

Immigrant's Entry Level Business: A Study of Vietnamese Nail Salons



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INTRODUCTION

Study Area Chosen

In Southern California, the source of employment for many Vietnamese immigrants is in the nail industry that was popularized in 1980's by the first and the second wave of Vietnamese refugees. Today, thousands of nail shops are owned and operated by these immigrants, especially in the Caucasian areas where there is a higher demand for manicures and pedicures. This paper will examine the three cities in the San Fernando Valley with the highest Hispanic population; Sylmar, San Fernando, and Pacoima. This paper will also examine the three cities with the highest Non-Hispanic Caucasian/White population Encino, Sherman Oaks, and Studio City (SFVERC).

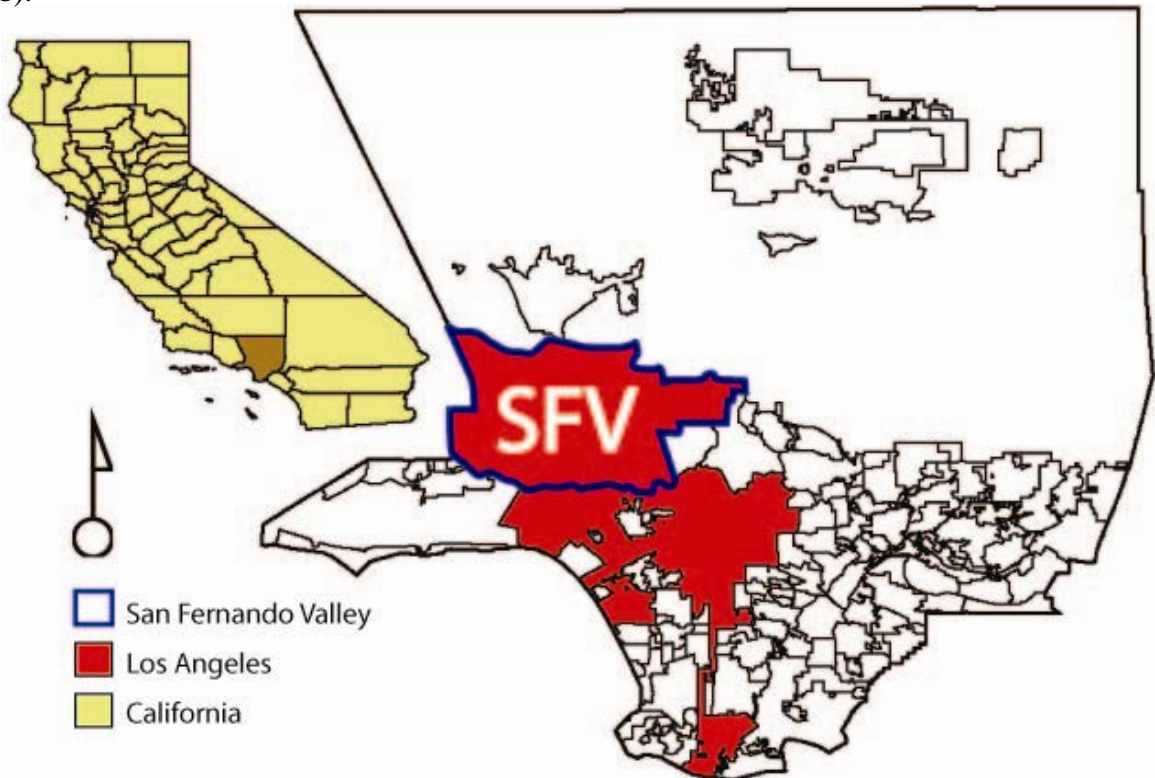


Figure 1. Map of San Fernando Valley

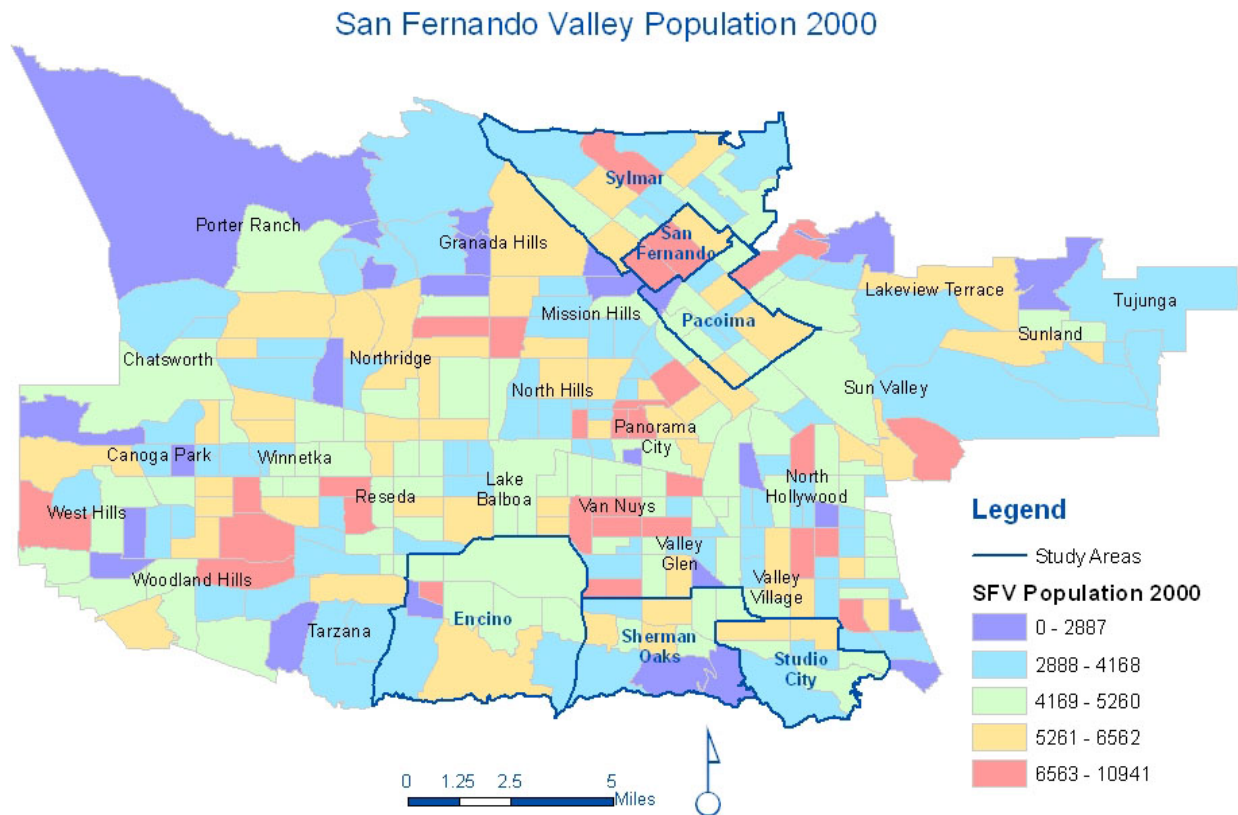


Figure 2. San Fernando Valley Population 2000 and study areas.

