Selling (In)Equality: Exploring the Relationship Between Colourism and Marketing Practices in South-East Asia

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Abstract
When considering the roles colourism and marketing practices play in the prevalent culture of skin-whitening in South-East Asia, it can be ascertained that a connection between the two concepts exists. While extensive research has been conducted on colourism, this is often limited to the African American experience and, thus, little has been done in the context of South-East Asia. Moreover, colourism and marketing have not been explored in conjunction with one another. Therefore, this study investigates the relationship between colourism and marketing, as well as the dynamics and implications of such a relationship. A qualitative mixed-methods approach was implemented: first, a narrative literature review was conducted to create a holistic understanding of the key topics and, second, semi-structured interviews were performed to compare published research to a case study. Results obtained from this approach suggested that marketing perpetuates colourism using skin-tone stereotypes and by encouraging fair-skin beauty ideals already present in society. Additionally, results highlighted that education and raising awareness on the existence of colourist ideals could be key in instigating change within society.

Keywords: Colourism, Marketing Practices, Skin Whitening, Philippines, Mixed Methods

1. Introduction

"From ebony to ivory" [1]. This is just one of the numerous phrases used in advertisements by cosmetic companies with a colourist undertone. Companies such as Gluta Max, L'Oréal and Fair & Lovely are part of a multi-billion-dollar industry that promotes products with the promise of lighter, brighter, and whiter skin, with the industry being valued at approximately US$8.8 billion globally in 2022 [2,3,60]. This is indicative of the extent to which colourism, where privilege is allocated to individuals with a lighter skin colour, is manifested within skin whitening culture. When focussing on the South-East Asia region, it is well established that colourism is a prevailing issue. This is demon-

strated by the region having the highest bias in the world for implicit association of light and dark skin tone with good and bad concepts respectively [4,5]. When looking more specifically into the Philippines, roughly one in every two women have reported using skin whiteners [6]. The culture of skin whitening itself has raised some health concerns, with approximately one in two of the skin whitening products tested by Zero Mercury Working Group in 2022 containing mercury levels over one ppm which is the international legal limit that was laid down in the Minamata Convention on Mercury [7].

As showcased above, it is hard to see marketing and colourism

as standalone components, especially when considering the convergence of the two in the prevalence of skin whitening among the South-East Asian population. Highlighting the lack of skin colour inclusivity within marketing, an analysis by artificial intelligence of 70 global beauty brands' social media accounts showed that during Spring 2020, only 13% of posts featured darker skin tones, while 48% featured lighter skin tones [8]. Moreover, marketing can also be considered of particular significance in South-East Asia, with the region being characterised by the second highest advertisement spending in the world [9].

Although scholarship has dealt with the interplay of skin whitening products and colourism, previous research has mainly focused on the African American experience [10,11]. In addition to this, the relationship between colourism and marketing may have not been examined thoroughly. As a result, even less research attention has been dedicated to exploring this relationship specifically in South-East Asian countries, even though colourism and marketing have been demonstrated to have a significant effect in this region.

This study therefore aims to shed light on the identified research by exploring the presence and dynamics of the relationship between colourism and marketing practices in South-East Asia and to contemplate the possible implications of such dynamics. To aptly address this multifaceted phenomenon, this study adopts an interdisciplinary approach to investigate the following research questions:
1. Are marketing practices and colourism interlinked in South-East Asia?
2. If so, what are the dynamics and implications of this relationship?

To better frame the research theoretically, the adopted theoretical considerations will be presented, followed by the methods used in this study. Subsequently, the results of the research will be presented and analysed. The existing and new knowledge will be discussed and the paper will finish with the research conclusions.

1.1. Theoretical Considerations
The following theoretical considerations for this research paper have been taken into account to maintain consistency and accuracy in the research efforts.

2. Colourism
Colourism refers to higher value being placed on lighter skin, irrespective of racial categorisation [12]. A social hierarchy, where white people are perceived as more powerful and prestigious than others, is transferred to the gradients of skin colour [12]. Both white and non-white people show this behaviour, which is often demonstrated towards people within the same constructed racial category [13]. In addition, colourism is interlinked with aesthetic preferences and cultural beauty standards, therefore having a greater impact on women [13]. Although heavily intertwined, colourism is a form of discrimination and exploitation distinct from racism [13]. Individuals with a darker skin tone can therefore be influenced by racial stereotypes, as well as within-group colourist stereotypes [14].

2.1. Racial Fluidity
Contrary to the typical assumption that race is a characteristic ascribed and fixed at birth, racial fluidity theorises that race can be defined as something flexible, changing over time and across contexts. It argues that racial categorisation is influenced not only by physical appearance such as skin colour, but also by the stereotypes and value judgements associated with certain racial groups [15]. As people's status within these racial groups change, so does the race to which they are assigned. As such, race implies differential treatment based upon the presumed membership to a certain racial group and is defined by a set of expectations – stereotypes – on which people are continually judged [15].

2.2. Stereotypes
Social stereotypes, related to both skin colour and race, have been demonstrated to impact inequality between and within races through consequences such as discrimination and prejudice [10]. In social psychology, stereotypes are defined as shared generalisations of members within a social group. These generalisations are stored in cognitive structures called 'schemas', which provide the possibility of making quick evaluations of people based on a single clue [16]. Priming effects make certain schemas more salient, as recently activated information about a group influences subsequent judgements [12,17]. Schemas are applied to individuals by categorising them into fitting social groupings through the social categorisation process [11,16].

2.3. Social Categorisation and Prototypicality
These social categories, such as race-based categories, are represented by different attributes that form the 'prototype' of the group, to which other members of the group are linked according to 'typicality'. The prototypicality judgement of race often heavily relies on physical appearance. People with more 'race signalling features', such as facial physiognomy and skin tone, are more likely to be viewed through a stereotypical lens of the category, as the priming effects are the strongest [10,11,17,18,19]. The use of skin tone as a race signalling feature gives rise to skin tone/colour bias and colourism [10,17]. Skin tone bias refers to the behaviour towards members of a category, depending on the lightness or darkness of their skin, and colourism refers to the subsequent allocation of privilege. Consistent with racial stereotyping, darker skin tones are associated with more negative stereotypes and negative social outcomes [5,17].

