

Psychosocial Consequences of Colorism on Mental Health: A Systematic Review

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Colorism is a phenomenon of social stratification based on skin complexion that has profound psychological effects. The purpose of this systematic review was to examine critically the psychological consequences of colorism across cultures. To evaluate past studies, current systematic review used Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines (2009), which consisted of a four-phase flow diagram and a 27-item checklist. This review included the multidimensionality of colorism and highlighted most of research done in this line of direction from 2012 to 2022. Quantitative studies ($N = 13$) and qualitative studies ($N = 3$) were selected after screening based on eligibility criteria. In selected qualitative studies, an interpretative phenomenological approach was used, and correlational research design was used in most of the quantitative research. The findings illustrated that colorism significantly affected the mental health of people with darker skin tone. The current review highlighted that majority of research in this domain is done in individualistic society. So, it calls for research on psychological consequences of colorism in collectivistic culture and future researchers need to differentiate the concepts of concept of colorism and racism.

Keywords. Colorism; Mental Health; Skin Color Discrimination; Psychosocial Consequences

Colorism refers to the unequal treatment and prejudice based on the color of an individual's skin linked with racism (Greene, 2020). Historically, skin color has been used as a reason for oppression and discrimination, particularly against people with darker skin tones such as African American. It often manifests as a preference for lighter skin tones over darker ones and can lead to biases and stereotypes within group (Landor & McNeil, 2019). Colorism has harmful effects on individuals and communities, perpetuating inequality and perpetuating harmful stereotypes. It is significant to identify and address this form prejudice to support greater equity and justice (Barrie et al., 2016).

The impact of colorism is not limited to individuals who experience it firsthand. It can also have far-reaching outcomes on communities, families and society. It is important to acknowledge the existence of skin color discrimination and work towards creating a more equitable society where people are treated with dignity and respect, regardless of the color of their skin (Greene, 2020). In many societies, individuals with lighter skin tones may be more likely to receive favorable treatment in areas such as education, employment, marriage prospects, and social interactions. This can lead to disparities in opportunities and reinforce systemic inequalities (Alexander & Carter, 2022). Colorism intersects with racism but operates within specific racial or ethnic communities. It is important to recognize that colorism can occur both within communities of color and between different racial or ethnic groups. Within communities, individuals may face discrimination and biases based on their skin color, reinforcing intra-group hierarchies (Hunter, 2007). Cultural norms and historical factors play a role in shaping colorism. Historical experiences, colonization, slavery, and social stratification have influenced perceptions of beauty and social hierarchies based on skin color. Cultural practices, beauty standards, and media representation can further reinforce colorism (Hall, 2010). Colorism can lead to lowered self-esteem, negative body image, social isolation, identity issues, and mental health challenges such as depression, anxiety and psychological distress (Hunter, 2007; Howard, 2011).

Studies have shown that skin color discrimination can have negative impacts on individuals' mental and physical health, academic and career opportunities, and overall well-being (Keyes, et al., 2020). Skin color discrimination can also intersect with other forms of discrimination, such as

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gender and class, further exacerbating its negative effects (Rondilla, & Spickard, 2007). According to Hunter (2007), colorism can result in lower self-esteem and negative body image among individuals who experience discrimination based on their skin color. Hall (2010) found that colorism can lead to identity issues and feelings of cultural disconnection, particularly for individuals with darker skin tones. Colorism perpetuates internalized racism, as individuals may internalize negative stereotypes associated with darker skin tones (Hunter, 2007). Colorism is linked with mental health challenges, such as depression, anxiety, and psychological distress (Hunter, 2012).

So, there is evidence in literature about the psychological consequences of colorism. So, by concluding all relevant literature in one umbrella review is significant to highlight this major problem for the diversity in society and act as grounds for resolving this problem by introducing a multi-faceted approach that includes policy making, education, and efforts to promote diversity and inclusion.

