



2021

Exploring the Effects of Colorism on Relationship Quality

Kara Burns

University of Kentucky, karaburns16@gmail.com

Digital Object Identifier: <https://doi.org/10.13023/etd.2021.092>

[Right click to open a feedback form in a new tab to let us know how this document benefits you.](#)

Recommended Citation

Burns, Kara, "Exploring the Effects of Colorism on Relationship Quality" (2021). *Theses and Dissertations--Family Sciences*. 90.

https://uknowledge.uky.edu/hes_etds/90

This Master's Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Family Sciences at UKnowledge. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses and Dissertations--Family Sciences by an authorized administrator of UKnowledge. For more information, please contact UKnowledge@lsv.uky.edu.

STUDENT AGREEMENT:

I represent that my thesis or dissertation and abstract are my original work. Proper attribution has been given to all outside sources. I understand that I am solely responsible for obtaining any needed copyright permissions. I have obtained needed written permission statement(s) from the owner(s) of each third-party copyrighted matter to be included in my work, allowing electronic distribution (if such use is not permitted by the fair use doctrine) which will be submitted to UKnowledge as Additional File.

I hereby grant to The University of Kentucky and its agents the irrevocable, non-exclusive, and royalty-free license to archive and make accessible my work in whole or in part in all forms of media, now or hereafter known. I agree that the document mentioned above may be made available immediately for worldwide access unless an embargo applies.

I retain all other ownership rights to the copyright of my work. I also retain the right to use in future works (such as articles or books) all or part of my work. I understand that I am free to register the copyright to my work.

REVIEW, APPROVAL AND ACCEPTANCE

The document mentioned above has been reviewed and accepted by the student's advisor, on behalf of the advisory committee, and by the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS), on behalf of the program; we verify that this is the final, approved version of the student's thesis including all changes required by the advisory committee. The undersigned agree to abide by the statements above.

Kara Burns, Student

Dr. Nathan Wood, Major Professor

Dr. Hyungsoo Kim, Director of Graduate Studies

EXPLORING THE EFFECTS OF COLORISM ON RELATIONSHIP QUALITY

THESIS

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Family Sciences in the College of Agriculture, Food and Environment at the University of Kentucky

By

Kara Burns

Lexington, Kentucky

Director: Dr. Nathan D. Wood, Professor of Family Sciences

Lexington, Kentucky

2021

Copyright © Kara Burns 2021

ABSTRACT OF THESIS

EXPLORING THE EFFECTS OF COLORISM ON RELATIONSHIP QUALITY

Many scholars have suggested that the division of enslaved Black people based on skin tone was one of the biggest factors that influence current intraracial tension and biases, referred to as colorism. The present study examined how colorism can affect romantic relationships through aspects of colorism, skin tone satisfaction, social comparison, racial awareness, and couples satisfaction. The present study used individual data from 46 middle income Black individuals residing in the South, who self-reported on colorism, racial identity, and relationship quality via online survey. Correlations between the key variables were examined. Correlations between colorism and skin tone satisfaction, a negative correlation between colorism and relationship satisfaction, and numerous correlations between racial identity stages, colorism, and skin tone satisfaction. This study helps to extend previously limited research on how colorism can affect romantic relationships. It is imperative scholars continue to use measures and analytical strategies that allow for an equal narrative of Black individuals with views of colorism and relationship quality.

KEYWORDS: Black individuals, racial discrimination, colorism, self-esteem, relationship quality.

Kara Burns

(Name of Student)

May 5, 2021

Date

EXPLORING THE EFFECTS OF COLORISM ON RELATIONSHIP QUALITY

By
Kara Burns

Nathan D. Wood, Ph.D.

Director of Thesis

Hyungsoo Kim, Ph.D.

Director of Graduate Studies

May 5, 2021

Date

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This thesis would not have been possible without the following important people. First, I would like to thank my Thesis Chair, Dr. Nathan Wood, for challenging my ideas to help me effectively get my point across. To my amazing committee members, Dr. Candice Hargons and Tracey Werner-Wilson, thank you for sharing your knowledge and providing excellent feedback at every stage of the thesis process. Additionally, thank you to my family and friends who encouraged me every time I needed it. Finally, thank you to the respondents of my study who offered their time to make this research possible.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	iv
Chapter 1. Literature Review	1
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.1.1 Historical Context of Colorism.....	1
1.1.2 Colorism.....	3
1.1.4 Socialization of Colorism	5
1.1.5 Self Esteem and Relationship Quality	5
CHAPTER 2. Method.....	7
2.1 Participants.....	7
Table 1.1 Sample Demographics of Participants.....	8
2.3 Measures	9
2.3.1 Demographic Questionnaire	9
2.3.2 Skin Color Satisfaction	9
2.3.4 Racial Identity.....	10
2.3.5 Colorism Scale.....	11
2.3.6 Social Comparison.....	12
2.3.7 Relationship Satisfaction	13
CHAPTER 3. FINDINGS.....	14
3.1 Results.....	14
3.1.1 Hypothesis 1	16
3.1.2 Hypothesis 2	17
3.1.3 Hypothesis 3	17
3.1.4 Racial Identity, Colorism, and Skin Tone Satisfaction.....	18
3.1.4 Research Limitations and Implications.....	21
3.1.5 Clinical Implications.....	21
3.1.6 Conclusion	22
APPENDICES	24
Appendix 1. Demographic Questionnaire	24

Appendix 2. Skin Color Questionnaire/ Skin Color Satisfaction Scale.....	27
Appendix 3. Black Racial Identity Attitude Scale.....	28
Appendix 4. In-Group Colorism Scale.....	39
Appendix 5. Social Comparison Scale/Physical Characteristics Assessment Procedure	43
APPENDIX 6. Couples Satisfaction Index.....	44
REFERENCES.....	45
VITA.....	51

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.1 Sample Demographics of Participants.....	8
Table 2.1 Scale Means and Correlations	15

CHAPTER 1. LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1 Introduction

Colorism coined in 1982 by Alice Walker, was defined as the preferred treatment of the same race based on skin tone (Walker, 1983, Norwood, 2015). Out-groups like White people would view lighter skin Black people as favorable as darker skinned Black people were unfavorable (Uzugara et al., 2014). Earlier research has demonstrated that racial discrimination can affect Black mental health and family interactions (Vargas et al., 2020; Ajrouch et al., 2010), but there has been limited focus specifically on how Black people's exposure to discrimination and racism affects couple quality (Lavner, Barton, & Bryant, 2018). A study of low-income African American couples found that 80% of the couples reported experiencing racial discrimination within the past 6 months. Relationship quality was associated with the amount of reported exposure to racial discrimination (Lavner, Barton, & Bryant, 2018). The present study is designed to examine if domains of colorism affect Black romantic relationship quality, while accounting for racial identity, age, gender, education, and income.