2.4. Skin Whitening as a Source of Symbolic Capital
In the introduction of Distinction: a Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste, Bourdieu states that people tend to attribute symbolic meaning to ordinary consumption goods [20]. Notably, most people do not separate 'the taste', the personal perception shaped by the historical culture, from the functional reality of the represented object. This abstract notion results in what Bourdieu considers symbolic capital, which distinguishes itself from economic and social capital as a source of status in society, given the economic value is determined by 'the taste' and therefore supersedes the value captured by the price. This can possibly be reconciled with the use and meaning of skin whitening products in society [20].

2.5. Corporate Social Responsibility

Finally, when looking at the relationship between marketing and colourism, this study will also apply the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). CSR urges firms to look beyond the financial bottom line and refers to their responsibilities to society, which are affected by their policies and practices [21]. As such, it opposes to profit-seeking behaviour that is at the cost of the firms' stakeholders.

3. Methods

In order to better explore the relationship between colourism and marketing practices, this paper adopts a sequential qualitative mixed-methods design consisting of two parts: a narrative literature review, with the aim to have a comprehensive overview of the published research, and semi-structured interviews, with the aim to obtain field data [22]. The combination of these methods was deemed appropriate to cross-check the published knowledge with empirical data and to identify new aspects in the explored phenomenon and produce new knowledge. In addition, the mixed methods approach was selected to mitigate potential bias associated with qualitative research, which, in se, tends to be bound to the perception of the researcher [23].

4. Literature Review

Considering the exploratory nature of the study, the narrative literature review was undertaken by all authors, following the steps given in Snyder [24,25]. Firstly, an exploratory inquiry into the concepts of colourism, marketing and their relationship, was performed to become acquainted with the topics. Secondly, selection criteria were determined, narrowing the scope of the review to articles from various internet search engines, such as JSTOR and Maastricht University Library, but also Google Scholar, regarding skin-whitening, colourism and marketing practices, as preferred related to women in South- East Asia. Thirdly, the articles identified were critically analysed and synthesised, following the guidelines identified by Torraco [26]. Finally, to assess the quality and robustness of the literature review, the criteria identified by Palmatier et al. were considered [27]. The narrative approach was primarily chosen, given it allows the combining of perspectives to create new conceptualisations of the literature to date [26]. Moreover, given the exploratory nature of the study the approach was deemed suitable. Nevertheless, the authors acknowledge that the review might not have as much rigor as a systematic literature review.

4.1. Semi-Structured Interviews

To retrieve empirical data to enrich the knowledge pool of the explored phenomenon, a semi-structured interview method of exploratory design was undertaken. The target pool of participants included women aged 18 years and above, who have lived in the Philippines, for at least three consecutive years, prior to the exploration conducted in 2023, on the grounds according to Mendoza one in every two young Filipino women tend to use skin whiteners and aligned with beauty standards closely related with skin tone and the respective social expectations on physical appearance [4,6]. In total, 12 women were selected, based on a combination of purposeful, convenience and snowball sampling, facilitated by the network of one of the researchers, who was born and raised in the Philippines. The researchers personally reached out to 7 women, resulting in 8 potential candidates, whilst simultaneously launching an appeal on Instagram, reaching 185 individuals, and receiving 4 responses. One selected candidate did not participate, and another did not meet the selection criteria due to miscommunication. Therefore, 10 women were interviewed. The sample may be considered to have reached the saturation point to properly support the aims of the study [28]. The sampling process can be reviewed in Appendix A.

Two researchers (PL and SW) conducted the interviews between 24th March and 8th April, 2023. The questionnaire (see Appendix B), designed considering Adams' and Baumbusch's guidelines for semi-structured interviews, pivoted around colourism, stereotypes related to colourism, marketing and skin whitening – topics identified following the literature review [29,30]. The interviews, lasting between 40 and 60 minutes, were conducted in English using videoconferencing and were audio recorded. Prior to the interview, all interviewees signed a consent form (Appendix C), informing them of the purpose of the study, their rights, and data protection. Moreover, at the beginning of the online meeting, participants were once again reminded of these orally.

The interviews were transcribed using transcription software and reviewed and corrected by three researchers (PL, AVD and DW). Furthermore, a theoretical, thematic analysis was performed by two of the researchers involved in the transcription, using Braun & Clarke's six-phase framework [31]. Firstly, the researchers (PL and AVD) thoroughly reread the excerpts to become acquainted with the data corpus. Subsequently, these two researchers independently sampled three interviews and used a combination of attributional, descriptive and structural coding as first cycle coding scheme, which was implemented manually in Microsoft Excel to create meaningful groupings of the data [32]. Moreover, pattern coding was applied as second coding cycle. During both processes, the researchers kept track of detailed code descriptions, inclusion criteria, frequencies, and typical exemplars to eventually harmonise the groupings identified in the codebook. The robustness of the final codes was investigated and validated by applying them to the remaining interviews. Afterwards, these codes were clustered in themes, which was done collectively. These were reviewed using the criteria identified by Maguire & Delahunt and finally interpreted and reported, following the guidelines of Castleberry & Nolen [33,34].

The open coding method, chosen by the researchers, facilitated flexibility in documenting possible important tendencies. In particular, it helped to incorporate personal statements in a detailed manner, accounting for nuances in views or experience of the concepts, which otherwise might have been overlooked when using predefined codes. Moreover, in accordance with the exploratory nature of the study, the method was deemed appropriate.

