

# More Than a Tube of Color - The Emotion

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## ABSTRACT

The relationship a colorist builds with their chosen products is deeply emotional and is heavily dependent on trust and confidence in their performance. With this confidence a colorist's focus can remain on their ability to ensure consumers' happiness through proper product choice, which directly affects the livelihood of a colorist. When a person sits in the colorist's chair, there can be trepidation, anxiousness, eagerness, or excitement. As with all relationships, understanding these emotions builds trust between consumer and colorist. How people feel about their hair color is intimate and unique to each individual. Color creates a connection to how people see themselves, and thus a reflection of how one is perceived. We will look at the perception and psychology behind different colors of hair, such as blonde, red, brunette, and grey. These intended consumer benefits – confidence, happiness, comfort - are often derived from this sacred service.

**KEYWORDS:** Relationship, Psychology, Hair Color, Emotional connection, Trust

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## 1. Introduction

A tube of hair color has a broad impact on lives. Like most products used in the beauty industry, hair color is utilized as a relationship and confidence builder. The emotional connection to hair color is intrinsic to these relationships. A connection to the colorist, from the colorist to the consumer, and from the consumer to their chosen hair color, drives the color product choice, and our chosen hair color result.

## 2. Theory

Hair Color service is a relationship of the colorist and the consumer, achieved through a tube of hair color. Product choice creates trust and confidence in this relationship. The sacred hair color service triggers emotions and influences the perception of an individual.

## 3. Method

Two questionnaires were developed to investigate the behaviors and opinions of hair color consumers and professional hair colorists. Questions are formatted in multiple choice and short answer form. A total of 500 hair

color consumers, including 281 professional hair colorists were surveyed. Data collection was conducted between May 17, 2021 to June 17, 2021.

## 4. Results and Discussions

### 4.1. Product Choice

When selecting a hair color line, the most important factors to a colorist are the performance, the customizability, and the environmental impact. Survey respondents are prompted to select top deciding factors when selecting a hair color line. Figure 1 is an illustration of the result.

Critical objective for a hair colorist is to ensure the consumer is happy with the hair color service and the hair color results. The ability to communicate, understand, and deliver the consumer's needs is the cornerstone for the consumer to trust the colorist and the colorist's ability to execute the sacred service - the hair color service.

Beautiful, healthy, shiny hair is always the goal. A happy consumer will share the hair service experience with others, which is one of the most important ways a colorist builds business.

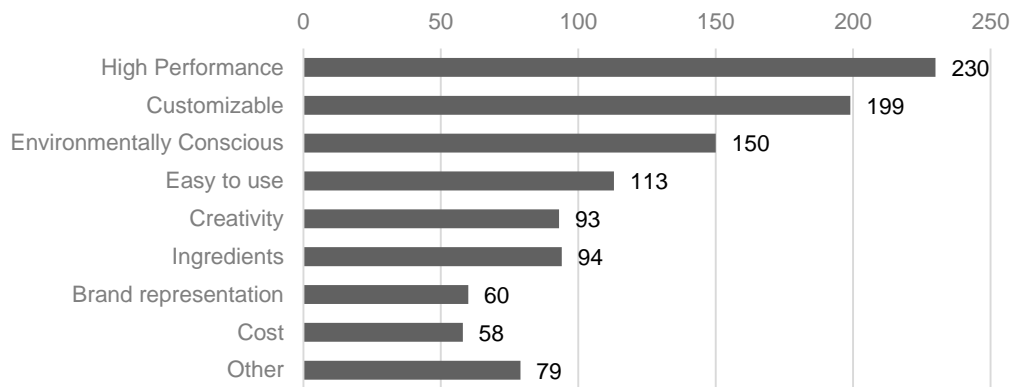


Fig. 1. Important Deciding Factors to Selecting a Hair Color Line

### 4.1.1. High Performance

When a colorist is choosing a hair color product to represent their work, quality is vital. Trusting that the hair color will perform as expected builds confidence in the colorist to achieve what the consumer expects. Amongst the surveyed professional hair colorists, 19% of the respondents experience 100% success rate; 58% of the respondents experience 90% success rate; 19% of the respondents experience 75% success rate; and 4% of the respondents only experience 50% success rate. No surveyed colorists use a hair color line that delivers below

50% success rate. Hence, performance of hair color provides the confidence for colorists to deliver consumer's needs (Table 1, left).