1.1.1 Historical Context of Colorism

Reports have shown that African Americans experience more racism than any other ethnic minority in the United States (Byrd, 2012). Camara Jones (2000) defined racism as "prejudiced and discrimination- prejudiced assumptions about the abilities, motives, and intention with a race and discrimination in which negative actions towards others with regards to race". Racism and discrimination can be experienced at any time during a Black person's life and occurs frequently. Historically, the rift between Black people and White people started before the 19th century, when Black people were forced into 'Chattel Slavery' (Okoye, 1980). During this Antebellum era, Black people were

kidnapped and enslaved by White people in hostile and deadly environments and even shipped to different areas for enslaved labor for the White people (Shalhope, 1971). Even though Black people were treated with disrespect and constant abuse, not all were treated the same (Bordenhorn & Ruebeck, 2007). The White-dominated society started to accept being around lighter-skinned Black people and would start to assign them more domestic roles. Darker-skinned Black people had harsh environments to work in as they were in the field and had more physically straining work (Uzugara & Jackson, 2016). Lighter-skinned Black people were assigned to domestic roles that were also straining but were given the opportunity to educate themselves further than the field slaves could (Frazier, 1930). Researchers who found past journal entries of enslaved Black people noted that a social distinction among the enslaved was that the house slaves and servants were on a higher social hierarchy than field slaves (Frazier, 1930). Domestic slaves believed that they were of higher class and would proudly write about their connection to White people (Reece, 2017). Researchers who found diaries from field slaves found that lighter-skinned Black people would boast about their clothing and higher role to darker Black people (Carson, 2011).

As the years progressed into the postbellum era, lighter-skinned Black people internalized their elite rank and would continue to practice their higher rank through colorist groups like the Blue Vein Society (Landor & McNeil, 2019). Similarly, they would attend events like paper bag parties and other events that darker-skinned Black people could not attend. This lighter-skinned Black people preference persisted through the institutionalization despite the one-drop rule that was passed in Arkansas in 1911, which explained that if you had any drop of Black in you that you were Black. After

chattel slavery was ruled illegal and enslaved were freed, discrimination and segregation persisted. Even though lighter-skinned Black people were treated to a certain extent better than field slaves, if one were Black at all, they would be treated differently by the White-dominated society. Harvey (2017) stated that racism is classified as intergroup as it deals with two or more racial groups; while colorism is an intragroup as it occurs within the racial groups. They go on to say that if racism were abolished, colorism would remain as it can exist outside of intergroups context.

1.1.2 Colorism

Colorism is still evidenced today via skin bleaching practices (Glenn, 2008), workplace favoritism towards lighter-skinned Black people (Turner, 1995), attractiveness (Reece 2018, Uzogara et al., 2014), even higher wages, and overall well-being (Reece, 2018, Keith et al., 2010). It became difficult for individuals with darker skin tones to find jobs because most businesses were White dominated. They would only hire within their own race or very light-skinned Black individuals that were comfortable to them (Turner, 1995). In a survey that asked Black individuals how satisfied they were with their skin tone in their own Black community; researchers found that individuals with lighter-skinned tones were more satisfied than those with darker skin tones (Keith & Herring, 1991). These within-race disparities across skin tones are typically more pronounced among women. Evidence may exist about negative stereotypes about darker and lighter-skinned Black women documented before the civil rights movement (Uzugara & Jackson, 2016). Dark-skinned women endure stereotypes of low attractiveness and intelligence, unlike their dark male counterparts.

Black people endured a profound loss of culture while held in captivity before and during the 19th century; they experienced sustained grief and loss (Gump, 2010). As

most Black people encounter racism, oppression, and discrimination, trauma is reinforced and can be transmitted generationally (Gump, 2010). Stolorow and Atwood (1992) define trauma as a "unique or important effect occurring within a profound relational misattunement". This definition of trauma can also help to explain the trauma of chattel slavery and the continuation of reinforcement through colorism and racial aggression.

Colorism is a result of slavery that still affects the Black community both consciously and unconsciously throughout generations. Darker and lighter-skinned Black people continue to exclude one another from groups due to their skin tone (Landor & McNeil Smith, 2019). Views on skin tone have established negative evaluations of darker-skinned Black people and influence perceptions both personally and romantically. Studies have found that lighter-skinned Black people have higher socioeconomic status, have spouses higher in socioeconomic status, and have lower color consciousness than those with dark skin (Hertel & Hughes, 1990). While the associations of skin tones affect both men and women of African descent, it has been shown that these biases lead to greater harm for African American women (Mathews et al 2015). Positive characteristics and traits are attributed to those with lighter-skin, while those with darker- skin tones are often placed into stereotypical categories and judged severely by their physical appearance (Coward & Lehnert, 2018). The internalization of stereotypes has been defined as either internalized racialism or internalized racism. Internalized racialism is accepting both positive and negative stereotypes about one's group; internalized racism is the acceptance of only negative stereotypes (Maxwell et al 2014). Previous research suggests that while families transmit racial socialization messages to their children in

order to protect them from the realities of racism, some Black families may also inadvertently perpetuate colorism (Landor et al., 2013).

1.1.4 Socialization of Colorism

Exclusionary practices within the Black community affect both males and females, but women are most often targeted when talking about color consciousness. In a survey that asked African American women how colorism was introduced within the family, most women reported that they primarily became aware of their skin color via their mothers (Wilder & Cain, 2011). Women are not the only ones who are affected by colorist stigmas and skin tone trauma. Darker-skinned men benefit from stereotypes about their masculinity and sexuality, whereas lighter-skinned men feel that they have less value in their sexual-attractiveness (Udry et al., 1971). When looking at the influence of colorism, families are not the only ones to introduce these views. The media is a big influence on how Black people view themselves within society (Parameswaran, 2015). From being exposed to constant ads for skin whitening creams, to seeing Hollywood actors with lighter skin portrayed as good heroes and dark-skinned actors as poor villains; Black people are exposed to colorism in several different ways. Previous research (e.g., Reece, 2020) has argued that darker-skinned Black people are the ones that are most negatively affected by colorism. This study aims to focus on both sides of the spectrum of blackness to better understand both lighter and darker-skinned individuals; and how colorism and its socialization affect one's self-esteem and relationship quality.

1.1.5 Self Esteem and Relationship Quality

In a study that asked how African Americans deal with discrimination related stressors, the study found that African Americans (women more than men) prefer to use avoidance strategies more than coping strategies to deal with discrimination (Utsey et al.,

2000); Providing evidence that Black people would rather internalize and avoid specific problems that point to their race or even skin tone. Due to the internalization of certain skin tone characteristics, self-esteem and color satisfaction decline. Self-esteem is said to be important in human existence (Tayler & Glenn, 2015), it should also be considered that a culture that has encountered systemic injustice and more would have several perspectives on themselves. Some Black individuals face issues of skin tone satisfaction within their own race. Both lighter skin and darker skin Black people are forced to be overtly aware of their skin tone, this awareness can have huge impacts on one's self-esteem (Tayler & Glenn, 2015).

Similarly, other researchers have found that internalized skin tone trauma has a positive correlation with skin color satisfaction (Maxwell et al 2015). Research indicates that one's romantic relationship can influence both mental health and outlook on life, which in turn affects relationship stability (Cutrona et al., 2011). It remains unclear how the combination of both partners' colorism perspectives or transgenerational trauma associate with relationship quality.

CHAPTER 2. METHOD

2.1 Participants

There were 46 participants in the study (29 female, 15 male, 2 trans) who identified as Black or African American between 18 and 73 years of age ($m=33.565$, $sd=14.694$) who were at least 6 months into a committed relationship (e.g., dating, engaged, or married). The majority of participants (93.5%) had at least some college-level education, and most participants resided in the Southern region of the United States (41.3%). For more details on sample demographics, see Table 1.1. It should be noted that even though the participant sample is small, the sample shows diversity in sexual identity and region.