Figure two above shows the San Fernando Valley population along with the six study cities highlighted. The three cities in the north, Sylmar, San Fernando and Pacoima, are more populated with the most Hispanic population in the valley and the three cities in the south, Encino, Sherman Oaks and Studio City have the most Caucasians in the valley that was chosen to be the study areas of this topic.

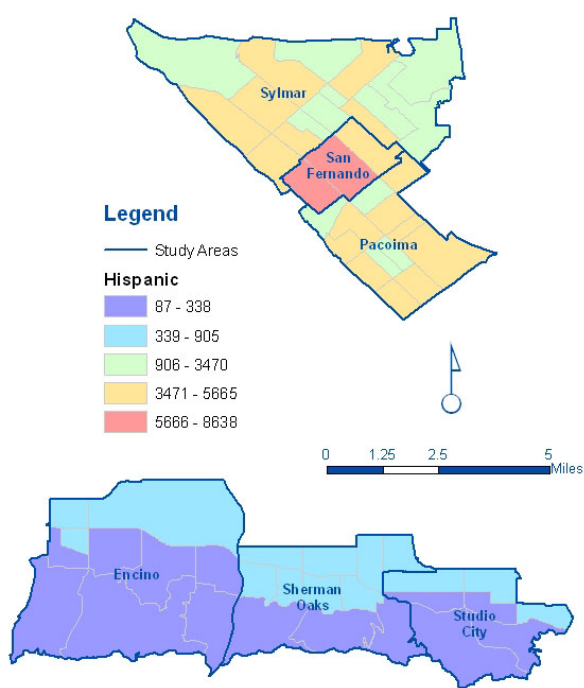


Figure 3. Hispanic population

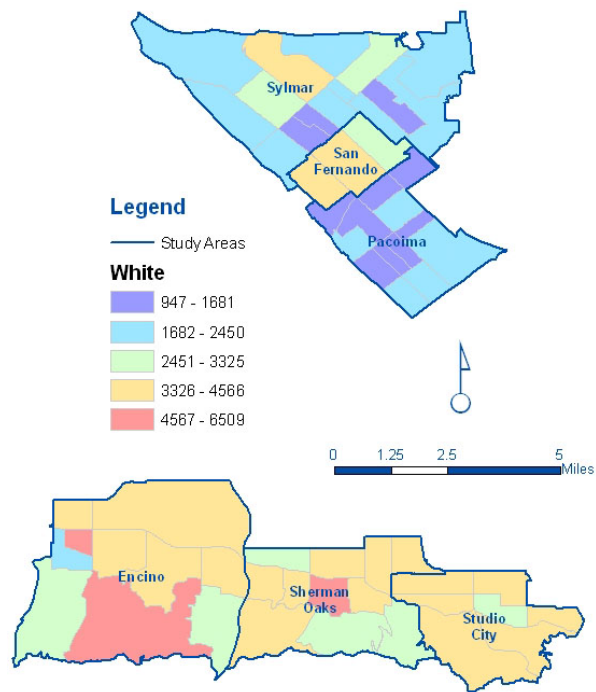


Figure 4. Caucasian/White population

Three cities with the highest Hispanic			Three cities with the highest Non-Hispanic White		
Arleta	Pacoima	San Fernando	Encino	Sherman Oaks	Studio City
75.8%	87.2%	89.3%	79.5%	75.6%	80.1%

Table 1. Percentages of six study cities.

Source: San Fernando Valley Economic Research Center

Nail Salons in the Study Areas

There are currently 82 nail salons located in the six study areas. The three cities with the highest Hispanic population have 21 nail salons while the highest Caucasian regions have approximately three times as many; a total of 61 salons (Yellow Book). Below are the two tables showing in the addresses of these nail salons in the San Fernando Valley.

ID	Name	Address	City	State	Zip
1	Beautiful Nails	13947 Foothill Blvd Ste 109	Sylmar	CA	91342
2	Fashion 2000 Hair & Nail	12643 Glenoaks Blvd	Sylmar	CA	91342
3	Golden Nail Skin Care Salon	12737 Glenoaks Blvd	Sylmar	CA	91342
4	Lilynn Nails	13643 Foothill Blvd	Sylmar	CA	91342
5	Number One Nails	13867 Foothill Blvd Ste 101	Sylmar	CA	91342
6	Perfect Nails	13796 Foothill Blvd	Sylmar	CA	91342
7	Carmen & Linda-Hair & Nail	820 San Fernando Rd	San Fernando	CA	91340
8	Chez Pam Nails	11220 Laurel Canyon Blvd	San Fernando	CA	91340
9	Elegance Nails	2049 Glenoaks Blvd	San Fernando	CA	91340
10	Heaven Nail and Spa	1001 Truman St	San Fernando	CA	91340
11	Julie Nails	103 S Workman St	San Fernando	CA	91340
12	Lovely Nails	722 N MacLay Ave	San Fernando	CA	91340
13	Lucky Nail	919 N MacLay Ave	San Fernando	CA	91340
14	Mari's Hair & Nails	1701 Truman St	San Fernando	CA	91340
15	Paradise Nail & Spa	14538 Brand Blvd	San Fernando	CA	91340
16	Pico Nail and Hair	1124 Pico St	San Fernando	CA	91340
17	Sensi Nails	1145 San Fernando Rd	San Fernando	CA	91340
18	Tony's Nail Salon	747 S Workman St	San Fernando	CA	91340
19	A & J Nails Salon	13003 Van Nuys Blvd	Pacoima	CA	91331
20	Fancy Nails	10749 Glenoaks Blvd	Pacoima	CA	91331
21	Imelda's Hair & Nails	10443 Laurel Canyon Blvd	Pacoima	CA	91331

Table 2: Nail Salons in the Hispanic Areas – Cities of Sylmar, San Fernando and Pacoima.

