

Home Nail Salons: The Embracement of Creativity

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Abstract

Researching the expression of creativity within the discourse community of home-based nail techs, series of questions were asked to gain insight into the factors that truly influence this said creativity. After observing the differences between nail styles popular at nail salons versus nail styles popular at home nail studios, we are given the opportunity to dive deeper into why these factors are so prominent in salon preference. Through a survey implemented on the Instagram story of my own private nail business page, nail enthusiasts provided us with factors that influence their preference for home nail salons such as price, quality, environment, capability, and experience. Keeping these listed factors in mind we can find that these aspects provide clients with a sense of comfort and support, that allow them to trust their artist with adventurous and creative nail art endeavors. With these findings I encourage other nail artists to implicate these factors into their own businesses to see how they may positively grow and retain clientele.

Introduction

Getting your nails done has been deemed as today's new luxury service, with almost everyone who does it demanding it be a continuous part of their lifestyle. This lifestyle has created its very own discourse community between nail enthusiasts and artists alike. A discourse community can be defined as a community of people who share the same goals, the same methods of communicating, the same genres, and the same lexis (specialized vocabulary)

(Melzer, 2020). In this study our findings benefit the more specific discourse community of home-based nail artists.

Nail art is defined as a technique involving the decoration of nails with paint, polish, and other materials. Now a days “the modern manicure is all about taking risks” (Osman, 2023). Styles can range from simple, to bold, to abstract, and even maximalist. Like stated in the article Nail Art: Beyond adornment; Understanding the Creative Practice of Nail Art and its Place in the Wilder Artistic Landscape by Rohani Osman (2023), “nail art is a powerful mean of artistic expression that deserves attention and appreciation.”

Nails can be so extremely personal and unique that there are endless possibilities a person can ask for when they walk into an appointment. I personally work independently out of my student apartment, catering to many students here at Davis. I love the personality that shines through with each nail set and the wide variety of art designs requested from me. A common reason for my clients switching over from salon artists to my home-based business has been vastly based on the services offered. I have noticed that lots of bigger nail salons can only offer so many designs and styles based off what products they have available and the time constraints they have allotted. When my clients come to me, I have a variety of colors, gems, and designs available with appropriate time allotted for each appointment. This cannot be the end all be all factor for every home-based vs salon-based preference, however.

From these observations I have been led to question, maybe there is a deeper influence that pressures this narrative within the nail community. This narrative has divided the expectations of nail salons and home-based salons greatly since the upcoming of this new craze of home-based service work. It is believed that nail salons are for simple, uncomplicated nails

and home technicians are for more adventurous, creative looks. But what has truly instilled this perspective within the community? In past research the potential role of the environment to influence creativity has been recognized (McCoy, Evans, 2002). Factors such as time pressure, evaluation, and freedom are just some of the factors that both encourage and become an obstacle when wanting to embrace a creative process. Freedom is one thing a lot of at home nail techs emphasize as they advertise that anything a client wishes to achieve for their nails can be made possible. The article “The Potential Role of the Physical Environment in Fostering Creativity” by Janetta Mitchell McCoy and Gary W. Evans (2002), states that a free environment allows diversion and, reflecting flexibility, offers a degree of personal autonomy. An environment as such in the nail world is one that encourages the creativity of clients and therefore leading to those said adventurous and creative designs being more frequently executed.

Another factor that may influence creativity that has been highlighted in this article is support and a lack of evaluation. In the nail world, outside opinions hold a lot of pressure upon the consumer due to the fact that personal preference and widespread opinions steer popular trends and styles. The article states “a supportive environment provides nonjudgmental acceptance and understanding, while also offering relevant information and an opportunity to function at the task required, (McCoy, Evans, 2002)” which in this case would be to brainstorm and embrace a more creative nail design.

By reflecting on these different factors on how to encourage creativity within a given environment I was steered to develop the question: what factors within a home nail studio influence a customer’s likelihood to experiment with creative nail designs? We will not only be exploring the effect of the overall environment our clients are being serviced in, but also the

deeper factors that clients say have influenced their preference. Examples of these factors are price, experience, quality, and capability.

By asking multiple nail clients what their experience and views are on the topic, we will be able to highlight why there is a divide between these two different environments within the nail industry. We will also be able to highlight factors that nail artists can take note of to embrace the kind of artistic freedom they wish to have within their own businesses whether it be at home or in a studio.

Methods

Using my pre-developed audience of nail-enthusiasts located on my own nail accounts Instagram, I have asked three closed ended poll questions and two open ended response questions for them to answer on my story. The use of my own Instagram viewers rather than asking at random is because this audience already has experience within this discourse community. By selecting a predeveloped audience that is known to be interested in the topic, my results will yield more accurate and true responses. However, these questions are worded to be applicable to all viewers and are not only apply to my clients. I introduced the viewers to the survey with an opening announcement story that explains that the data will be used for research and the questions pertain to anyone who gets their nails done. To ensure a greater amount of participation no links or separate websites were used. All questions were answerable within the Instagram story feature.

