

The Hidden Prejudice in Selection: A Research Investigation on Skin Color Bias

MATTHEW S. HARRISON¹ AND KECIA M. THOMAS

University of Georgia

In this era of affirmative action, racial discrimination in the workplace has been studied widely. A common negligence of these studies is that they disregard the subject of skin-tone stratification, and present an analysis of discrimination based on treatment of Blacks and Whites (both as collective units); thereby overlooking a prevalent issue that has long existed in western culture—colorism. This study examined the influence of colorism on job selection, and discovered a significant preferential difference among Black applicants based on their skin complexion. The findings suggest that skin tone plays a considerable role in the favorability of a Black applicant; indicating that skin color is more salient and regarded more highly than one's educational background and prior work experience.

If the average person of color were asked to describe himself or herself based on five physical characteristics, one could likely assume that the minority individual would list his or her race as one of the descriptors. Thus, it is no surprise that the concepts of race and race relations are not novelties in our society. In America, when people think of race or race relations, they commonly think of these notions as a Black and White issue, where each “race” is generalized and homogenized into one grouping (Celious & Oyserman, 2001). Most racial identity theories fall prey to this inexplicit categorization. They look at race as a simple dichotomy between Blacks and Whites, and ignore the presence of diversity within races and ethnicities.

These theories are accurate in their assumption that there is in-group homogeneity; this is the primary building block of race being a social category (Celious & Oyserman, 2001). They are negligent, however, in their failure to address the potential for differences in racial identities within races for those who may differ among other social constructs, such as gender, socioeconomic status, and, for the purposes of the present research, skin complexion.

¹Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Matthew S. Harrison, PhD, 6205 Peachtree Dunwoody Road, Atlanta, GA 30328. E-mail: msharris@uga.edu

The presence of varying racial identities within Blacks as a result of skin complexion should be no surprise, given that, according to Edwards (1973), “of the several criteria by which Americans are stratified, none bears greater significance than [that of] skin color” (p. 473). Skin color is highly stratified because in America, and in most other western cultures, Whiteness is presumed to be representative of beauty and graciousness; and in contrast, Blackness signifies ugliness and incivility (Hunter, 2002). This dichotomy between Blacks and Whites has been extended into a stratification system within the Black community itself, where light-skinned Blacks take on the aforementioned characteristics used to describe Whites, and dark-skinned Blacks are ascribed the negative features commonly associated with Blackness. Therefore, it is not farfetched to presume that lighter skinned Blacks receive preferential treatment over their darker skinned counterparts (Thompson & Keith, 2001).

Thus, the primary purpose of the present study is to examine the presence, if any, of preferential treatment in the job-selection process between light- and dark-skinned Blacks. A number of studies have looked at differences in educational attainment and socioeconomic status obtained between Blacks based on their skin tone, but past research is quite limited in its examination of why these educational and economical disparities exist. This research is expected to uncover some of the ambiguity behind these findings. Further, this study is intended to illustrate that these inequalities within the Black community are, in part, a result of preferential treatment as a result of one’s skin complexion.

Racial Discrimination in Employment Selection

As stated earlier, the principal focus of past research with regard to selection preferences has generally focused on Whites being favored over all Blacks (Deitch et al., 2003). And there is no doubt that preferential treatment for Whites does exist in America. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, Blacks are twice as likely to be unemployed as are Whites (Brief, Butz, & Deitch, 2005). The varying unemployment rates could easily be attributed to the way in which most employers conduct recruiting for their organizations. Most often, particular neighborhoods are targeted with information regarding job openings, or employers recruit applicants via word of mouth from current employees (Brief et al., 2005). Either way, both methods put Blacks at a clear disadvantage, because most will not even have the chance to be considered for the job.

For those Blacks who do make it to the application process, or who are even hired, the discriminatory practices they face are typically far from

over. This unending differential treatment is evidenced by studies conducted by the Fair Employment Council (FEC). The FEC performed studies in which Blacks and Whites were matched with regard to their qualifications, interviewing skills, and credentials. The FEC found, however, that “over 20% of employers [still] treated the Black applicants less favorably than White applicants” (Brief et al., 2005, p. 121).

Further, the number of disparate-treatment and adverse-impact cases that have been filed under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 illustrates that current employees must continue to cope with inequitable practices. One famous such case is *Watson v. Fort Worth*. In this case, Clara Watson, a Black employee at Fort Worth Bank & Trust, had applied for a promotion to a management position four times. Each time she was rejected, while a White applicant was given the position for which she applied. Watson provided evidence illustrating that Fort Worth Bank had never hired a Black employee as an officer or director and had only one Black in a managerial position, and lower wages were given to Black employees who had comparable jobs to those of Whites (Bersoff, Malson, & Verrilli, 1988).

Situations and cases similar to that of Ms. Watson are common in the American workforce. Quite often, companies actually implement selection tools used during the application process that ultimately lead to a disproportionate number of Whites being hired over Blacks. Most companies claim that the utility of the selection tool was not at all rooted in an attempt to hire more White workers than Blacks, but was used to acquire the most qualified individuals for the job, who just happen to be White (Terpstra & Kethley, 2002). Thus, in many ways, companies can now hide behind, or camouflage, discrimination in the selection process by placing the blame on these selection instruments.

Even with the presence of these new tools, however, an applicant's skin color is still inescapable, especially given that most selection processes involve an interview. Thus, the longstanding history of racial discrimination in our society seems to be unavoidable in the job selection process. This is not to say that every White individual who is hired over a Black is hired solely because he or she is White. However, given U.S. history, it would be naïve to think that it is never a factor, as previous research has shown (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2004; Dovidio, Gaertner, & Pearson, 2005; Gaertner & Dovidio, 2005). The present research study, though, delved further into the preferential selection issue in America, as it sought to illustrate that there is a continuum of preference with regard to skin color. Thus, implying that although Blacks may often be at a disadvantage when applying for jobs, not all Blacks are disadvantaged equally, and the burden that Blacks may face is highly dependent on whether they have light or dark skin.

Discriminatory Treatment Based on Skin Tone

This anticipated partisan behavior as a result of skin tone dates back to the chattel system of slavery in America, where skin color was used by slave owners as the basis of their division for work chores (Hunter, 2002). Slaves who worked in the fields and had the more physically demanding tasks were disproportionately of pure African ancestry and, therefore, dark-skinned; whereas, the lighter skinned slaves (who had lighter skin because of their mixed parentage, as it was common for slave masters to have nonconsensual and consensual sexual relationships with their slaves) were usually given more desirable and prestigious positions within the chattel system (Keith & Herring, 1991). These divisions not only created animosity between the slaves, but also substantiated the notion that the lighter one's complexion, "the better off he or she was in the eyes of the majority group members" (Ross, 1997, p. 555).

The findings of Hughes and Hertel (1990) illustrate that this conception continues to hold true over 200 years later. They found that lighter skinned Blacks were more likely to have completed more years of schooling, to have higher salaries, and to have more prominent jobs than darker skinned Blacks. Perhaps the most compelling discovery of the study was that they found that the effect of skin color on educational attainment and socioeconomic status between light- and dark-skinned Blacks is equivalent to the effect of race between Whites and all Blacks on these two domains. These results, in addition to studies juxtaposing socioeconomic attainment between mulattoes and Blacks, clearly signify the importance of colorism, and further illustrate the prominence of color-based stratification in American society (Hill, 2000). Thus, lighterskinned Blacks are generally more advantaged educationally and economically, and are more likely to experience status advancement than are those with more pigmentation (Seltzer & Smith, 1991; Udry, Bauman, & Chase, 1971). These social advantages allotted to lighter skinned Blacks emphasize a system in our society that privileges light skin over dark skin: This type of classification is the general definition of *colorism* (Hunter, 2002).

