An investigation into the relationship between skin-tone, self-esteem and racial discrimination.

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Abstract

Aims: This study aims to investigate the relationship between skin-tone, self-esteem and perceived discrimination within the Black population living in Ireland. The purpose of this study was to determine the effect of skin tone on self-esteem. Additionally, it examined if an association existed between skin tone and perceived discrimination. **Method**: Participants (n = 73) completed a survey that included a demographic questionnaire, a Perceived Discrimination scale, and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem measure. Participants were asked to self-identify their skin tone using the Fenty Foundation Guide. **Results**: The results indicated that there was no correlation between skin tone and self-esteem. Additionally, there is no correlation between skin tone and perceived discrimination. This indicates that no link exists between skin tone and either of the factors. **Conclusions**: The findings indicate a need for more research into the significance of skin tone in Ireland's black community. This study emphasizes the significance of additional research and analysis into why results differ between an Irish community and other communities with a history of racism. It implies that further research into the function of the media in skin-tone discrimination is necessary.

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Introduction

"Colourism is the daughter of racism" – Lupita Nyon'go

Colourism is a form of prejudice and/or discrimination in which people with comparable ethnic traits or perceived race are treated differently based on the social consequences of the cultural stigmas attached to skin colour. It is the assignment of privilege and disadvantage according to the darkness or lightness of one's skin colour (Burke, 2008). Eurocentric beauty standards, external racism perpetrated by white people, internalized racism perpetrated by black people, and rigid conceptions of femininity and masculinity in relation to race and skin tone all contribute to the manifestation of colourism as a phenomenon (Franklin, Boyd-Franklin, & Kelly, 2006; Kelly, 2004; Walker, 1983). What differentiates colourism from other forms of discrimination is the fact that it is both a within-group and between-group issue. When discussing colourism in a BBC interview, Lupita Nyon'go refers to colourism as the daughter of racism, highlighting the causal relationship between the two ("Lupita Nyong'o: Colourism is the daughter of racism", 2022). Although colourism isn't limited to Black people, It has been linked to several interpersonal and intrapersonal issues within the black community and effects the way black people are perceived by other races. Colourism differs from other forms of racial prejudice because those who fall prey to it experience its discomforts both internally, by expressing a desire to appear more 'light skinned' to receive the social benefits of it (Landor & McNeil Smith, 2019), and externally because often those with a more 'dark skinned' complexion are perceived negatively by their own race and other races (Maddox & Gray, 2002). What establishes the link between colourism and racism as causal is the fact that colourism, and the perceptions of 'dark skinned' and 'light skinned' individuals, is linked to their proximity to whiteness (Moffitt, 2020). Simply put it stems from the belief that to be white

is to be better and the closer an individual is to appearing as white, the more likely they are to benefit from its privileges. This concept will be explored further in this study. Since colourism has only recently began being discussed, many of the few studies conducted on it have been in America. This leaves a large gap in the research and gives the impression that it is only an issue in America. However, as a Black Afro-Irish woman, I have seen its effects first-hand. Colourism can lead one to view themselves negatively if they have a darker skin complexion and this, combined with external racial prejudice and experience can have dire consequences. Colourism often can lead to race-based trauma which has been found to indirectly cause its victims to have poorer mental and physical health in the future (Stanley et al., 2019). Colourism's mental health consequences have been equated to psychological and emotional abuse. Colourism may increase the likelihood of aggressiveness, substance abuse, self-injury, and hazardous sexual conduct. Colourism has also been linked to depression and anxiety. Poor self-concept and poor self-esteem, which are often an effect of colourism (Jordan & Hernandez-Reif, 2009), increase the incidence of depression, whereas persistent inspection, taunting, and abuse raise the risk of anxiety ("The Skin I'm in: What Colorism Means for Psychological Healing — Therapy For Black Girls", 2022). Most of the research conducted on race-based trauma has been centred around oppression and race-based violence and aggression but many studies fail to discuss more of the subtle forms of racism such as colourism. This lack of research has led to a lack of knowledge surrounding the topic, therefore trauma as a result of racist experiences such as colourism is not even recognised by many psychological and psychiatric diagnostic services (Stanley et al., 2019) meaning those suffering from it is less likely to receive treatment. This study aims to highlight the effects of colourism and its existence within the black community in Ireland as most studies have been centred in America. More research is required in this area and this study aims to build upon that.