ID	Name	Address	City	State	Zip
1	Annas Nails	17938 Ventura Blvd	Encino	CA	91316
2	Beautiful Forever Nails And Spa	17281 Ventura Blvd	Encino	CA	91316
3	Cd Nails & Skin	17200 Ventura Blvd	Encino	CA	91436
4	Dana Nails	16545 Ventura Blvd Ste 22	Encino	CA	91436
5	Encino Nails & Spa	15610 Ventura Blvd	Encino	CA	91436
6	Friendly Nails	15603 Ventura Blvd	Encino	CA	91436
7	Le Nail Studio	17418 Ventura Blvd	Encino	CA	91316
8	Michelle's Nails	17960 Ventura Blvd	Encino	CA	91316
9	Modern Nails	18026 Ventura Blvd	Encino	CA	91316
10	Nail Elegance	17038 Ventura Blvd	Encino	CA	91316
11	Nail Works The	17905 Ventura Blvd	Encino	CA	91316
12	Nails By Leonor	17304 Ventura Blvd	Encino	CA	91316
13	Nails by Linda Sherbert	17401 Ventura Blvd SteA25	Encino	CA	91316
14	New You Nails	17935 Ventura Blvd	Encino	CA	91316
15	Noa Nail Salon	17420 Ventura Blvd	Encino	CA	91316
16	Pinuk Nails & Wax Salon	15826 Ventura Blvd	Encino	CA	91436

17	Princess Nails	17328 Ventura Blvd	Encino	CA	91316
18	Sally's Nails	16060 Ventura Blvd	Encino	CA	91316
19	The Nail Cafe	17039 Ventura Blvd	Encino	CA	91316
20	Tina's Nails	16746 Ventura Blvd	Encino	CA	91436
21	Allstar Nails	4407 Woodman Ave	ShermanOaks	CA	91423
22	Beautiful Forever Nail & Spa	4554 Van Nuys Blvd	ShermanOaks	CA	91403
23	Cozytoes Nail Spa	15109 Ventura Blvd	ShermanOaks	CA	91403
24	Emily's Nails	12753 Ventura Blvd	ShermanOaks	CA	91423
25	Emporio Nails	13452 Ventura Blvd	ShermanOaks	CA	91423
26	Fancy Nails	14306 Ventura Blvd	ShermanOaks	CA	91423
27	Fashion Nails	14949 Ventura Blvd	ShermanOaks	CA	91403
28	Four Seasons Nails & Spa	4408 Vesper Ave	ShermanOaks	CA	91403
29	Full Moon Nail Spa	13349 Ventura Blvd	ShermanOaks	CA	91423
30	Image Nails	14380 Ventura Blvd	ShermanOaks	CA	91423
31	Jungle Nail	13952 Ventura Blvd	ShermanOaks	CA	91423
32	Lynn's Nails	15009 Ventura Blvd	ShermanOaks	CA	91403
33	Merry Nails And Hair	13719 Ventura Blvd	ShermanOaks	CA	91423
34	Nail Design	5160 Van Nuys Blvd	ShermanOaks	CA	91403
35	Nail Shop By Helen & Kim The	15030 Ventura Blvd	ShermanOaks	CA	91403
36	Paulena Nails	13242 Riverside Dr	ShermanOaks	CA	91423
37	Perfect Nail	12910 Magnolia Blvd	ShermanOaks	CA	91423
38	Pink N' White Nails & Spa	4454 Van Nuys Blvd	ShermanOaks	CA	91403
39	Rose's Nail Salon	15033 Ventura Blvd	ShermanOaks	CA	91403
40	Serenity Skin & Nail Spa	14549 Ventura Blvd	ShermanOaks	CA	91403
41	Tammy's Place Hair & Nails	15445 Ventura Blvd	ShermanOaks	CA	91403
42	US Nails	13911 Ventura Blvd	ShermanOaks	CA	91423
43	Western Nails	4611 Van Nuys Blvd	ShermanOaks	CA	91403
44	Aq Nail Spa	11239 Ventura Blvd	Studio City	CA	91604
45	Asian Nails	4383 Tujunga Ave Ste L	Studio City	CA	91604
46	Glamour Nails	11925 Ventura Blvd	Studio City	CA	91604
47	Great Nails	11382 Ventura Blvd	Studio City	CA	91604
48	Happy Spa & Nails	4397 Tujunga Ave	Studio City	CA	91604
49	In Style Nails	11440 Ventura Blvd Ste 105	Studio City	CA	91604
50	Katie Nail	11036 Ventura Blvd	Studio City	CA	91604
51	Mailan Nail Salon	12446 Ventura Blvd	Studio City	CA	91604
52	Mibella Nail Salon	12192 Ventura Blvd	Studio City	CA	91604
53	Nail Art	11267 Ventura Blvd	Studio City	CA	91604
54	Nail Garden	10939 Ventura Blvd	Studio City	CA	91604
55	Nail Time	3962 Laurel Canyon Blvd	Studio City	CA	91604
56	Nails Boutique	12358 Ventura Blvd	Studio City	CA	91604
57	Nails By Bonnie	13223 Ventura Blvd	Studio City	CA	91604

58	Natural Nails	11709 Moorpark St	Studio City	CA	91604
59	Studio Nail Spa	12151 Ventura Blvd	Studio City	CA	91604
60	Studio Nails	11288 Ventura Blvd Ste D	Studio City	CA	91604
61	Ventura Nails	12080 Ventura Pl Ste 1	Studio City	CA	91604

Table 3: Nail Salons in the Caucasian Areas – Cities of Encino, ShermanOaks and Studio City.

Personal Experience

The ethnic niche that the Vietnamese are well known for is the nail care industry. This paper will examine all 82 nail salons to see how many of these are owned by Vietnamese. Being Vietnamese and a part of the ethnic niche encourages me to find out more about my people and why I obtained a license in this business in the first place. Particularly, why did I get a manicurist license back in February of 2006 and how did I let myself fall into this ethnic niche that everyone around me are talking about the Vietnamese with less opportunities are stuck in this business? On the contrary, I am a college student with a promising future ahead of me but I still obtained a license in this business.

What is the job and responsibilities of a Manicurist?

A major responsibility of a manicurist is to know how to take care of a client's overall nail. These duties include cutting, trimming, filing, buffering, cleansing both the cuticles and under nails and acrylic nails that was introduced in 1970's and lastly, manicurists need to know how to creatively polish the client's nails. More importantly, manicurists need to know a few tricks for nail treatments to help customers have healthier nails. In addition to these responsibilities, a manicurist must be able to massage the hands or feet of a client, depending on

the work perform. Perhaps one of the most important skills a manicurist possess is the knowledge of the chemicals that are used on customers along with how to sanitize all the tools used in the shop for safety and sanitary purposes (B&C 2004a). The following photos show the typical responsibilities of a manicurist perform at the nail shops.



Figure 5. Filing



Figure 6. Remove cuticles



Figure 7. Hand Massage



Figure 8. Leg and feet massage



Figure 9. *Callus removal*



Figure 10. *Polishing*

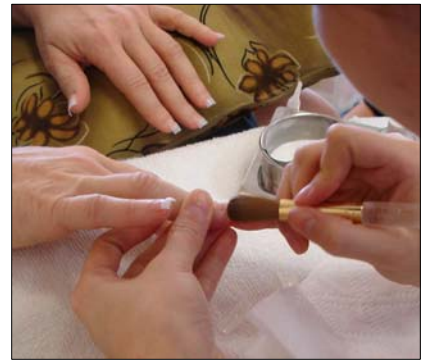


Figure 11. *Acrylic nails*

Why Be a Manicurist but not a Cosmetologist?