Considering the findings of Hughes and Hertel (1990) discussed earlier, it is no surprise that colorism plays a significant role in the working environment. Given that light skin is associated with White skin, and White skin is associated with competence, lighter skinned Blacks are more appealing to White employers (Hunter, 2002). It was even once considered to be "better business" for a White employer to hire Black workers who had light skin complexion (Ross, 1997). Therefore, generally Whites (particularly, White males) are perceived as being gatekeepers who have permitted more light-skinned Blacks into high-status jobs than dark-skinned Blacks (Ransford, 1970). Thus, I hypothesize the following:

Hypothesis 1. Lighter skinned Blacks will receive higher, more preferential ratings related to job selection than will dark-skinned Blacks. More specifically, there will be a continuum of preference based on skin tone, from light to medium to dark skin.

The hypothesis regarding this preferential treatment toward lighter skinned Blacks extends beyond the common notions surrounding colorism, but also takes into account the fact that dark-skinned Black men and women are commonly regarded differently from their lighter skinned cohorts because of common differences in their self-identification. Because darker skinned Blacks have experienced greater discrimination and disparate treatment, they have a greater awareness of racial discrimination and therefore, have an enhanced affection toward their racial identification (Edwards, 1973; Hughes & Hertel, 1990). Furthermore, because dark-skinned Blacks' entrance into general (or White) society is met with great resistance, they have enhanced frustration and hostility toward Whites (Ransford, 1970). Thus, because darker skinned Blacks tend to have greater racial pride, Whites who are not highly developed in their racial identity may perceive this trait as yet another damaging characteristic associated with dark skin, thereby reinforcing the stereotypes and prejudices that surround colorism.

It is important to note, however, that while colorism is present in the workforce for both Black males and Black females, it is present for different reasons. Colorism plays a role in the work environment for Black females because of beliefs surrounding attractiveness. Even during childhood, fairytales illustrate that it is "fortunate to be beautiful and unfortunate to be ugly" (Webster & Driskell, 1983, p. 140). Further, research has illustrated that in the "real world," there is a positive correlation between attractiveness and perceptions of ability and success (Umberson & Hughes, 1987). Ideologies surrounding colorism suggest that Blacks are perceived as being more attractive when their phenotypic features (e.g., nose shape, lip size, hair texture) are more closely analogous to that of Whites than their African ancestors (Fears, 1998; Maddox & Gray, 2002; Oliver, Jackson, Moses, & Dangerfield, 2004). Thus, it is common for lighter skinned Black women to have higher salaries than Black women with darker skin who have very similar résumés (Hunter, 2002).

It was even found in a 2001 study (Catalyst, 2001) that light-skinned Black women, who are deemed "less ethnic," were more likely to be satisfied with their pay and opportunities for advancement than darker skinned (i.e., "more ethnic") Black females. Thompson and Keith (2001), therefore, described a dark-skinned Black woman as being in a "triple-jeopardy" situation because of her race, gender, and skin tone, where all can have negative and damaging effects on her self-esteem and feelings of competency.

Similarly, dark-skinned Black males can consider themselves as being in a “double-jeopardy” situation because of their race and skin tone. These men are often perceived as being more violent and threatening by the general population (Hall, 1995). Because darker skinned Black males are commonly associated with crime and general civil misconduct, many people have pre-conceived notions about Black men who have dark skin (Hall, 1995). Thus, when interviewing for a job, these individuals are possibly at an automatic disadvantage as soon as they walk into the interview. Therefore, we propose the following:

Hypothesis 2. Preferential treatment as a result of skin tone will be present for both Black men and women, but darker skinned women will be at a greater disadvantage than will darker skinned men because of their gender.

In addition to testing for differences as a result of skin tone and gender differences, the present study seeks to look at differences in qualifications and if these disparities will forecast the likelihood of an individual being hired, or if the more salient features (i.e., skin tone, gender) of the applicant will play a more critical role in the selection process. We propose the following:

Hypothesis 3. Darker skinned Blacks with greater education and experience will receive similar ratings to those of a light-skinned Black with a résumé depicting less background education and work experience.

The interaction of skin tone and gender should serve as an explanation for this finding. As stated previously, people perceive light-skinned Black women to be more attractive than dark-skinned Black women, and they perceive attraction to be correlated with competency. Thus, lighter skinned Black women can have lower qualifications and still be regarded as competent as a dark-skinned Black woman with greater credentials. For men, lighter skinned Blacks will be advantageous because of the fear and apprehension surrounding darker skinned Black men. The enhanced fear people have toward dark-skinned Black men will cause them to rate them lower, despite the qualifications they may have. Lastly, an exploratory proposal was performed that determined whether or not there was a three-way interaction between color, gender, and qualifications.

Thus, to recap, the primary purpose of this research study is to investigate the role, if any, a Black individual’s skin complexion plays on his or her probability of being selected for a job. More specifically, this investigation seeks to determine whether or not the aforementioned notions of colorism—

which seem to permeate the consciousness of our society—give lighter skinned Blacks an advantage over darker skinned Blacks in the job-selection process when job qualifications are both equivalent and nonequivalent. Because of the significant gap with regard to economic status between dark- and light-skinned Blacks, via the findings of Hughes and Hertel (1990) it was hypothesized that lighter skinned Blacks would receive higher ratings for selection than would dark-skinned Blacks, even if the two had identical résumés.

It is expected that this system of skin-tone preference will be present for male and female Blacks, but that women will be at a greater disadvantage because of their gender. Therefore, an additional hypothesis is that a dark-skinned Black woman will receive the lowest ratings overall. If this expectation holds true, it would further substantiate Thompson and Keith's (2001) triple-jeopardy explanation regarding dark-skinned Black women. And at the other end of this spectrum, it is speculated that a light-skinned Black man will receive the most desirable ratings.

A further conjecture is that a darker skinned Black with a higher level résumé will receive a rating similar to that of a light-skinned Black with a résumé of a lower level. In both of these settings, it is speculated that Blacks with a medium skin tone will receive ratings between the two extremes, thus illustrating a continuum of preference from darker to lighter skin. Finally, this research explores the complex relationship among skin color, gender, and qualifications, and the possible interaction among all three. For clarification, details of the hypotheses and the exploratory three-way interaction proposition are presented in Appendix A.

Pilot Study

Method

Participants

Participants for the pilot study were 42 undergraduates at a southeastern university. Some of the students participated voluntarily, while others took part for course credit.

Stimuli

A pilot study was conducted for the résumés and pictures used. In each pilot study, only one picture stimulus was presented, and both résumé

conditions were shown. Participants viewed the two different résumés with the full content, but without the pictures on them; and also a blank résumé with one of the six picture conditions on it. For the résumés with content and no photo, participants rated the competency level of the résumé. They also gave ratings regarding perceived experience, skill, and knowledge of the applicant, based on the résumé. This pre-rating was done to ensure that a significant difference was observed from the general populace regarding the average and above-average résumés in order for them to be used properly in the primary research study.

For the non-content résumés with the photo, participants rated the skin tones of those pictured. This portion of the pilot study was performed to ensure that people do recognize differences in skin tones within Blacks; and that the light, medium, and dark skin tones obtained via the Adobe® Photoshop® CS software were appropriately identified. Additionally, participants estimated the ages of the individuals pictured and gave a rating of attractiveness, in order to gauge whether or not a significant difference between interpreted ages and perceived attractiveness of those pictured existed, which could possibly lead to differences in competency ratings as a result of age bias and attractiveness.