Colourism, Skin Bleaching and POC communities

Colourism can trace its origin back to slavery and colonization. Although colourism is a prominent issue within the black community, it is certainly not limited to it. Colourism effects majority of people of colour where skin tone is concerned e.g., Indian people. The British invasion is one of the most visible origins of colourism in Indian society. The British and Europeans not only propagated their "superior" faith among the people, but also preached that their fair complexion was part of their "superiority" above the Indians. They institutionalized colourism-based oppression against Indians by giving fair-skinned people priority, employment, and authority while openly criticizing and oppressing dark-skinned people with their message of fair-skinned people being educated, intellectual, and beautiful. Whether intentionally or unconsciously, Indian culture acquired this philosophy throughout the colonial era ("The History of Colourism", 2022).

Colonization also played a role in the introduction of colourism to African societies. This occurred during the 15th and 20th centuries. Europeans symbolized power, as well as the promise of a better life, opportunity, refinement, and greatness. The only thing that stood between them and these things, in their eyes, was lighter skin. Between the 15th and 19th centuries, the slave trade resulted in many Africans being enslaved in the Western world. A similar situation existed to that of the Asians, when children were born to white owners and female black slaves. The mulattos, as they were widely known, were fair skinned, which allowed them to get preferential treatment from the masters. They were placed in their owners' houses in order to do household duties that were more comfortable.

Some slave owners even assisted their mulatto progeny in obtaining freedom, while others sent them overseas to further their education. When they returned home, they found work as attorneys, teachers, and physicians, among other occupations. After a while, the black

slave population had come to understand that lighter skin signified beauty and privilege, and that this was the route to a better existence ("Colourism 2000 years ago and Today - Any Improvements? - Safer Skin Whitening", 2022).

Even after the end of slavery and colonization, colourism remained in these societies because it was so deeply ingrained. Evidence of this can be seen in the use of bleaching creams and skin lightening products in these countries. Bleaching creams are very damaging products used to lighten the skin's tone. Over 8.6 billion dollars are spent annually on bleaching creams globally, and between 25% and 80% of women in African nations use skin bleaching cosmetics. The high mercury content of these lotions is one of the reasons why black people and other non-white people of colour are discouraged from using them. Mercury poisoning may cause peripheral vision loss; pins and needles sensations, most often in the hands, feet, and around the mouth; lack of coordination of movements; impairment of speech, hearing, and walking; and/or muscular weakness ("Health Effects of Mercury Exposures | US EPA", 2021). Many users of these creams are aware of the hazards yet continue to use them, demonstrating how important skin tone is to the black community's quality of life. It also demonstrates how ingrained insecurity over one's skin tone is and how far individuals would go to appear lighter.

The Media and The Light-skinned Aesthetic

As previously discussed, dark-skinned people are often subject to more discrimination than light-skinned black people within their community. This is because lighter skin is often generally associated with more positive traits such as intelligence while darker skin is associated with more negative traits such as aggressiveness (Maddox & Gray, 2002). This also affects mate selection within the black community and, between the black community and other race groups. Lighter skinned individuals are seen as more attractive and favoured as both romantic and social companions (Hughes & Hertel, 1990). These sentiments and beliefs are

also depicted in the media. Black persons with lighter skin tones seldom have difficulty getting cast in big parts in films and television programs. However, dark-skinned actors, particularly women, have far more difficulties getting hired in similar parts. Hollywood's preference for fair-skinned individuals is not new. It may be tracked throughout time simply by analysing the people cast in black romance films and television series (Rose, 2022). A well-known example of colourism may be found in the television sitcom "The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air." Aunt Viv was initially played by a dark-skinned lady, Janet Hubert, but was subsequently replaced by a light-skinned woman, Daphne Maxwell Reid. The cause for Hubert's departure is not indicative of the widespread mistreatment of dark-skinned women, but the choice of somebody to replace her is.

The favouritism of light-skinned black people is not limited to the film industry and can also be seen in the music industry. Majority of black female artists are lighter skinned. Examples of this would be Rihanna, Beyonce, Cardi B, Nicki Minaj etc. Although this could be attributed to talent, it is more than likely not a coincidence. Mathew Knowles, father of singer and actress Beyonce once acknowledged this; *"When it comes to black females, who are the people who get their music played on the radio?... Mariah Carey, Rihanna, the female rapper, Nicki Minaj, [his] kids… what do they all have in common?"* ("Colourism – how shade bias perpetuates prejudice against people with dark skin", 2022). Light-skinned black women are often seen as more racially ambiguous, and this is seen as more marketable as it is considered more digestible for predominately white market ("Marketing Still Has a Colorism Problem", 2022). This not only affects those in the film industry, but it effects the viewers. The over representation of light-skinned women in media means a lack of representation for dark-skinned women and young girls. This may be a contributing factor to young dark-skinned girl having lower self-evaluations than their light skinned counterparts (Jordan & Hernandez-Reif, 2009).

Many of the findings on colourism's effect on media appears to be centred around women and the differences between light-skinned and dark-skinned women. This is because there is a complicated relationship between gender and colourism.