The evidence in the literature suggests that skin color discrimination has adverse effects on psychological health. People are likely to portray a fair-skinned women as competent and dark-skinned woman as insecure and under- confident person due to exposure to skin color discrimination which affect their mental health (Maqsood, 2018). While the literature provides evidence about the effects of colorism on mental health, the totality of these experiences and consequences has yet to be reported in a systematic way that promotes continuity in research on the effects of colorism.

The main goal of this review is to answer the research question that What are the psychological consequences of colorism? The systematic assessment (2012-2022) of where and how the field stands on providing evidence about psychological consequences of colorism is a meaningful scientific contribution in this line of direction. It is substantial and significant to analyze literature in cross-racial groups to explore the research strategies, theories and methods used in past research. Therefore, the current systematic review aims to describe the range of research that addressed the psychological consequences of colorism, and to summarize the evidence in order to guide future researchers about the need of further research on colorism phenomenon.

Method

Research Design

This systematic review followed the PRISMA guidelines and used PRISMA checklists for selection of studies on the basis on inclusion and exclusion criteria (Moher, et al., 2009).

Procedure

Researchers conducted this systematic literature review search using PsycINFO, MEDLINE, JSTOR, PubMed, and NCBI databases. Search engines that were used for this review are Google, Google scholar and Elsevier. To more efficiently identify relevant studies that reflect the psychological impact of skin color discrimination, researcher restricted the search to English language articles published in the past 10 years between December 2012 and December 2022. The searches were carried out using a variety of population and outcome search terms including young adults. The following keywords were used in searches: Skin color discrimination, psychological wellbeing, mental health, psychosocial consequences, self-esteem, psychological distress, social comparison, social media, stress, anxiety, depression. The thesis and dissertation database were also searched to identify relevant studies in the grey literature. First, titles and abstracts were screened independently by a single researcher. Following this, the full texts of the remaining articles were read to determine eligibility for inclusion. This was carried out independently by two researchers, with discrepancies addressed through discussion with a third author.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

This systematic review followed the PRISMA reporting guidelines (Moher, et al, 2009). Criteria for considering studies for this review established based on inclusion and exclusion criteria. All quantitative (correlational, cross-sectional, survey & longitudinal studies) and qualitative (document analysis, focus group, interview study) that are helpful to investigate the impact of skin color discrimination on psychological wellbeing on youth. The literature covering all psychosocial consequences of skin color discrimination and role of social media in this phenomenon were included from 2012 till 2022. Studies carried out on colorism linked with physical health and colorism linked with racism were excluded from this review. Studies focusing primarily on therapeutic intervention are also excluded.