Finally, participants also gave an overall picture quality rating for the photo pictured on the résumé. This test was done to ensure that a significant difference did not exist between the different skin-tone conditions with regard to picture quality. The presence of a significant difference could suggest that participants in the actual study may regard the pictures on the résumé as a poor-quality picture, rather than that of a dark-skinned Black male or female. If picture qualities were equivalent, then any differences in ratings of skin tone should be attributed solely to proper morphing by the computer software, and not that of a picture with flawed resolution.

Results

A paired-sample *t* test was performed in order to analyze whether or not a statistical difference was seen with regard to competency of the two résumés. As hoped, a significant difference was perceived on all three scales of competence: experience, $t(41) = 5.42, p < .001$; skill, $t(41) = 4.34, p < .001$; and knowledge, $t(41) = 5.95, p < .001$.

Several ANOVAs were computed to assess possible perceptual differences as a result of the different picture conditions: perceived skin color, age, and attractiveness. The ANOVA results for perceived skin color indicate a significant difference in skin color between the skin-tone conditions, $F(2, 36) = 23.56, p < .001$. These results illustrate that participants did

distinguish a significant difference between the light ($M = 4.93$), medium ($M = 3.14$), and dark ($M = 2.36$) skin-tone conditions. Additionally, there was no significant difference between genders with regard to skin tone ($F = 0.00$, *ns*). Thus, there was no difference perceived between a light/medium/dark-skinned male juxtaposed to a light/medium/dark-skinned female. This ensured that the manipulations for light, medium, and dark skin were congruent between genders, and, therefore, skin tone between genders can be weighed against each other equally.

For age, the ANOVA results depict no significant difference within genders, $F(2, 36) = 0.40$, *ns*. This finding shows that participants viewed all males and all females, regardless of their depicted skin tones, as being the same age. In other words, there was no significant difference in perceived age between the skin-tone conditions within males and females (e.g., light skin male age \approx medium skin male age; medium skin female age \approx dark skin female age). However, a significant difference was found between genders, $F(1, 36) = 4.61$, $p < .05$, such that the male manipulation was perceived as significantly older. Ideally, an equal perception of age would have been desired. This was not problematic, however, in that perceived age was also assessed in the actual study, where there was no significant difference between or within genders.

The final ANOVA performed investigated perceived attractiveness. These results illustrate no significant differences either between or within genders, $F(1, 36) = 0.60$, *ns*; and $F(2, 36) = 0.20$, *ns*, respectively. Thus, the male and female conditions were observed as being equally attractive. In addition, there were no distinctions in attractiveness between light, medium, and dark skin-tone conditions.

Present Study

Method

Participants

Study participants were 240 undergraduate college students (68 male, 172 female) from a southeastern university. All of the students participated in the study for course credit. A semi-racially diverse subject pool was used, but the majority of participants were White (87.5%). There was also a disproportionate number of females taking part in the study (72%), which is not surprising, given that most participants were psychology majors who needed credit for their course, and at this particular university, there was a larger percentage of female psychology majors than males.

Participants in the study ranged in age from 17 to 26 years. The mode age, however, was 18 years, making up nearly 50% of participants. Most participants (71%) in the experiment indicated that they grew up in a suburban neighborhood, and 45% stated that they came from a family whose estimated income was greater than \$100,000. These results, again, are indicative of a research pool conducted of college undergraduates. Each participant in the study was randomly assigned to one of 12 conditions; therefore, resulting in 20 participants for each condition.

Procedure

The research study was a 2 (Gender) \times 2 (Résumé Level) \times 3 (Skin Tone) between-subjects design. Each participant received a packet that contained one résumé with one of the six pictures on it, and they also received one questionnaire. When the participants received the research materials, they were told that the researchers were interested in how strongly an applicant's résumé influences selection decisions, and that they were viewing résumés of applicants interested in a marketing job with a fictitious corporation. Each participant was exposed to only one résumé and picture, and they were not aware that other participants could possibly have the same (or a different) résumé or picture from themselves. After reviewing the résumé with the attached picture, the participants completed the questionnaire.

Stimuli

There were six possible pictures and two possible résumés that the participants could receive. The six possible pictures, illustrated in Appendix B, consist of three pictures of the same man with a dark, medium, or light skin tone; and three pictures of the same woman with these same varying complexions. Their skin tones were manipulated via the use of Adobe® Photoshop® CS software. The same man and woman were used for all skin-tone conditions to ensure that facial characteristics, which often lead to differences in attractiveness, would not be a contributing factor to the selection ratings given by participants, but that the only difference in the pictures would be the complexion of the applicant's skin.

The two résumés used in this study varied vis-à-vis the educational and work experience listed, where one résumé (Appendix C) depicted an individual who had more education and experience and would, therefore, seem to be a better applicant for the position than the applicant with the résumé shown in Appendix D. The résumés were congruent, however, in that they

had the same male or female name (depending on the gender of the corresponding picture), and they also had the same description regarding the objective of the applicant. Each picture from Appendix B was placed on both conditions of the résumés, thus resulting in 12 different résumés (e.g., an average résumé with a dark-skinned Black woman pictured, an above-average résumé with a dark-skinned Black woman pictured).

An example of a résumé with an attached picture is illustrated in Appendix E. All résumés were developed by combining various marketing-related résumés from <http://susanireland.com/resumeindex.htm>. An occupation in the marketing field was used because it is a profession that is both gender- and racial-neutral (Office of Educational Research and Improvement, 2002). Occupations such as a nurse or a diversity recruiter, which are often perceived as female or minority positions, respectively, could have skewed the results.

Because of the subjectivity of many of the stimuli used in this study, a pilot study was conducted with the résumés and picture conditions. One of these possible covariates from the stimuli (i.e., age) was also measured in the actual study. Age was measured as a result of a significant difference found in the pilot study between genders.

Measures

For each of the following measures, participants read résumés, and answered the questions posed. The items were rated on a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 to 7.

Recommendation. Participants were asked to rate how strongly they would recommend the candidate based on educational background, prior work experience, and overall résumé. A sample question is “Based on this applicant’s educational background, how likely would you recommend this applicant for the position in question?”

Hiring of applicant. Participants were asked how likely they, themselves, would hire the applicant in the packet that they had received. They answered the question “If you were in charge for hiring for the position in question, what is the likelihood that you would hire this applicant?”

Demographic information. Finally, participants were asked to provide basic demographic information regarding their race, gender, age, and socioeconomic status. A sample question is “What is your gender?”

Manipulation Checks

Applicant race and skin tone were made salient via the picture in the upper right-hand corner of each résumé. At the end of each questionnaire,

participants were asked to give the race/ethnicity of the individual pictured on the résumé. Additionally, participants were given six picture choices from which to circle the one that had appeared on the résumé they had viewed. These manipulation checks were included in the study to ensure that participants believed they were viewing a Black/African American, and also to ensure that they accurately differentiated between the varying skin tones.

Only questionnaires on which the participants correctly answered both of the manipulation checks were included in the data analysis of the study. Thus, a total of 280 participants actually completed questionnaires for the study. However, 40 of these questionnaires were not included in the data analysis because the participant either incorrectly identified the race/ethnicity of the applicant pictured, or circled a picture on the questionnaire that did not match the one that had appeared on the résumé the participant had received in the packet.

Results

Originally, data analysis for the primary portion of the present study was to be performed via use of MANOVA, since two dependent variables are being tested against three varying independent variables. MANOVA helps in determining if an entire set of means (across two or more correlated dependent variables) is different from one group to the next. Multivariate F is based on the error/variance of the covariance matrix and the effect error/covariance when dependent variables are considered simultaneously (Harris, 1985). Using MANOVA is advantageous over the general ANOVA because it gives the researcher a greater chance to discover effects by considering several dependent variables concurrently, thereby increasing power. Additionally, it helps to protect against Type I errors that may be more likely to occur if multiple ANOVAs are conducted independently (Cliff, 1987).