Colourism, The Dating Pool and Gender Differences

Colourism appears to play a role in mate selection within the black community (Hughes & Hertel, 1990) with lighter skinned being favoured because it fits more into the white beauty standard. However, it looks as though this problem affects both male and female black individuals equally. As previously stated, when it comes to entertainment and the industry, lighter skinned women are frequently cast more and serve as representation for black women because they are perceived as more attractive and marketable, and this sentiment carries over into the dating pool for black women as well. For black men, darker skin is frequently regarded as more attractive. This, contrary to common assumption, is also rooted in colourism.

"Dark skin is a masculine sign of potency and has intense psychological implications when contrasted with light skin as a sign of masculine impotency and, hence, effeminancy" - (Hall, 2015)

The perceived relationship between darker skin and masculinity and aggressiveness has posed as a benefit to darker skinned black men in the dating world (Hall, 2015). Since darker skin is masculinized so heavily, they are often seen as the ultimate depiction of a man. This may make them much more suitable candidates when it comes to picking sexual partners. The issue with this stereotype, much like any other, is that it forces black men into a box leading many their behaviours to be viewed as aggressive or violence. This stereotype is also often applied in a sexual context and dark-skinned black men are dehumanised and fetishized as a

result of it (Asare, 2022). This stereotype also effects lighter skinned black men in the sense that they are seen as more feminine, and this can negatively affect them when looking for a partner as masculinity is favoured in heterosexual relationships. However, overall, lighter skinned individuals are still seen as more attractive and favoured as both romantic and social companions (Hughes & Hertel, 1990).

"The trope of the steely, resolute black woman is ingrained in society, and helps fuel a growing problem with depression and self-harm" - (Cole, 2022)

As previously said, A darker complexion has frequently been associated with negative attributes such as aggression or violence both inside and beyond the black community (Maddox & Gray, 2002). This belief is detrimental to dark-skinned black women because it masculinizes them. Not only does this masculinization diminish their perceived attractiveness (Navah et al., 2022), but it also has a detrimental influence on their quality of life. This is where the 'strong' black woman trope originated from. This is also referred to as the 'superwoman schema'. This stereotype is a representation of Black women who exhibit three distinguishing characteristics: emotional resilience, caregiver abilities, and independence. This stereotype depicts Black women as fearless individuals capable of overcoming any obstacle ("The Damaging Effects of The Strong Black Woman Trope - SHEQUALITY", 2022). Although, this statement appears to be positive, it leaves the impression that black women can withstand more pain which can lead to the not being able to receive the help they need emotionally, psychologically and physically. The resilience associated with darker skinned black individuals has led to the issues faced by them being ignored.

Skin-Tone, Self Esteem and Racial Discrimination

Similarly, to the privilege afforded to white people, the privileges experienced by light-skinned black people have become more subtle since the end of slavery and colonization. It has been shown that lighter-skinned persons of the same race or ethnicity make more money, finish more years of school, live in nicer areas, and marry people of higher status than darker-skinned people (Murguia and Telles 1996; Rondilla and Spickard 2007; Arce et al. 1987; Hill 2000; Hughes and Hertel 1990; Keith and Herring 1991; Hunter 1998, 2005; Espino and Franz 2002). Many of these studies were conducted in America and therefore they cannot be used to generalise on an Irish population. However, one cannot ignore the several studies providing evidence of the contrast in experiences faced by light-skinned and dark-skinned black people.

These differences can have negative effects on dark-skinned black people because they add another layer to the discrimination that they are already experiencing for being black. Earlier research has suggested that the skin tone of Black children had a significant effect on their self-esteem, with lighter skin being related with higher self-esteem (Jordan & Hernandez-Reif, 2009). Previous research has established links between skin tone and psychological well-being, including self-esteem (Landor & McNeil Smith, 2019), bodily satisfaction (Falconer & Neville, 2000), and perceived attractiveness (Hill, 2002). Darker skinned persons, in particular, have poorer self-esteem, less body satisfaction, and higher rates of depression than their lighter skinned counterparts (Landor & McNeil Smith, 2019). Additionally, research of developing African American and Latinx adults discovered that skin tone and contentment with one's skin tone related to racial/ethnic identification and predicted depressive symptoms, anxiety, and self-esteem (Landor & Zeiders, 2019). Self-esteem is described as an individual's overall outlook toward himself or herself, whether bad or good. Persons with a high personal self-esteem believe they are valuable individuals, whereas those with a low personal self-esteem have scorn or hatred for themselves (Rosenberg, 1979). It is evident that the discrimination and

the lack of representation for dark-skinned people has contributed to them having lower self-esteem. Low self-esteem is associated with disordered eating (Larison and Pritchard, 2019), as well as depression and anxiety (Johnson, 2020). These cumulative experiences might cause trauma in dark-skinned black individuals who face this form of prejudice daily. Unfortunately, Racial trauma is rarely recognised by many psychological and psychiatric diagnostic services (Stanley et al., 2019) due to the lack of research conducted on it and the lack of understanding of the topic and the consequences of it. As skin-tone discrimination is rarely discussed, the trauma resulting from it is also rarely recognised meaning those suffering from it rarely receive the help and support they need.