2.2 Procedures

This study used the snowball sampling method. Individuals were informed about the anonymous online survey study by advertised flyers within the University of Kentucky as well as advertised flyers on personal social media accounts. Flyers placed around the University of Kentucky campus and other locations with a high probability of foot traffic. An email was sent to gatekeepers of different Black student organizations like MANNRS, Student Support Services (SSS), and Black Graduate and Professional Student Association (BGPSA). The study also advertised in certain news media like the Kentucky Kernel, Graduate Student Congress Digest, and other newspaper outlets. Additionally, recruitment emails were sent to department heads, and directors of graduate studies asking them to distribute advertisements to all their graduate students. After providing informed consent, participants completed the online survey via Qualtrics; survey completion approximately 30 minutes. On retrieving the link to the online survey

Table 1.1 Sample Demographics of Participants

	n	%		n	%
Which race do you primarily identify as?			Indicate your highest level of education:		
Black	40	87	Less than high school	1	2.2
Bi/multiracial	5	10.9	High school diploma/GED	2	4.3
Other:	1	2.2	Some college	13	28.3
What is your ethnicity?			Associate degree	5	10.9
African American	43	93.5	Master's degree	15	32.6
African	3	6.5	Professional degree	6	13
Afro-Caribbean	2	4.3	Doctorate degree	3	6.5
			No response	1	2.2
What is your gender identity?			How would you describe your income?		
Male	15	32.6	Low income	7	15.2
Female	29	63	Lower-middle income	13	28.3
Transgender- Man	2	4.3	Middle income	20	43.5
What is your sexual identity?			Upper-middle income	4	8.7
Heterosexual	39	84.8	High income	2	4.3
Gay	2	4.3	Which region of the U.S. do you live in?		
Bisexual	3	6.5	South	19	41.3
Queer	1	2.2	West	4	8.7
No response	1	2.2	Midwest	11	23.9
Relationship Status			Southeast	6	13
Unspecified Committed Relationship	17	37	North	2	4.3
Married	18	39.1	Northeast	2	4.3
Engaged	4	8.7	Northwest	1	2.2
Living Together	4	8.7	Total	45	97.8
Living Apart	3	6.5	System	1	2.2

participants were taken to the first page of the survey for a recruitment statement.

Participants were prompted to agree to participate or if they chose not to participate, they were instructed to log out of the survey and close the browser window. The order of the measures included in the survey randomized, as the order of the questionnaires was not important. Once all measures are completed, responses were saved and stored to be coded later. Each participant thanked for their participation and presented an onscreen explanation of research as well as one last question that asked the participant if they would like to enter to win a gift card prize. Participants had an option to enter their email into a random drawing for a \$25 Starbucks gift card. If they wished to be entered into the drawing, they were directed to a separate online survey to record their email addresses. This was done to keep any identifying information separate from participant responses. The winner was selected using an online random number generator (i.e., google).

2.3 Measures

2.3.1 Demographic Questionnaire

A brief demographics questionnaire (see Appendix 1) included 13 questions assessing age, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, educational level, income, geographical location, relationship status, and relationship length. Although individual responses are only included in the analysis, four questions are included which prompted respondents to provide both their own and their partner's date of birth. In the present study, there were 46 total participants.

2.3.2 Skin Color Satisfaction

The Skin Color Satisfaction Scale (SCSS; see Appendix B) by Falconer and Neville (2000) is a 7-item questionnaire that is made from two parts. The first three questions are from the 3-item Skin Color Questionnaire Scale (SCQ; Bond & Cash, 1992)

and are designed to assess skin color satisfaction, self-perceived skin color (light-dark), and ideal skin color [Sample items: "How satisfied are you with the shade (lightness or darkness) of your skin color?" Response alternatives range from 1 (extremely dissatisfied) to 9 (extremely satisfied). (b) "Compared to most African-American people, I believe my skin color is . . ." Responses range from 1 (extremely light) to 9 (extremely dark)]. This questionnaire assessed how comfortable individuals are with their skin tone (Sample items: "I have always felt comfortable with my skin color"; "I didn't feel comfortable with my skin color until recently"). Previous research has shown that the SCSS scores are based on an item-average and thus ranges from 1 to 9, with higher scores indicating more satisfaction with skin color. Studies also merge the first three questions of SCQ scale with SCSS. Results from previous studies (Falconer & Neville, 2000) were ($\alpha=.71$, $M=7.7$, $SD=1.43$), while current sample is ($\alpha=0.676$) ($M= 7.421$) ($SD= 1.836$).

2.3.4 Racial Identity

To better understand racial identity and African Americans' attitudes toward their community, this study used the Racial Identity Attitude Scale (Helms & Parham, 1985) (Appendix C). The scale has 50 items using a 5-point Likert Scale to access subscales of preencounter (An individual's belief the idea that their race has no social meaning), Encounter (An individual's views about where they are in society changes), Immersion (Individuals' anger towards whites), and Internalization (Individuals feel a sense of pride and security within their racial heritage). Participants in the study asked questions about how they feel about being in environments of Black culture as well as if they feel comfortable with it (Sample item: I believe that being Black is good, and consequently, I limit myself to Black activities). Participants on a scale if they agree or disagree with the

statements provided (1- Strongly Disagree and 5 Strongly agree). This scale was not used to answer the research question of colorism but was included as it potentially could confound the variables of interest. Understanding this aspect helps to better understand how often some African Americans may internalize their thoughts within the community. Parham and Helms (1985) report in previous studies: preencounter (M=1.960, SD=0.61), encounter (M=4.20, SD=.77), Immersion (M=3.07, SD=0.61), Internalization (M=3.70, SD=.64). Mean scores of the present study were preencounter (M=14.918, SD= 6.170, $\alpha=0.792$), encounter (M=12.473, SD=3.116, $\alpha=0.452$), Immersion (M=26.486, SD= 4.816, $\alpha=0.527$), Internalization (M=37.837, SD= 4.997, $\alpha=0.718$).

2.3.5 Colorism Scale

The In-group Colorism Scale (ICS) (Harvey, Banks & Tennial, 2017; Appendix D) is a 20-item questionnaire that includes statements regarding one's personal views on skin color. The In-Group Colorism Scale assesses the degree to which skin tone variation is important across five essential domains: Self-Concept (self-constructed from the beliefs one holds about oneself and the responses of others based on their skin tone), Affiliation (Individuals' preference to associate with a certain person or group focused on skin tone), Attraction (Individuals find certain skin tones more romantically attractive), Impression Formation (form impressions based on certain skin tone), and Upward Mobility (the belief that skin tone will be the gateway to upward mobility and socioeconomic success). Participants will answer if they disagree or agree with the statement (1- Strongly Agree and 5- Strongly Disagree). The ICS is related to other important constructs such as parental socialization, skin tone, self-esteem, stereotypes, racial identity, and socioeconomic status. This scale can help to assess how African Americans see their skin tone, and how it affects their self-esteem. The questionnaire

from this scale can also provide information on if color is the main characteristic of why an individual may feel within the five essential domains. Results from previous studies (Harvey, Banks & Tennial, 2017) were: Self Concept ($\alpha=.87$), Impression Formulation ($\alpha=.73$), Upwards Mobility ($\alpha=.90$), Attraction ($\alpha=.81$), Affiliation ($\alpha=.80$). Mean scores of the present study were: Self Concept ($\alpha=0.814$, $M=12.923$, $SD=4.318$), Impression Formulation ($\alpha=0.761$, $M=6.7$, $SD=3.329$), Upwards Mobility ($\alpha=0.799$, $M=11.375$, $SD=4.099$), Attraction ($\alpha=0.658$, $M=8$, $SD=3.616$), Affiliation ($\alpha=0.7$, $M=6.425$, $SD=2.960$).