Along with trust, hair color performance builds loyalty in both the colorist and consumer. The colorist is loyal to the hair color brand and the consumer is loyal to the colorist. Analysis shows that 51% of the respondents, who are professional hair colorists, use a single hair color line. This is an indication of colorists trusting the performance of their selected choice of hair color product (Table 1, right).

**Success Rate of Existing Hair Color Line(s) In Achieving Anticipated Hair Color Results**

**Percentage of Hair Colorist Using Multiple Hair Color Lines**

■ 25% success   
 ■ 50% success   
 ■ 75% success  
■ 90% success   
 ■ 100% success

■ Yes   
 ■ No

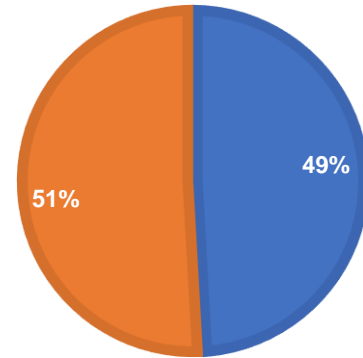
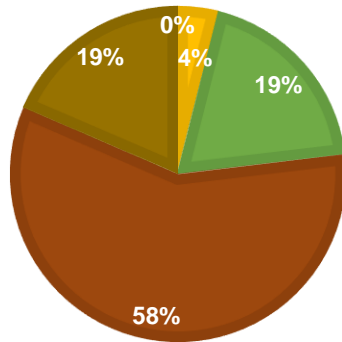


Table 1. Analysis of Hair Color Lines

Confidence in a product connects directly to a colorist on an emotional level. Quality components within the tube of hair color, supported by a foundation of strong education, create predictable and consistent results. When predictable results occur, the colorist trusts the product performance, and confidence is established.

4.1.2. Customizable Hair Color

The ability to be creative with hair color is very appealing to a colorist. Marketing a customizable hair color to consumers is a natural fit with the current trend of “individuality”. Colorist needs to assess a series of variables when formulating hair color (Fisher, et al., 2016). In order to create the desired outcome, variables affect a color formula and need to be considered. Using the same formula on different clients will not produce the same results.

Variables in hair color formulation are Natural Remaining Pigment, Developer Choice, Hair Texture, Hair Type, Hair Density, Percentage of Grey.

Natural Remaining Pigment, or Underlying Pigment, is the pigment exposed in the hair when lifting or lightening natural hair color during a hair color service. Natural Remaining Pigment will contribute to the result if not neutralized, enhanced, or refined with the right hair color product (Fisher, et al., 2016).

Developer choice is an important element in formulation because it acts as a time control of product activation. Developers, with a pH of 2.5 to 4.5, are

oxidizing agents used with demi-permanent and permanent colors, lighteners, and toners (Fisher, et al., 2016). Hair color developer is a hair color activator with different processing times and power strengths. Hair color developers come in a variety of processing times and strengths. This product is mixed in various ratios for specific formulas. Developers are also known referred to as catalysts to activate the process of hair color.

Hair texture is referred as the movement in the hair. Straight, wavy, and curly hair indicates the natural hair color level to use when creating a hair color formula. Straight hair is reflective of light. Therefore, the colorist will utilize a hair color formula that would match the desired level of hair color. Wavy hair is reflective and shadowed within the movement of the texture hair. A formula for this hair texture would be adjusted one-half to one shade lighter than the desired level of hair color. Curly hair is absorbent of light and should be adjusted one to two levels lighter than the consumer's desired result (Color Space™, 2021).

Hair Type is referred as the diameter of the hair shaft. Hair Type determines what developer to utilize in order to achieve the correct lift or deposit of hair color within the formula. Fine hair does not need as much strength in the formula. This hair type is also fragile compared to medium or coarse hair types. Medium hair would be is considered the standard hair type, and usually a standard catalyst can be utilized. Coarse hair requires

more developer strength; a stronger catalyst is required to achieve the final desired outcome (Color Space™, 2021).

Hair Density is the quantity of hair per square inch. Thinner hair has lesser hair per square inch; and thicker hair has more hair per square inch. Hair Density indicates to the colorist the hair's natural starting level. The colorist identifies how many levels to lift or deposit hair color. The colorist also determines the correct product to achieve the desired result while maintaining the integrity of hair after the service. The thinner the hair, the more light is reflected through, and the hair appears lighter. Thicker hair can appear darker because the light cannot travel through as easily (Color Space™, 2021).