5. Results

5.1. Literature Review, Colourism

Although Li et al. argue that colourism stems from a colonial past, Chen & Francis-Tan identify two additional factors contributing to the presence of systemic colourism in Asia: historical class/colour associations, and modern globalisation [5,35]. Pre-dating European colonialism, skin colour was associated with lower-status work which took place outdoors, often in the fields, and lighter skin tones became associated with higher-status work which took place indoors [4,5,36,37]. Over time, light skin started to become associated with positive characteristics relating to class, lifestyle and beauty whereas darker skin became associated with more undesirable characteristics [4,5,36,38]. These associations were then exacerbated by the Spanish and American colonisations of the Philippines which, combined, lasted from 1565 until 1946. Prasad argues that this exacerbation began with the imposition of a colour caste system – a stratification based on a fusion of racial categories and skin tone – during the 333-year rule by the Spanish [13]. According to Singson, colonial rule resulted in a perceived inferiority of Filipino culture, with many Filipinos having a distinct lack of pride in their native culture and ethnicity, manifested in the automatic rejection of Filipino culture and an uncritical preference for American culture [38]. As a result of this, many Filipinos discriminate against those who do not assimilate towards the Western standards of what is desirable and, in this way, have a clear preference for lighter skin [13,36,38].

This issue was furthered by globalisation, with Hunter faulting globalised markets, which spread images of white beauty and affluence – images tainted with colourism. As people strive for the American dream, they also strive for the dominant US aesthetic of light skin, blond hair and Anglo features [4]. Alongside this, popular culture in the Philippines often promotes mestizos, half-white or very light-skinned individuals, thereby reinforcing the beauty ideal based on whiteness [4,6]. Furthermore, Rondilla Spinckard and Phoenix find that the practice of conforming to these homogenised standards of white beauty by altering oneself via cosmetic products and procedures has become increasingly normalised through the media such as popular TV programmes. In this way, the historic associations of darker skin being associated with the outdoor nature of lower-class work have developed into modern-day beauty standards perpetrating ideas of favouritism towards Anglo aesthetics [36]. In relation to these beauty standards, Chen & Francis Tan showed that skin colour bias is the highest in South-East Asia, where historically, darker skin has been associated with lower class and negative characteristics [5]. In addition, Li et al. demonstrate that individuals in different regions of Asia such as Japan, Korea, and India, associate more positive characteristics such as beauty, intelligence, wealth, success, luxury, prestige, and cleanliness with light skin. More negative characteristics are subsequently associated with darker skin such as dark, dirty, wrong, dumb, and lower class [35]. The effect of implicit racial bias was further demonstrated by Reed as Scottish and Polish participants preferred the phenotypicality that resembled their own ethnic group, while South Asians also had a higher preference for the European American phenotypicality [56].

Further empirical research on colourism and stereotypes is mainly focused on blacks in reference to whites, as the main body of literature is focused on research on African Americans [10,11]. A study by Kahn and Davies showed that more prototypically black people, with darker skin and more typical physiognomy, were more likely to be stereotyped against, by both outgroup and ingroup members. In addition, people with higher black prototypicality were shown to receive longer prison sentences [11,14]. Furthermore, a study by Chen & Francis Tan showed through implicit skin tone testing, that white Americans classified darker skinned people with more prototypical features and more negative words. Lastly, Ma and Wittenbrink found that stereotypes are not applied equally to all members of the same group, with a linear link seen between the severity of the stereotype and the prototypicality of the person [5,11].

Colourism has shown to result in persistent differences between darker skinned and lighter skinned individuals in relation to health, occupation, education, income, and marriage [5]. For example, Goldsmith et al. found a significant wage gap between white-skinned and dark-skinned workers as well as evidence for a skin-shade wage gradient, where the wages decrease as skin tone gets darker [39]. In addition, a multidimensional study by Monk found skin colour to be a predictor of different forms of perceived discrimination, both by the in-group and out-group, which subsequently predicts key health outcomes in African Americans such as depression and self-rated physical and mental health. Therefore, life outcomes are not only affected by personal motivations and behaviours, but also by group membership and how they are embedded into social systems and hierarchies [40,41]. The resulting inequities and disparities can be attributed to fundamental inferiorities of darker skinned people, when compared to lighter skinned people [13].

6. Marketing

Davis argues that marketing relies heavily on (visual) representations to create compelling product images. For customers, these representations can serve as a substitute for experiences, in terms of the information that can be acquired from them [42]. Borgerson & Schroeder add to this and argue that in acting as a substitute for experiences, these representations have the power to convince one that one knows something that was not experienced in fact and, moreover, to also affect one's future experiences. In this way, representations can be a potent agent of socialisation, shaping people's thinking about other individuals and groups [43]. Hence, marketing has the potential to spread, further perpetuate or alter certain thinking patterns and views held in society, including skin colour stereotypes, through the representations it employs.

With regards to these representations, Benett et al. studied the effects of omission and commission in the marketplace. Acts of omission occur when certain groups or individuals are not represented or included in marketing efforts, while acts of commission do represent them, but do so inaccurately, often relying upon stereotypes. Among the other effects of acts of commission, two of the most impactful are the reinforcement of the institutional privilege of the dominant group and the risk of a majority be-

ginning to accept the stereotypes as reality. In this way, through the effects of acts of commission, marketing could perpetuate colourism. Concurrently, goods are being marketed and sold that assist customers in transferring from their disadvantaged in-group to the favoured out-group by attempting to alter physical characteristics [44]. Specifically for skin tone, an abundance of different types of skin whiteners is available; however, Mendoza shows that primarily creams/lotions, gels, soaps, and tablets are used [6]. Leveraging the concept of racial fluidity, these goods can provide private benefits to customers, in the sense that they could mitigate the discrimination associated with a darker skin tone As such, Singson argues that the motivations to use these products are mainly associated with achieving social acceptance and more economic opportunities [38]. Nevertheless, Mendoza mentions that the products often contain harmful ingredients including mercury and hydroquinone which pose significant health hazards [6]. Additionally, while these products might reduce the discrimination on a personal level, they have the potential to perpetuate and raise it at a macrolevel. In case they are capable of lightening skin tone, mass usage would likely result in an intensified light-skinned beauty standard, putting those who do not use the products, or naturally have a darker skin tone, at a greater disadvantage. Perhaps the most influential effect, however, originates from these products' marketing. Natividad and Karnani have shown how the advertisements for skin whiteners oftentimes rely on misrepresentation or acts of commission, which could perpetuate colourism, as discussed earlier [45,46]. In general, this seems to diametrically oppose Corporate Social Responsibility. Karnani investigated the validity of "doing well by doing good", a ubiquitous phrase in CSR, for skin whitening products, arguing that, due to the aforementioned negative impact, the validity of this claim for skin whitening products is highly improbable [46].