2.3.6 Social Comparison

To better assess social comparison, the Physical Characteristic Assessment Procedure (Adapted from Bond & Cash, 1992) (Appendix E), and Social Comparison Scale (SCS; Adapted from Thompson, et. al., 1999) are used. The physical characteristic assessment procedure scale is an adapted 5- item scale that assesses from 1 to 9 (1- lightest skin and 9 darker-skinned) How a participant wants to be seen as well as how they view themselves. The scale is taken from previous research that has adapted the questionnaire to fit African Americans (Hall, 2003). The social comparison scale is a 6- item questionnaire that asks how one feels as though their race is viewed as well as some might compare skin color. This scale uses a Likert scale ranging from one to five in how an individual might agree or disagree with the statements provided. The scale that is being used is also adapted from the previous study to better assess African Americans (Hall, 2003). Both scales can provide better knowledge on how individuals see themselves and compare themselves to others giving a more accurate result for the study. Previous studies merge the first few questions of the social comparison scale (SCS) with the Physical Characteristic Assessment Procedure (PCAP). Results of previous studies

(Hall, 2003) were ($\alpha = .387$), ($M = 4.47$), ($SD = 2.87$), while current sample results were ($\alpha = 0.702$, $M = 5.586$, $SD = 1.241$).

2.3.7 Relationship Satisfaction

The Couples Satisfaction Index (Funk & Rogue, 2007, see Appendix F) is a 4-item scale that assesses perceptions of romantic satisfaction (sample item: “My relationship with my partner is happy”). Participants their satisfaction within their relationship on a 5 or 6-point Likert scale (0 being the lowest and not having healthy relationship satisfaction and 5-or 6-being the highest within relationship satisfaction). Response scores will be summed across the four items for a possible range of 0 to 21, with higher scores indicating more relationship satisfaction. It is important to note that due to a transcription error, the present study used an item average score across three items of the CSI-4 (“I have a warm and comfortable relationship with my partner”, “How rewarding is your relationship with your partner?”, and “In general, how satisfied are you with your relationship?”). Previous studies (e.g., Funk & Rogue, 2007) have shown that the CSI-4 were reliable ($\alpha = .84$, $mean = 16$, $SD = 3.9$); while current results were ($\alpha = 0.865$, $M = 4.065$, $SD = .910$).

CHAPTER 3. FINDINGS

3.1 Results

The original goal of the present study was to examine if domains of colorism affect Black romantic relationship quality while accounting for racial identity, age, gender, education, and income. Due to having a smaller sample size than expected, only correlations between the key variables were examined (See Table 2.1). If the purpose of the study were to be restated in terms of hypothesized correlations, those hypotheses would be (a) a negative correlation between domains of colorism and skin-tone satisfaction (i.e., self-esteem), (b) a negative correlation between colorism domains and couples satisfaction, and (c) a positive correlation between skin tone satisfaction and couples satisfaction.

The first hypothesis predicted that there would be a negative relationship between colorism and skin-tone satisfaction. Correlation results between some of the domains of colorism and skin tone satisfaction were statistically significant in the predicted direction. More specifically, Impression Formation ($r = -.456$, $p = 0.006$) and Affiliation ($r = -.395$, $p = 0.019$) have a negative correlation with skin tone satisfaction. Increasing skin tone satisfaction was associated with the decreased judgment of others based on skin tone as well as lower scores on beliefs about associating with others based on skin tone. Surprisingly, no other domain of colorism was significant such as Self-Concept or Attractiveness.

The second hypothesis predicted that there would be a negative relationship between domains of colorism and couples satisfaction. Correlation results between the various domains of colorism and couples satisfaction were mixed. Specifically, only

Table 2.1 Scale Means and Correlations

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Couples Satisfaction score of CSI	4.065	0.91049	-										
2. Self-Concept subscale score of the ICS	12.9231	4.31878	-0.128	-									
3. Impression-Formation subscale score of the ICS	6.7	3.32974	-0.209	0.21	-								
4. Affiliation subscale score of the ICS	6.425	2.96031	-.373*	.438**	.557**	-							
5. Attractiveness subscale score of the ICS	8	3.6162	-0.2	-0.153	.524**	.450**	-						
6. Upwards Mobility subscale of the ICS	11.375	4.09933	0.04	-0.016	0.153	0.054	0.166	-					
7. Skin Tone Satisfaction Subscale (Higher scores represent higher satisfaction)	7.4211	1.83629	0.159	-0.239	-.456**	-.395*	-0.191	-0.006	-				
8. Desire for skin tone change (Higher scores represent desire to be darker)	12.8966	5.28032	-0.187	0.05	0.082	.401*	0.193	-0.125	-0.022	-			
9. Preencounter of RIAS	14.9189	6.17062	-0.266	0.206	.484**	.509**	.627**	0.118	-0.288	0.24	-		
10. Encounter of RIAS	12.4737	3.11697	-0.056	.414*	-0.008	0.181	-0.024	0.273	-0.02	0.112	0.182	-	
11. Immersion of RIAS	26.4865	4.81676	-0.035	0.32	-0.005	0.165	-0.081	0.141	0.089	0.054	0.125	.806**	-
12. Internalization of RIAS	37.8378	4.9973	0.114	0.109	-.396*	-.492**	-.525**	0.056	.418*	0.001	-.410*	.478**	.391*

Note. * Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Affiliation ($r = -.462, p = 0.023$) had a negative correlation with skin tone satisfaction. This means that the less satisfaction a person feels within their relationship was associated with an individual's preference to have associations with certain skin tones (or vice-versa).

Finally, I hypothesized that there would be a positive correlation between skin tone satisfaction and couples satisfaction. Results show there are no statistically significant correlations between the two variables ($r = 0.159, p = 0.361$).

Discussion

Consistent with Reece's (2018) concept of colorism, this study echoes that colorism still exists and impacts the lives of Black individuals. Supporting Udry et al., (1971) argument that in colorism ideas may affect how one views attractiveness; the present study provides support to how colorism can affect romantic relationships. The present study also advances the literature by utilizing measures that assess for multiple forms of colorism, skin tone satisfaction, and social comparison. Discussion of each finding will be broken down by hypothesis

3.1.1 Hypothesis 1

Based on previous findings of showing the impact of colorism in the literature, such as attractiveness, (Hill, 2002), skin bleaching (Glenn, 2008), workplace favoritism (Turner, 1994), and overall well-being (Keith et al., 2010; Reece, 2018), I predicted that there would be a negative relationship between colorism and skin-tone satisfaction. It is interesting to note that very few articles directly assess colorism and skin tone satisfaction. This study found statistically significant correlations between colorism and skin tone satisfaction. Specifically, impression formulation and affiliation within the in-group colorism scale were negatively correlated to skin tone satisfaction. These results

explain that when Black individuals feel low satisfaction about their skin, they will dissocialize and judge other Black individuals. The link between colorism and skin tone satisfaction should be examined more. The term colorism is focused on how there is racism within racial groups. Skin tone satisfaction examines to the degree of how satisfied Black individuals are with their tone of skin. Colorism and skin tone satisfaction can help to understand how Black individuals perceive in-group racism and to what degree they are satisfied with their skin tone standing. The connection between colorism in skin tone satisfaction helps to understand how Black individuals place themselves within their racial groups. It also helps to know if the hierarchy that was implemented by a white-dominated society remains.