Percentage of grey tells the colorist how much of the grey coverage additive to be included in the formula (Fisher, et al., 2016).

The ability to customize hair color allows the colorist to efficiently address important variables in each formula, and to remain unique and creative while regularly being challenged to elevate their craft to the next level.

Product performance and formulation ease are a must when working with customizable hair color. A colorist works with tight schedules and cannot spend extra time adjusting an unexpected hair color result. In the beauty industry, time has a direct correlation to revenue.

#### 4.1.3. *Environmental Impact*

Because of the current state of the global environment, more companies in the beauty industry are focusing on sustainability. Pioneering beauty brands focusing on positive impact innovation and creativity are paving the way for eco-conscious products and green companies to take over the market and showing their less sustainable siblings that green is not only the new glamorous — it's also a mean to preserve the well-being of our planet and the people who live in it (Sparknews Report in collaboration with Cosmoprof Worldwide Bologna, 2019). Colorists connect to hair color companies that advocate the following beliefs: clean ingredients, plant-based ingredients, vegan, PETA friendly, innovations to make color easier to use.

Search engines are widely accessible. It is not uncommon for colorists and consumers to research where ingredients are sourced. One also expects the cleanest ingredients that give a quality performance while remaining sensitive to environmental impact. A

clean product that is sensitive to the environment should be the goal for all hair color manufacturers.

## 4.2. *Confidence and Trust*

### 4.2.1. *The Confidence a consumer has in their colorist*

The relationship between the colorist and the consumer is a strong emotional connection. Majority of the consumers, represented by 97% of the respondents in the questionnaire, trusts that the colorist is knowledgeable and competent to give recommendations and create suitable outcomes (Table 2, left). There can be a lot of emotions connected to this trust. Until this trust is established, there can be fear and anxiety before a hair color service. Such emotions can return when adjustments are required. Having a consistent, reliable product will help colorists to be successful; hence maintaining the established trust. Trust in the colorist is established through different stages of the relationship.

#### *Stage 1 - Before the first hair color appointment*

The consumer gets introduced to a colorist through avenue such as referral and research. 18% of the survey respondents trust their colorists through word-of-mouth reputation.

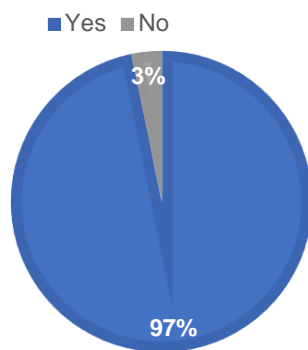
#### *Stage 2 – After the first hair color appointment*

In the first appointment, the consumer and colorist are both getting to know each other. A solid consultation kicks off the relationship between the colorist and consumer. The consumer is anxious, fearful, insecure, and vulnerable sitting in the colorist's chair. This fear is alleviated with each question a confident colorist asks during the consultation, and as the consumer feels heard. 57% of the survey respondents trust their colorists after the first appointment.

#### *Stage 3 – After the second and third hair color appointments*

During the second appointment, any adjustments needed stemming from the previous service is addressed. This appointment can be pivotal in the colorist/consumer relationship. The consumer assesses how well the colorist performs the second service and understands the consumer's needs. A consumer returning for their third appointment indicates that trust has been established. It is also apparent at this appointment that the colorist understands the consumer, and the consumer knows what to expect from the colorist. The consumer has built trust in the colorist to do what is right and that the colorist can adjust or correct anything the consumer does not like. 20% of the survey respondents trust their colorists after the second and third appointments.