California state law requires all manicurists to be licensed before performing any work on clients due to public health and safety of others. Why is it that manicurists do not go for a cosmetologist license which would enable them to perform facials, hair stylists and nail treatments at the same time instead of the getting only the manicurist license? It takes 1,600 hours to complete the cosmetology course with enough practical experience to prepare for the state exam and can cost up to \$10,000 (Carter & Sanders 2005). Another hindering factor is that cosmetologist exams are only offered in Spanish and English while manicurist exams are offered in Vietnamese, which has made it easier for many Vietnamese with limited English to enter the business (Chang 2006a). Besides, it takes only three months of training with less than \$1,000 to complete a four hundred hour course with practical experience to prepare for the manicurist license (Dang 1999). Additionally, in order to get a California state license, both cosmetologists and manicurists are required to pass a practical and written exam. For manicurists, this exam

only tests the essentials of how to do manicuring while the cosmetology test requires the examination of skin care, make up, nails and hair.

Ethnicities and Increasing of Nail Technicians over the Years.

The surge of Vietnamese immigrant ownerships of nail salon began in the 1980's. In 1995, the number of manicurists in the nation was 35,000 and in only ten years that number tripled to an astonishing figure of 105,000 (Chang 2006b) with more than 83,500 manicurists in California, 80% of the population are Vietnamese (MT Lite 2005). However, Vietnamese are not the first in line for this business. Surprisingly, Caucasians occupy the largest number of nail technician positions in the United States with 41% of the population, followed by Vietnamese with 38% of all 380,635 licensed technicians (NAILS Magazine 2005a).

According to National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum, over 95% of all nail salons employ female workers (2006) serving a clientele of 93.6% female (NAILS Magazine 2005b), this industry is clearly a women to women type of job.

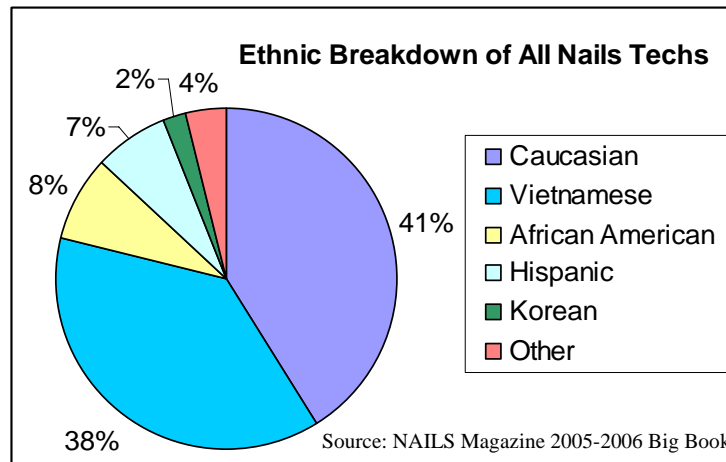


Figure 12. Nails Tech Groups in the United States

Since 1996, there have been 60,551 Vietnamese who have taken the cosmetologist test in their native tongue (Chang 2006c). In fiscal year 2003, there were 5,246 Vietnamese who had taken the manicurist test and by the first eight months of 2004, that number increased by 43% or 8,246 people (Carter and Sanders 2005b). According to Nail Magazine, the business is worth six billion dollars per year, not including the money paid under the table. This revenue has increased by 67% since a decade ago. Presently, there are 51,000 nail salons owned and operated by Vietnamese immigrants in California today (Nguyen 2006) and across the nation's statistics in 1990, there were 32,674 and 53,615 in 2003 (Dickson 2005). As of August 2004, there were more than 369,000 total licenses issued in California, which includes more than 206,000 cosmetologists, 83,500 manicurists, and 35,000 nail salons establishments (B & C 2004b).

GEOGRAPHICAL SUB-FIELD

Introducing Sub-fields

Geography specializes in many branches such as physical, human, environmental, geomatics, regional and social geography. This study will focus on human geography, more specifically the social geography that involves people and their spatial relations, such as manicurists in San Fernando Valley in California.

Human Geography

A small portion of the paper will look at the human aspect of geography, also known as human geography, which is the study of human populations and activities based on historical developments, population density, ethnicity, distribution, composition and how things change over time (EA 2002, pg 437). This paper examines the Vietnamese population in the United States, their historical background, and how California became home for the majority of the Vietnamese people. In addition, the major part of this paper will center on the famous ethnic niche of the Vietnamese-American and primarily how and why the nail industry became so associated with this group.

Social Geography

Social geography is another subfield study of geography that is concerned with people in different geographical locations and the adaptation of human behaviors in particular environments. Geographers have examined issues such as place marketing, social practice, production of space, culture and geographical representations and labor migration. Social geographers analyze the social action of how people work and act among those with differences around them everyday. The conceptualization of action is understood as a result of how people use their agency within the structural contexts of their social setting through resources and the theoretical approach based on two social processes. The first process is the attention to and the movement of identity, power and action. The next process is the socio-spatial process and its relations of social action that government needs to pay tremendous attention to. Modern social geographers are socially concerned with how people take actions on various

matters, especially on government issues while contemporary geographers focuses on analyzing empirical data on social action. (Panelli 2004).

Social geographers look at how people become attached to various places, such as their hometown, work place and another place called the third place. The third place is defined as a place where people like to go to besides their house and their work place, for example, a church or a bar. These places became the social attachment and people put their responsibilities upon it as part of their job to protect these places (Pain 2001).

Literature review

Like many other minorities in America, the Vietnamese create a landscape community by uniting and attaching together to form a sense of place and created a sense of belonging (Airriess 2002). What bring people together are the common interests among themselves. Asians in America provide inexpensive labor to the American economy (Frazier 2003). Many geographers have studied ethnicity niches such as Chinese are largely known as laundry services, Indians are known for Seven Eleven owners, Mexicans in gardening, Cambodians in donut shops, Pilipino as nurses, etc.. According to *The Ethnic Quilt* book written by Dr. Turner and Dr. Allen at California State University, Northridge, “Vietnamese women are six times more likely to be working in beauty shops than is the average Southern California woman” (page 223).

Hypothesis

The hypothesis investigated in this paper is nail technicians with limited opportunities are mainly Vietnamese and nail salons owned by Vietnamese are predominantly in Caucasian areas of the San Fernando Valley. A study analysis in the San Fernando Valley, located in County of Los Angeles, comparing the number of nail shops owned by the three cities with highest number of Non-Hispanic Whites by the three cities with highest number of Hispanics. The hypothesis was brought up due to an observations and why personal experience of being a Vietnamese manicurist.