3.1.2 Hypothesis 2

Congruent with studies that state relationship satisfaction is frequently a part of a person's overall well-being, and colorism has been associated with lower quality of life (Keith et al., 2010; Reece, 2018), I predicted that there would be a negative relationship between domains of colorism and couples satisfaction. Interestingly, there was a statistically significant relationship between colorism and couples satisfaction. Specifically, Affiliation within the In-Group Colorism Scale had a negative relationship to couples satisfaction. This connection in research explains that if a Black individual has colorist ideas that do not match up with their partner, the relationship will negatively be affected. This connection also helps the understanding of how relationship quality can be affected when colorist views in the relationship are not agreed upon.

3.1.3 Hypothesis 3

I predicted that there would be a positive correlation between skin tone satisfaction and couple's satisfaction. As stated before there was no statistically

significant correlation between skin tone satisfaction and couple's satisfaction. There is limited to no research that focuses specifically on correlations between these two variables. One possible explanation for this finding is that more Black individuals are comfortable within their race and therefore do not need to think about this issue within their relationships. Another explanation for this finding could be that partners of Black individuals may have positive perceptions about their partner's skin, lessening the awareness of skin tone consciousness. Lastly, possible reasoning for the significance between colorism and relationship quality is that Black individuals may have high relationship quality. Meaning Black individuals could feel secure enough in the relationship that there is no need to worry about skin tone. Recent research has focused on the differences between skin tones regarding socioeconomic factors (e.g., Reece, 2019, Awrd et al., 2015, Maxwell et al., 2015). The difference in this study is that while socioeconomic factors are acknowledged, the focus is on quality of life as measured through relationship satisfaction, which little research has given attention to.

3.1.4 Racial Identity, Colorism, and Skin Tone Satisfaction

The Racial Identity Attitude Scale (RIAS; Helms & Parham, 1985) was originally included as a control variable answering the research question of how colorism affects romantic relationship quality. The Racial Identity Attitude Scale assesses the racial identity attitudes of Black individuals across four theorized stages (preencounter, encounter, immersion, internalization). The RIAS attempts to measure the mentality of Black individuals and how close or far they feel from their heritage. Notably, there were statistically significant correlations between racial identity stages and colorism domains which can provide information for future research.

Preencounter is defined as when Black individuals have not experienced racism nor awareness of racism yet (Yanico et al., 1994). Black individuals in this stage see no social meaning to race. Results show that preencounter was statistically significant to colorism domains of impression formation, affiliation, and attractiveness. These findings explain that Black individuals who have not yet experienced racism, view certain skin tones of Black people as attractive. Findings also suggest that those individuals socialize with certain skin tones as well. This result helps to understand that Black individuals who have no sense of pride within the race will judge, dissocialize, and find certain skin tones attractive. Ironically, the less happy and less culturally aware a Black individual is, the more sensitive to the skin-tone of others of their race they are.

Encounter is defined as when Black individuals have experienced racism (Yanico et al., 1994). In this stage, Black individuals start to identify race being an issue. Results found statistically significant correlations between encounter and self-concept stages. These findings suggest that as Black individuals experience racism, they start to become aware of their color. Conversely, it could also be stated that as an individual connects their identity to their skin-tone, the more they are aware of discrimination. Results could explain how Black individuals start to compare overall well-being and identity in society. This could be because prior to experience race had no social meaning. Immersion is defined as when a Black becomes acutely aware of racism (Yanico et al., 1994). This study did not find any statistically significant findings between this stage and domains of colorism.

Lastly, Internalization is defined as when Black individuals feel a sense of pride within their culture (Yanico et al, 1994). In this stage, Black individuals are getting a

better sense of their race and culture and want to help their community. There were statistically significant correlations found between Internalization, colorism, and skin tone satisfaction. Specifically, Internalization had a negative relationship to Impression Formation, Attractiveness, and Affiliation. Notably, internalization had a positive relationship with skin tone satisfaction. These results suggest that Black individuals who feel more pride towards their culture are less influenced by the skin tone of others in their outward appearances, who they socialize with, or even find more attractive. This could be due to Black individuals gaining more understanding about their heritage thus lessening the stress of socialization, judgment, and attractiveness. Prior research has found that racial identity and stress can be strong predictors of activism (Szymanski et al., 2015). Supporting the idea that when Black individuals feel a sense of pride within their identity, they will feel satisfied with their skin and more willing to help and support their community.

There is limited research on how racial identity stages and colorism correlate. However, these findings strengthen existing research focusing on how colorism and racial identity affect one's mentality (Banks et al., 2016). The fact that the correlations between identity stages and domains of colorism is important for future work. This research finding can help to understand that Black communities will continue to grow as individuals have a better sense of pride. Future research should focus on racial identity and its correlation to colorism. Research has shown that as individuals become aware and proud of their culture, they will want to be around their race and community. Thompson & Keith (2001) stated that skin color can be a predictor of self-esteem, with colorism still being socialized it would be interesting to find out how skin tone satisfaction can affect

self-esteem or self-concepts. Examining more on how colorism can affect one's racial identity can provide a better understanding of Black self- concept. As colorism focuses on in-group racism, and racial identity highlights the experience of societal racism; studies should pay close attention to how they correlate.

3.1.4 Research Limitations and Implications

The biggest limitation within this study was the number of participants and timing of the survey. In the beginning, researchers planned for up to 300 participants. After the survey closed the study was only able to use data from 46 participants. To better assess the question of how colorism affects romantic relationship quality, more participants should be used in future research. This study was limited to predominately University and Electronic recruitment. Future study may want to focus on more diverse areas outside of University focus (working with community partners). This study was started in the year 2020 when the coronavirus was heavily present, which could explain why the number of participants was low (sick, death, lack of technology, or quarantine fatigue). Some implications may have also been present from the diverse definition of colorism. Colorism is still present, yet how it is defined, spelled, and even talked about varies through geographic location and cultures. Future research on the impacts of colorism on Black individuals should also include a measure of racial identity as it potentially can affect how a person perceives not only their skin tone satisfaction but how they view others.

3.1.5 Clinical Implications

In a clinical setting, therapists must consider how Black individuals struggle with the impact of colorism and their racial identity. There is evidence that explains how skin tone satisfaction can affect one's self-esteem (Thompson & Keith, 2001). Therefore,

therapists should be cognitive about Black individuals that come into therapy with low satisfaction with their skin tone as they may think of themselves negatively. As demonstrated in this study, the experience of colorism can impact romantic relationship satisfaction. Clinicians should be mindful of the effects of colorism. Research has also proved that colorism ideas are passed down generationally, explaining that colorism does not have to happen while in relationships. Studies have shown that Black individuals benefit more from the therapy modality of Emotionally Focused Therapy (Nightingale et al., 2019). Clinicians can practice validation strategies to help strengthen their views about themselves and their culture.

3.1.6 Conclusion

The present study examined how colorism can affect romantic relationships through aspects of colorism, skin tone satisfaction, social comparison, racial awareness, and couple's satisfaction. Results found that domains of colorism can impact romantic relationship quality. Findings explain that Black individuals who socialize within the Black community based on skin-tone have less relationship satisfaction. An alternative interpretation would suggest that Black individuals who have a weak relationship quality may also dissociate from the Black community. This study helps to extend previously limited research that pays little attention to how colorism can affect romantic relationships. It is imperative scholars continue to use measures and analytical strategies that allow for an equal narrative of Black individuals with views of colorism and relationship quality. Consistent with efforts to take a positive approach in examining relationship quality, scholars should focus on cultural factors when it comes to colorism in the Black community and romantic relationships rather than colorism in the family and societal environments (school & family). How to avoid ideals and limit the socialization

of colorism within Black social groups is still unknown to researchers. However, the degree of how colorism can affect romantic relationship quality can be partially answered from this study.