Despite the aforementioned advantages of using MANOVA, it can only be appropriately employed if its accompanying assumptions are met. Stevens (1992) listed three key assumptions to the use of MANOVA:

1. The observations on the dependent variables follow a multivariate normal distribution in each group.
2. The population covariance matrices for the dependent variables in each group are equal.
3. The observations are independent. (p. 257)

For the data in this study, the second assumption was violated. This was evident via Box's test of equality of covariance matrices, which resulted in a significant value, $F(66, 55821) = 1.83, p < .001$. While this test is very sensitive—and, therefore, does not necessarily indicate that the F values

would be inaccurate (Timm, 1975)—it was decided that the data would be analyzed via ANOVA because of the significance level of the covariances not being equal, and because the data analyses involve only two dependent variables. Furthermore, the correlation between the two dependent variables was .76, which offers additional support against the use of MANOVA in this particular analysis (L. T. Eby, personal communication, September 25, 2005).

Age and Gender

The pilot study found a significant difference regarding age between genders. Because analyses for the actual study were performed with gender, an ANOVA was performed to see if there was a need to control for gender. The results of the ANOVA for the actual study show that participants viewed all males and all females, irrespective of their skin tone, as being the same age ($F = 2.11, ns$). The mean perceived age of the males and females pictured were 32.833 and 32.067 years, respectively. Therefore, there was no need to control for age in any of the analyses that included juxtaposition between genders.

Résumé Competency

In order to ensure that participants were seeing differences between the two types of résumés in the study—and not solely basing their ratings on the picture—a measure of perceived knowledge, skill, and experience was assessed. An independent-sample t test gave results illustrating that there was a significant difference seen between the two résumé conditions. These differences were present in all competency dimensions: knowledge, $t(238) = 3.01, p < .001$; skill, $t(238) = 3.97, p < .001$; experience, $t(238) = 3.50, p < .001$. Thus, with results from any analyses involving the qualifications of the conditions, it can be properly assumed that the participant viewed the résumé at the level at which it should be.

Skin Color

It was expected that light-skinned applicants would receive significantly higher ratings for selection (i.e., recommendation for job/hiring decision) than would darker skinned applicants (Hypothesis 1). The ANOVA results for the ratings on recommendation based on the overall résumé and the ratings on general hiring decision are both significant: $F(2, 228) = 15.62,$

Table 1

Skin Tone Mean Ratings Given for Recommendation Based on Overall Résumé

Skin color	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Light	5.96	0.79
Medium	5.79	0.88
Dark	5.15	1.26

Note. *N* = 80.

Table 2

Skin Tone Mean Ratings Given for Hiring Decision

Skin color	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Light	5.70	0.88
Medium	5.64	0.89
Dark	4.96	1.28

Note. *N* = 80.

$p < .001$; and $F(2, 228) = 13.38$, $p < .001$, respectively. As illustrated in Table 1, the mean selection rating score for recommendation based on the overall résumé increased in relation to skin tone, where higher ratings were given to lighter skinned applicants. Almost mirrored results were found with the ratings for hiring decision, as depicted in Table 2.

Pairwise comparisons for ratings on recommendation based on the résumé (see Table 3) illustrate the conditions in which a mean difference was significant at the $p < .05$ level. These comparisons show significant mean differences when juxtaposing the light and dark conditions to each other, as well as comparing the medium and dark conditions. Thus, while the selection rating mean value for light-skinned Blacks was higher than that of medium-skinned Blacks (illustrated in Table 1), the pairwise comparison test shows that the difference was not significant, suggesting that light- and medium-skinned Blacks received similar ratings on this dimension. These ratings, however, are significantly higher than those given to dark-skinned Blacks. Not surprisingly, Table 4 shows how the pairwise comparisons of ratings for hiring decision mimic those for recommendation.

Table 3

Pairwise Comparisons for Ratings on Recommendation Based on Overall Résumé

(I) Skin color	(J) Skin color	<i>M</i> difference (I–J)	<i>p</i> ^a
Light	Medium	0.18	.254
	Dark	0.81*	.000
Medium	Light	–0.18	.254
	Dark	0.64*	.000
Dark	Light	–0.81*	.000
	Medium	–0.64*	.000

Note. Standard error = .153.

Adjustment for multiple comparisons: least significant difference (equivalent to no adjustments).

**p* < .05.

Table 4

Pairwise Comparisons for Ratings on Hiring Decision

(I) Skin color	(J) Skin color	<i>M</i> difference (I–J)	<i>p</i> ^a
Light	Medium	0.63	.694
	Dark	0.74*	.000
Medium	Light	–0.06	.694
	Dark	0.68*	.000
Dark	Light	–0.74*	.000
	Medium	–0.68*	.000

Note. Standard error = .159.

Adjustment for multiple comparisons: least significant difference (equivalent to no adjustments).

**p* < .05.

Skin Color and Gender Interaction

Hypothesis 2 stated that darker skinned women would receive the lowest ratings, and light-skinned men would receive the highest ratings. This hypothesis was based on the notion described by Thompson and Keith (2001)

as the triple-jeopardy situation, where dark-skinned Black women are triply disadvantaged because of their being Black, dark-skinned, and female. While conceptually logical, this hypothesis was not supported in this particular study for either rating condition recommendation, $F(2, 228) = 2.04$, *ns*; or hiring decision, $F(2, 228) = 2.14$, *ns*.

Skin Color and Qualifications

It was hypothesized (Hypothesis 3) that skin color would be so salient that light-skinned applicants with lower qualifications would receive similar ratings to those of darker skinned applicants with higher qualifications. Thus, it was conjectured that a significant finding would not be present with the Skin Tone \times Qualification interaction, ultimately suggesting that because of the prominence of skin tone, lighter skinned applicants would receive comparable ratings, regardless of having lower qualifications. The results suggest that this was, in fact, the case, given that nonsignificant differences were found between means for these tests, $F(2, 228) = 1.68$, *ns*; and $F(2, 228) = 0.33$, *ns*, respectively.

Skin Color, Gender, and Qualifications

A final exploratory hypothesis for this study was to examine a possible three-way interaction among skin color, gender, and qualifications. This interaction is somewhat of a combination of Hypotheses 2 and 3, basically conjecturing that a light-skinned Black male with an MBA should receive the highest ratings overall, while a dark-skinned Black female with a bachelor's degree (BA) should receive the lowest ratings overall. Significance was not found for recommendation ratings, $F(2, 228) = 1.66$, $p = .41$. However, for the hiring ratings, there was a significant interaction, $F(2, 228) = 6.81$, $p < .05$. Table 5 illustrates the pairwise comparison for this three-way interaction, which was performed with the use of a Bonferroni correction.

For hiring decision, the highest rating average ($M = 5.90$) was given to both the light-skinned female condition with the BA résumé and the medium-skinned female condition with the MBA résumé. The lowest rating ($M = 4.50$) was obtained by the dark-skinned male condition with the MBA résumé. The unexpected variation of these ratings is highly linked to the significance found for this particular dependent variable, where significance was most likely attained because of the significantly higher ratings given to the female conditions in this study, $F(1, 228) = 6.44$, $p < .05$.