Risk of Bias Assessment

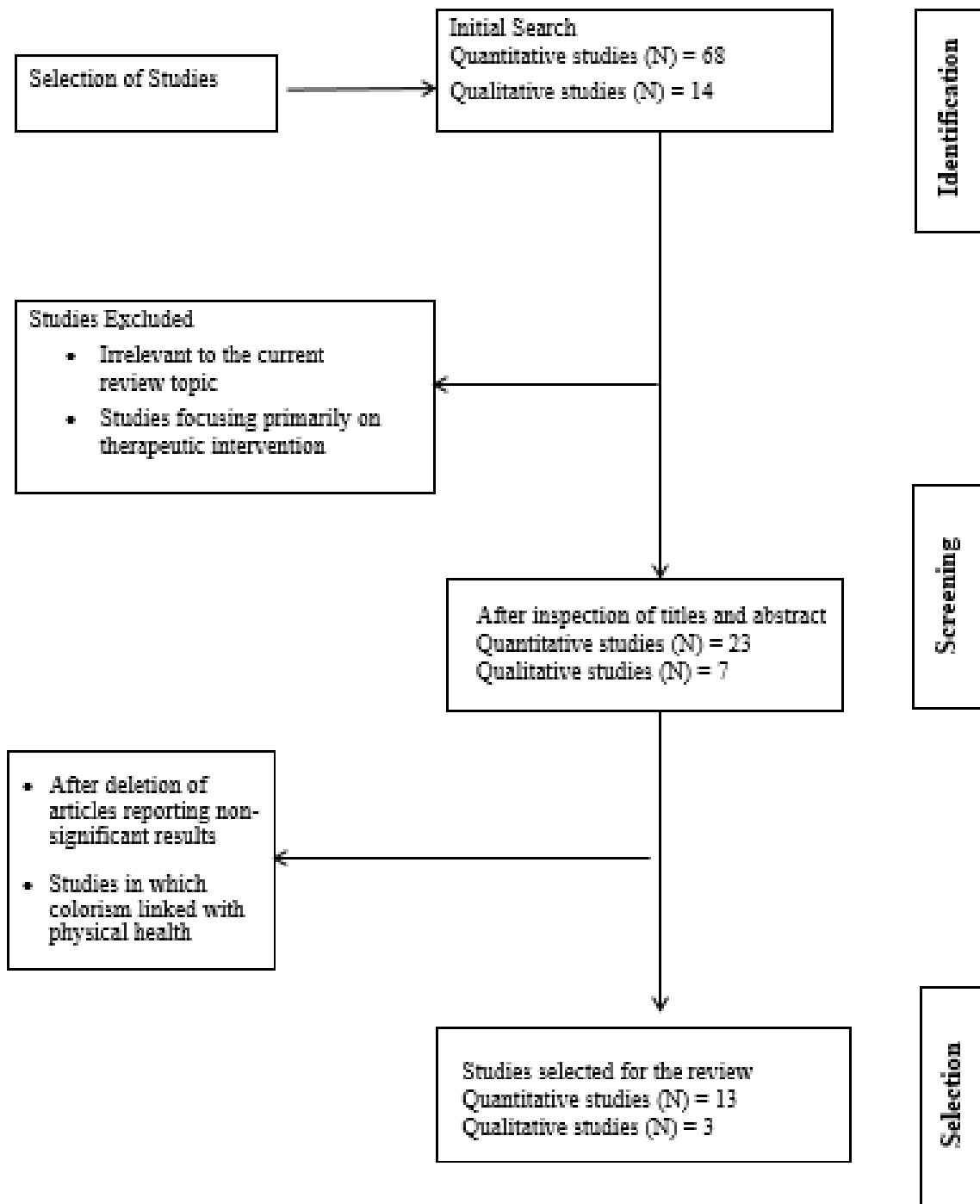
The process of systematically assessing and interpreting evidence has validity, significance of results and relevance which are used to assess the risk of bias in literature. Critical Appraisal Skills Program (CASP) checklist helped to consider these three areas as part of critical evaluation. These ratings were then used to identify common risks of bias across literature.

Data Extraction and Management

For the present research, studies focusing on the title of the review were included by consulting the abstracts followed by full-text thorough reading to make sure all the inclusion and exclusion criteria are met. Studies focusing primarily on therapeutic intervention, racism, physical health were excluded and those studies that have only focused on the etiology and prevalence of skin color discrimination were also discarded. As far as the inclusion criteria are concerned, studies which meet the predefined selection criteria were included. Once the search process for the relevant articles is completed, titles of the research papers are checked, followed by detailed reading of the abstracts. The research articles that meet the exclusion and inclusion criteria were included for further analysis and assessed independently.

Figure 1

Showing the Procedure of Identification, Screening and Selection of Research Articles (Moher et al., 2009)



Results

The findings provide the summary of the quantitative and qualitative research articles and provides the quality index of them.

Table 1

Summary of quantitative researches on Skin Color Discrimination and Psychological Health (N=15)