APPENDICES
APPENDIX 1. DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What is your date of birth? For example: (01/01/2020)

2. What is your partner's date of birth? For example: (01/01/2020)

3. What is the last letter of the city you live in?

4. What is the last letter of the city your partner lives in?

5. What is your gender identity?

- a. Male
- b. Female
- c. Transgender- Man
- d. Transgender- Female
- e. Gender fluid
- f. Other _____

6. What is your sexual identity?

- a. Heterosexual
- b. Lesbian
- c. Gay
- d. Bisexual
- e. Queer
- f. Pansexual
- g. Other _____

7. Which race do you primarily identify as?

- a. Black
- b. Bi/multiracial

8. What is your ethnicity? Check all that apply:

- a. African American
- b. African
- c. Afro-Caribbean
- d. Caucasian
- e. Other _____

9. Indicate your highest level of education:

- a. Less than high school
- b. High school diploma/GED
- c. Some college

- d. Associate degree
- e. Master's degree
- f. Professional degree
- g. Doctorate

10. How would you describe you and your partner's income?

Your individual income:

- a. Low-income
- b. Lower-middle income
- c. Middle-Income
- d. Upper-middle income
- e. High income

The combined income of you and your partner:

- f. Low-income
- g. Lower-middle income
- h. Middle Income
- i. Upper-middle income
- j. High income

11. Briefly describe your work setting?

12. Which region of the U.S. do you live in?

- a. South
- b. West
- c. Midwest
- d. Southeast
- e. North
- f. Northeast
- g. Northwest

13. What is your relationship status? Check all that apply:

- a. Single
- b. In a committed relationship
- c. Engaged
- d. Married
- e. Living together
- f. Living separately
- g. Previously divorced/separated

14. How many years and months have you been in your current committed relationship?
_____years _____months

APPENDIX 2. SKIN COLOR QUESTIONNAIRE/ SKIN COLOR SATISFACTION
SCALE

1. How satisfied are you with the shade (lightness or darkness) of your own skin color?" Response alternatives range from 1 (extremely dissatisfied) to 9 (extremely satisfied).
2. Compared to most African American people, I believe my skin color is . . . Responses range from 1 (extremely light) to 9 (extremely dark)
3. If I could change my skin color, I would make it lighter or darker. Responses range from 1 (much lighter) to 9 (much darker)
4. Compared to the complexion (skin color) of members of my family, I am satisfied with my skin color
5. I wish the shade of my skin was darker
6. I wish my skin was lighter
7. Compared to the complexion (skin color) of other African Americans, I am satisfied with my skin color"

APPENDIX 3. BLACK RACIAL IDENTITY ATTITUDE SCALE

1. I believe being Black is a positive experience.
 - a. Strongly Disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly Agree

2. I know through personal experience what being Black in America means.
 - a. Strongly Disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly Agree

3. I am increasing my involvement in Black activities because I don't feel comfortable in White environments.
 - a. Strongly Disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly Agree

4. I believe that large numbers of Blacks are untrustworthy.
 - a. Strongly Disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly Agree

5. I feel an overwhelming attachment to Black people.
 - a. Strongly Disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly Agree

6. I involve myself in causes that will help all oppressed people.
 - a. Strongly Disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither
 - d. Agree

- e. Strongly Agree
7. A person's race does not influence how comfortable I feel when I am with her or him.
- a. Strongly Disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly Agree
8. I believe that Whites look and express themselves better than Blacks.
- a. Strongly Disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly Agree
9. I feel uncomfortable when I am around Black people.
- a. Strongly Disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly Agree
10. I feel good about being Black, but do not limit myself to Black activities.
- a. Strongly Disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly Agree
11. When I am with people I trust, I often find myself using slang words to refer to White people.
- a. Strongly Disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly Agree
12. I believe that being Black is a negative experience.
- a. Strongly Disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither

- d. Agree
 - e. Strongly Agree
13. I am confused about whether White people have anything important to teach me.
- a. Strongly Disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly Agree
14. I frequently confront the system and the (White) man.
- a. Strongly Disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly Agree
15. I constantly involve myself in Black political and social activities (art shows, political meetings, Black theater, etc.)
- a. Strongly Disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly Agree
16. I involve myself in social action and political groups even if there are no other Blacks involved.
- a. Strongly Disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly Agree
17. I believe that Black people should learn to think and experience life in ways which are similar to White people.
- a. Strongly Disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly Agree
18. I believe that the world should be interpreted from a Black or Afrocentric perspective.

- a. Strongly Disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly Agree

19. I'm not sure how I feel about myself racially.

- a. Strongly Disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly Agree

20. I feel excitement and joy in Black surroundings.

- a. Strongly Disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly Agree

21. I believe that Black people came from a strange, dark, and uncivilized continent.

- a. Strongly Disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly Agree

22. People, regardless of their race, have strengths

- a. Strongly Disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly Agree

23. I find myself reading a lot of Black literature and thinking about being Black.

- a. Strongly Disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly Agree

24. I feel guilty or anxious about some of the things I believe about Black people.

- a. Strongly Disagree

- b. Disagree
- c. Neither
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly Agree

25. I believe that a Black person's most effective weapon for solving problems is to become part of the White person's world.

- a. Strongly Disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly Agree

26. My identity revolves around being a Black person in this country.

- a. Strongly Disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly Agree

27. I limit myself to Black activities as much as I can.

- a. Strongly Disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly Agree

28. I am determined to find my Black identity.

- a. Strongly Disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly Agree

29. I like to make friends with Black people.

- a. Strongly Disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly Agree

30. I believe that I have many strengths because I am Black.

- a. Strongly Disagree

- b. Disagree
- c. Neither
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly Agree

31. I feel that Black people do not have as much to be proud of as White people do.

- a. Strongly Disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly Agree

32. I am at ease being around Black people.

- a. Strongly Disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly Agree

33. I believe that Whites should feel guilty about the way they have treated Blacks in the past.

- a. Strongly Disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly Agree

34. White people can't be trusted.

- a. Strongly Disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly Agree

35. In today's society, if Black people don't achieve, they have only themselves to blame.

- a. Strongly Disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly Agree

36. The most important thing about me is that I am Black.

- a. Strongly Disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly Agree
37. Being Black just feels natural to me.
- a. Strongly Disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly Agree
38. Other Black people have trouble accepting me because my life experiences have been so different from their experiences.
- a. Strongly Disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly Agree
39. Black people who have any White people's blood should feel ashamed of it.
- a. Strongly Disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly Agree
40. Sometimes, I wish I belonged to the White race.
- a. Strongly Disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly Agree
41. The people I respect most are White.
- a. Strongly Disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly Agree
42. I have begun to question my beliefs about my racial group.