6.1. Semi-Structured Interviews

Views, 'conceptualisations' and opinions were distinguished based on the coding types used by the researchers. Nevertheless, they differed to a great extent in some areas, which struck the researchers when comparing the initial codes identified after the independent coding stage. This resulted in low reiteration of individual codes across interviews, highlighting the complexity and importance of individual perception for the relationship between marketing, stereotypes and colourism. Nonetheless, all participants were deemed to have adequate knowledge and experience about the topics addressed. As shown in Table 1, the majority of participants fell into the age group 18-25, although, 26-35 and 36-45 were also represented. Moreover, whilst all interviewees held Filipino nationality, ethnicity varied, as presented in Table 1. The same can be noted for highest education levels attained, which ranged from, high school (30%), bachelor (20%), master (30%) to doctorate (20%). Most participants were also engaged in the education sector, as students, teachers, or professors. Notwithstanding, one interviewee was actively engaged in the modelling sector, working as model.

Based on the process outlined in the methodology, the two researchers involved in the data analysis could identify eight themes, regardless of the heterogeneity of the responses. In particular, the identified themes include 1) stereotypes within society, 2) colourism within society, 3) beauty ideal in the Philippines, 4) skin whitening culture, 5) drive of consumption of whitening products, 6) the power of marketing, 7) barriers versus facilitators, and 8) desired changes. Exemplars for all themes can be found in Table 2.

Item	Category	ƒ	%	Item	Category	ƒ	%
Age Group	18-25	6	60	Place Born	Philippines	9	90
	26-35	1	10		Malaysia	1	10
	36-45	3	30	Place Raised*	Philippines	10	100
Marital Status	Single	5	50		Malaysia	1	10
	Actively Dating	3	30	Place of Current Residence	Philippines	7	70
	Married	2	20		London	2	20
	Established Partnership	0	0		Netherlands	1	10
Education Level	Highschool Graduate	1	10	Places lived outside of the Philippines*	None	5	50
	Current University Student	3	30		Malaysia	1	10
	Bachelor's Degree	2	20		China	1	10
	Masters Degree	2	20		United Kingdom	2	20
	Doctorate Degree	2	20		Australia	1	10

Occupation	Full-Time Student	4	40		Germany	1	10
	Elementary Teacher	1	10	Duration of Residence in the Philippines (Cumulative)	Whole Life	5	50
	University Director	1	10		Under 5 years	0	0
	University Lecturer	1	10		5 to 10 years	1	10
	University Department Chair	1	10		Over 10 years	3	30
	Software Developer	1	10	How Recently they moved away from the Philippines, if applicable	Under 1 Year	2	20
	Model	1	10		1 to 2 years	1	10
Nationality Held*	Filipino	10	100		2 to 3 years	0	0
	British	1	10	Skin-Tone Participant Identified Themselves As	Light	2	20
	Australian	1	10		Light/Medium	2	20
	German	1	10		Medium	6	60
Ethnicity (as identified by Participants)*	Tagalog/Cebuano/Ilocano	1	10		Dark	0	0
	Ilonga	1	10	Skin-Tone Participants Identified Filipinas As	Light	0	0
	Filipino	4	40		Medium	3	30
	Asian	4	40		Medium/Dark	2	20
	European	1	10		Dark	3	30
	Chinese	1	10		All	2	20
	German	1	10				

*Some participants, when answering the demographic question, provided more than one answer – percentage is calculated based on the number of participants and not the number of answers provided holistically.

Table 1: Characteristics of Participants *(N = 10)*

Theme	Pattern Code	Quotes
Stereotypes within society	Stereotypes	*Sometimes…the colour of their skin, the type of hair…the physical appearance of their face.* (interviewee 1)
		there's the stereotype, like if you are more fair-skinned, you're considered to be more beautiful or you're clean. And if you are darker, you are just like, she's not that beautiful or she comes from a poor family (interviewee 5)
	Low self-esteem	*You know the effect of that, especially in the children. It gives them a low low morale* (interviewee 1)
		I think she also kind of got a little bit insecure about it, because sometimes she would ask us if the -- if she looks -- if her skin looks way too dark on the photo. (interviewee 6)
	Gender	*Like you only get you are only qualified for a job because you're female, or this kind of job is for males, or you're expected to behave a certain way because you are female, or you are male. So, I think that that's the kind of stereotyping that matters at this point.* (interviewee 3)
		they said, it's because men are good with geography compared to women. And with this kind of work that we have, sometimes there are jobs that are only considered to be for men, but not for women – that's what they mention. (interviewee 10)
Colourism within society	Discrimination	*In my workplace also they serve you according to your physical appearance.* (interviewee 2)
		There are companies who charge you with the way you look…There are kind of occupations that require you to look a certain way. (interviewee 3)
		I remember like one specific thing for modelling here is that it's so cutthroat and basically you won't be accepted if you are not that much pale. (interviewee 7)
	Success	*as kids, we were just like raised to these standards that yeah, you have to look a certain way in order to get these compliments, or acknowledgement in general.* (interviewee 6)
		I looked a little more east Asian or Western a bit, so they give me privileges because of that. (interviewee 9)
	Relativism	*because stereotyping and stereotypes comes in, all works. I mean, you cannot please everyone, and other people always have something to say about you. Whether you're light, skin, medium, or dark, some people would say, oh, I will not be friending you because you're light skinned or you're not fit for a job because your dark skin, you're not pretty enough because your skin is not light. Something like that.* (interviewee 3)
		I think in in the Philippines is skin colour isn't that much of a concern. It's just that that it's not appearing here in the Philippines that intense. (interviewee 8)
Beauty ideal	Fair skin complexion	*it's really common for celebrities here to be mostly fair skin and if they're not that fair skin, they'd actually turn to whitening products to have a more fair complexion so that they'd be perceived as prettier since people don't really see darker skin tone as beautiful.* (interviewee 5)
		Sometimes they kind of want to be whiter than white people. Yeah, just anything that's light skin tone. (interviewee 6)
		But in general, like in the mind of people like this is the standard: your skin should be glowing, your skin should be light in colour. (interviewee 8)
	Korean trends	*I think especially now with the whole…Korean trends…a lot of people in the Philippines…see more value in people who have more East Asian…features.* (interviewee 9)
		I think that there is…this sort of thing where in the Philippines it's very typical for people to not actually want to be Filipino. They want to be, say more East Asian, or they want to be white, or to look white, or to look Korean. (interviewee 4)