Author (Year)	Research Design	Theoretical Framework	Sample and sample size	Variables and Scales	Statistical Analyses and Research findings	Limitations/suggestions
1. Sharma, et al. (2022)	Correlational (non-experimental approach)	Transactional model of social media and body image concerns (Perloff, 2014)	Indian young adults were Participated (N = 726)	<i>Variables</i> Social Comparison, Colorism, Mental Health <i>Scales</i> Social Comparison Scale (Schneider, 2011) Colorism scale (1997) Mental Health scale (Sharma, et al., 2022)	Through Structural Equational Modeling it was found that with increasing age people face social issues and social comparisons played a significant role of mediator between the relationship of colorism and psychological distress.	This study used online survey method and majority of data was from early young group and only a few of middle-aged people. So, due to lack of middle and late young adults, age related findings are not generalizable.
2. Urzua, et al. (2020)	Correlational Research	Eudaimonic perspective of Wellbeing (Waterman, 1990)	919 migrants of Colombian nationality, who were living in Chile: 476 (51.8%) in Antofagasta, 219 (23.8%) in Arica, and 224 (24.4%) in Santiago.	<i>Variables</i> Colorism, Affects and Psychological Wellbeing <i>Scales</i> Discrimination Experience Scale (Krieger et al., 2005), PANAS (Watson et al., 1988) And Psychological Well-Being Scale of Ryff (1989)	Findings reported negative affect as a mediator in the relationship between colorism psychological well-being through structure equal modeling	Other psychological factors should also consider in future researches. Longitudinal research is needed to explore the emotional perspective
3. Hamler, et al. (2022)	Correlational research Design	Social comparison theory (Festinger, 1954)	African Americans aged 55+ (N = 837)	<i>Variables</i> Skin color discrimination, psychological distress <i>Scales</i> Everyday Discrimination Scale (Williams et al.,1997), And Serious psychological distress (Kessler et al., 2002).	Results of Pearson product-moment Correlation showed that Discrimination was associated with worse self-rated Psychological distress and regressions analysis showed Skin tone moderated the association between skin color discrimination psychological distress which was stronger among darker-skinned individuals	The generalization of study findings is limited due to the sample characteristics and on average the sample reported low SPD and good self-rated mental health which can be self-bias.

Author (Year)	Research Design	Theoretical Framework	Sample and sample size	Variables and Scales	Statistical Analyses and Research findings	Limitations/suggestions
4. Jones (2018)	Cross-Sectional correlational Design	Theory of Intersectionality (Collins 2015).	Data was from the NSAL-A, (2001-2004) included 1170 African Americans and 331 were Caribbean Blacks	<i>Variables</i> Mastery Self-esteem <i>Scales</i> Mastery was measured by twelve items capturing the overall sense of self-efficacy. Self-esteem was measured using ten items of sense of self-efficacy scale.	Pearson product-moment correlation analysis showed that darker skin was associated with lower self-esteem and mastery. The regression analysis showed that African Americans with darker skin had lower self-esteem and mastery, while Caribbean adolescent's self-concepts were not influenced by skin shade.	This study was limited by its quantitative approach. It was difficult to capture the reasoning black adolescents had behind their attitudes about their skin color. Only one group was studied and colorism is an issue that influences not only Blacks but people of color around the world.
5. Brown, et al. (2022)	Within and Between Group correlational Research Design	Theory of intersectionality (Collins 2015).	African American and Latinx young adults (n = 140).	<i>Variables</i> Coping strategies, Colorsim, Anxiety, Depression, Anger <i>Scales</i> Race-related coping (Taylor, 2008), Racism and Life Experiences scale (Harrel,2000) Brief measure of generalized anxiety disorder (Spitzer, 2006) and depression index (Melchior, et al., 1993), Anger Scale (Pilkonis et al., 2011)	Within person discrimination showed that those who experienced more discrimination, they reported greater anxiety symptoms and feelings of anger. Between-person findings demonstrated that those who reported higher levels discrimination reported increased anxiety and depressive symptoms and anger. Moderation analysis showed that skin color moderates the efficacy for coping with acute and chronic exposure to discrimination.	The response rate for the study was relatively low, and study was unable to examine whether there were differences between those who did and did not participate, which may limit the generalizability of results.
6. Nguyen (2021)	Correlational Research Design	Theory of Internalization (Raef, 2011)	330 female Asian American African American Hispanic /Latinx	<i>Variables</i> Perceived colorism (self-reported) Mental Health <i>Scales</i> Depression Anxiety and Stress Scales (DASS-21) and the Negative and Positive Affect Schedule (PANAS)	Perceived in-group colorism is significantly associated with Negative affect and depression, Stress and anxiety among African Americans as compared to other groups	Majority of data was collected From blacks African So, Group comparisons was not Justified.