- a. Strongly Disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly Agree

43. I feel anxious when White people compare me to other members of my race.

- a. Strongly Disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly Agree

44. I tend to bond easily with Black people.

- a. Strongly Disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly Agree

45. A person's race may be a positive aspect of who he or she is.

- a. Strongly Disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly Agree

46. When I am with Black people, I pretend to enjoy the things they enjoy.

- a. Strongly Disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly Agree

47. When a stranger who is Black does something embarrassing in public, I get embarrassed.

- a. Strongly Disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly Agree

48. I believe that a Black person can be close friends with a White person.

- a. Strongly Disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly Agree

49. Sometimes I think that White people are superior and sometimes I think they're inferior to Black people.

- a. Strongly Disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly Agree

50. I have a positive attitude about myself because I am Black.

- a. Strongly Disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly Agree

51. I participate in Black culture.

- a. Strongly Disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly Agree

52. I am not sure where I really belong racially.

- a. Strongly Disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly Agree

53. I believe that White people are more intelligent than Blacks.

- a. Strongly Disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly Agree

54. I speak my mind regardless of the consequences (e.g. being kicked out of school, being imprisoned, being exposed to danger).
- Strongly Disagree
 - Disagree
 - Neither
 - Agree
 - Strongly Agree
55. I can't feel comfortable with either Black people or White people.
- Strongly Disagree
 - Disagree
 - Neither
 - Agree
 - Strongly Agree
56. I often feel that I belong to the Black racial group.
- Strongly Disagree
 - Disagree
 - Neither
 - Agree
 - Strongly Agree
57. I am embarrassed about some of the things I feel about my racial group.
- Strongly Disagree
 - Disagree
 - Neither
 - Agree
 - Strongly Agree
58. Most Blacks I know are failures.
- Strongly Disagree
 - Disagree
 - Neither
 - Agree
 - Strongly Agree
59. I am changing my style of life to fit my new beliefs about Black people.
- Strongly Disagree
 - Disagree
 - Neither
 - Agree
 - Strongly Agree

60. I am satisfied with myself.
- a. Strongly Disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly Agree

APPENDIX 4. IN-GROUP COLORISM SCALE

1. My skin tone is an important part of my self-concept
 - a. Strongly Disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly Agree

2. My skin tone is an important component of who I am
 - a. Strongly Disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly Agree

3. My skin tone affects my self-esteem
 - a. Strongly Disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly Agree

4. My skin tone is a big part of my identity
 - a. Strongly Disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly Agree

5. You can tell a lot about a person by their skin tone
 - a. Strongly Disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly Agree

6. Blacks with lighter skin tone tend to be more pleasant people to deal with
 - a. Strongly Disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither
 - d. Agree

- e. Strongly Agree
7. Dark-skinned people are more difficult to work with
- a. Strongly Disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly Agree
8. There are real differences between light skin and dark-skinned people
- a. Strongly Disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly Agree
9. I'm usually uncomfortable being around people who are a certain skin tone
- a. Strongly Disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly Agree
10. Most of my friends tend to be the same skin tone
- a. Strongly Disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly Agree
11. I usually choose who I'm going to be friends with by their skin tone
- a. Strongly Disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly Agree
12. The majority of my current friends are the same skin tone as me
- a. Strongly Disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly Agree

13. I'm primarily attracted to people of a certain skin tone
- Strongly Disagree
 - Disagree
 - Neither
 - Agree
 - Strongly Agree
14. I prefer light skin over dark complexion skin when choosing romantic interests
- Strongly Disagree
 - Disagree
 - Neither
 - Agree
 - Strongly Agree
15. I prefer a romantic partner who has the same skin tone as me
- Strongly Disagree
 - Disagree
 - Neither
 - Agree
 - Strongly Agree
16. Lighter skin tone makes others more attractive
- Strongly Disagree
 - Disagree
 - Neither
 - Agree
 - Strongly Agree
17. Even if you work really hard, your skin tone matters most
- Strongly Disagree
 - Disagree
 - Neither
 - Agree
 - Strongly Agree
18. Skin tone plays a big part in determining how far you can make it
- Strongly Disagree
 - Disagree
 - Neither
 - Agree
 - Strongly Agree

19. Skin tone affects how much money you can make

- a. Strongly Disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly Agree
- f.

20. If you want to get ahead, you have to be the right skin tone

- a. Strongly Disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly Agree

APPENDIX 5. SOCIAL COMPARISON SCALE/ PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS ASSESSMENT PROCEDURE

A set of 4x4-inch color squares of African-American skin colors were presented to the participants on survey. Participants responded to the following questions.

1. I find myself thinking about how my nose is different from other Black people.
2. When I am with Black people, I find myself comparing my skin color with theirs.
3. I compare my physical appearance with the physical appearance of other Black people
4. I compare the attractiveness of my nose with the attractiveness of the noses of other Black people.
5. I find myself comparing the shape of my lips to the shape of other Black people's lips.
6. In social situations, I find myself comparing my overall attractiveness to the attractiveness of other Black people.
7. Choose the facial skin color that most resembles your facial skin color.
8. Choose the facial skin color that you most prefer.
9. Choose the skin color that you believe African American men find most attractive.
10. Choose the skin color you believe African American women find most attractive.
11. Choose the skin color that you believe is admired in your family.

APPENDIX 6. COUPLES SATISFACTION INDEX

1. Please indicate the degree of happiness, all things considered, of your relationship.
 - a. Extremely Unhappy
 - b. Fairly Unhappy
 - c. A Little Unhappy
 - d. Happy
 - e. Very Happy
 - f. Extremely Happy
 - g. Perfect

2. I have a warm and comfortable relationship with my partner
 - a. Not at all True
 - b. A little True
 - c. Somewhat True
 - d. Mostly True
 - e. Almost Completely True
 - f. Completely True

3. How rewarding is your relationship with your partner?
 - a. Not at all True
 - b. A little True
 - c. Somewhat True
 - d. Mostly True
 - e. Almost Completely True
 - f. Completely True

4. In general, how satisfied are you with your relationship?
 - a. Not at all True
 - b. A little True
 - c. Somewhat True
 - d. Mostly True
 - e. Almost Completely True
 - f. Completely True

REFERENCES

- Ajrouch, K. J., Reisine, S., Lim, S., Sohn, W., & Ismail, A. (2010). Perceived everyday discrimination and psychological distress: does social support matter? *Ethnicity & Health, 15*(4), 417–434. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13557858.2010.484050>
- Awad, G. H., Norwood, C., Taylor, D. S., Martinez, M., McClain, S., Jones, B., Holman, A., & Chapman-Hilliard, C. (2015). Beauty and Body Image Concerns Among African American College Women. *Journal of Black Psychology, 41*(6), 540–564. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0095798414550864>
- Baldwin, J. A., Duncan, J. A., & Bell, Y. R. (1987). Assessment of African Self-Consciousness among Black Students from Two College Environments. *Journal of Black Psychology, 13*(2), 27–41. <https://doi.org/10.1177/009579848701300201>
- Banks, K. H., Harvey, R. D., Thelemaque, T., & Onyinyechi, V. A. (2016). The Intersection of Colorism and Racial Identity and the Impact on Mental Health. Meaning-Making, Internalized Racism, and African American Identity, 261.
- Bryant-Davis, T., & Ocampo, C. (2005). Racist incident–based trauma. *The Counseling Psychologist, 33*(4), 479–500. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0011000005276465>
- Byrd, D. R. (2012). Race/Ethnicity and Self-Reported Levels of Discrimination and Psychological Distress, California, 2005. *Preventing Chronic Disease, 9*. <https://doi.org/10.5888/pcd9.120042>
- Cutrona, C. E., Russell, D. W., Burzette, R. G., Wesner, K. A., & Bryant, C. M. (2011). Predicting relationship stability among midlife African American couples. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 79*(6), 814–825. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0025874>