**Percentage of hair color consumers trusting the knowledge and competency of their colorists**



**Moment a consumer started to trust their colorist**

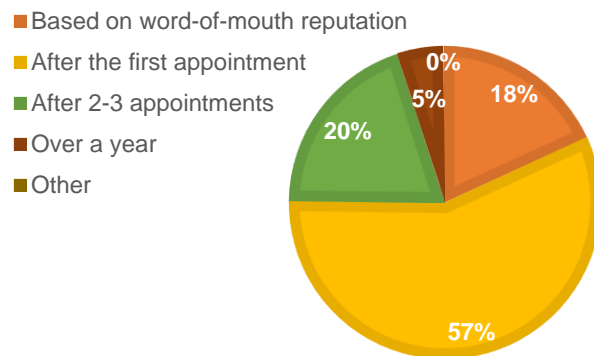


Table 2. Analysis of consumer’s Trust towards their colorists

Stage 4 – Trust established

95% of the surveyed respondents would have established trust to their colorists upon reaching Stage 3 of the relationship (Table 2, right). Once trust is established, consumers will start to feel confident to the recommendations from the colorists. From the questionnaire surveying professional colorists, 22% of colorists agreed that 100% of their clients will allow them to select hair color for the clients with absolute trust. 38% of the colorist agreed that 75% of their clients will allow them to choose hair color for the clients with absolute trust. This is a significant indication that the established trust empowers the colorist to make appropriate recommendations to the consumer.

When there is trust in the hair colorist, the consumer will return for future services. This trust is vital for the service provider since this is how revenue is generated. There are different benchmarks a service provider can review to measure the loyalty of the consumer. Rebooking appointments for future hair color services is one of the benchmarks. Studies found that an 80% rebooking rate on existing hair services will lead a hair professional to the top 10% of all earners in the hair industry (Zoot, 2017). Trust is one way to ensure consistent future revenue for colorists.

A consumer bases their trust on the skill of the colorist and the performance of the product. The consumer wants to leave the salon with an experience of having expectations met, holding their head high, and feeling great. The colorist's livelihood relies on the customer happily paying for the provided service. Hence, having a high-performing and reliable product is critical.

4.2.2. The Confidence of a Colorist

There is a learning curve when starting to use a new hair color line. Confidence is created through education, practice, and competency. Knowledge is the key to overcoming fear of failure and learning how the product performs.

There are two factors affecting the commitment to education - Time and Money. As a service provider, taking time to attend education means taking time away from work and the potential of generating revenue working behind the chair and creating revenue. The commitment for a colorist to attend education is significant as earnings can be affected.

Paradoxically, education is crucial for the colorist to grow skills and increase future earnings. The decision to attend ongoing education is critical for the colorist to create future revenue. 98% of the surveyed colorists attend at least one class per year, and 84% of the surveyed colorists attend at least two classes per year. In addition, 81% of the surveyed colorists spend at least \$100 USD on education annually.

Attending education can strike up insecurities of failure and build confidence in a hair colorist (akesha, 2017). Colorists may be vulnerable to the educator’s judgement of the colorist’s current technical skills sets. However, education establishes necessary knowledge and strengthens the confidence of colorists, which also results in the assurance of consumer’s confidence in a colorist.

4.3. Perception and Emotion

Beauty consumers search for ways to look their best and feel beautiful. This personal quest can create specific

individual emotional responses which can in turn drive this search for tools that will help one feel more beautiful. Hair color is a tool that can be utilized in fulfilling the emotional responses. Examples of emotional responses include confidence, acceptance, self-expression, individuality, and self-representation.

There is an intense psychological connection to hair color as well. There are two ideas to consider; how we perceive ourselves and how others perceive us. Table 3 illustrates some preconceived ideas of an individual's personality or characteristics connected to hair color.

Words can be definitive in our perception. As we go through this world of opinions, we have heard how people see blondes, brunettes, reds, and grey hair. These perceptions and preconceived ideas of who we are influences employment, relationships, emotions and how we perceive ourselves.

#### 4.3.1. Perception of Hair Color and Employment

Studies found that biases regarding personal appearance may affect judgement about a female's applicant's ability in a job application process (Kyle & Mahler, 1996). Researchers from the University of Queensland found blonde-haired women generally make salaries that are 7% higher than those of women with other-color tresses. They also learned that blonde women marry men who earn about 6% more than the husbands of non-blondes (Shontell 2011). Other studies also found that blonde women earn \$870 more on average than brunettes and redheads (Rosen 2011). However, these studies do not show a direct correlation between an individual's hair color and their ability.

When it comes to employment opportunity, physical appearance, specifically hair color, does influence the opinions and perceptions of hiring managers (Watson, Griggs and Szeman 2020). It is important to recognize that preconceived perceptions of an individual's hair color have a significant impact on the employment opportunity and their employment terms.