Thus, the results for this study illustrate that there was no significant three-way interaction among skin tone, gender, and qualifications for

Table 5

Pairwise Comparisons for Ratings on Hiring Decision Based on Interaction of Gender, Skin Tone, and Résumé Level

(I) Gender × Skin Color × Résumé	(J) Gender × Skin Color × Résumé	M difference (I-J)
Male Light MBA	Female Light MBA	0.15
	Female Light BA	-0.05
	Female Medium MBA	-0.05
	Female Medium BA	0.35
	Female Dark MBA	0.15
	Female Dark BA	0.90
Male Light BA	Female Light MBA	-0.35
	Female Light BA	-0.55
	Female Medium MBA	-0.55
	Female Medium BA	-0.15
	Female Dark MBA	-0.35
	Female Dark BA	0.40
Male Medium MBA	Female Light MBA	0.00
	Female Light BA	-0.20
	Female Medium MBA	-0.20
	Female Medium BA	0.20
	Female Dark MBA	0.00
	Female Dark BA	0.75
Male Medium BA	Female Light MBA	-0.25
	Female Light BA	-0.45
	Female Medium MBA	-0.45
	Female Medium BA	-0.05
	Female Dark MBA	-0.25
	Female Dark BA	0.50
Male Dark MBA	Female Light MBA	-1.20*
	Female Light BA	-1.40**
	Female Medium MBA	-1.40**
	Female Medium BA	-1.00
	Female Dark MBA	-1.20*
	Female Dark BA	-0.45
Male Dark BA	Female Light MBA	-1.00
	Female Light BA	-1.20*
	Female Medium MBA	-1.20*
	Female Medium BA	-0.80
	Female Dark MBA	-1.00
	Female Dark BA	-0.25

Note. Standard error = .317.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .001$.

recommendation ratings; but there was such an interaction for hiring (possibly because of the presence of a significant gender main effect). The significant finding of the dependent variable of hiring rating, and the few unexpected cases in which the lower level résumé condition generated higher mean values than did the higher level résumé and vice versa, most probably can be explained by the sample size of 20 per condition. It is important to note, however, that although the obtained mean was opposite of what was expected, the mean difference was only .20 or less.

Finally, one of the most compelling findings in this study comes via this three-way interaction of gender, skin tone, and qualifications, particularly for men. With regard to hiring decision, light-skin males who had only a BA degree (and whose résumé was rated in the pilot study as having significantly less prior work experience, skill, and overall knowledge than the résumé of the applicant with an MBA) received a mean rating ($M = 5.35$) higher than that of dark-skin males who had the higher level MBA résumé ($M = 4.50$). In addition, the rating of medium-skinned males with this same lower level résumé ($M = 5.45$) was also higher than that of dark-skinned males with an MBA. The means and accompanying standard deviations for males with regard to hiring decision are shown in Table 6. Pairwise comparisons of these means were also performed via a Bonferroni correction, and are illustrated in Table 7. Figure 1 depicts these mean comparisons in graphical form as well.

A similar pattern was found for women. A key difference, however, was that in some instances, medium-skinned females received the highest ratings rather than light-skinned females. Nonetheless, these mean ratings were generally much higher than those awarded to their darker skinned counterparts, even when the individual's résumé depicted someone with a higher academic

Table 6

Skin Tone × Résumé Level Mean Ratings Given for Hiring Decision for Male Condition

Skin color	Résumé	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Light	MBA	5.85	0.67
	BA	5.35	1.14
Medium	MBA	5.70	0.87
	BA	5.45	0.89
Dark	MBA	4.50	1.10
	BA	4.70	1.38

Note. $N = 80$.

Table 7

Pairwise Comparisons for Ratings on Hiring Decision Based on Interaction of Skin Tone and Résumé Level for Males

(I) Skin Color × Résumé	(J) Skin Color × Résumé	<i>M</i> difference (I-J)
Light MBA	Light BA	0.50
	Medium MBA	0.15
	Medium BA	0.40
	Dark MBA	1.35**
	Dark BA	1.15*
Light BA	Light MBA	-0.50
	Medium MBA	-0.35
	Medium BA	-0.10
	Dark MBA	0.85
	Dark BA	0.65
Medium MBA	Light MBA	-0.15
	Light BA	0.35
	Medium BA	0.25
	Dark MBA	1.20*
	Dark BA	1.00*
Medium BA	Light MBA	-0.40
	Light BA	0.10
	Medium MBA	-0.25
	Dark MBA	0.95†
	Dark BA	0.75
Dark MBA	Light MBA	-1.35**
	Light BA	-0.85
	Medium MBA	-1.20*
	Medium BA	-0.95†
	Dark BA	-0.20
Dark BA	Light MBA	-1.15*
	Light BA	-0.65
	Medium MBA	-1.00*
	Medium BA	-0.75
	Dark MBA	0.20

Note. Standard error = .326.

† $p < .10$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .001$.

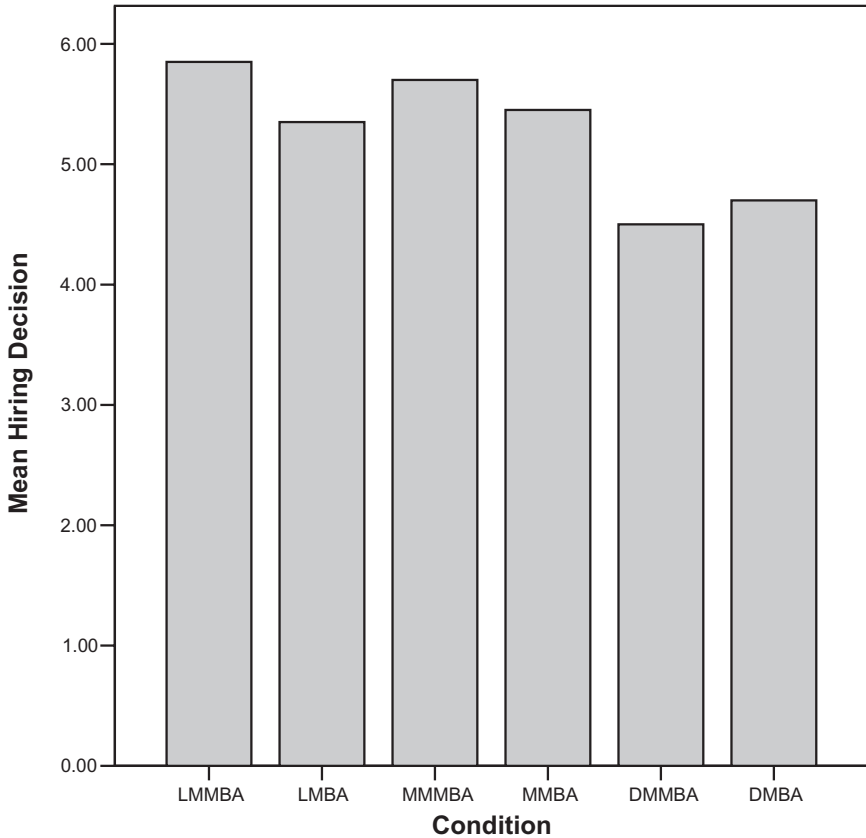


Figure 1. Mean comparisons of ratings for hiring decision with regard to the interaction of skin tone and résumé level for males. LMMBA = Light Male w/ MBA; LMBA = Light Male w/ BA; MMMBA = Medium Male w/ MBA; MMBA = Medium Male w/ BA; DMMBA = Dark Male w/ MBA; DMBA = Dark Male w/ BA.

degree and greater prior work credentials. Table 8 depicts the mean ratings given for hiring decision for females in the present study with respect to résumé level.

General Discussion

This study sought to shed light on an area of selection discrimination that is seldom studied and discussed in America. While the phenomenon of colorism is not a novel topic in the U.S. (or in Western culture), skin color bias

Table 8

Skin Tone × Résumé Level Mean Ratings Given for Hiring Decision for Female Condition

Skin color	Résumé	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Light	MBA	5.70	0.80
	BA	5.90	0.79
Medium	MBA	5.90	0.85
	BA	5.50	0.95
Dark	MBA	5.70	1.03
	BA	4.95	1.32

Note. *N* = 80.

is an issue that is rarely discussed with regard to its possible implications in workplace selection. As a result of the historical significance of racial prejudice in the United States, and the majority of discrimination cases being gender- or race-based, it is uncommon for one to think that discrimination can have different repercussions for individuals of the same race. This study has illustrated that this can very well be the case.