Research questions

The following three questions were asked in order to find answers to the hypothesis: (1) How many of the eighty-two nail salons are Vietnamese owned? This question ties to the Vietnamese niche that was mentioned earlier in the paper to see if it is true if most manicurist owners are Vietnamese. (2) How many of the Vietnamese workers chose the occupation because of the limited opportunity? If they were educated people and had the option to follow other opportunities, would they have chosen to do so or did they become a manicurist because of limited proficiency of the English language? (3) Are Vietnamese nail salons predominantly located in Caucasian/White areas? According to my sister who owns a nail shop, most owners aim at Caucasians for their business, therefore, a question was raised to see if it's true that Caucasian people have higher demand on nail service than Hispanic people.

Methodology

To help understand the topic better and in order to answer the research questions, the following methods were used in order to evaluate the hypothesis of this paper: (1) Use of 2000 census data from the San Fernando Valley Economic Research Center to find where most Hispanics and Caucasians are located in the valley by identifying the three cities of highest concentration of each group then compare their income per capita based on this census block group. (2) Locate the 82 nail shops on the map by first creating a spreadsheet from Microsoft Excel with all the nail salons and their respective addresses. The next step was to convert the spreadsheet into a .dbf4 database file in order to import it into ArcMap. Once this was completed, a map of the San Fernando Valley was added to ArcMap and subsequently clipped to show only the six cities of the study area. The next step was then to add the San Fernando Valley streets layer which enabled the geocoding of the nail salons. (3) A nine question survey, conducted in order to answer the second research question, was created in both English and Vietnamese which thus allowed non English speakers the ability to participate in the survey. The survey used Dr. Hussey's business card with the California State University, Northridge address and phone number to build trust in the owners for not assuming that this survey is from the government wanting to investigate their nail shops. (4) Before conducting interviews of the survey, 89 phone calls were made to see how many shops Vietnamese are owned. However, only 82 answers were used in the research due to the duplications of seven addresses in some areas. As for the field work, 17 shops were visited with only 27 people in the survey due to the hesitation and lack of knowledge to fully understand that this is only a study and not some

investigation on manicurists flaws at nail salons that the state of California would do to investigate these nail shops and their workers as some of the workers who did the survey warned me about. The first field work was conducted on a Thursday, which turned out to be the busiest day of the week for most nail shops in America (NAILS Magazine 2004). The next available time to conduct interviews was a Saturday, the second busiest time of the week for these shops. As a result, only twenty-three manicurist workers and four owners were able to answer the survey. (5) And lastly, analyze past surveys of NAIL Magazine's Big Book from 2003-2006 statistic data to help further understand the nail industry and to compare the results of their survey to the one I conducted.

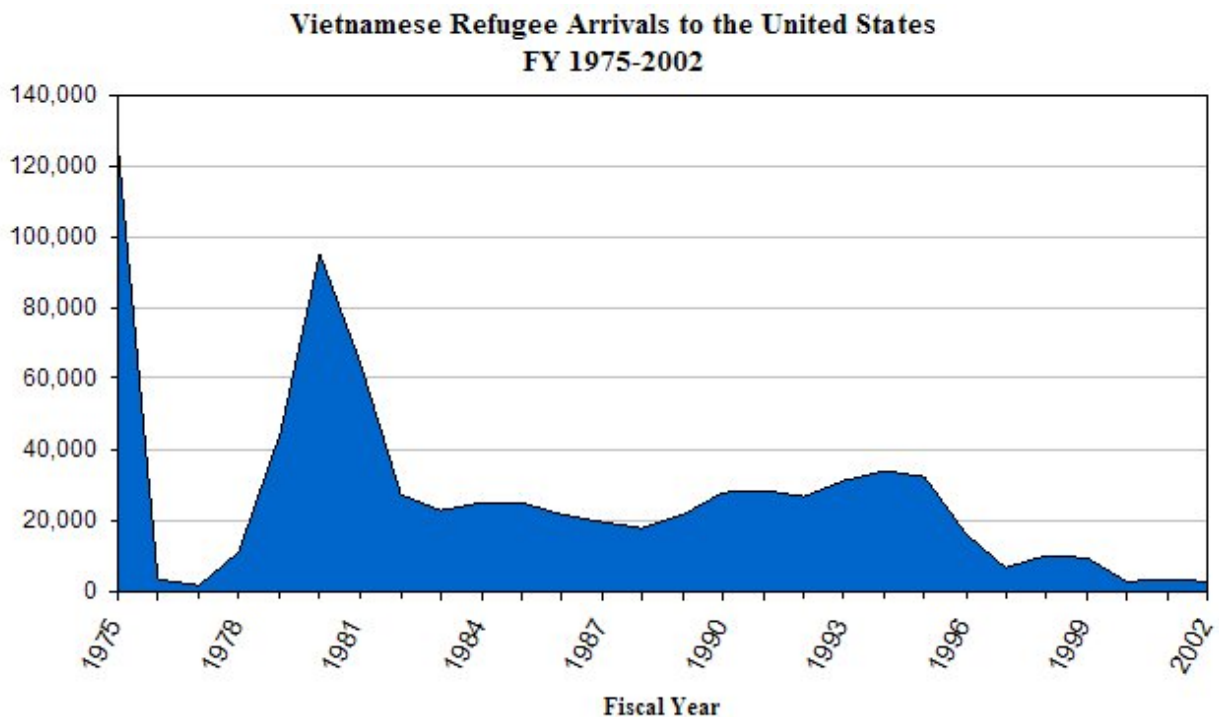
BACKGROUND

Vietnamese Immigrants

Vietnamese in America are considered refugees rather than immigrants (Turner and Allen 1997). The first wave of Vietnamese refugees in American was when Saigon, Vietnam fell into the hands of the Communist Government on April 30, 1975 which led to 150,000 of the best educated Vietnamese who could speak English, air lifted to America. Followed by the second wave of refugees with people ranging from businessperson to farmers with little or no knowledge English. From 1979 to 1981 the Communist Government forced all the Chinese who had lived and adapted into the Vietnamese culture out of Vietnam since 1978. With the United Nations involved in 1980s, an Orderly Departure Program opened allowed 161,000 people with relatives already in America from the first wave of refugees, were allowed to come to the United States

along with 81,000 Amerasians, children of American servicemen and Vietnamese women.

Furthermore, 61,000 political prisoners who worked for the Americans during the war and their families entered the United States. (Turner and Allen 1997). By 2003, the number of Vietnamese Lawful Permanent Residents in America was 832,765. Of these numbers, 40% stayed in California and the rest settled in other states. Many of the educated Vietnamese became restaurant owners or auto-repair shop owners and the lesser educated Vietnamese entered the nail salon industry, commercial fishing and shrimping industry. (Campi 2005).



Source: Southeast Asia Resource Action Center, Southeast Asian American Statistical Profile. Washington, DC: 2004, p. 10.

Figure 13. Vietnamese Refugee in the United States from 1975 to 2002.

