

Colorism Shaping the Lives of Black Women in America

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Abstract

- Skin-tone bias (colorism) is prejudice or discrimination against individuals with a darker skin tone.
- Colorism can also be defined as the preference and desire for both lighter skin (men or women) and their features over someone with darker skin.
- Colorism stems from the belief that people with lighter skin are more valuable than those who have darker skin.
- Colorism has been happening in America since the days of slavery and those practices have shaped the lives of black Americans today. Consciously or unconsciously, colorism usually happens within the same ethnic groups.
- My research is an exploration of to see if colorism affects a black woman's self esteem and her social status.

Visual of Colorism in America



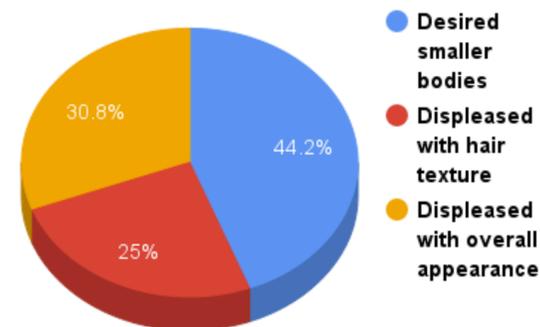
Background

Colorism roots from the belief of white supremacy. Being white was seen as civil, rational, beautiful and superior. While having a darker skin tone was seen as the exact opposite: savagery, irrational, ugly and inferior. These beliefs made the idea of white supremacy live on because it made people think anything lighter was better. You can also date colorism back to slavery. When white slave masters raped and impregnated black slaves, the offspring was treated better than the typical slave because of their white ancestry. Being partially white caused them to be viewed as smarter, more capable, and favorable. Historical research concluded that lighter skinned black people have fewer societal barriers rather than a darker skinned black person in white America and even with African Americans. African Americans received unequal treatment primarily due to their race but also due to their skin tone.

Results

- Colorism has a negative influence on black women mental state and self perception as early as middle school.
- ### Colorism effects in self perception
- As predicated, skin tone has influences on physical attraction associated with black women.
 - The lightness or darkness of a person's skin tone is correlated with attractiveness ratings assigned to a black woman.
 - Lighter skin complexion associated with higher feelings of perceived mastery.
 - Studies find skin color is related to feelings of self worth and attractiveness.
 - Black women, consciously or unconsciously, move toward ideals of beauty connected to white ideals of beauty.

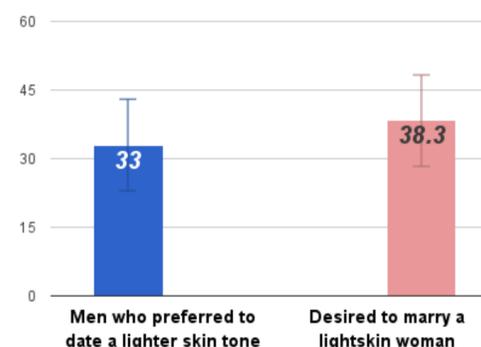
Women of color



Colorism effects in society

- Lighter skinned black people worked in higher socioeconomic division than those with darker skin (Higher rankings in jobs).
- Even after slavery ended, lighter blacks had advantages for jobs and schools.
- Light skinned black people have an higher income, complete more years of schooling, and live in better neighborhoods.
- Skin color associated with qualities of life.
- During the civil rights movement, being light skin could be used as a form of safety against racial violence.

Table 2



Methodology

I chose this topic because I wanted to show what effects colorism has on women of color and how it can affect their life negatively. Many people think the effects are only skin deep when colorism can have negative effects on their social lifestyle. To help find information on my topic I used Perkins library to find articles that were peer reviewed, I watched documentaries and speeches about people who have faced colorism to have perspective and insight of the daily struggles. I faced struggles within my research finding statics about colorism and the effects it has in the workplace. I feel this would have made my poster stronger.

Conclusion

My research proved that colorism has a negative effect on black women in America within self perception and society. I also found that colorism has an impact on men and women but more strongly in women. Black women can use having a lighter skin tone as an advantage to advance in society and get higher social status rather than men. Due to my findings concluding that lighter skinned women have a higher quality of life in comparison to a darker skinned women, shows they may not be offered the same opportunities.

What can be done to heal colorism?

1. To fix the problem of colorism, many people need to be informed of how it can affect lives further than just self perception. If the black community were to see how many people do not have the same opportunities as another just because one is darker, I feel like that could change our treatment toward those with darker skin. Once people get informed, people can come together to uplift all skin tones of a race.
2. Colorism in the media is a big contribution to why we think one tone of black is more beautiful than the other. Physical traits such as skin color, eye color, hair texture, lip prominence, and nose shape are symbols of what we perceive as beautiful. Many things are not celebrated in the media that are associated with the average black woman because that is what is not seen as "beautiful". If we were to change what was socially accepted as beautiful, many more people would feel beautiful the way they are.

The prominent factor that continues to separate the same race of people is skin color.