The hypothesis based purely on skin tone asserted that light-skinned applicants would receive significantly higher selection ratings (i.e., recommendation for hiring based on overall résumé and hiring decision) than would darker skinned applicants. The ANOVAs that were conducted for both recommendation and hiring showed mean values that were significantly higher for lighter skinned Blacks. These results indicate that there appears to be a skin-tone preference with regard to job selection. Given that this study was manipulated in such a way that everything was held constant (i.e., résumé, person pictured on résumé, desired job) except the applicant's skin color, these significant mean differences can be attributed only to the skin color variation. Sadly, these findings are not terribly shocking, because, according to Williams (2002), "we have been conditioned to believe that lighter skin equals success" (p. 8).

Further, these results support—and possibly help to explain—the findings of Hughes and Hertel (1990). Perhaps lighter skinned Blacks have substantially higher incomes and attain greater education, because the U.S. is structured in such a way that attainment of schooling and competitively paying jobs is not as difficult a feat for them as it is for darker skinned Blacks. These results, however, are not intended to make the claim that light-skinned Blacks do not experience discrimination in the workplace or in society in

general, for that matter. The results do, on the other hand, support the notion that the severity of the discrimination experienced may very well be dependent on whether this individual is a light- or dark-skinned Black.

It was also hypothesized that there would be an interaction between skin color and gender such that dark-skinned women would receive the lowest ratings, and light-skinned men would receive the highest ratings. While this hypothesis was not supported, it is important to keep in mind the gender demographic of the particular sample involved in this study. This finding and nonsignificance for this particular hypothesis is not terribly surprising, given that 72% of the study participants were female. Perhaps a more gender-equivalent participant pool—or even one that is more closely aligned with the actual demographics of working professionals making selection decisions (which is most likely disproportionately male)—would have yielded results supporting the original assumption. Thus, another study that had a more equivalent participant pool, in terms of gender, could possibly find results that support Thompson and Keith's (2001) triple-jeopardy claim for dark-skinned Black women.

The findings for the hypothesis regarding the interaction between skin tone and résumé level reveal the most compelling results for the present study. It was originally conjectured that light-skinned applicants with lower qualifications would receive similar ratings as their darker skinned complements with higher qualifications. This hypothesis assumed that skin color is such a salient feature of an applicant that it can actually transcend and ultimately overshadow one's actual knowledge and experience. The mean ratings (both for recommendation and hiring) given to applicants in this study seem to suggest that darker skinned Blacks (particularly males) can have more educational background, prior work experience, and perceived competence and still not be as highly recommended or more likely to be hired over someone with lighter skin and noticeably less skill.

This finding is possibly a result of the common belief that fair-skinned Blacks probably have more similarities with Whites than do dark-skinned Blacks, which, in turn, makes Whites feel more comfortable around them (Williams, 2002). Other potential reasons for this finding are attractiveness for females and potentiality of threat for males. As discussed earlier, perceived competency has a direct link with perceived attractiveness. In other words, the more attractive you are (to a certain extent), the more competent you are perceived to be (Umberson & Hughes, 1987).

Given that women are consistently objectified in America, it is more common for their attractiveness to be associated with their ability. Past research has shown that Blacks are regarded as being more attractive when they have noses, lips, hair textures/styles, and other facial characteristics (e.g., lighter skin tone) that are more aligned with Eurocentric features than

African features (Fears, 1998). Thus, Black women with light skin have an automatic advantage over women who have darker skin. They can, therefore, have a résumé that depicts a lower level degree, or a past job not equal to that of a darker skinned Black female, because their light skin automatically grants them a certain level of competency that is not similarly awarded to a darker female.

This advantage system is also in place for men, although its foundation is not necessarily rooted in attractiveness; rather, it stems from the common stereotype of the violent, angry, Black man, who most often is dark-skinned. Even if one has not been exposed to this particular stereotype, the media helps paint a picture that depicts a canvas illustrating two very different types of men when juxtaposing light- and dark-skinned Black men. For instance, if one was to imagine a Black male physician, attorney, or politician, most of these images would be of a light-skinned Black male. Whereas, if images of a Black male factory worker, garbage collector, or janitor were conjured up, more than likely they would be of darker pigmentation than those listed previously.

Thus, not only do dark-skinned Black men incite fear in many Americans, most people also have much lower expectations of them than of lighter skinned Black males. The findings in this study, therefore, are tragically not too surprising. A light-skinned Black male can have only a bachelor's degree and minimal work experience, and still be preferred over a dark-skinned Black male with an MBA and past managerial positions, simply because expectations of the light-skinned Black male are much higher. In addition, the light-skinned Black male does not appear to be as "menacing" as the darker skinned male applicant.

The final hypothesis was an exploratory look at a possible three-way interaction among skin color, gender, and qualifications. There was no past literature suggesting that a level of significance would be found, so it was not expected to find any in this particular study. Significance was found with regard to the ratings given for hiring decision. A couple of outliers in the data most likely attributed to this finding, so it is not presumed that a three-way interaction actually exists. Further research, with a larger sample size, should be conducted to test the possibility of this relationship.

The most prevalent limitation of the present study is that it is a laboratory experiment, which limits its possible relevance to real-world situations. It makes sense to examine this particular research topic via a lab experiment, because the probability of getting factual data from individuals in managerial positions regarding colorism is highly unlikely. One could, however, possibly submit similar résumés with the corresponding pictures as those in the present study to job listings and see which ones receive a response. A study of this nature, however, would have to use pictures of different individuals,

which would lead this experiment to be more subjective with regard to whether or not it was the actual skin tone, or other phenotypic characteristics that led to possibly obtained preferential differences.

An additional shortcoming of this study is that it only addressed colorism among Blacks. Light skin, however, is almost universally valued. Hierarchies based on light skin are prevalent in Hindu cultures in India (Hall, 1995) and in other Asian and Hispanic cultures as well. Thus, given the heterogeneity of the workforce in America, future research should address this notion of colorism in other cultures, because the presence of preferential treatment as a result of skin tone is most probably present elsewhere.

One final fault of the present study is that while it addressed the ways in which colorism affects how others view Blacks, it does not take into account the ways colorism affects how Blacks view other Blacks. There have been a number of studies that have illustrated that Blacks themselves adhere to common negative stereotypes surrounding Blacks with dark skin. Maxwell (2003) even stated "More than any other minority group in the United States, Blacks discriminate against one another" (p. 7D). The truthfulness of this statement is evidenced by the increasing number of colorism cases reported by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), where most cases involve a Black discriminating against another Black. In 2002, there were 1,382 such cases; and this number rose to 1,555 in 2003. These cases are filed under Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act (Arnn, 2004; Maxwell, 2003). These rising numbers illustrate that Whites are not solitary mediators of color bias in America and that research should be conducted to investigate the prevalence of colorism values among Blacks (Hill, 2000).

The present research allowed for the juxtaposition of within-race selection preferences based on skin tone and gender. Past research has neglected to look at discrimination outside of the normal dichotomous comparisons of Blacks and Whites as groups consisting of homogeneous individuals. Given the increasing number of biracial and multiracial Americans, more research similar to this study should be performed so that Americans can become more aware of the prevalence of color bias. Perhaps the results from this study will not only enhance their awareness, but also challenge their acceptance of the common belief that "whiteness" signifies graciousness and beauty (Hill, 2000).

Additionally, this study has helped to substantiate, and in some ways expand, current theories regarding privilege and similarity attraction. It is no secret that America is a society in which being White affords many privileges that are not equally awarded to those who do not belong to this same racial or ethnic group (McIntosh, 1993). The results from this study possibly illustrate that the privilege one receives extends beyond one's race, but is deeply rooted in one's skin color, where darker skin equates to fewer privileges.