Vietnamese Family

To most Vietnamese, family life is very important. For instance, if the family owns a business, all the children who grow up in that family will participate in the family business as their first job. Helping family members is a duty in the Vietnamese tradition. Some people even have a full time job but also help out the family on the weekends or whenever they can. In the nail industry, most salons are owned and operated by a family. For the Vietnamese, it is important to own a business and work their way up instead of being held back by working for other people and have to follow orders. Additionally, a business owner can make their own work schedule and work whenever they want with this flexible job.

The majority of the Vietnamese parents came to the United States not to fulfill their own dreams but to sacrifice their own comfort for their children enabling them to have a brighter economic future. Meanwhile, the opportunity available for most of these parents are to pursue what other Vietnamese have traditionally done before them: open a nail shop if one has the money to do so or to obtain a manicurist license. Either decision comes at a cost of working in a profession without the knowledge of the English language or the opportunity to adapt into the new environment. Furthermore, these individuals have the dual responsibilities of providing for their family in this country in addition to the rest of the family they left behind in Vietnam. From the people I know in this business, not many people can proudly say they enjoy their when other Vietnamese people take a manicurist position as the lowest job out there for holding customers' hands and feet everyday to support a living and to get their kids into college. Vietnamese parents are not any different than other parents from the former gang members in the South Central area or the immigrants from Mexico. They all strive to attain the best for their children. Vietnamese

teenage years were spent out in the rice patties helping their parents and patiently waited for the harvest season to arrive to collect the rice and as melancholy as it can sound, unless they raise animals at home or plant vegetables to sell, harvesting was farmers' only income of the year. Consequently, there are farmers who came here illiterate. If they're lucky enough, they'll get a driver's license to help get themselves to work and function within the Americans' daily society. However, no business owner would want to hire someone with a limited knowledge on everything, especially with the language, therefore, Vietnamese chose to follow the first and the second wave of refugees in the nail industry and force them to work with their hands more than their head in this business. Immigrants that came after these two waves fell into the same circumstances and followed the earlier Vietnamese-American's footsteps in the nail care industry.

Vietnamese as Manicurists

According to most nail salon in the valley, when the owner hires a worker, both make an agreement that the owner has the authority to take 40% of what the worker make per day, not including tips. In some busy areas, it is a 50-50 share among both sides. If a worker chooses to rent a nail station from the owner, then the worker pays a monthly fee in lieu of the 40-50% contribution per day. In this business, the majority of employees do not get health insurance from the salon, instead they have to buy health insurance elsewhere on their own. The busiest time of the year for this job is during the summer time. Almost all manicurist technicians can hardly find time to eat and no overtime is paid in this business. Life is tough among these workers for having

to please the owners and their customers everyday, but it is their joy to be able to be in America and, overall, being treated equally as many other races.

More Men Entering the Industry.

Today, more men are getting involved in this industry. The number has increased 29% from 2000 to 2005 in the National Accrediting Commission of Cosmetology Arts and Sciences according to Nail Magazine. In 2000, this school had 2,277 males enrolled and by 2004, the number increased more than four times with 9,637 males registered (Nails Magazine 2006). One of the Vietnamese successful male who owned and operated Nail 2007 shop in Bradenton, Florida is David Hoang There's a nail contest offered once a year for all manicurists all over the United States and David had won three times in that nail contest.

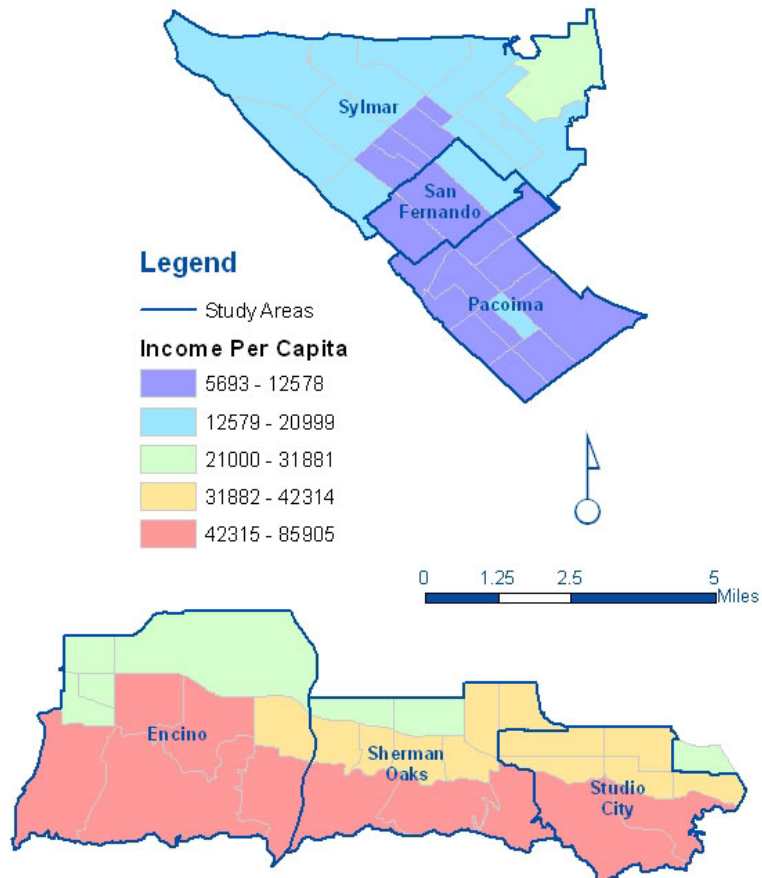
One of the most unusual examples of all Vietnamese for choosing nail salons as his main business and became successful with this industry is Quy "Charlie" Ton who lives in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Ton graduated from Louisiana State University in 1995 with a bachelor's degree in Chemical Engineering. At the age of 34, Ton has more than 700 *Regal Nails* franchises within the Wal-Mart's chain. His business is growing at the rate of 125 nail salons per year with each franchise selling for \$50,000 apiece. In addition, Ton owns and operates six warehouses, a manufacturing plant and he is also planning to introduce his Charlie's Coffee shops into Wal-Mart stores across the country as well (Verma 2005). Charlie knows how and where to invest his money. Even though the nail industry is not a pleasant job according to most Vietnamese, the

successful case of Charlie's business has become a role model to every Vietnamese American in the United States.

Vietnamese Nails Today

For over 20 years, NAILS Magazine had published in English and made available online provide useful information for salons owners and nail technicians. As of Spring 2006, three Vietnamese language beauty and nail magazine launched at the same time making one of the magazine as an offshoot of NAILS named VietSALON and made it linkable to the NAILS Magazine website. VietSALON is a bilingual publication that promotes safety and healthy working habits. It also exposes readers to a wide range of professional products and encourages business growth. This magazine publishes every three months with 30,000 copies circulate nationwide.

RESEARCH FINDINGS



This map of income per capita shows the comparison of the two study areas with Hispanic cities in the north have almost half of the income in the Caucasian areas in the south which leads to the next map for higher demand of nail shops in Caucasians areas.