		But not in the sense that we idolise more Western features. It's more East Asian, the porcelain skin type thing. (interviewee 7)
Skin whitening culture	The scale of the practice	*But then, in Asia it is so normal to want to be lighter skinned to sort of use creams.* (interviewee 4)
		I don't really like to have the fairer skin, it's just that it's part of the product already, so I cannot remove the whitening effect of the products. But yeah, I do have products. (interviewee 10)
	The intensity of the preference	*But then again, you know Filipinos, if they really motivated to use it, they can. They can do anything even if they don't have food to eat, as long as they can buy those products that satisfy their needs.* (interviewee 1)
		There's really no way for this…cycle of products going around to ever stop because people will always want them. (interviewee 9)
	Taboo	*They don't talk about, you know change your skin colour cause it's quite offensive.* (interviewee 7)
		I don't think they're open when it comes to these things. (interviewee 8)
	Indifference close environment	*I know a lot of people who use, and I know a lot of people who say I want to have this kind of skin because…You can't blame them, I really, really don't mind.* (interviewee 3)
		Like if you want to be fairer, then it's your choice to be fairer. (interviewee 5)
	Feelings about skin whitening products	*I don't consider them as success. I think I consider them as an advantage.* (interviewee 2)
		I think they are extremely harmful, because it pushes the agenda and sort of mindset that your skin tone matters as to who you are as a person, and that it is something that needs to be changed in the Philippines. (interviewee 4)
		I don't really see the product as something evil. Since, like for example, like there's this one soap that they kind of advertise it as a whitening soap, but if you look at the ingredients, it has some ingredients that are actually, like, good for the skin. (interviewee 5)
Motivations of consumption of whitening products	Idealisation of prospects	*I think a lot of it is due to money. The fact that you're seen as richer or in a higher wealth class or in a higher social class if you're more white.* (interviewee 9)
		It's more of like a problem in the sense that women here want to have fairer skin because they associate this skin colour to success. (interviewee 10)
	Conformism	*So, I just go with the society like, since I've experienced bullying, I'm insecure with my body. That's why I'm trying to fit in.* (interviewee 2)
		As a collectivist society, I would definitely say we're in, when people are easily influenced by what is the social norm and if the social is to be fairer skin, I'd say that's a large reason of why people would succumb to sort of buy these products. (interviewee 4)
	Self-esteem	*Maybe one of the reasons is it boosts themselves, their self-confidence of having those colours.* (interviewee 1)
		It gives them more confidence to like walk in their own skin. (interviewee 9)
	Celebrity endorsement	*Like if they see that the influencer is using that, they will use it.* (interviewee 2)
		Like I think if, especially for younger girls and they're more impressionable, like if they see their favourite actress or favourite influencer or model using it, they're more inclined to use it more. (interviewee 5)
	Family	*I do know people who have talked about it and said that their parents gave it to them.* (interviewee 4)
		My mama told me to use this for this and ask me to use this. So those are facilitating also. (interviewee 8)
	Drivers not to use skin whitening products	*I have this at the back of my mind that I don't want, I don't need to use that, because I'm satisfied with my colour and my skin tone.* (interviewee 1)
		I don't want to be white. (interviewee 7)
The power of marketing	Targeting effectiveness	*They are very good in making those endorsement while making those ads. They do their best to have these ads so that consumers really try their best to buy it and to use it actually.* (interviewee 1)
		I think they're pretty effective on marketing the product to people. (interviewee 6)
	Stigmatisation in advertisement	*I'd always notice that the celebrities or the people on these ads that are advertising the products or any products, really are lighter skinned, even though in the Philippines it is typical to be darker skin.* (interviewee 4)
		Like if you had lighter skin, you would definitely get like a role as a lead actor in a commercial, even though you don't act very well. (interviewee 6)
	Marketing influential in shaping views	*I mean, they create the kind of thinking that we have, they shape the culture that we have.* (interviewee 3)
		It's really the ads that contribute to stereotypes, because they're creating, they're basically creating the stereotype for people to, you know, look up to. (interviewee 9)
		It just teaches people that your natural skin colour is not-- it doesn't fit to the beauty standard, which is kind of ridiculous. (interviewee 6)
	Opinions regarding selling culture	*We are driven by incomes and profit. It's no longer about their social responsibility, but it's more of what sells.* (interviewee 3)
		In the desirable, perfect utopia, these companies wouldn't be producing these ads at all. Or they'd be acknowledging the sort of responsibility and effect that it may have on people, the responsibility they should have. But because these companies are powerful because they'd be earning nice from these products, I don't think that it will ever happen realistically. (interviewee 4)
		Of course, for me, I am not happy most of the time with advertisements and marketing strategies that I see. But I think that's just how the capitalist would think, only to sell their products. Well, I keep saying that these are just strategies, marketing strategies, because this companies' the primary goal is really profit more than like thinking about your skin. (interviewee 8)
	Positive changes	*There's the movement of being treated equally. Like I've seen a lot of influencers who are morena or on the darker side, just gaining a lot of popularity from a lot of cosmetic brands here, like local brands.* (interviewee 5)
		I am working in an industry which is slowly starting to accept all race and all beauties. (interviewee 7)
		However, there are models where they now, they are dark. They have darker skin, and they are trying to, in a way, do away with the colourism problem in our country. But I still believe that it's not yet like, we're not yet in that stage. (interviewee 10)
Additional barriers versus facilitators	Price as an influential factor	*I think people would still buy the products even if they're expensive.* (interviewee 5)
		I feel like, if you increase the price just by a little bit, not too much. Just by a little…I think they will start thinking twice that they don't really need it, because a lot of feelings do prioritize being white over other things. (interviewee 7)
		I think that would make people want them more because if they were more expensive, then the higher class people would buy them and use them and people would see them using them. And that would encourage, you know, the lower class…who can't really afford it to want to buy that. Instead of…using that money for the daily expenses and all that. (interviewee 9)
	Education as an influential factor (health)	*especially with the older generation, I think they're quite wary about like health and what these products can do to your health. So, yeah, if they knew about the risks, I think a lot of people would be influenced to stop* (interviewee 9)

