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## CEEP Paper

Covid-19 has affected many people and businesses since March 2020. The pandemic has undoubtedly affected standard business practices in businesses both big and small. The pandemic has driven many industries and companies to shut down. About 41.3% of businesses have reported that they were temporarily closed because of COVID-19, and consequently forced employers to lay off or furlough workers. Many businesses had to explore the option of online shopping, which posed challenges to businesses with little to no online presence. This has caught my attention because I am interested in examining the effect COVID-19 has had on eyebrow salons in my area. I live in Queens, New York and there are about 10-15 eyebrow salons in my neighborhood. New York has been affected the most where many stores shut down, most eyebrow salons have shut down but some salons have re-opened successfully. This question is particularly important to my neighbor because everyone gets their eyebrows done. Whether it's getting it done yourself or professionally. Now that most of the salons near me have shut down, I have had no choice but to get my brows done less often. I also have to go to a different salon because the three main salons that I went to before the pandemic have. This article *Covid-19 Impact: Beauty parlors to undergo a seismic shift in the new normal*. The Economic Times (Anand, 2020) talks about the impact of Covid-19 on beauty salons, and what has changed. They were able to go in-person interviews and gather information on how covid has affected their business. They were able to ask questions to business owners on what has covid changed in their day-to-day business. They were also talking about the measures that are being taken for customers and workers to be safe. What caught my attention is how many customers eyebrow salon owners lost and more. Overall my question is; How has Covid-19 affected the eyebrow salons near me?

Since most of the eyebrow salons near my neighborhood closed down due to covid, I was a bit unsure as to how to collect my data. I was able to speak to some local residents around my neighborhood that I would see go to the eyebrow salons. I choose to speak to people around my area to help me gather data on how covid has affected eyebrow salons near me. Collecting data this way was fun, I was a bit nervous because most people especially today don't want to be spoken to and I get nervous speaking sometimes. But I enjoyed being able to get to the customer's side. People's reactions to me asking them questions about what I'm doing is very positive. Many of them say "What you're doing is important" which made me feel like my study felt more important than I thought it was. How I collected my data is I went up to 20 people and I asked them survey questions. I was also able to collect data from business owners in my neighborhood that are open. I was able to speak to them on the phone for about 7-11 minutes per owner.

I choose this question because I want to know the effect that covid has done on businesses in my neighborhood. This question is very important because there are no articles about small business owners in queens that were shut down due to Covid. Since there are no articles that are specific to my question although eyebrow salons are in the beauty industry. I was able to find some articles that talk about the effect covid has done on eyebrow salons throughout New York. In the article Allure "How Covid-19 Is Changing the Eyebrow Threading Industry" (Prinzivalli, 2021) she speaks about the impacts of what eyebrow salons have been challenged with. One of the new rules that are being followed by threaders; threaders no longer should place the thread in their mouth. There is a new system on how threaders should start

threading brows which is chosen from a choker necklace that holds the thread on the neck, or a custom mask that sits the thread near the chin. These practices are what salons are testing because beauty, nail, and barbershops are potentially at high risk due to the close contact in appointments. This is important because according to the CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) “ Even if you're wearing a mask, if [mouth threading] means that the provider isn't wearing one, it's an unnecessarily high risk”. But since this is a part of a solution there is also a downside to this, Since this new technique is something you have to master since you have to move the neck a little differently, and you could end up with a little more neck pain, and you don't want to have employees ask for a sick day and also having customers not like how the brows came out.

To collect my data I chose to speak to customers and business owners near my area. I would ask some questions to the neighbors near me, for example, questions like; When was the last time you got your eyebrows done? Have you gone anywhere else to get your eyebrows done? How often do you visit the salon? and the responses down on paper while speaking on the phone with the business owners. Example questions for the business owners were; Are there any new rules you have to follow since the re-opening? How long have you been closed since Covid? For the neighbors, I typed the responses on my phone that they gave me, since I was able to catch the customers that went to the salons near my neighbor I was able to get straightforward answers on how covid-19 shut down eyebrow salons and how it affected them as well.

### Business Owners



The chart above it is the information that I gathered from the business owners I was able to reach out to. I was able to speak to four business owners in my neighborhood about the effect Covid has done on their business. The first column labeled as Shut down storefront was a

question I asked the business owners. The response I got from them was “ Yes, I had to shut down my store for two and a half months. It was very nerve-wracking having to shut down what brings in money for my family and house.” Another business owner named Lilly said, “ The thought of how I had to close due to covid still scares me”. All of the four business owners I spoke to had to shut down which is calculated 100 percent on the chart above. Many of the business owners at the time were all thinking the same, how long will my salon be closed for? since the news said only essential stores will be open. Eyebrow salons weren't able to open in phase two, because threading and waxing caused a being your brows done leaving your skin open since the hairs are pulled out. I also masked off the record question which was What were your thoughts/feelings throughout your store being closed. Lilly said hoe she was nervous throughout the closed, she was always worried about not being able to go through the phase of reopening her store. Sankya mentioned how she was worried about her business and her employees.