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	Author (Year)	Research Design	Theoretical Framework	Sample and sample size	Variables and Scales	Statistical Analyses and Research findings	Limitations/suggestions
7.	Oh, et al. (2021)	Cross-Sectional correlational Design	Theory of Internalization (Raeff, 2011)	Sample of 5191 Black Americans (3570 African Americans and 1621 Caribbean Black Americans).	<i>Variables</i> Perceived skin tone discrimination Psychotic experiences <i>Scales</i> WHO-CIDI 3.0 Psychosis Screen (Kessler & Üstün, 2004) Perceived skin tone discrimination scale ranging from 0 to 4 (Nguyen, 2015).	Through bivariate regression Analysis it was found that one percent increase in experiencing colorism linked with 24% increase in psychotic experiences in black individuals Only perceived skin color discrimination from Blacks was significantly linked with lifetime psychotic experiences.	First, The causal relationship direction is undefined. Qualitative research is needed to explore the causing factors to find out the reasons of experiencing more or less Colorism in different ethic groups.
8.	Oh, et al. (2021)	Correlational	Social Stress Model (Slavich, et al., 2010)	5191 black Americans	<i>Variables</i> Colorism and Mental health <i>Scales</i> Perceived Colorism (Havery, et al., 2017) Lifetime psychiatric disorders (WMH, 2004)	Pearson product-moment Correlation analysis revealed that colorism was negatively correlated with Mental health. Regression analysis found that colorism negatively predicted Mental health. These findings are consistent with social stress model where social stigma affects both the mind and the body.	This study used colorism scale measures both race and color discrimination. It was difficult to determine whether they were targeted because of their skin color or specifically because of the shade/tone of their skin in their race (colorism).
9.	Adams, et al. (2020)	Longitudinal correlational Research Design	Objective self-awareness framework (Pinel & Bosson, 2013)	Late adolescence in African American girls (N = 124)	<i>Variables</i> Skin tone and Self-esteem <i>Scales</i> Perceived skin tone 3-point scale. 10-item Rosenberg Self-Esteem Inventory (Rosenberg, 1965)	Regression analysis revealed that skin color discrimination was a negative predictor of self-esteem	The current results might not generalize to adolescents in other parts of the country, or to areas where schools differ in racial context, we encourage researchers to explore colorism in different contexts and consider other indicators of well-being that might be related to skin tone

Author (Year)	Research Design	Theoretical Framework	Sample and sample size	Variables and Scales	Statistical Analyses and Research findings	Limitations/suggestions
10. Gaddy and James, (2020)	Correlational	Objective self-awareness framework (Pinel & Bosson, 2013)	African American adults (N = 780)	<p><i>Variables</i></p> <p>Skin tone, stigma consciousness, life satisfaction and Psychological distress</p> <p><i>Scales</i></p> <p>Self-perceived skin tone (5 likert scale)</p> <p>Stigma Consciousness Scale (Pinel, 1999).</p> <p>Brief Symptom Inventory (Derogatis & Melisaratos, 1982),</p> <p>Life Satisfaction Scale (Diener et al., 1985)</p>	Regression and mediation analyses found that individuals with darker skin reported low level of life satisfaction and high level of psychological distress due to increased Stigma consciousness	This research calls for further exploration of skin tone as a determinant of mental health within group discrimination. This has significant implications for clinical settings. Given that stigma consciousness is generally associated with less psychological distress, clinical practitioners may benefit from encouraging the anticipation of stereotypes or screening for it during visits.
11. Louie, (2020)	Correlational	Social comparison theory (Festinger, 1954)	1170 black Americans	<p><i>Variables</i></p> <p>Skin tone discrimination, depression and mastery</p> <p><i>Scales</i></p> <p>Everyday Discrimination scale (5 likert scale) (Williams et al., 1997), Depression Scale (CES-D) (Radloff, 1977), Pearlin Mastery Scale (Pearlin, 1978).</p>	Moderation analysis found that skin tone discrimination had negative impact on depression through lower mastery.	The processes underlying the association between skin tone and depression; between skin tone and mental health can be more clearly defined when the involvement of stressors and coping mechanisms are carefully considered. The role of skin tone disparities in mental health in both teenage and adult populations should be further explored in future study, along with additional stress explanations and coping mechanisms.

