection and design of the solution, and only after that—implementation. The significance lies not in the sequence itself but in its pedagogical function. Within this model, an error is not treated as a failure that disrupts the learning process; it is reframed as a mode of hypothesis testing. Discussion of alternatives—for instance, layered cutting, blow-drying techniques, or color accents in the upper zone—expands the field of professionally acceptable options and reduces dependence on a single pattern [8].

Against this background, the traditional demonstration-based organization of training begins to reveal its limitations. It effectively transmits the external algorithm, yet when individualization becomes necessary, its explanatory capacity narrows. A gap emerges between what a student is able to reproduce and what can be interpreted in real practice. Within a professional environment, such a discrepancy becomes critical, since client situations rarely correspond to training templates [8].

The psychomotor dimension of training undergoes transformation as well. Its stability appears closely linked to the structure of instructional materials. In a sample of 33 graduating students and 5 expert evaluators, structured learning sheets received a rating of "very satisfactory" in terms of content, clarity, compliance with educational standards, and technical design, while the students themselves described them as "very effective" for skill formation [2]. Observation of practical performance demonstrated a "very pronounced" mastery of hair sectioning, tool handling, time management, curl creation, and product use [2]. A consistent pattern emerges: the more transparent the action pathway, the higher the likelihood that the student modifies it confidently rather than randomly.

A notable shift occurs. Formalized algorithms, contrary to expectation, do not render training mechanical. They reduce operational uncertainty and release cognitive resources for analyzing form, composition, and outcome. The structure no longer constrains action; it maintains a framework within which variability becomes possible [2].

A separate line is formed by the digital infrastructure of training. Virtual reality introduces an environment where actions can be repeated multiple times without material cost or risk to the client. A sample of 1,200 students from three vocational institutions in Chiayi and Tainan demonstrates that perceived usefulness and ease of use directly influence attitudes toward application, while immersion partially mediates the relationship between technology perception and behavioral intention [1]. In this case, the technological environment does not function as an external supplement to the course but reshapes the mode of student engagement in practice.

Within such an environment, attention distribution changes. Immersion fosters more stable concentration, and repetition reduces fear of error. At the same time, the digital format does not replace traditional demonstration. It operates as a complementary layer. Virtual modules strengthen independent practice and support creativity, whereas demonstration-based instruction preserves precision in technical execution [1]. As a result, the training system acquires a hybrid structure.

This combination aligns with observations that digital technologies enhance practical training without fully substituting it, instead embedding into an existing pedagogical structure.

The resource dimension becomes equally significant. Virtual environments reduce dependence on physical training objects, including mannequins, thereby linking instructional methods with sustainability logic. At the same time, a limitation was identified: the intervention lasted 120 minutes, meaning that part of the positive response may be associated with a novelty effect rather than long-term stabilization of learning behavior [1]. The system demonstrates functionality, yet its long-term dynamics require further verification.

If digital platforms transform the instrumental layer of training, the affective dimension restructures its social mechanics. Within hairdressing education, professional formation is closely connected with the regulation of emotional expression. A smile, tone of voice, readiness for positive interaction, and the ability to maintain client comfort become embedded not as auxiliary elements but as integral components of professional conduct [5]. Emotional labor begins to overshadow other forms of competence.

This reorientation corresponds with earlier observations in vocational education, where emphasis shifts from purely technical preparation toward service-oriented and communicative characteristics.

The phenomenon extends beyond outward displays of friendliness. A more complex mechanism emerges. Students are encouraged not only to demonstrate positive reactions but gradually to internalize them. A pattern appears—"first imitate, then internalize"—in which a superficial role functions as a training stage for consolidating a professional state [5]. Such a mechanism reflects a distinctive feature of service training: behavioral patterns are initially performed and later absorbed into professional identity.

This process unfolds with tension. Educational episodes reveal resistance to such formats. Some students perceive the constant display of positivity as artificial and even irritating [4]. The structure of training therefore contains not only a channel of norm acquisition but also a channel of its problematization. Professional socialization does not equate to complete submission to prescribed roles.

The gender configuration intensifies this mechanism. In one case, 96% of students enrolled in hairdressing vocational programs were female; in another, 94% of participants in craft-oriented training were women, most of whose parents

did not possess higher education [4]. These figures extend beyond demographic description. They indicate that training operates within a gender-marked field, where smiling, care, pleasant verbal expression, and external neatness acquire both professional and socially normative significance.

A deeper pedagogical issue emerges from this. The image of the professional is formed through a combination of craft and a feminized service model. This does not represent a simple addition of soft skills to technical ability. A regime develops in which emotional regulation and alignment with client expectations become interpreted as indicators of professional maturity [5]. The space for critical distance correspondingly narrows.

Within the same system, the position of the instructor undergoes transformation. In a study involving 20 students out of 25 invited participants and 8 vocational instructors—each identifying as female, with teaching experience ranging from 5 to approximately 30 years—three dominant role positions were identified: maternal, craft-professional, and pedagogical [4]. These roles transmit not only instructional content but patterns of отношение to discipline, care, craft, and authority within the learning environment.

A spatial dimension is also present. In one configuration of a training salon, instructors and students interact almost as colleagues; in another, a more formal boundary between teaching and learning zones is maintained [5]. Even the distribution of access to physical spaces alters the mode of professional entry. Space conveys normative structures no less effectively than curricular modules.

DISCUSSION

When shifting to a different analytical level, training of hair stylists increasingly aligns not only with industrial requirements but with cultural specificity. A study involving 13 informants—including administrators, instructors, students, and representatives of professional organizations—outlines a training model in which local cultural practices are integrated into the curriculum [6]. Under such conditions, the educational system no longer functions solely as a channel for transmitting standardized market techniques. It begins to transform local aesthetic and cultural forms into structured learning material.