- Falconer W. J., & Neville, H. A. (2000). African American College Women's Body Image: An Examination of Body Mass, African Self-Consciousness, and Skin Color Satisfaction. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 24(3), 236–243.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-6402.2000.tb00205.x>
- George, S. (2001). Trauma and the conservation of African American racial identity. *Journal for the Psychoanalysis of Culture and Society*, 6(1), 58–72.
- Graff, G. (2017). The intergenerational trauma of slavery and its aftereffects: The question of reparations. *The Journal of Psychohistory*, 44(4), 256
- Gump, J. (2010). Reality matters: The shadow of trauma on African American subjectivity. *Psychoanalytic Psychology*, 27(1), 42–54
- Hall, A. V. (2003). Body image as a function of colorism: testing a theoretical model.
- Harrell, S. P., Merchant, M. A., & Young, S. A. (1997). Psychometric properties of the Racism and Life Experiences Scales. Symposium presented at the 1997 Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association, Chicago, IL.
- Harvey, R. D., Tennial, R. E., & Hudson B. K. (2017). The development and validation of a colorism scale. *Journal of Black Psychology*, 43(7), 740–764.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0095798417690054>
- Hill, M. E. (2002). Skin Color and the Perception of Attractiveness among African Americans: Does Gender Make a Difference? *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 65(1), 77.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/3090169>
- Hughes, M., & Hertel, B. (1990). The Significance of Color Remains: A Study of Life Chances, Mate Selection, and Ethnic Consciousness Among Black Americans. *Social Forces*, 68(4), 1105-1120.

- Jones, C.P. (2000). Levels of racism: a theoretic framework and a gardener's tale. *American Journal of Public Health*. <http://doi.org/10.2105/ajph.90.8.1212>
- Kerr, J., Schafer, P., Perry, A., Orkin, J., Vance, M., & O'Campo, P. (2018). The Impact of Racial Discrimination on African American Fathers' Intimate Relationships. *Race and Social Problems*, 10(2), 134–144. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12552-018-9227-3>
- Landor, A. M., & McNeil Smith, S. (2019). Skin-tone trauma: Historical and contemporary influences on the health and interpersonal outcomes of African Americans. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 14(5), 797–815. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691619851781>
- Maxwell, M., Brevard, J., Abrams, J., & Belgrave, F. (2015). What's Color Got to Do with It? Skin Color, Skin Color Satisfaction, Racial Identity, and Internalized Racism Among African American College Students. *Journal of Black Psychology*, 41(5), 438–461. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0095798414542299>
- Nightingale, M., Awosan, C.I & Stavrianopoulos, K. (2019) Emotionally Focused Therapy: A Culturally Sensitive Approach for African American Heterosexual Couples, *Journal of Family Psychotherapy*, 30:3, 221-244, DOI: 10.1080/08975353.2019.1666497
- Norton, R. (1983). Measuring marital quality: A critical look at the dependent variable. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 45, 141–151. <http://doi.org/10.2307/351302>
- Norwood, K. J. (2015). "If you is white, you's alright...": Stories about colorism in America. *Washington University Global Studies Law Review*, 14(4), 585.
- Parham, T. A., & Helms, J. E. (1981). The influence of Black students' racial identity attitudes on preferences for counselor's race. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 28(3), 250–257. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0167.28.3.250>

- Perry, B. L., Harp, K. L., & Oser, C. B. (2013). Racial and gender discrimination in the stress Process: Implications for African American women's health and well-Being. *Sociological Perspectives*, 56(1), 25–48.
- Reece, R. L. (2018). Genesis of U.S. Colorism and Skin Tone Stratification: Slavery, Freedom, and Mulatto-Black Occupational Inequality in the Late 19th Century. *The Review of Black Political Economy*, 45(1), 3–21.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0034644618770761>
- Reece, R. L. (2019). Color Crit: Critical Race Theory and the History and Future of Colorism in the United States. *Journal of Black Studies*, 50(1), 3–25.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0021934718803735>
- Reece, R. L. (2020). The Gender of Colorism: Understanding the Intersection of Skin Tone and Gender Inequality. *Journal of Economics, Race, and Policy*.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s41996-020-00054-1>
- Shalhope, R. E. (1971). Race, Class, Slavery, and the Antebellum Southern Mind. *The Journal of Southern History*, 37(4), 557. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2206546>
- Szymanski, D. M., & Lewis, J. A. (2015). Race-Related Stress and Racial Identity as Predictors of African American Activism. *Journal of Black Psychology*, 41(2), 170–191. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0095798414520707>
- Thompson, M. & Keith, V. (2001). The Blacker the Berry: Gender, Skin Tone, Self-Esteem, and Self-Efficacy. *Gender & Society - GENDER SOC.* 15. 336-357.
10.1177/089124301015003002.
- Thompson, V. (2002). Racism: Perceptions of distress among African Americans. *Community Mental Health Journal*, 38(2), 111–118.

- Udry, J. R., Bauman, K. E., & Chase, C. (1971). Skin color, status, and mate selection. *American Journal of Sociology*, 76, 722–733
- Utsey, S., Ponterotto, J., Reynolds, A., & Cancelli, A. (2000). Racial Discrimination, Coping, Life Satisfaction, and Self-Esteem Among African Americans. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 78(1), 72-80.
- Uzogara, E. E., Lee, H., Abdou, C. M., & Jackson, J. S. (2014). A comparison of skin tone discrimination among African American men: 1995 and 2003. *Psychology of Men & Masculinities*. Psychology of Men & Masculinities. <http://doi.org/10.1037/a0033479>
- Vargas, S. M., Huey, S. J., Jr., & Miranda, J. (2020). A critical review of current evidence on multiple types of discrimination and mental health. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 90(3), 374–390. <https://doi.org/10.1037/ort0000441>
- Walker, A. (1983). If the present looks like the past, what does the future look like? *Heresies: A Feminist Publication on Art & Politics*, 4(15), 56-59.
- Weiss, R. L., & Cerreto, M. C. (1980). The Marital Status Inventory: Development of a measure of dissolution potential. *American Journal of Family Therapy*, 8, 80–85. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01926188008250358>
- Wilder, J., & Cain, C. (2011). Teaching and learning color consciousness in black families: Exploring family processes and women’s experiences with colorism. *Journal of Family Issues*, 32(5), 577–604. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X10390858>
- Williams-Washington, K., & Mills, C. (2018). African American historical trauma: Creating an inclusive measure. *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development*, 46(4), 246–263.

Yanico, B. J., Swanson, J. L., & Tokar, D. M. (1994). A psychometric investigation of the Black Racial Identity Attitude Scale—Form B. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 44(2), 218–234. <https://doi.org/10.1006/jvbe.1994.1015>

VITA

Kara Renee Burns

PLACE OF BIRTH

Paducah, Kentucky

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

B.S., Family Sciences, 2019

Minor: Photography

University of Kentucky

Lexington, KY

PROFESSIONAL POSITIONS HELD

Intern Therapist, UK Family Center, 2019-2021

Research Assistant, University of Kentucky, 2019-2021

SCHOLASTIC AND PROFESSIONAL HONORS

Diversity Scholarship Recipient, University of Kentucky, 2019-2021