Further, this study's findings also seem to confirm Byrne's (1971) similarity attraction theory, which states that people tend to be more attracted to and have a greater comfort level around individuals who are similar to themselves. Therefore, it is not surprising that the lowest ratings for recommendation and hiring in this study, where the average participant was a White female, were both given to the dark-skinned Black male conditions.

Furthermore, this research has hopefully combated some of the irony that has long existed in social science research of race and race relations. Most social scientists claim that the purpose of their research is to address and hopefully falsify perceptions and stereotypes surrounding various races. Yet, by grouping individuals into homogeneous groups—and assuming that life experiences are the same for all Blacks or all Whites—they are doing nothing more than perpetuating these stereotypes. Because the present research study forced people to view Blacks with a heterogeneous perspective, perhaps it caused them to look at Blacks in a way in which these longstanding stereotypes no longer seem appropriate.

And finally, given the increasing number of companies that employ affirmative-action policies in their selection processes, determining the possible presence of skin-tone preference is paramount. Organizations must be more cognizant of the colorism issue in many of their human-resource-related procedures. Further training (with an emphasis on skin-tone preference) should be conducted with diversity recruitment, selection, career development, and wage/salary allotments. While statistics may indicate that the number of minorities in corporate America is on the rise, those statistics are not indicating the possibility that most of these minorities are of a lighter complexion than their racial/ethnic counterparts. In addition, lighter skinned minority employees may have more vertical mobility in organizations because of their enhanced perceived competence; not to mention the fact that they are possibly compensated more in terms of their salaries or benefits because of their lighter pigmentation.

Combating the inequities that result from the beliefs and ideologies that are associated with colorism will only begin with greater awareness of the prejudices we have regarding skin tone as a result of the images to which we are exposed on a regular basis. Society paints a picture of lighter skin equating to attractiveness, intelligence, competency, likability, and so forth, and gives a much more dismal and bleak picture of those who have darker skin. These images are extremely powerful, in that they alter an individual's immediate perception of someone, who then must "fit" into the pictures to which they have been exposed. The more these images are challenged, the more one's belief system will also be challenged, which will lead to a greater likelihood of them judging someone else by their actual merit, rather than by their skin tone.

The results of this study illustrate that these images are not generally challenged, and instead are fully accepted and often believed; as the results very well depicted a continuum of preference with regard to skin tone. The findings in the present study show that past research has perhaps been somewhat incomplete with regard to selection discrimination, and that it extends far beyond a racial/ethnic issue. The outcome of this research illustrates that racism in America goes beyond the “White vs. other” phenomenon that is discussed so commonly. Rather, it is also manifested in skin-tone variation. Therefore, because this study emphasized and demonstrated the significance of colorism in America, it ultimately showed that racism is not necessarily a practice that allots preference and privilege based solely on one’s race, but that one’s skin color also plays a substantial role in the treatment he or she will receive.

References

- Arnn, B. (2004). A matter of tone. *Operations and Fulfillment*, 12(7), 8.
- Bersoff, D. N., Malson, L. P., & Verrilli, D. B. (1988). In the Supreme Court of the United States: Clara Watson v. Fort Worth Bank & Trust. *American Psychologist*, 43, 1019–1028.
- Brief, A. P., Butz, R. M., & Deitch, E. A. (2005). Organizations as reflections of their environments: The case of race composition. In R. Dipboye & A. Colella (Eds.), *Discrimination at work: The psychological and organizational bases* (pp. 119–148). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Byrne, D. (1971). *The attraction paradigm*. New York: Academic Press.
- Catalyst. (2001). *Women of color in corporate management: Three years later*. Retrieved December 20, 2006, from www.catalyst.org.
- Celious, A., & Oyserman, D. (2001). Race from the inside: An emerging heterogeneous race model. *Journal of Social Issues*, 57, 149–165.
- Cliff, N. (1987). *Analyzing multivariate data*. Orlando, FL: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- Deitch, E. A., Barsky, A., Butz, R. M., Chan, S., Brief, A. P., & Bradley, J. C. (2003). Subtle yet significant: The existence and impact of everyday racial discrimination in the workplace. *Human Relations*, 56, 1299–1324.
- Dovidio, J. F., & Gaertner, S. L. (2004). Aversive racism. In M. Zanna (Ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. 36, pp. 1–52). San Diego, CA: Elsevier Academic Press.
- Dovidio, J. F., Gaertner, S. L., & Pearson, A. R. (2005). On the nature of prejudice: The psychological foundations of hate. In R. Sternberg (Ed.), *The psychology of hate* (pp. 211–234). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

- Edwards, O. L. (1973). Skin color as a variable in racial attitudes of Black urbanites. *Journal of Black Studies*, 3, 473–483.
- Fears, L. M. (1998). Colorism of Black women in news editorial photos. *Western Journal of Black Studies*, 22, 30–36.
- Gaertner, S. L., & Dovidio, J. F. (2005). Understanding and addressing contemporary racism: From aversive racism to the common in-group identity model. *Journal of Social Issues*, 61, 615–639.
- Hall, R. (1995). The bleaching syndrome: African Americans' response to cultural domination vis-à-vis skin color. *Journal of Black Studies*, 26, 172–184.
- Harris, R. J. (1985). *A primer of multivariate statistics* (2nd ed.). Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Hill, M. E. (2000). Color differences in the socioeconomic status of African American men: Results of a longitudinal study. *Social Forces*, 78, 1437–1460.
- Hughes, M., & Hertel, B. R. (1990). The significance of color remains: A study of life chances, mate selection, and ethnic consciousness among Black Americans. *Social Forces*, 68, 1105–1120.
- Hunter, M. L. (2002). “If you're light you're alright”: Light skin color as social capital for women of color. *Gender and Society*, 16, 175–193.
- Keith, V. M., & Herring, C. (1991). Skin tone and stratification in the Black community. *American Journal of Sociology*, 97, 760–778.
- Maddox, K. B., & Gray, S. A. (2002). Cognitive representations of Black Americans: Re-exploring the role of skin tone. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 28, 250–259.
- Maxwell, B. (2003, August 31). The paper bag test. *St. Petersburg Times*, p. 7D.
- McIntosh, P. (1993). White male privilege: A personal account of coming to see correspondence through work in women's studies. In A. Minas (Ed.), *Gender basics* (pp. 30–38). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Office of Educational Research and Improvement. (2002). Retrieved April 13, 2005, from www.ed.gov/offices/OERI/research.html.
- Oliver, M. B., Jackson, R. L., Moses, N. N. & Dangerfield, C. L. (2004). The face of crime: Viewers' memory of race-related facial features of individuals pictured in the news. *Journal of Communications*, 54, 88–104.
- Ransford, H. E. (1970). Skin color, life chances, and anti-White attitudes. *Social Problems*, 18, 164–179.
- Ross, L. E. (1997). Mate selection preferences among African American college students. *Journal of Black Studies*, 27, 554–569.
- Seltzer, R., & Smith, R. C. (1991). Color differences in the Afro-American community and the differences they make. *Journal of Black Studies*, 21, 279–286.