The Current Study

Majority of the research conducted on colourism has been in America. This means there is a lack of evidence supporting the existence of skin-tone discrimination within the Black Community in Ireland. It is unclear whether there is a difference in the discrimination faced by light-skinned black people living in Ireland and their darker skinned counterparts and therefore, it is often assumed that it does not exist. However, due to technical advancements and an overall growth in worldwide media consumption, it is acceptable to claim that the media consumed by an Irish population is comparable to that consumed in America. This suggests that dark-skinned black adults and children are also subjected to a lack of representation in films, television shows, and the music industry. As well as this, Ireland, much like any other country is not immune to racist ideologies and racist discrimination is a regular occurrence (Fanning, 2018). As highlighted before in the review, colourism evolved from racism and the assumption that whiteness is superior. Therefore, it is reasonable to believe that colourism exists in Irish society.

Numerous psychological and physical consequences of skin-tone discrimination are associated with low self-esteem. Furthermore, the first element that should be explored is the

relationship between the amount of discrimination encountered based on skin tone and self-esteem. If a link is established between skin tone, the level of discrimination faced, and self-esteem, it can be argued that skin-tone discrimination exists in the Black-Irish community. Additionally, larger research on skin-tone discrimination and the trauma associated with it can be conducted. This understanding will assist psychological and psychiatric diagnostic services in determining who is more susceptible to racial trauma and the detrimental consequences of skin-tone discrimination. As previously said, darker skinned individuals are sometimes viewed as being unrealistically strong, which frequently prevents them from accessing required support. Increased awareness of colourism and skin-tone discrimination may aid in the elimination of this stigma.

The objective of this study is to highlight the existence of skin-tone discrimination among the Black Irish community by examining if there is a difference in the amount of perceived discrimination faced by light-skinned black individuals in Ireland compared to their dark-skinned counterparts. Additionally, this study may demonstrate the relationship between skin tone and self-esteem. As a result of these aims, the following research questions and hypotheses are proposed:

Research Question 1: Is there a relationship between Skin-Tone and Perceived Discrimination (Lifetime Discrimination and Daily Discrimination)? Hypothesis for research question 1: There will be higher Perceived discrimination scores amongst darker skinned participants than lighter skinned participants as suggested by literature.

Research Question 2: Is there a relationship between Skin-Tone and Self Esteem? Hypothesis for research question 2: There will be higher self esteem scores amongst the lighter

skinned participants than the darker skinned participants in line with previous studies discussed.

Methods

Participants

The research sample in the present study consisted of 72 participants. The sampling technique used to recruit participants was convenience sampling. The survey was shared via the primary researcher's social media accounts (Instagram, Snapchat, Tiktok). This increased the likelihood of the survey reaching a larger number of people. Additionally, participants were able to share the survey via the Google Forms link, which increased the likelihood that it would reach individuals in multiple counties, hence boosting the reliability of the survey's results. In accordance with ethical considerations, participants were required to provide informed consent before to completing the survey. To guarantee that the survey sampled the desired demographic (Black Individuals living in Ireland), participants were required to complete a demographic questionnaire. Participants were asked to self-identify their skin tone using the Fenty foundation identification system, which was labelled from 1 to 30 (with 30 representing the darkest skin tone and 1 representing the lightest). The Fenty foundation guide was chosen because Fenty is an inclusive and diverse brand with a wide range of shades. Only responses from participants who identified as having skin tones 16 to 30 were included, as they were the only participants who identified as black. Since this study is focusing exclusively on skin-tone discrimination in an Irish context, participants were asked if they lived in Ireland. The study did not collect data from participants who lived outside of Ireland.

Materials

The questionnaire for this study included a demographic questionnaire and two distinct scales, which were merged on Google Forms. A demographic questionnaire was utilized to ensure that the data gathered was representative of the intended sample (Black people living in Ireland). The participants were required to self-identify using the Fenty foundation's guide, as well as their gender and residency status in Ireland.

Perceived Discrimination Scale:

The 20-item Perceived Discrimination Scale, developed by Williams, Yu, Jackson, and Anderson (1997), assesses how frequently people believe that others treat them poorly or unfairly on the basis of their race, ethnic origin, gender, age, faith, personal appearance, sexual identity, and perhaps other characteristics.