The next column is New rules for covid-19, this is very important because since covid everyone around the world had to follow a new rule; Wear a mask. New rules were also applied to businesses, three out of four of the eyebrow salons had new rules to follow for their business to run successfully during Covid. Which is 75 percent in the chart above. One business owner named Sam, said: “ I was required to take a Covid-19 test before returning to work”. A new rule that was mandatory for the salons was having to disinfect the store every morning, afternoon, and night, services should be sanitized/cleaned between each client. Lilly said, “I have to clean my station every time I get a customer and once they leave”. This is a new rule I see everywhere in grocery stores, nail salons, tattoo stores, etc. Lilly also mentioned that waxing sticks and other implements that cannot be disinfected shouldn't be used for more than one person. Also, a new rule I got from a business owner is Sankya she mentioned how before letting herself and her employees in the store she need to check for temperature. This new rule is something I've seen me take action mostly everywhere, for example in my nearby mall there's a food cafe but before anyone could get a seat there are severe guards taking temperatures before entering. This is to prevent anyone who has a sign of a fever.

The third column is Change in customers. Since most of the eyebrow salons near my neighborhood closed down and people need to get their eyebrows done, I could imagine some people having to find open salons. I asked one business owner named Hiya who said“ the state limits salons to only have 50 percent of their usual maximum capacity".Which led me to ask how many people before covid did you have coming in? She stated, “about 50 clients come in, now I only get about 15-25 people”. This amount of customers decrease is big because this means not many people have been coming in which makes business slow. This could be a negative impact that covid-19 has brought to a small eyebrow salon business. Lilly mentioned how at the beginning of her reopening she only had seven people come in. She opens from 10 am-7 pm and only seven people come in. she stated “ That was the slowest day I ever had in business”. To get your eyebrows done in my neighborhood only costs \$5 in other salons the highest \$7, to charge \$5 for threading and only seven people coming in you only make \$35 in profit. That is insane. Half of the owners said they saw a difference in customers coming in and the other half said most of their loyal customers come in but just not as often as they used to before Covid which is 50 percent on the chart above.

The last column is pulled out a loan. Since Covid-19 had made eyebrow salons shut down and not had the business for about 2-3 months that means business owners weren't making money to pay the bills for the storefront. Sam mentioned how she had to pull out from her savings to help her pay her bills, since she is the only one who runs the business and works

alone, there was no need for her to pull out a loan. One business owner did pull out a loan which is the 25 percent that is shown above. Her name is Sankya. She owns a bigger storefront and has two people work with her. She was able to pull out a loan such as PPP, she said "I had to make sure I pay my employees and pay my bills." But the PPP loan could be forgiven but if the business isn't forgiven then the owner has to pay back the loan. The other owners got help from family members to pay bills since 3 of the owners are sole proprietors which means they pay themselves.

I was also able to speak to a few customers that I would see in my neighborhood and ask them questions. For example, Have you gone anywhere else to get your eyebrows done? Have you gone anywhere else to get your eyebrows done?. Many of the customers can go to the eyebrow salon that is open but doesn't go as often anymore. Some said they go to different salons outside the neighborhood. Some also said that they have stopped going to the salon and have done their eyebrows because the salon they would go to has shut down and don't trust anyone with their brows to try and find an open salon. This is something I can relate to. I haven't gone to the salon in two months because I've been doing my touch-up with my brows but to have them done by a professional is something I want to do but nervous to trust anyone with my brows. Since the person who always has my brows shut down, I don't know who to go with. Getting your brows done is important to some people, it's the feeling of getting them done and looking nice but that is gone to most people. Someone mentioned how they are going somewhere else that is not in the area that their friend has mentioned going since the salon they used to go to shut down.

From gathering this information that I got from business owners of an eyebrow salon, it showed me that the other business that closed down had not been able to get a PPP loan, or had a business running but didn't make enough to keep the business running this research is important for the future because so many salons near my neighborhood have shut down and have lost their business due to Covid. Many small business owners have lost their dream business because of slow business, not being able to get approved for loans, not having customers come in. Small businesses are in danger because they were shut down for a few months and having a slow business is thin ice for small businesses to reopen again. I was able to collect data that no one has collected yet in my neighborhood. I have about nine eyebrow salons near my area and four out of nine were able to successfully re-open. Overall this research was a success. This made me understand that there is much more than just a business shutting down due to Covid. Also being able to speak to business owners who have gone through this big phase on how businesses been being affected. I was able to answer my question; How has Covid-19 affected the eyebrow salons near me?

## References

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