Figure 14. Income Per Capita.

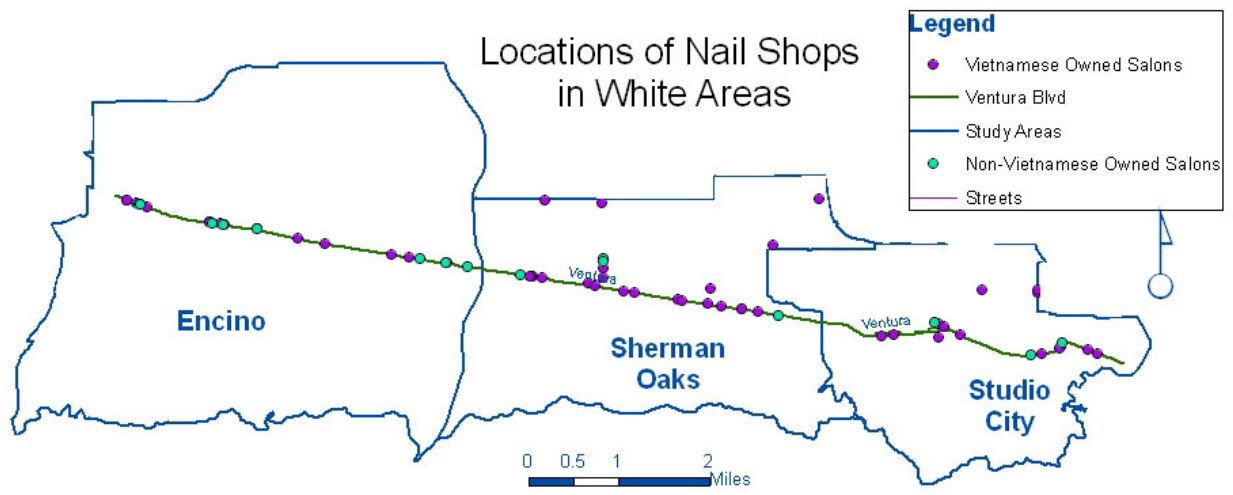


Figure 15. Locations of nail shops in White areas.

In the cities of Encino, Sherman Oaks and Studio City, the main street for most of these nail shops are on Ventura Boulevard with 51 nail salons lining up within almost seven miles to distance. There are a total of 61 nail salons in these three areas. The numbers of Vietnamese owned salons are 46 and 15 salons under other ownership.

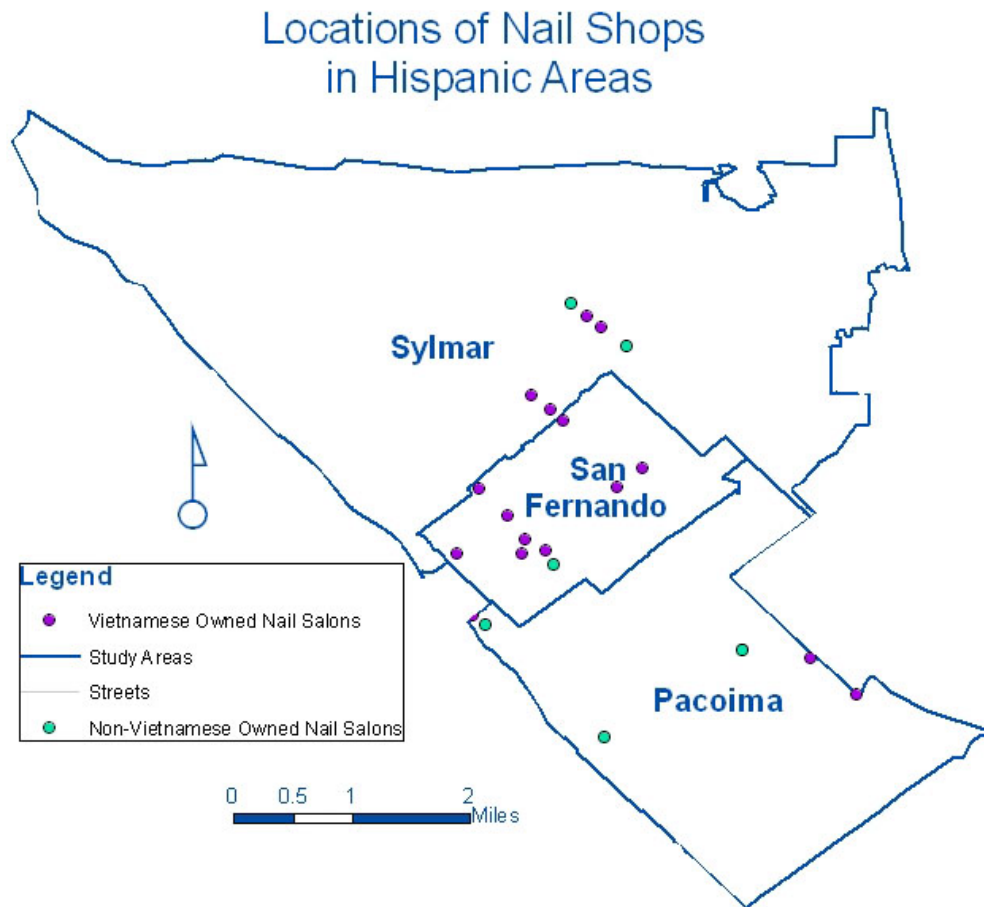


Figure 16. *Locations of nail shops in Hispanic areas.*

The map above represents all the nail shops in the Hispanic areas of Sylmar, San Fernando and Pacoima. There are 21 nail shops in this area, 76% of it, 16 salons, are Vietnamese owned.

Manicurists Survey

The survey located below was created of nine general questions on manicurist jobs. Due to the purpose of the survey, the questions were work specific to insure that no individual was

offended. With the help of 27 manicurists in the six cities of the study area, seven pie charts below were established from the results of these questions

Questions and Results of the Survey

Question #1: I am _____ years old.

The average age was 40 years old.

Question #2: I have been a manicurist for _____ year(s).

The average year of being a manicurist is 5.1 years.

Question #3: This is my _____ job.

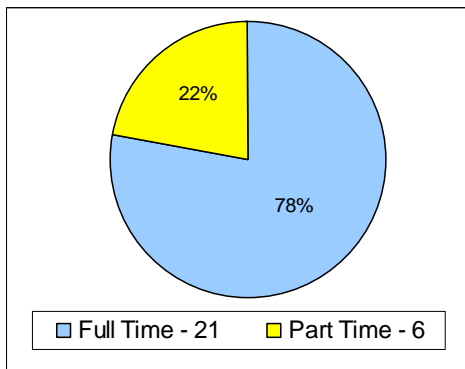


Figure 17. Part time and full time job.

As a result, 78% take this manicurist job as their full time job and 22% said this is their part time job. Often times people work on

the weekends to either help out with their family business or work as the second job to earn some extra money.

