

The beauty industry seems shallow from most perspectives. People pay so much money to improve their outside appearance. I have worked and studied within it for three years now. I attended cosmetology school throughout my junior and senior years of high school. I worked at one hair salon in my hometown for two years straight and now I work in a new tanning and hair salon in the city. Despite its outer appearance, there is a lot behind it, including lots of hard work and dedication.

I have met various hairdressers and makeup artists who make their living off of getting in as many clients as possible and working nonstop. It is a fast-paced industry despite what people may think. It is evident that “in a society valuing youth, health, aesthetics, and well-being, cosmetic skin or hair care products have gained huge popularity. Recent research confirms that consumers from all countries and cultures also have strong attitudes toward physical appearance” (Beresniak). The beauty industry is an ever-growing field. People constantly will want to look and feel better. There are also a lot of aspects in the industry that are not noticed. There are long days on your feet and only getting 3 minutes to sneak off and eat lunch in between clients.

The satisfaction of being able to make others feel beautiful is shared among beauty professionals. Performing your work on a client and seeing their face light up in the mirror is an amazing feeling. I work with a few hairdressers and spray tanning technicians. The most common thing I hear from these people I work with is how they are basically also “therapists”. We listen to clients gossip, complain, rant, and just talk for hours on end. Many times the stylist is offering advice or support. My coworker Donnie personally loves to just make everyone laugh. He shows his whole personality while working and connects really well with his clients. By doing so, it lifts the spirits of everyone in the salon and can make a really positive environment. In one article that examines the hair salon workplace, it was found that “making a client ‘feel better’ about themselves can be a source of job satisfaction and emotional well being among hair stylists” (Hill 56).

A lot of aspects in cosmetology can also be attributed to self confidence. Many people do receive these services as a way to feel better about themselves. Is it shallow or is there a deeper meaning to it? “As cosmetic products help enhance our appearance, they thus improve our self-perception, the way we relate to others, and as such, our quality of life. Either under normal physiological conditions or in pathological settings, cosmetic care can improve well-being, self-esteem, and social relations” (Beresniak). These are all parts of overall health, therefore this implies cosmetic services to our appearances can really make us feel better. I feel there is a thin line between just trying to look and feel your best and completely wanting to change yourself. The beauty industry preys on insecurity and self doubt. If you get your hair colored and a good facial, your life will improve. Quickly this turns into surgical procedures until someone transforms into a new person. I have seen it first hand many times in this line of work. People can become unrecognizable and beautiful in different ways, but still lack self confidence and inner happiness. Upon looking deeper into it, it becomes noticeable that these services can be a concern for people with “a preoccupation with a perceived defect in physical appearance [which] commonly occurs in body image disorders, such as eating disorders and body dysmorphic disorder” (Pikoos). Recently, It is additionally found these “individuals with high dysmorphic concern displayed higher negative emotionality, greater distress regarding the

closure of beauty services due to COVID-19 restrictions, and increased desire to obtain future beauty or cosmetic treatments” (Pikoos).

Cosmetics have had a long history of representation of status and/or wealth. In earlier times, certain products were only available and worn by people of high status. Perhaps this can still relate today, as we see celebrities with unattainable beauty standards, created by insanely expensive procedures and products. Beauty standards have always been controversial. Usually they are focused on something only a few actually possess, and therefore others work so hard to get there.

The beauty industry has a lot to do with other industries, like entertainment. People look up to celebrities and the way they look. Marlis Schweitzer, in a paper about the “mad search for beauty, says that “building on the public’s fascination with the stage, these manufacturers emphasized the artificial processes that transformed actresses from attractive women into exceptional beauties and implied that their products could do the same for every woman” (Schweitzer 1). Essentially, the people that work in the cosmetics industry want to make common people believe that their products can turn them into someone beautiful, like an actress.

The beauty industry as a whole is very widespread. Almost everybody participates in it in one way or another. It contains elements of hard work, high standards, and satisfaction.