	Author (Year)	Research Design	Theoretical Framework	Sample and sample size	Variables and Scales	Statistical Analyses and Research findings	Limitations/suggestions
12.	Alexander and Carter, (2022)	Correlational cross-sectional Research	Theory of Intersectionality (Collins 2015).	American University students were at least 18 years old. The study recruited 90 female and 86 male participants.	<i>Variables</i> Colorism Attitudes towards skin tone Anxiety, Depression <i>Scales</i> In-Group Colorism Scale (ICS) Brief Symptom Inventory 18 (BSI-18)	For women, but not men, the positive correlation between psychological distress and perceived skin color discrimination. Results from this study indicated that experiences of colorism differ by gender.	The results showed evidence of colorism for African American men and women. Future researches are needed to focus on other communities as well to explore group specific experiences. It should be noted that most participants described their skin tone as medium. As a result, advanced analysis relating to individual's skin tones could not be done due to the lack of variability in skin tones.
13.	Sharif and Siddique, (2021)	Correlational cross-sectional study	Cooley's Looking Glass Self-theory	400 Pakistani females (18–40 years) from rural area	<i>Variables</i> Colorism Self-esteem <i>Scales</i> Skin-related questions, everyday discrimination scale, and Rosenberg's self-esteem scale.	Results of Hierarchical linear regression showed education, colorism and residence were significant predictors (p-value < 0.05) of self-esteem. Skin color moderated the effect of colorism on self-esteem (R ² change = 0.028).	Study did not include participants from urban areas. But it emphasizes on the education of women, as well as the involvement of public health and dermatologists to combat colorism and help women feel secure in their skin tones.

Table 2

Summary of qualitative researches on Skin Color Discrimination and Psychological Health (N=3)

	Authors	Design	Theory	Sample and Sample size	Results	Limitations/Suggestions
1.	Hall, (2017)	Focus groups	Goffman Model of Stigma (2007)	67 African American women.	People who experienced colorism reported psychological distress	Future research might focus on exploring colorism among other racial and ethnic groups.
2.	Rosario, Minors and Rogers (2021)	Quasi-mixed sequential design: Survey (Colorist ideology & self-esteem measures) and semi-structured interview.	Psychosocial identity theory (Erikson, 1968),	Fifty-nine Black girls (Mage = 16.97) Completed asurvey and semi-structured interview.	Results from correlation analysis indicated a strong positive association between rejecting colorist ideology and positive self-esteem. Results of qualitative findings indicated that black girls' showed the engagement in anti-blackness, and have beliefs of white supremacy.	Although girls freely stated their skin tone in the interview, this study's data collection did not provide a systematic way to assess the participants' skin tones. Last but not least, a specific geographic area (the metropolitan Midwest) served as the source of sample. Because Black girls' experiences might differ depending on their geographic location, so the ways in which they interact with and challenge colorist ideology can also differ.
3.	Maqsood (2018)	Interpretative Phenomenological Approach	Goffman Model of stigma (1963)	Sample of six individuals (3 females, 3 males)	Results revealed that individuals with fair skin color reported better self-esteem. People also reported that fair complexion is important in seeking marriage proposals and marital adjustment.	Since this study is qualitative, it cannot be applied to all situations. The inability to generalise findings to others is a result of individual differences. The sample size was very small, which prevented a true representation of all people with darker skin tone.