	Education as an influential factor (beauty)	It's really more of educating them. And part of that education is making them understand that, you know, certain notions such as that of beauty or certain standards, such as that of beauty, should not be confined within very basic criteria such as colour of the skin. (interviewee 3)
		maybe conversation with friends also, or like for a youngster, if somebody, someone older from the family, would discourage them, using it. (interviewee 8)
Desired changes	Legislation concerning health and safety	Maybe they should be stricter than. I don't know what are those rules and regulations and laws about this beauty products. But then again they should be more strict here, in giving this license to those who have companies who produce this kind of beauty products, because it harms those Filipinos that uses those kind of beauty products. (interviewee 1)
		So I think government should like, create a law on that for like for skin care. They should have regulations on that before. You release us skin care. (interviewee 2)
		The government should implement Health and safety issues, especially because, you know, "shoppee" and all that, these skin, the skin whitening products are so like wildly available and accessible, more than like, actual healthcare. (interviewee 9)
	Inactivity	Government will not really regulate social media much because they're actually earning from it. (interviewee 3)
		I'm not so sure if a legislation or a law would be something that is possible since it can be easily dismissed as something irrelevant. (interviewee 5)
		But in the Philippines, in the reality. That's not happening also because I think the government is concerned with how much tax … how much money these companies can give in terms of their taxes. (interviewee 8)
	Education	You have to be educated. Then you have to know which one will be safe for you. Which one will be harmful. (interviewee 3)
		But one thing that I think is really possible for people to do is generally just discuss the things associated with it, like colourism or just bring awareness to the public. Just talk about how harmful these stereotypes or these things could be like in just aspects that people can understand. (interviewee 5)
	Opinions corporate responsibility	But it would be nice if companies were to sort of reflect and take a step back and think about maybe producing more useful products to society. (interviewee 4)
		I think they should be more mindful, because light skin tone isn't everything like skin-skin colour in general isn't everything, and it doesn't really define you as a person. (interviewee 6)
	Advertisements	That's so I think I just want that companies state more facts, but it's hard to control since there are many people who are trying to be sellers of skin care. (interviewee 2)
		You as somebody creates the ad will have a responsibility to the audience, will have the responsibility to your consumers. (interviewee 3)
		They've never really put it in the back of there like a warning sign, or anything like that. (interviewee 7)

TABLE 2: Themes identified in semi-structured interviews

6.2. Stereotypes Within Society

The dominant and most frequently mentioned stereotypes were related to physical attributes of the body. In particular, skin tone was the most prevalent cause of stereotyping in society in this category, whilst stereotypes regarding hair style and characteristics of the nose were also common. Moreover, in relation to this, some participants identified bullying and low self-esteem as important phenomena. Nevertheless, stereotypes related to gender were also frequently mentioned.

6.3. Colourism Within Society

During the interview, every interviewee identified at least one situation in which skin tone was a cause of discrimination in the Philippines. In particular, frequently mentioned scenarios were related to job opportunity or the work environment. Nevertheless, this was not necessarily based on personal experience. Moreover, all participants agreed that success is related to beauty in general and to varying extent to colour of the skin. Nonetheless, regarding colourism, some degree of relativism or complacency was expressed by the doctorates involved in the study.

6.4. Beauty Ideal in The Philippines

According to our participants, the 'beauty standard' in the Philippines is dominated by a fair skin complexion. The origin of this complexion was brought into relationship with colonialism by three participants. Nevertheless, others mentioned a new source of inspiration of the current trend, inter alia, Korea.

6.5. Skin Whitening Culture

30% of the interviewees used skin whitening products in the past, while another 30% stated that they were actively using these products at the time of the interview. In general, respondents stated that the scale of the practice is ingrained and vast. Considering the intensity of the preference for skin whitening, participants noted, based on personal desire or more in general, that it is strong in the Philippines. Furthermore, four participants said it is taboo to talk about skin whitening in the Philippines.

Overall, the participants were also indifferent whether other people, in the close environment or in more general terms, whitened their skin. Nevertheless, participants were divided with respect to their feelings about skin whitening products.

6.6. Motivations for the Use of Skin Whitening Products

Different reasons were indicated as to why people consume whitening products. Personal statements were given by the people who were actively using, while general conceptualisations were given by others. In particular, the most prevalent rationales were idealisation of prospects and conformism, mentioned by 60% of the participants, followed by celebrity endorsement, family and self-esteem noted by 50% of the respondents. Nonetheless, participants also identified drivers to not use skin whitening products, such as a general distaste towards white skin or general satisfaction with the own skin.

6.7. The Power of Marketing

Participants viewed companies to be effective in targeting whitening products in society. Nevertheless, participants recognised stigmatisation in advertisement practices. Moreover, interviewees unanimously considered marketing influential in shaping the views held in society regarding skin tone. Overall, the opinions regarding the selling culture were also negative. Mostly, this was brought into relation with profit seeking behaviour of firms. Notwithstanding, four respondents discussed some positive changes, regarding skin tone in advertisement.

6.8. Barriers Versus Facilitators

Regarding price as an influential factor in the use of skin whitening products, some felt that increasing the price of the products would deter people from using skin whitening products. However, most interviewees did believe that a change in the price of these products would have little to no effect in how much these products are bought and used in the Philippines. Some even believed that an increase of price may further motivate people to buy more of these products. Moreover, participants also felt that

education was an influential factor in how much skin whitening was used in the Philippines – but in different ways. Firstly, some participants felt that if people were educated on the health risks, they would be more inclined to stop their use of such products. Alternatively, participants also stated that educating people on these beauty standards rather than the health risks could also discourage people from buying skin whitening products.