The Perceived Discrimination Scale (PDS) is a twenty-item instrument composed of two subscales: the Lifetime Discrimination Scale and the Daily Discrimination Scale. Respondents complete the 11-item Lifetime Discrimination measure by indicating the number of times they have encountered unjust treatment throughout their lives. The overall score on this scale is increased by the number of incidents that occurred at least once for the respondent. More discrimination during one's life is linked with higher scores on this test. Participants were able to type in the number for this section of the study questionnaire.

The Daily Discrimination is a nine-item subscale that assesses respondents' daily encounters with unjust treatment. On a scale of 1 to 4, respondents indicate how frequently they feel discriminated against (1 = frequently; 2 = occasionally; 3 = rarely; 4 = never). The researchers evaluated this scale by reverse coding all the items and adding the scores together, with higher scores indicating more discriminatory experiences. Unlike questions 1 to 11,

participants were asked to click the box which applied rather than typing out the number. Overall Higher scores indicate more perceived discrimination (See Appendix A).

Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale

The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) is a ten-item, Likert scale, self-report measure that was initially created to collect data on teenage self-esteem and self-worth. It has subsequently grown to be one of the most extensively used measures of adult self-esteem (Rosenberg, 1965). The questions are answered on a four-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree (Winch and Rosenberg, 1965) (See Appendix B). Questions 2, 5,7,8 and 9 are reversed scores. High scores indicate higher levels of self-esteem. Low scores indicate lower levels of self-esteem. This scale has been found to have high internal reliability with Cronbach's Alpha scores ranging from 0.84 to 0.86 (Tinakon & Nahathai, 2012). For this study in particular, this scale was found to be reliable with a Cronbach alpha score of 0.66 (α = 0.66). In the study questionnaire, participants were asked to click the box which applied, with the four boxes being labelled from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

Design and Analyses

The study used a cross-sectional design and is quantitative in nature due to the use of a questionnaire to gather data. Due to the design of this study, A large sample was required (approx. 64 participants according to g* power). A Pearson's Correlation will be conducted first to establish a relationship between skin-tone and perceived discrimination and self-esteem. If a correlation is established, linear regressions will be conducted to understand the relationship between; 1) skin-tone and perceived discrimination (Lifetime Discrimination and Daily Discrimination) Scores and 2) skin-tone and self-esteem. A linear regression will show the effect the predictor variable (Skin-tone) has on the separate criterion variables (Self Esteem

and Perceived Discrimination (LD + DD)) rather a Pearson's R test which will only be able to identify the presence of a relationship between the PV and the CV.

Procedure

The data was gathered using an online questionnaire. The questionnaire was anonymized and shared via stories and posts on the primary researchers' social media platforms (Instagram, Snapchat, and Tiktok). The survey was linked and could be shared and reposted. When participants clicked the link, they were sent to an information page outlining the study's aim and risks. They were advised that by proceeding to the following page, they were consenting to the study's use of their information (See Appendix E). Additionally, they were informed that they could revoke their consent at any time before submitting their response by closing the survey (See Appendix F) . Since the survey was delivered online, it was difficult to determine how long it took participants to complete, however it was predicted to take 10-15 minutes.

After obtaining consent, participants completed a demographic questionnaire in which they were asked to rate their skin tone on a scale of 1 to 30 using the Fenty foundation guide (see Appendix C). They were instructed to enter the number that was closest to their skin tone. Additionally, they were asked if they resided in Ireland, as this study was limited to an Irish population. Additionally, participants were asked their gender and age (as this may be a relevant factor according to previous literature). After completing this section, participants were permitted to proceed to the remainder of the survey. This component was necessary in order to continue with the remaining questions. Following that, participants were asked to complete the Perceived Discrimination Scale (PDS) and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale

(RSES) (See Appendix B). This was followed by a debriefing page in which participants were thanked and informed that they could no longer withdraw consent due to the survey's anonymity. Additionally, participants were supplied with helplines to call in the event of distress (See Appendix D.).

Ethical Considerations

All data was obtained in accordance with the National College of Ireland's ethical requirements. There was no coercion for participants to complete the survey, and all participants provided informed consent. Participants were made aware of the risks and benefits of this study, as well as the implications of their participation in the study. Participants were permitted to withdraw the information and consent at any point during the survey before submitting their response. All the information retrieved from the survey is anonymised and all information obtained was required information. Following the study, they are supplied with contact information for helplines such as 50808, Reach Out, and Aware.Ie who they can contact if they have psychological distress after the study.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

The data presented was taken from a sample of 73 participants (n = 73). This consisted of 27.4% men (n = 20) and 71.2% women (n = 52). Preliminary analysis was performed to ensure all continuous variables followed all assumptions of normality. All variables in this study were continuous. The results for the continuous variables are indicated below in *Table 1*.