- Stevens, J. (1992) *Applied multivariate statistics for the social sciences* (2nd ed.). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Terpstra, D. E., & Kethley, R. B. (2002). Organizations' relative degree of exposure to selection discrimination litigation. *Public Personnel Management, 31*, 277–292.
- Thompson, M. S., & Keith, V. M. (2001). The blacker the berry: Gender, skin tone, self-esteem, and self-efficacy. *Gender and Society, 15*, 336–357.
- Timm, N. H. (1975). *Multivariate analysis, with applications in education and psychology*. Belmont, CA: Brooks-Cole.
- Udry, J. R., Bauman, K. E., & Chase, C. (1971). Skin color, status, and mate selection. *American Journal of Sociology, 76*, 722–733.
- Umberson, D., & Hughes, M. (1987). The impact of physical attractiveness on achievement and psychological well-being. *Social Psychology Quarterly, 50*, 227–236.
- Webster, M., Jr., & Driskell, J. E., Jr. (1983). Beauty as status. *American Journal of Sociology, 89*, 140–165.
- Williams, A. (2002, January 31–February 6). Colorism. *New York Amsterdam News*, p. 8.

Appendix A

Summary of Hypotheses

- Hypothesis 1: Main effect of color on selection ratings (recommendation based on the overall résumé and hiring decision) such that light-skinned applicants will receive significantly higher ratings than darker skinned applicants.
- Hypothesis 2: Interaction between color and gender such that dark-skinned women will receive the lowest ratings and light-skinned men will receive the highest ratings.
- Hypothesis 3: Interaction of color and qualifications such that light-skinned applicants with lower qualifications will receive similar ratings to those of darker skinned applicants with higher qualifications.
- Exploratory proposal: Examination of the possible three-way interaction between color, gender, and qualifications.

Appendix B

Skin-Tone Conditions



Light-skin condition



Medium-skin condition



Dark-skin condition



Light-skin condition



Medium-skin condition



Dark-skin condition

Appendix C

*Higher Level Résumé Example***George S. Johnson***

2240 Peachtree St. NW ~ #355 □ Atlanta, GA 30322 □ (404) 555-1234

Career Objective

To obtain an executive position in Account Management focusing on Integrated Direct Marketing and Analysis

Summary of Qualifications

- Ten years experience as an organized, energetic, and client-focused professional with a balance of technical and marketing skills.
- Skilled in competitive analysis, targeting markets, identifying prospects, and following through to secure new business.
- A creative communicator and presenter; able to establish rapport with individuals and groups at all organizational levels.
- A motivated team player, with a reputation for perseverance and success in marketing and direct sales efforts.

Professional Experience

- 2000–present Thompson Marketing Associates (TMA) Atlanta, GA
Director of Metro Atlanta Area Marketing
- Led team to develop strategic business plan for Atlanta metro area market penetration, including analysis of organization's strengths, weaknesses, and competition.
 - Conducted research to identify optimal target markets for business expansion.
 - Mentored engineering staff in the areas of: targeting/selection, elements of sales calls, evaluating competition, and proposal development
 - Initiated innovative strategies to increase TMA's name recognition in new markets
 - Reviewed proposals to ensure accuracy of technical approach and ability to meet client's time and budget requirements.

Appendix C

Continued

-
- | | |
|-----------|--|
| 1997–2000 | <p>Online Solutions Boston, MA
 <i>Business Development Manager</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Developed and implemented marketing strategy for new regulatory compliance program, resulting in increased revenues. ■ Created and executed strategic and tactical marketing plans for key accounts. ■ Developed and launched a series of new products and services to increase response rates, reduce customer defection, and increase client profitability. |
| 1994–1997 | <p>Expert Marketing Managers Boston, MA
 <i>Marketing Specialist & Assistant</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Negotiated with visual and merchant teams for appropriate space and shop enhancements to improve flow and increase sales. ■ Researched and reviewed prospective clients using online computer services, referring optimal candidates to Marketing Manager. ■ Secured event speakers and coordinated transportation and accommodations for out-of-town guests. |

Education

M.B.A., Goizueta Business School of Emory University, Atlanta, GA, 2001

B.B.A., Boston University, Boston, MA, 1994

References

(available upon request)

*For the female condition, this name was replaced with Lisa M. Richardson.

Appendix D

*Lower Level Résumé Example***George S. Johnson***

2240 Peachtree St. NW ~ #355 □ Atlanta, GA 30322 □ (404) 555-1234

Career Objective

To obtain an executive position in Account Management focusing on
Integrated Direct Marketing and Analysis

Summary of Qualifications

- Seven years experience as an organized, energetic, and client-focused professional with a balance of technical and marketing skills.
- A creative communicator and presenter; able to establish rapport with individuals and groups at all organizational levels.
- A motivated team player, with a reputation for perseverance and success in marketing and direct sales efforts.

Professional Experience

2000–present Online Solutions Atlanta, GA

Business Development Manager

- Developed and implemented marketing strategy for new regulatory compliance program, resulting in increased revenues.
- Created and executed strategic and tactical marketing plans for key accounts.
- Developed and launched a series of new products and services to increase response rates, reduce customer defection, and increase client profitability.
- Created and executed strategic and tactical marketing plans for key accounts.
- Defined, developed, and implemented marketing automation software resulting in 100% improvement in user productivity.

Appendix D

Continued

- 1994–2000 Expert Marketing Managers Boston, MA
Marketing Specialist & Assistant
- Negotiated with visual and merchant teams for appropriate space and shop enhancements to improve flow and increase sales.
 - Researched and reviewed prospective clients using online computer services, referring optimal candidates to Marketing Manager.
 - Secured event speakers and coordinated transportation and accommodations for out-of-town guests.
 - Worked with marketing, advertising, merchandising, and account executives to develop strategies that generated sales of new or selected products.

Education

B.B.A., Boston University, Boston, MA, 1994

References

(available upon request)

*For the female condition, this name was replaced with Lisa M. Richardson.

Appendix E

Higher Level Résumé Example With Picture**George S. Johnson***

2240 Peachtree St. NW ~ #355 □ Atlanta, GA 30322 □ (404) 555-1234

Career Objective

To obtain an executive position in Account Management focusing on Integrated Direct Marketing and Analysis

Summary of Qualifications

- Ten years experience as an organized, energetic, and client-focused professional with a balance of technical and marketing skills.
- Skilled in competitive analysis, targeting markets, identifying prospects, and following through to secure new business.
- A creative communicator and presenter; able to establish rapport with individuals and groups at all organizational levels.
- A motivated team player, with a reputation for perseverance and success in marketing and direct sales efforts.

Professional Experience

2000–present Thompson Marketing Associates (TMA) Atlanta, GA
Director of Metro Atlanta Area Marketing

- Led team to develop strategic business plan for Atlanta metro area market penetration, including analysis of organization's strengths, weaknesses, and competition.
- Conducted research to identify optimal target markets for business expansion.
- Mentored engineering staff in the areas of: targeting/selection, elements of sales calls, evaluating competition, and proposal development
- Initiated innovative strategies to increase TMA's name recognition in new markets
- Reviewed proposals to ensure accuracy of technical approach and ability to meet client's time and budget requirements.

Appendix E

Continued

-
- | | | |
|-----------|---|------------|
| 1997–2000 | Online Solutions
<i>Business Development Manager</i> | Boston, MA |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Developed and implemented marketing strategy for new regulatory compliance program, resulting in increased revenues. ■ Created and executed strategic and tactical marketing plans for key accounts. ■ Developed and launched a series of new products and services to increase response rates, reduce customer defection, and increase client profitability. | |
| 1994–1997 | Expert Marketing Managers
<i>Marketing Specialist & Assistant</i> | Boston, MA |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Negotiated with visual and merchant teams for appropriate space and shop enhancements to improve flow and increase sales. ■ Researched and reviewed prospective clients using online computer services, referring optimal candidates to Marketing Manager. ■ Secured event speakers and coordinated transportation and accommodations for out-of-town guests. | |

Education

M.B.A., Goizueta Business School of Emory University, Atlanta, GA, 2001

B.B.A., Boston University, Boston, MA, 1994

References

(available upon request)

*For the female condition, this name was replaced with Lisa M. Richardson.