

Shedding Light on Colorism: Exploring Stereotypes, Influential Factors, and Consequences in African American Communities

Authors : India Sanders, Jeffrey Sherman

Abstract : Colorism has been a persistent and ingrained issue in the history of the United States, with far-reaching consequences that continue to affect various aspects of daily life, institutional policies, public spaces, economic structures, and social norms. This complex problem has had a particularly profound impact on the African-American community, shaping how they are perceived and treated within society at large. The prevalence of negative stereotypes surrounding African Americans can lead to severe repercussions such as discrimination and mental health disparities. The effects of such biases can also materialize in diverse forms, impacting the well-being and livelihoods of individuals within this community. Current research has examined how people from different racial groups perceive different skin tones of Black people, looking at the cognitive processes that manifest through categorization and stereotypes. Additionally, studies observed consequences related to colorism and how it directly affects those with darker versus lighter skin tones. However, not much research has been conducted on the influence of stereotypes associated with various skin tones. In the present study, it is hypothesized that participants in Group A will rate positive stereotypes associated with lighter skin tones significantly higher than positive stereotypes associated with darker skin tones. It is also hypothesized that participants in Group B will rate negative stereotypes associated with darker skin tones significantly higher than negative stereotypes associated with lighter skin tones. For this study, a quantitative study on stereotypes of skin tone representation within the African-American community will be conducted. Participants will rate the accuracy of various visual representations within mass media of African Americans with light skin tones and dark skin tones using a Likert scale. Participants will also be provided a questionnaire further examining the perception of stereotypes and how this affects their interactions with African Americans with lighter versus darker skin tones. The purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of skin tone portrayals on African Americans, including associated stereotypes and societal perceptions. It is expected that participants will more likely associate negative stereotypes with African Americans who have darker skin tones, as this is a common and reinforced viewpoint in the cultural and social system.

Keywords : colorism, discrimination, racism, stereotype

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