Table 3

Quality Assessment of the Selected Researches (N=16)

Sr. No.	Authors (Years)	Selection bias	Study design was given	Sample size calculated	Self-reported measures	Data Collection method was given	Withdrawals and dropouts	Appropriate Analytical procedures	Reported suggestions for future studies
1.	Sharma, et al. (2022)	NO	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes	Yes
2.	Oh, et al. (2021)	NO	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes	Yes
3.	Gaddy & James (2020)	NO	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes	Yes
4.	Jones (2018)	NO	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	N/A	Yes	Yes
5.	Brown, et al. (2022)	NO	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes	Yes
6.	Hamler, et al. (2022)	N/A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes	Yes
7.	Urzua, et al. (2020)	NO	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes	Yes
8.	Oh, et al. (2021)	NO	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes	Yes
9.	Louie (2020)	NO	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes	Yes
10.	Alexender & Carter (2022)	NO	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes	Yes
11.	Sharif & Siddique (2021)	NO	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes	Yes
12.	Oh, et al. (2021)	NO	Yes	No	Yes	NO	N/A	Yes	Yes
13.	Adams, et al. (2020)	NO	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes	Yes
14.	Hall (2017)	NO	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
15.	Rosario, et al. (2021)	NO	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes	Yes
16.	Maqsood (2018)	NO	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes	N/A	Yes	Yes

Discussion

The goal of the current review was to assess and critically evaluate the evidence in literature on colorism linked with psychological health. Qualitative research highlighted that Black girls' have difficulty in social engagement, negative self-image and ideologies of white supremacy, issues in marriage proposals, low self-esteem and psychological distress. All Quantitative studies were derived primarily from correlational research design in which one used longitudinal correlational research design, one study used within and between group design and all others used cross-sectional correlational research design. One study was from India including young adults, two studies included Pakistani young women, and all other studies were from America including American Africans/lack Americans population. Whereas in qualitative studies, one was from Pakistan and other 3 were conducted on American population. All researches, focused on the effects of colorism or skin color discrimination on psychological health of individuals with age range from 16 years to 55 plus including both male and female. Psychosocial identity theory (Erikson, 1968), Goffman Model of Stigma (2007), Social comparison theory (Festinger, 1954), Objective self-awareness framework (Pinel & Bosson, 2013), Theory of Objectification (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997), Social Stress Model (Slavich, et al., 2010), Theory of Internalization (Raef, 2011), An Interdisciplinary Theory (Philomena, 1991), Stratification Theory (Williams & Sternthal, 2010), Stress Process Framework (Pearlin, 1989), Theory of intersectionality (Collins, 2015), Transactional model of body image concerns and social media (Perloff, 2014) and Eudaimonic perspective of Wellbeing (Waterman, 1990) were used in selected researches of current review.

Findings of quantitative researches, by using Pearson product-moment correlation analysis showed that skin color discrimination was related to higher level of psychological distress, poor mental health, lower self-esteem and lower mastery (Hamler, et al., 2022; Jones, 2018; Adams, et al., 2020; Oh, et al., 2021). Moreover, colorism significantly associated with Negative affect and depression, stress and anxiety (Nguyen, 2021) and lifetime psychotic experiences (Oh, et al., 2021). Within person discrimination showed that those who experienced more discrimination reported greater anxiety symptoms and feelings of anger. Between-person findings demonstrated that those who reported higher levels discrimination reported increased anxiety and depressive symptoms and anger (Brown, et al., 2022). Regressions analysis showed skin tone moderated the relationship between discrimination and psychological which was stronger among darker-skinned individuals (Hamler, et al., 2022) and as a moderator between efficacy for coping with acute and chronic exposure to discrimination (Brown, et al., 2022).