Table 1: *Descriptives for all continuous variables (n = 73)*

	Mean	*Range*	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis	Minimum	Maximum
Perceived Discrimination	32.54	74	16.46	1.70	3.07	11	85
Self Esteem	17.73	16	4.07	-0.39	-0.58	9	25
Skin Tone	24.22	12	2.70	-0.47	0.21	17	29

Inferential Statistics

A Pearson's correlation was conducted to investigate the relationship between Self-Esteem and Skin-Tone. Preliminary analyses were conducted to ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity and homoscedasticity. There was an insignificant, weak, positive correlation between Skin-Tone and Self-Esteem ($r = 0.13$, n = 72, $p = 0.28$). Results indicated that Skin-Tone is not correlated to Self- Esteem (See Table 3)

A Pearson's correlation was conducted to investigate the relationship between Skin-Tone and Perceived Discrimination. Preliminary analyses were conducted to ensure no

violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity and homoscedasticity. There was an insignificant, weak, negative correlation between Skin-Tone and Perceived Discrimination (r = -0.032, n = 72, p = 0.80). Results indicated no correlations being levels of Perceived Discrimination and Skin-Tone.

As there is no association between the variables, no further analyses are required.

Table 3: *Pearson's Correlations between continuous variables*

	1	2	3
1. **Skin Tone**	1		
2. **Perceived Discrimination**	-0.32	1	
3. **Self Esteem**	0.132	-0.19	1

N = 72 ; statistical significance: p < 0.01 *

*View Appendix G for Variable View

Discussion

The aim of this study was to examine the association between skin tone and perceived discrimination. Additionally, it sought to investigate the link between skin tone and self-esteem in the Black Irish community. Previous research has indicated a relationship between skin tone and self-esteem (Landor & McNeil Smith, 2019); however, these studies have been limited to the African American community. Prior research has also shown the many types of prejudice that dark-skinned black individuals face more frequently as a result of their skin tone (Murguia and Telles 1996; Rondilla and Spickard 2007; Arce et al. 1987; Hill 2000; Hughes and Hertel 1990; Keith and Herring 1991; Hunter 1998, 2005; Espino and Franz 2002). Two hypotheses were developed following an analysis of the prior literature.

The study's findings indicated that there was no correlation between skin tone and perceived discrimination, which contradicted the hypothesis. According to previous research, it was hypothesized that not only would there be a link between skin tone and perceived discrimination, but that skin tone may also be a predictor of the degree of prejudice one would encounter. In order to explore the relationship between self-esteem and skin-tone, correlation analyses were also conducted. In contrast with what was hypothesised, there was no significant relationship between skin-tone and self-esteem. In line with previous studies, it was hypothesised that skin-tone and self-esteem would be correlated. In the case of this study, skin-tone and self-esteem were hypothesis to be negatively correlated, as skin-tone deepened (a.k.a. the number increased), self-esteem scale scores were expected to decrease.

The findings indicated that discrimination based on skin tone is less prevalent in the Black-Irish community than in African American ones. This contradicts prior research suggesting that racism was a problem in Irish culture, because, as previously stated,

colourism is evolved from racism and frequently coincides with it. Additionally, the data indicated that there is no correlation between self-esteem and skin tone. This also opposes prior research indicating that skin tone might be a predictor of self-esteem, with lighter skin being related with higher self-esteem. If Black Irish people are equally subjected to light skin propaganda in the media, how come it have no effect on their self-esteem? This might be explained by two factors: either the media's effect is less substantial than prior study revealed, or Irish culture is usually more accommodating of darker skin-tones. This might account for the absence of a correlation between self-esteem and skin tone. Also, if this is the case, these findings may also imply that discrimination based on skin tone is more damaging in person than it is in the media.

Implications

The current study's findings have significant theoretical and practical ramifications. This study has prompted us to investigate the role of the media. Despite the fact that the majority of American research demonstrated the opposite, the gathered previous data suggested that there was no association between skin-tone, self-esteem and perceived discrimination. It prompts us to consider the distinctions between a Black American and a Black Irish sample. Because the media is a factor that is shared by both populations, future research may utilize it to ascertain what factors contributed to the discrepancy in the results. Is the media a factor in the self-esteem of persons who face discrimination on a regular basis? Is media representation vital to counteract prejudice on the basis of skin tone? Both of these issues have yet to be examined in an Irish as well as an American population.