This shift carries structural consequences. The incorporation of cultural elements leads to adjustments in curricula, the inclusion of invited practitioners, expanded use of extracurricular formats, and intensified interaction with professional associations and industry environments [6]. Cultural material therefore operates at the level of program infrastructure rather than as an auxiliary thematic addition.

Constraints remain clearly identifiable. Reported limitations include restricted instructional time, shortages of qualified personnel, insufficient instructor competence in specific domains, limited student engagement, difficulties in accessing traditional materials, and weak representation of cultural practices within digital environments [6]. These factors delineate the boundaries within which transformation occurs. Educational systems do not reorganize content autonomously; they depend on resources, knowledge carriers, and institutional support.

The reported unemployment rate of 8.63% among vocational graduates at the national level adds further tension to this issue [6]. The problem extends beyond the effectiveness of individual courses and touches upon alignment between training programs and real trajectories of professional entry. Interaction with industry environments, training-production sites, and stakeholder participation functions as a corrective mechanism addressing institutional disjunctions [6].

Specialized technological modules, including hair lightening techniques, introduce an additional layer of complexity. Technical execution becomes highly dependent on precision, understanding of color processes, and the ability to combine traditional and digital modes of training. Within this segment, the educational model distinctly moves away from purely craft-based transmission. Stable acquisition requires video materials, virtual platforms, hands-on practice, and application-oriented tasks, since the procedure itself involves a high risk of error and directly influences professional competitiveness [3].

In this domain, advanced techniques act as indicators of program maturity. When training environments successfully support procedures requiring simultaneous coordination of chemical, visual, and client-related parameters, they demonstrate the capacity to transmit not only foundational skills but integrated professional coordination [3].

A comparable transformation emerges in studies addressing textured hair care. Here, hair treatment is interpreted not as a narrow service act but as a meaningful activity closely connected with identity, social representation, and embodied self-perception of the client [7]. This interpretation expands the pedagogical horizon. Hair work ceases to function exclusively as a manual procedure.

Such an approach contrasts with narrower models that reduce hair care to technical execution. It extends the boundaries of professional action by incorporating social and cultural dimensions.

From this follows a practical implication for foundational training. Different hair types correspond to distinct care regimes, cultural expectations, and levels of personal significance. Consequently, training programs cannot rely solely on standardized techniques. They must process variation as a normative condition of professional practice; otherwise, segments of client situations remain outside the scope of preparation [7].

Several analytical limitations require consideration. The presented interpretation draws upon previously published studies conducted within diverse national, institutional, and methodological settings. The corpus combines ethnographic

observations, qualitative analyses, practice-oriented studies, mixed-method designs, quasi-experimental approaches, and survey-based technology assessments. Divergent research perspectives restrict direct comparability of numerical outcomes. At the same time, such heterogeneity reveals a more informative pattern—the recurrence of similar mechanisms across different educational environments.

An additional limitation concerns the scale of individual observations. Some studies involve 20 students out of 25 invited participants, 65 observational episodes, and 8 instructors; others rely on samples of 33 learners and 5 expert evaluators, 100 cosmetology trainees, 1,200 respondents from three institutions, or 13 informants across two educational settings. These scales are not directly comparable. Yet their uneven distribution reveals structural features of the field: emotional regulation, hybridization of methods, cultural adaptation of content, and the strengthening of analytical components recur across different configurations.

Such repetition across heterogeneous samples supports the interpretation of identified mechanisms not as isolated effects but as stable characteristics of the professional training system.

The internal logic of basic professional training for hair stylists therefore operates as a system of interrelated regimes: craft-based, cognitive, digital, communicative, gender-normative, and culturally adaptive. What is transmitted extends beyond technique toward the formation of a mode of professional presence.

CONCLUSION

The stated objective is addressed through the explanation of mechanisms that reorganize basic professional training for hair stylists. Training appears not as a sum of discrete skills but as a system linking multiple levels: craft-based, cognitive, psychomotor, communicative, emotional, digital, and culturally adaptive. Such an interpretation clarifies why simple reproduction of techniques no longer ensures устойчивое professional performance.

The first research task, focused on identifying internal components of training, is resolved through modeling their functional interrelations. Technical precision relies on prior analytical processing of client situations, while communicative and affective behavior participates in transforming craft-based solutions into professionally completed services. Learning action thus takes the form of a multilayered construct.

The second task, oriented toward describing pedagogical mechanisms of transformation, is addressed through comparison of different instructional modes. Problem-based learning strengthens analytical variability and reframes error as hypothesis testing. Algorithmized instructional materials stabilize action pathways and support confident modification of techniques. Digital training environments expand opportunities for repeated practice and enhance engagement, while preserving dependence on direct demonstration. The most productive configuration emerges from their coordinated interaction rather than substitution.

The third task is fulfilled through identification of constraints that hinder sustainable modernization of training. These include the gap between demonstration-based logic and individualized client situations, the overemphasis on service-communicative norms at the expense of craft foundations, shortages of human and organizational resources, insufficient integration of cultural material, and limited attention to client heterogeneity. Work with diverse hair textures, local aesthetic practices, and complex technological procedures requires revision of standardized training schemes.

The hypothesis finds empirical support. Improved effectiveness of basic professional training correlates with the integration of craft practice, analytical processing of client requests, digital forms of repeated training, emotional-communicative regulation, and culturally responsive content. When these components remain separated, training retains a fragmented structure; when combined, the configuration of professional formation undergoes transformation. Theoretical contribution lies in refining the structure of professional training in the beauty industry as a multi-component system. Practical implications concern the application of the proposed model in the design of educational programs and training courses for hair stylists.

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