Structural Equational Modeling through AMOS showed that a significant negative relationship between age and colorism based social comparisons with control variables as the frequency and time spent on Instagram. It was also found that colorism linked with social comparison and psychological distress (Sharmaa, et al., 2022). Negative affects found as a mediator between colorism and psychological wellbeing (Urzua, et al., 2020). Results of regression and mediation analyses in study conducted by Gaddy and James (2020) revealed that individuals with darker (vs. lighter) skin tones reported increased stigma consciousness, which then predicted lower life satisfaction and higher levels of psychological distress. Moderation analysis found that skin tone discrimination had negative impact on depression through lower mastery (Louie, 2020). Gender differences in experiencing colorism indicated that there was a positive correlation between psychological distress and perceived skin color discrimination in women as compared to men (Alexander & Carter, 2022). Furthermore, education, and residence reported as significant predictors of colorism of self-esteem (Sharif & Siddique, 2021).

Findings of qualitative studies revealed that People who experienced colorism reported psychological distress (Hall, 2017) and resistance to colorism illustrated that black girls' showed engagement in anti-blackness and have beliefs on white supremacy (Rosario, et al., 2021). Moreover, individuals with fair complexion reported high self-esteem and self-efficacy. Fair complexion plays an important role in seeking marriage proposals and marital adjustment (Maqsood, 2018). Adverse psychological impact of colorism was associated with depressive

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symptomatology which was firstly explored in black Americans (Perry et al., 2002). A substantial and significant evidence in literature explained that prejudice in concern to skin tone cause negative consequences on mental health of individuals (Adams, et al., 2020; Alexender & Carter, 2022; Brown, et al., 2022; Gaddy & James, 2020; Hamler, et al., 2022; Jones, 2018; Louie, 2020; Oh, et al., 2021; Oh, et al., 2021; Rosario, et al., 2021; Sharif & Siddique, 2021; Sharma, et al., 2022; Urzua, et al., 2020). Colorism demonstrates the shortcomings for individuals with darker skin and privileges of their lighter skin counterparts (Hal, 2017). This indicates the value of white color or one group (whites) over other group (blacks) based on skin color that causes poor mental health.

The literature illustrated that colorism significantly affected the mental health of people with a darker skin tone. By analyzing the results of ethnic/cultural differences on skin color discrimination across western and eastern societies, this review provided a guideline for further need of study about this line of direction. There is a need to involve more research on colorism phenomenon to properly understand its impact on mental health of people especially living in collectivistic culture. Future studies or reviews should be focused on discrimination based on color solely by eradicating the effect of racial discrimination. In literature, there was no colorism measurement scale developed for Asian population especially for collectivistic societies which have different perspectives and dynamics of any social phenomenon (e.g colorism) as compared to individualistic societies/culture. Therefore, current review is a call for a psychological investigation into colorism in Asian societies and suggested to develop a specific colorism scale for the Asian population. Overall, by analyzing the literature for ethnic/cultural differences on skin color discrimination across western and eastern societies, this review provides a guideline for further need of study about this line of direction.

Conclusion

Our findings show the adverse effects of colorism on mental health of young adult population such as low self-esteem, lower mastery, depression, psychological distress, psychotic experiences, social anxiety, Black girls' have difficulty in social engagement, negative self-image and ideologies of white supremacy, issues in marriage proposals, feelings of anger and negative social comparisons, low level of life satisfaction and psychological wellbeing, Overall current review highlighted that majority of research in this domain done in individualistic society So, there is a need to investigate the colorism phenomenon in collectivistic culture and societies to confirm its impact on mental health. There were number of studies those have conflated the concept of colorism and racism so, in future researchers need to be differentiate this term properly. Even though it is difficult to exchange people's attitudes in the direction of darkish-skinned people, fair treatment for every individual without any discrimination in every government and non-government sector under the law and regulations can be the best step to make certain social equity.

Limitations and Future Recommendations

In this systematic review, we have not included unpublished studies; we only searched for a published article, which probably leads to publication bias. Another limitation can be our review may have ignored some relevant studies even though we made a meticulous effort to include most relevant studies. Current review has not focused on one population, that's why it was a rigorous process to finalize the studies for systematic review. So, it is suggested to include one population such as African black or Asian black to make systematic review more specific. This review has not included studies which are conducted on older population. It would be interesting future researchers to add those studies because people who have experienced colorism throughout their lives can provide immense contribution in this regard.

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