7. Desired Changes

When asked about government intervention, participants did state that it would be ideal for the government to step in and introduce legislation on the matter – specifically regarding health and safety, although many did not think this was feasible. A few stated that their hesitance towards the use of government intervention lay in their belief that the colourism was not something the government would see as a serious enough issue to act against. Moreover, interviewees felt that the government would likely not act as they believed that the government benefited from these industries. Instead, many participants stated that education was a better means of achieving change and progress in this field – either by raising awareness about the health effect of the use of these products or on the impact of such beauty standards on individuals. Participants were also asked for their opinions regarding corporate responsibility relating to the skin whitening industry. Some shared that they felt companies

needed to be more careful regarding the message they were sharing through the products they were selling. Alternatively, one participant stated that companies should increase the price of these products to limit the use of such whitening products. Regarding advertisements specifically, interviewees commented that companies had a responsibility to ensure that the necessary information was relayed to consumers when creating such advertisements.

8. Analysis

The main research question investigated by this study is whether colourist stereotypes and global marketing practises are related in South-East Asia. To aptly address this question, the prevalence of these stereotypes, as well as the different marketing practises employed, was established following the literature review and interviews. The relationship between these two concepts was characterised by looking at how both colourist stereotypes and marketing practices influenced the use of skin whitening products, and how this use further influenced colourist stereotypes and ideals. The results highlight the prevalence of colourism in the Philippines and indicate a direct link between this phenomenon and marketing, as visualised by the thematic map in Figure 1. The themes and links between them are explored below following the diagram.

Figure 1:

Note: The thematic map showing the main interactions established. The two most influential feedback loops established are primarily between the power of marketing and stereotypes in society, which influence both colourism in society, and beauty ideals in society in a multidirectional fashion. These feedback loops subsequently lead to skin whitening use and motivations for skin whitening use respectively, which also influence each other. Lastly, this bidirectional relationship results in the desired changes and as well as the possibility to apply barriers vs. facilitators.

Firstly, the interviews yielded empirical evidence for the fair skin beauty ideal and how this ideal is directly linked to stereotypes in society that associate lighter skin tones with success in its broadest definition, ranging from increased social status to more economic opportunities. Although the literature review outlines the spread of American ideals and the Westernisation of beauty standards in the Philippines through globalisation, the interviews were able to identify other cultural mediums impacting the beauty ideal in the Philippines. Specifically, Korean trends were mentioned as being influential, with Filipinos embracing East Asian features, whilst also wishing to appear pale and "porcelain". In this way, the interviews highlighted how the Filipino beauty ideal is not only dominated by American and Western ideals. A study by Rondilla briefly touched upon how proximal countries such as China, Japan, and Korea, influence colourism in the Philippines through imported media, such as TV and film. In addition, Rondilla confirms the valorisation of East Asian beauty ideals (pale skin, straight black hair, double lidded almond eyes, etc), and the impact that they have on the beauty ideal in the Philippines Furthermore, the results also provide evidence for the sentiment of rejecting specifically Filipino appearances, as discussed in the literature review, with women "not actually want[ing] to be Filipino". This was also observed when all participants identified that they wished to fit the light or medium skin tone image. However, when identifying the skin tone of a typical Filipino, all of them identified either the medium or dark skin category. This thereby highlights skin tone as a measure of prototypicality, as well as further indicating the rejection of Filipino appearance [57].

The stereotypes associated with this beauty ideal are characteristic of the ubiquitous colourism in Filipino society, implying that skin tone can be either a source of privilege or of discrimination. The main stereotypical associations people had with darker skin colour was that individuals were dirtier, came from a poor family, and were less beautiful. Lighter skin was labelled as fair/ glowing and associated with wealth, beauty, cleanliness, and success. This is in line with previous literature and overlaps with the stereotypes of other cultures, as seen in much of the research in Africa. Additionally, many women highlighted the prevalence of gender stereotypes, with some considering it a more pressing issue than skin whitening, thus relativising the severity of colourism in the Philippines. Interestingly, when looking at the demographics, the interviewees who did not consider skin whitening as much of an issue were from the older age category and had lived in the Philippines their whole lives. Therefore, this could indicate a generational difference in perceptions of colourism, as well as how engrained colourism is in contemporary society. This contrasted the views of the younger generation who often considered colourism as harmful, especially individuals who had lived or are currently living outside of the Philippines. In addition, the majority of participants mentioned that gender and colourist stereotypes where greatly interlinked, as women were expected to look and behave a certain way at their jobs, for example. A study by Choma & Prusaczyck confirmed this effect of women being more disadvantaged due to skin tone, by investigating skin whitening in relation to self-objectification. They argue that women who internalise being objectified by

society, in concordance with the self-objectification theory, are more affected by appearance ideals as that is intimately connected to their self-worth, and are therefore more likely to use skin whitening products [47].

Furthermore, this study empirically supports the view of existing literature on the socialisation potential of marketing. Interviewees repeatedly noted marketing to be shaping thinking patterns and views on skin tones in Filipino society. In addition, participants discussed the ubiquity of the earlier noted skin tone stereotypes and associated beauty standard in advertisements, as only light skinned models were reported to be used. Hence, this power of marketing to shape views and thinking patterns, in combination with the ubiquity of skin tone stereotypes in advertisements, one of the foundations of colourism, provides evidence for the perpetuation of colourism by marketing, as represented in the top right of Figure 1. In addition, the specific skin tone stereotypes and the beauty ideals in society influence what is represented in advertisements and marketing, while its subsequent power further defines these beauty ideals and stereotypes in society, as represented by the left top part of the Figure 1.