While this study did not provide the anticipated findings, it did give a solid foundation for future research. It is the first study of its sort to be undertaken on an Irish community and may contribute to the ongoing debate over racism faced by ethnic minorities in Ireland. Due to the fact that the majority of Irish psychiatric and psychological diagnostic services are still under development, it is critical for them to comprehend the experiences of ethnic minorities who may seek care. If they have a greater understanding of racial and cultural issues, they can help eliminate stigmas that black people have an innate sense of resilience and may assist them in developing methods to assist black people in coping with the various types of traumas they may face as a result of their skin colour. This could help these services understand who is more at risks for the trauma resulting from racism and skin-tone discrimination.

Strengths and Limitations

This study has a few limitations. The study's use of convenience sampling may have been problematic. As a result of this sampling approach, many individuals had a similar skin tone, with the mean and median being 24. Due to a lower proportion of individuals being light-skinned and in the light skin tone range (19-22), the relationships between skin tone and self-esteem and discrimination may have been weakened and appeared insignificant. The small proportion of light-skinned individuals may have contributed to the result's lack of distinction. Perhaps in future research, a more deliberate method of sampling, such as selective sampling, should be adopted.

Another potential disadvantage of this study is that it relied on a perceived discrimination scale rather than a qualitative method. Due to the fact that skin tone discrimination is a more subtle kind of discrimination, it might manifest differently than racial discrimination. The majority of discrimination measures are more suited to more straightforward types of prejudice and do not always account for the subtle ways in which skin-

tone discrimination expresses itself. An interview may be more effective at determining the extent to which one faces skin-tone discrimination and identifying racial microaggressions, which are everyday verbal, behavioural, or environmental insinuations, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative attitudes toward stigmatized or culturally marginalized groups ("What Is a Microaggression? Everyday Insults with Harmful Effects", 2022).

One of this study's significant strengths was the use of a foundation guide as a measure. This made it simple for participants to pick their skin-tone and eliminated the possibility of misinterpretation. If the study had allowed participants to choose between three alternatives, such as dark-skin, light-skin, or brown-skin, people may have been unsure about their fit and may have provided a false description of their skin tone. Due to the stigma associated with dark-skinned individuals, participants may be hesitant to self-identify as such. The foundation guide was entirely objective and did not appear to be biased in any way. This might be used to group or select individuals in future research.

Conclusion

This study contributes to the ongoing discussion on racial dynamics in Ireland, particularly in the black community. It demonstrates the impact of skin-tone on the quality of life of a black person living in Ireland and initiates a discussion on whether Ireland's racial conflicts are equivalent to those in the United States. The data demonstrates that skin tone and self-esteem are not always related, and that prejudice is felt equally by all black skin-tones in Ireland. Due to the study's inconsistency with past research, it suggests the necessity for more investigation. Specifically, this study highlights the importance of further research and

examination into why the outcomes differ between an Irish community and other populations where racism is prevalent.

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Appendix

Appendix A

<u>Perceived Discrimination Scale.</u>

Instructions: How many times in your life have you been discriminated against in each of the following ways because of such things as your race, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, physical appearance, sexual orientation, or other characteristics? Write the number of times each event occurred next to each statement for questions 1-11 and circle your response for questions 12-20.

1. You were discouraged by a teacher or advisor from seeking higher education. ____

2. You were denied a scholarship.____

3. You were not hired for a job.____

4. You were not given a promotion.____

5. You were fired.____

6. You were prevented from renting or buying a home in the neighborhood you wanted._____

7. You were prevented from remaining in a neighborhood because neighbors made life so uncomfortable._____

8. You were hassled by the police._____

9. You were denied a bank loan._____

10. You were denied or provided inferior medical care._____

11. You were denied or provided inferior service by a plumber, care mechanic, or other service provider._____

12. You are treated with less courtesy than other people.

Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never

13. You are treated with less respect than other people.

Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never

14. You receive poorer service than other people at restaurants or stores.

Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never

15. People act as if they think you are not smart.

Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never

16. People act as if they are afraid of you.

Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never

17. People act as if they think you are dishonest.

Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never

18. People act as if they think you are not as good as they are.

Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never

19. You are called names or insulted.

Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never

20. You are threatened or harassed.

Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never

Appendix B

Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale

Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

1.   On the whole, I am satisfied with myself

2.   At times, I think I am no good at all

3.   I feel that I have a number of good qualities

4.   I am able to do things as well as most other people

5.   I feel I do not have much to be proud of

6.   certainly feel useless at times

7.   I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others

8.   I wish I could have more respect for myself

9.   All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure

10.   take a positive attitude toward myself

Appendix C

Appendix D

Debriefing Form

Thank you!

Thank you for participating in the current study which was investigating the effects of colourism on self-esteem and racist experiences.