	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>
<b>Blondes</b>	Blondes, have more fun Blondes always get their way Popular Glamorous	Low IQ / Weak Blondes are only interested in their looks Mean
<b>Reds</b>	Red heads are passionate Wild / Libidinous / Impulsive Quick-tempered	Hot-blooded / Hot-tempered / Angry Get thing done Funny / Personality
<b>Brunettes</b>	Brainy brunette / smart Sophisticated Clever/witty Down-to-earth / wholesome / sensible Girl-next-door	Serious Plain-looking / dull Mousy Villains
<b>Grey</b>	Knowing Wise Confident Grey	Unrelatable Grandmother / Grandfather Old Unfavorable

Table 3. Perceptions of Blonde, Red, Brunette, Grey

#### 4.3.2. Perception of Hair Color and Relationships

Attraction is an important factor when we develop a new relationship. We are attracted to individuals with certain hair color, eye color, and body types. Our personal experience with individuals of specific hair color impacts our perceptions on others who wear that same hair color. A study conducted by the Badoo social network found that 60% of the men find brunette to be the most desirable. 33.1% said they think the most attractive hair color is brown hair, 28.6%

preferred black hair, 29.5% of men preferred blondes, and 8.8% of them preferred redheads. Results show that 61.7% of men prefer women with dark hair (Weaver 2015).

Most individuals are attracted to the type they are familiar with, or curious of the type that is the extreme opposite. Even if they have been comfortable dating blondes or redheads their entire dating years, they might still choose to meet and marry a brunette. The choice in a relationship is personal, but one can see

that the choice is often influenced by the perception of the perceived personality and characteristics of hair color.

#### 4.3.3. Perception and Emotion behind grey hair

A personal weighing of emotions is involved when the consumer decides when to cover grey hair and when to stop. In our survey, 40% of the total respondents do not have grey hair; 60% have grey hair. 78% of this grey hair population uses hair color to cover their grey hair; and the remainder 22% embrace their grey hair.

Emotionally, the decision to cover or grow out is individualized. The top two reasons our surveyed respondents choose to cover their grey hair is because covering greys makes them feel better and more youthful. There is a balance of feeling insecure with appearing old or appearing desperate to look young. In contrary, the top two reasons our surveyed respondents choose to grow out their grey hair is because it is less maintenance and like how they look. The decision to embrace the grey will arrive when a person is emotionally prepared.

#### 4.3.4. Perception of Ourselves and Emotion

Hair color plays a role in our identity. How we regard ourselves is paramount to our hair color choices. Choosing the hair color that best suits our perception of who we are, blonde, red, brunette, or grey, is about self-identification. How we think others perceive us is affected by our biases learned from our experiences. The emotional connection by how others regard us stirs in fear, insecurity, and uncertainty. Most consumers strive for social acceptance and approval. There is often a feeling of joy when someone compliments our hair, as the compliment is a validation of the consumer's hair color choice.

## 5. Conclusions

The hair color service that evokes emotions such as confidence, happiness, and comfort, is an important moment that changes how we feel about ourselves. These emotions are derived from the sacred hair color service and start with a tube of hair color. The relationship of a hair color product to the colorist, the colorist to the consumer, and the consumer to their hair, is profound. The relationship involves building trust and understanding, which results in an emotional impact to the consumer. The celebration of individuality is unique to how a consumer feels about their hair color choice. Consumers show the world how they want to be perceived - their statement and their self-expression. Become aware of all the different hair colors surrounding you and see how you perceive them. Know that there is a

trusted tube of hair color that performs perfectly and is emotionally contributing to personal acceptance and happiness.

## 6. Conflict of interest declaration

The Authors declare that there is no conflict of interest. No financial or personal interests have affected the author's objectivity.

## 7. Funding source declaration

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## 9. Short biography of the authors

**Lupe Voss** - • Lupe is a salon owner, professional hair color educator, and one of the founders of Color Space™ hair color. Lupe has been advocating the need for reimagined and inspired hair color education in the hair industry. She dedicates herself to developing hair color education programs that inspire hair industry professionals.

**Sherman Wong** - Originally a computer engineer who worked in Silicon Valley, Sherman found his passion lie in the hair industry. Sherman is a passionate beauty industry professional who is always in pursuit to inspire. His enthusiasm for developing leading education programs is matched by his focus on sharing his knowledge of the craft.

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