My opening poll question stated, “Where do you currently get your nails done at?” with the answer options of “Home- Tech, Nail Salon, or Neither.” My following two questions

followed up that first poll with the statements “If you answered Home-Tech, do you lean towards... Designs and nail art, or plain and simple nails?” and “If you answered Nail Salon, do you lean towards designs and nail art, or plain and simple nails?” This method of creating two separate paths of responses allows for me to separate the data in a way that makes it easier to see the true values I have received for each salon preference. My last two open ended questions stated, “If you enjoy designs, what designs do you prefer?” and “What has influenced your salon preference?” By allowing people to express their opinions openly we are able to gain a deeper insight into their reasoning much more than a simple close ended poll would.

As responses came in, the Instagram story feature recorded all the data and transcribed it into percentages for me to see. Along with the percentages, I am also be able to see the exact number of people that voted for a specific answer option, as well as exactly who voted for what answer.

Results

These results have been compiled based on the association between environment and experience for nail art customers in the form of close ended poll questions. Results were compiled in a series of percentages given each question had varying numbers of responses. When asked where the audience currently gets their nails done I received 83 responses, with 55% voting at a home-nail tech, 20% voting at a nail salon, and 24% voted neither (**Figure 1**). Out of that 55% of people who voted they go to a home-tech, 75% of them leans towards designs and nail art while 25% of them leans towards plain and simple nails (**Figure 2**). Out of that 20% to

people who voted they go to a nail salon, 24% of them leans towards designs and nail art while 76% of them leans towards plain and simple nails (**Figure 2**).

When asked the open-ended question of what designs the audience prefers, responses included airbrush, gems, chrome, french tips, bold colors, stars, flowers, animal print, charms, and 3D art (**Figures 3-6**).

The last open-ended question asked was what has influenced the audience's salon preference. Majority of these responses were regarding home nail salons. These responses included price, retention, environment, experience, small business support, skill/ ability, satisfaction, customer service, attention to detail, quality, and location.

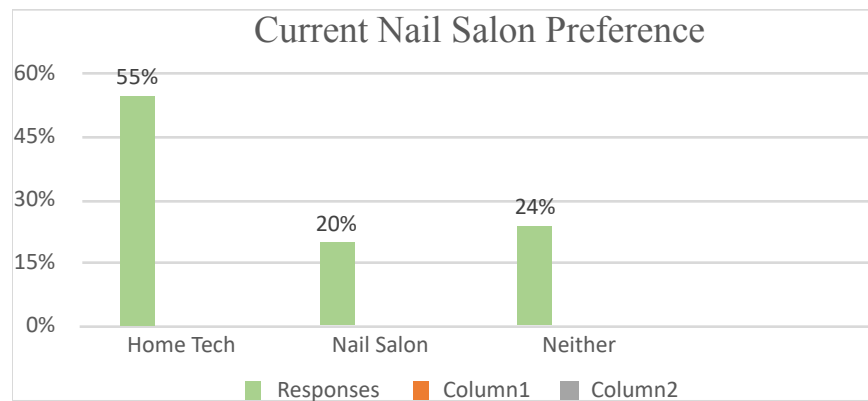


Figure 1. Preference in Nail Service Location. The audience was asked where they currently get their nails done and were given three response options: home-tech, nail salon, or neither.

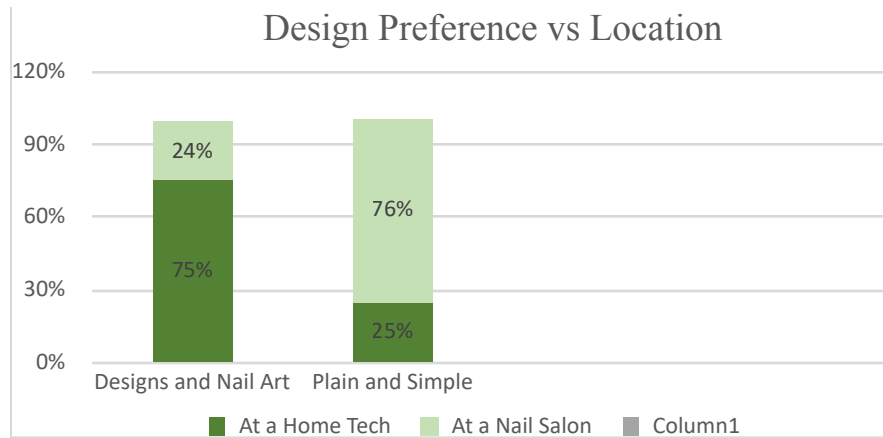


Figure 2. Location based design preference. If the audience previously answered they get their nails done with a home-tech, they were asked if they preferred designs and nail art or plain and simple nails. The same question was asked separately to those who go to a nail salon.