If you know any friends or acquaintances that are eligible to participate in this study, we request that you do not discuss it with them until they have had the opportunity to participate in the study. Your cooperation in this study is appreciated.

If you have any further questions regarding the study, feel free to email the principal researcher at x19368163@student.ncirl.ie. You can no longer withdraw your information at this point as it is anonymous.

If you feel psychologically distressed as a result this study, please contact the numbers of any of the helplines below.

Thanks again for your participation.

Helplines.

The Samaritans

Call: 087 260 9090

Email: jo@samaritans.org

Aware

Call: 1800 80 4848

Email: supportmail@aware.ie

24/7 Suicide Hotline

Call: 1800 247 247

*Or text **help** to **51444***

Appendix E

Brief/Information Sheet:

Information Sheet

Title of research: An investigation into the relationship between skin-tone, self-esteem and racial discrimination.

Principal Investigator: Diamond Odebunmi

Introduction and Purpose of the study: This study aims to understand the effects of colourism or skin tone-based discrimination on Self-esteem and perceived discrimination. It aims to add to previous research on the effects of colourism.

Description of research:

After reading this sheet and providing your consent to participate, you will complete a survey containing a number of questionnaires. You will be asked to indicate your age, gender, your race, and whether you are an Irish resident. You will then self-identify your skin tone using the Fenty foundation guide as a measure. After this you will complete two questionnaires – one will assess general self-esteem and the other will assess racial discrimination you may have experienced. If you find any of these topics too distressing, you can choose not to participate by closing your browser window or tab and exiting the survey. As there is a potential risk of psychological distress, a list of helpline numbers that offer support in Ireland will be provided at the end of the survey. Participation will take approximately 10mins.

Your data will be protected and anonymous. All laptops and computers will be encrypted and will have strong passwords. Data will be accessible only to the primary researcher and their supervisor. Data will be stored for 5 years in line with NCI research guidelines before being destroyed. You can withdraw at any point during the study just by closing your browser window or tab. Once your response has been submitted at the end of the survey, you can no longer withdraw your data as it will be anonymised.

Participants in this study:

As this topic is centered around racism and more specifically colourism, we are seeking participants who self-identify as Black. Any Black people currently residing in Ireland, aged 18 years or over are able to participate.

Potential risks:

There is potential risk of psychological distress when recalling racial discrimination in the survey. If you experience psychological distress at any point during the survey, you can withdraw from the study by closing the browser window or tab. At the end of the survey, there will be links and numbers for helplines in Ireland such as 50808 who can offer support if you are experiencing psychological distress.

Potential Benefits:

By participating in this study, you will be contributing to the gaps in research surrounding colourism and the effects of skin tone discrimination. This could help improve our understanding of the relationship between colourism and psychological factors such as self-esteem.

If you have any further questions about the study, you can contact the primary researcher (Diamond) at the following email address: x19368163@student.ncirl.ie

Appendix F

Consent Form

By clicking you are agreeing to the following:

I have read and understood the information sheet and consent form.

 I have been given the opportunity to email the researcher to ask questions about the study and (where questions have been asked) the researcher has answered the questions to my satisfaction.

 I understand that participation is voluntary, and I am free to withdraw from the study any point during the study.
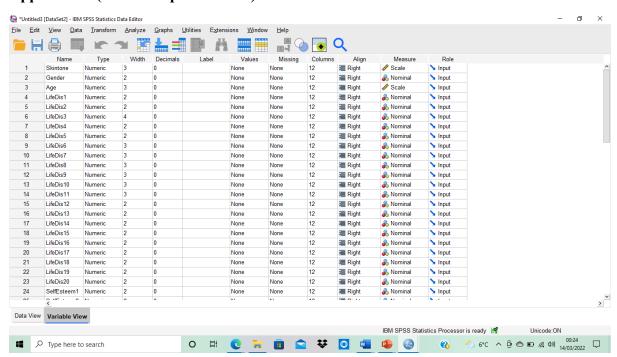

 I understand that the information I provide for this study is anonymous and will be used for this study alone.

I understand the risks involved in participating in this study and understand the potential benefits of my participation.

 I understand that authenticated researchers may use my responses in lab reports, articles, journals etc. but that all data will be anonymous.

By clicking 'continue', you are agreeing to take part in this study.

Appendix G (Proof of Spss data file)

Correlations

		PerceivedDis	Skintone
Pearson Correlation	PerceivedDis	1.000	-.032
	Skintone	-.032	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	PerceivedDis	.	.400
	Skintone	.400	.
N	PerceivedDis	64	64
	Skintone	64	72

Variables Entered/Removed[a]

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	Skintone[b]	.	Enter

a. Dependent Variable: PerceivedDis

b. All requested variables entered.