Question 4. I _____ being a manicurist.

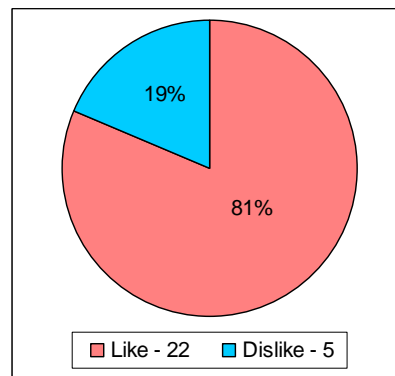


Figure 18. Like and dislike the job.

There was one manicurist who was busy working on a customer when I had to personally asked her to answer the survey showed how enthusiastic she was when this question was being asked. It was shocking to know how much she loves her job and the

result of this question came out unexpected that the number of people love their job is four times higher than the ones who disliked their job.

Question 5. I am the _____ in this shop.

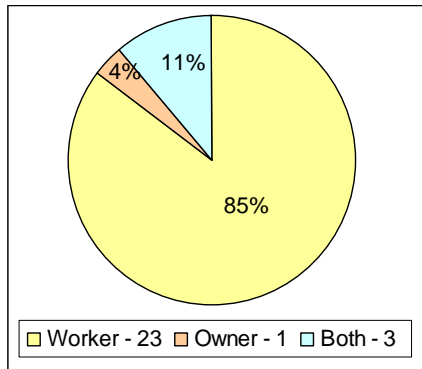


Figure 19. Roles in the salon.

There's only one person who owns the shop but doesn't work on the customers as many other Vietnamese does, instead this person was there to manage the shop and being the boss to take care of the shop as an owner only. The number of worker took 85% and 11% who was both owner and worker of the shop.

Question 6. If you can choose not being a manicurist, what would you like to do?

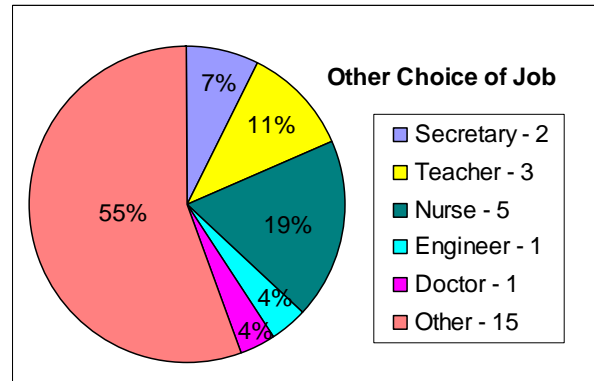


Figure 20. Choices of job.

If these workers and owners can choose not being a manicurist, what would they like to do?

One person chose to be a doctor and another one chose to be an engineer while 19% chose to be a nurse, 7% chose to be a secretary and 11% want to be a teacher. As interesting as the job listed on the survey, more than half said they want other jobs instead.

Question 7. My highest level of education is:

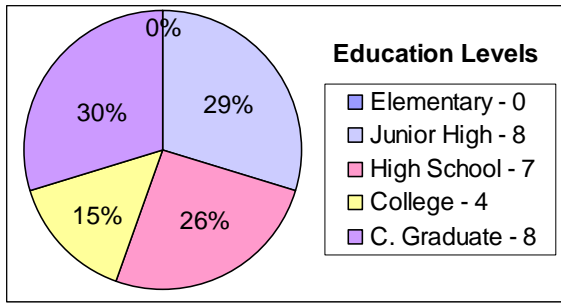


Figure 21. Education Levels

As shocking as the result comes out that one thirds of the surveyors are college graduated and most likely are not the ones who have limited opportunities, they preferred being manicurists due of the pay due to the pay and the flexibility of time this job is given.

Question 8. I feel that my English is:

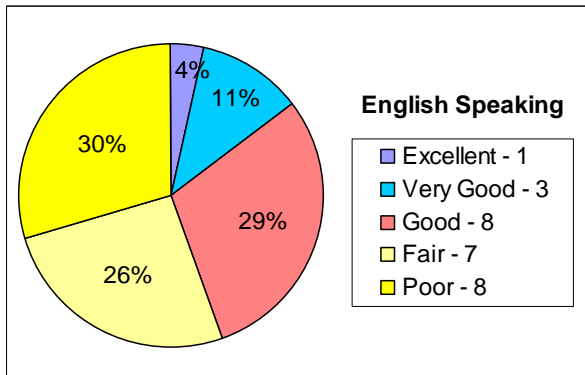


Figure 22. English speaking levels.

When asked how the surveyors feel about their English speaking ability, only one person said their English is excellent and

stunningly almost one third, 30%, said their English is poor and 26% said it's fair. That makes 56% of their English are below average. Language is very important in finding a job, therefore, with this many people not fluently English speakers result in limited opportunity in finding other jobs.

Question 9. I prefer answering these questions in:

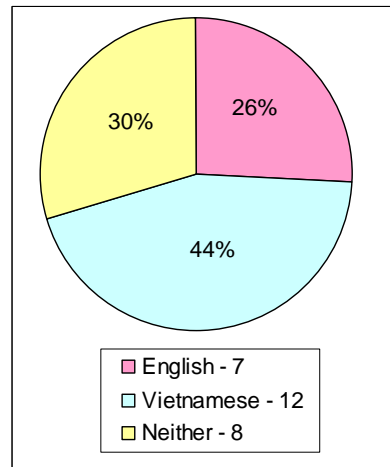


Figure 23. Language preferred to answer the survey.

Even though the survey has both English and Vietnamese constructed in the same order for both languages, a question was raised to see which language the surveyors

prefer to answer. Interestingly, 44% said in Vietnamese, which is almost half of all they would prefer answering these questions the people who took the survey.

Conclusions and Results

The research findings support the hypothesis and all the research questions were answered. First of all, of the 82 nail shops, 76% or 62 salons, are Vietnamese owned. With this as the result, the first research question was answered with how many nail salons are owned by Vietnamese. Secondly, 56% of the Vietnamese workers chose the occupation because of the limited opportunity due to the below good language skills that reduced their opportunity in finding other jobs. Lastly, the number of Vietnamese owned nail salons in Caucasian areas are 46, triple the number of nail salons in Hispanic areas of only 15. This answered the third research question identifying that Vietnamese nail salons are predominantly in the Caucasian areas.

When the nail business is so easily accessed even with limited education and with the number of Vietnamese manicurists astonishingly increased over the past few years, it is most likely that Vietnamese who are working at the rate of minimum wage pay will eventually end up in this business also in the next couple years. Moreover, California is taking 80% of all Vietnamese manicurists in the nation of 38% total, soon these percentages will increase and California will become a competitive place among these manicurists and perhaps manicurists will slowly move to other states where Caucasians predominantly live.

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