Figure 3. Nails with 3D, Chrome, and Pearl Gems



Figure 4. Nails with Glitter, Gems, 3D, Chrome, and Stars



Figure 5. Nails with Chrome, Gems, Airbrush, Bold Colors, and Stars



Figure 6. Nails with Airbrush and Chrome

Discussion

In this study we examined different factors that may induce the likelihood of a client experimenting with nail designs in the setting of a home-based nail studio. Using a series of poll and open-ended style questions we can confirm that home-based nail salons are involved in much more creative nail design endeavors than nail salons. As shown in **Figure 2**. The majority of clientele who attend a home-based salon prefer to get designs and nail art (75%). In this same figure, we see a major switch when asked the same question to people who prefer to go to nail salons. Only 25% of clients get designs and nail art while the other 76% prefer plain and simple nails. Now that we have established this divide between the two salon preferences, further factors can be observed within home-based nail studios to understand why this divide has been established.

FREEDOM OF CHOICE

When asked what designs are specifically preferred, we were given various responses that all alluded to more than just a plain and simple nail design. The designs listed such as chrome, airbrush, and 3D art all entail specialty knowledge on the creative process of executing them and specialty products that not many nail enthusiasts from a general population may ask for. Like Osman (2023) has stated, “Nail artists must adapt their skills to work with different types of nail polishes, gels, acrylics, and 3D elements like crystals or charms for example.” As a home-based nail tech who gets asked for these styles on a day-to-day basis, the effort put into perfecting these designs becomes worthwhile. However, when you are a nail salon who is catering to a huge general clientele, these skills and products may not be as practical for profit. The option of being able to perform these specialty tasks, however, is one factor that voters listed as the reason they prefer home-based technicians. As stated in results, clients like their nail techs to have the ability to execute whatever design they throw at them without being turned down due to complications or inabilities. This falls in line with the idea that freedom allows for creativity to thrive. With the freedom to choose any design possible, a client’s creative nail choices will be fully expressed, overall, encouraging these choices to be made from the start.

SUPPORT AND COMFORT

In the introduction we touched on the idea that support also drives creativity. As we see in the audience’s responses, their preferences have been based on environment, experience, and customer service. At a home-based nail appointment there is no outside people involved, a one-

on-one experience offered, and an environment catered to the client. With the lack of surrounding judgement from others, a client will likely feel greatly more comforted in expressing their wishes and will also likely get the full attention and support of their home-artist. This is where customer service comes into play, as a successful home nail tech will ensure comfort to the client. Whether this comfort be from the temperature of the room, the type of music playing, or the style of conversation being had, these specific courtesies are unheard of in a general nail salon. In the article “The Influence of Price, Service Quality, and Physical Environment on Customer Satisfaction,” authors Mandang Cristo David P. E Saerang, and Frederik G. Worang (2017) explain that the environment influences the customer satisfaction, and in ways like I have previously described, will create a positive image in the minds of customers.

PRICE AND QUALITY

Two other popular responses were price and quality. Since a home-based nail tech does not have to give a percentage of their commission to the established nail salon, such as monthly rent, more of the gross income made can be invested back into the business. When a service worker works under an umbrella company, these dues lead to a greater monetary divide between their products, tools, environment, and personal profit. On the popular nail business webpage “Nailpro” it is states that the cost of supplies, rent and utilities should be factored into pricing as well as value of your time and experience (How-To: Price Your Nail Services, 2023). When owed rent and dues are taken out of the equation, nail techs have a greater margin of re-investment income and therefore can purchase higher quality polishes, gems, and other products, while also appropriately charging for sets to allow for personal profit. A higher quality of

products results in longer lasting manicures, and a more expensive look to the finished nails. With no percentage being taken out of their gross income, prices are more accurate based solely on the services offered, products used, and time spent. This transparent pricing is what many clients find to have influenced their preference, true quality work at fair pricing.

Conclusion

By understanding many clients' emphasis on factors such as environment, customer service, price, quality, and capability, we can grasp the justification for embracing more creative endeavors within a private home nail studio. With an environment catering to the client, a sense of freedom, support, and comfort allow for full creativity to be expressed. With this study I am hopeful that other nail artists will use these factors and try to implement them into their own spaces for an improved customer experience. I, myself, have been able to reflect after gaining these insights and have a list of aspects that I will keep emphasizing within my own private nail business. With these findings, not only comes an opportunity for private nail business growth but also growth for major nail salons as well. By focusing on these factors within a bigger nail business, the opportunity for new, successful endeavors can arise.

Appendix

CITATIONS:

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FIGURES AND IMAGES:

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