This widespread colourism, in combination with the associated beauty standard, stereotypes, and perpetuation by marketing, result in a pervasive skin whitening culture in the Philippines. Although the products are widely used, and the interviewees were themselves open to discuss skin whitening culture, it was noted as a taboo topic within the Philippines. This mystification of the use of skin whitening products can be brought into relation with Bourdieu's conditio sine qua non of his definition of symbolic capital. In particular, he noted that what defines status in society, inherent to symbolic capital, should be what he calls 'misrecognised' or implicit [20]. Therefore, considering skin whitening as taboo, may contribute to the possible status it embodies in Filipino society. Nevertheless, whilst Menke notes that many studies have found that skin whitening use can be associated with taboo in South-East Asia, no validation of this relationship can be given based on the study conducted [48].

9. Discussion
When looking closer into the nature and dynamics of the relationship between colourism and marketing, this study was able to uncover more concrete motivations behind skin whitening use. The idealisation of prospects, conformism, family pressure, and celebrity endorsement, for example, are very closely related to the fair-skin beauty standard and stereotypes, since all these motivations are characteristic of desires for more social acceptance and economic opportunities. Self-esteem problems were also mentioned as a consequence of the beauty standards, stereotypes and colourism within Filipino society. Furthermore, the prevalence of celebrity endorsement as a motivation illustrates how marketing also heavily influences these motivations and bolsters participants' argument about the effectiveness of skin whitening marketing.

These empirical findings are in line with the literature review of Khan et al. which concluded that celebrity endorsement is

influential for skin whitening marketing, with important effects for discrimination and purchase intentions. Nonetheless, firms certainly also leverage the other mentioned motivations in advertisements, which can be observed in the semiotic analysis conducted by Natividad [45,49]. Conformism and family as motivators further highlighted how engrained skin whitening is the culture. Some mentioned that they would receive skin whitening products as presents, get pressured by family members to use them, or that having products without skin whitening agents was almost unavoidable as they were the cheapest and most prevalent type of skin care. The extent of these motivators varied per individual and time of their life. Many mentioned having been more affected by the different motivators in their teenage and young adult years, while others were still influenced. However, the intensity and strength of these motivators was highlighted when the participants reflected on their surroundings. Some mentioned that skin whitening was so engrained in the culture, that it was sometimes placed above basic needs such as food, while others mainly reflected on the increased self-confidence people would experience. On a structural level, this could be related to the status signal these goods convey, also captured by the notion of symbolic capital considering Bourdieu, or conspicuous consumption according to Veblen, T. which coincide in some respects [20,50].

10. Implications of the Relationship

As mentioned above, the attitudes with respect to the sale and marketing of skin whitening products were negative, and this was mostly associated with the profit seeking behaviour of firms. Moreover, it was repeatedly noted that firms should reflect more on the broader impact of the messages conveyed by their products and marketing. This indicates that it is not only scholars' perception that these products conflict with Corporate Social Responsibility as discussed in the literature review, but that this perception is also present outside of academia. In addition, the predominantly negative tone in statements about the sale of whitening products and profit seeking behaviour of the sellers, highlights the relevance of Corporate Social Responsibility and should urge businesses, especially in this industry, to look beyond the financial bottom line, and not prioritise profits over the overall wellbeing of customers. It was repeatedly noted, however, that there is already a trend towards more inclusive marketing, especially for the more premium brands, which can be seen as a sign that some firms are, in fact, already responding to this call for greater Corporate Social Responsibility.

The role of the government in this issue was discussed and, repeatedly, effective government intervention, especially regarding health and safety, was desired by interviewees. However, the interviewees themselves felt this was neither feasible, nor realistic. Interviewees' beliefs about the government's inability to thoroughly intervene could be seen as part of a broader distrust in public institutions in the Philippines, which would not be surprising given the World Governance Indicators for the country. During the period of 2015-2021, the Philippines performed consistently badly in rule of law, political stability and, to a lesser extent, control of corruption, with respect to the other members of ASEAN [61]. Nonetheless, it must be noted that some initia-

tives to mitigate the negative impact of skin whitening products have been undertaken by Filipino authorities, notably the ratification of the UN Minamata Convention on Mercury by the Philippines in June of 2020. Prior to this, a Republic Act, outlining a prohibition on adulterated cosmetic products, was passed by the Senate and the House of Representatives in June [51]. However, the absence of these existing initiatives in the discussions could indicate the shortcomings of the Filipino government in addressing the public's concerns about such products.

In addition to government intervention, interviewees frequently mentioned the need for education. This was largely expanded upon when discussing the health consequences of using such products. As identified in the literature, skin whitening products have many harmful side effects, however, it seems that these are not always known by the consumers. In this way, interviewees suggested that education would be a useful tool for spreading such information, and that it may cause customers to reconsider their usage of the products. As such, education can be identified as a barrier to the use of skin whitening products. Therefore, it can be related to information asymmetry existing between buyer and seller in society, as conceptualised by Wahil, Ishak & Daud [52]. Furthermore, participants also suggested that educating people on roots of beauty standards in the Philippines, rather than just the risks associated with product-use, may be effective in discouraging people from using whitening products. As such, it was discussed that only once the phenomenon was understood could it be adequately addressed.

When looking at price as a potential barrier or facilitator, interviewees identified that this could have varying effects on the consumption of skin whitening products. Where some mentioned that price would decrease usage, as skin whitening products are often the cheapest form of skin care, others mentioned that motivations were so strong that it wouldn't matter, or went as far as saying that it would increase the motivation as it would be even more related to wealth. From an economic point of view, some of the participants described the demand for the goods as inelastic, which can be associated with the intensity of the preference, reflecting the necessity of the commodity in society [37].

The relationship between the marketing of skin whitening products based on prevailing stereotypes and the impact that these stereotypes have on inequality within society remains complex, with many factors involved that are beyond the scope of this research. Due to this, the exact relationship cannot yet be fully understood, and does not lend itself to a remedy that is readily implemented. However, this research attempted to highlight several important contributing factors, areas that appear promising for future exploration, and different possibilities for change. The challenge lies within the social perception and the acknowledgement of the pervasiveness of the current colourist stereotypes. Therefore, a call for better education on skin whitening and colourism, and especially the physically harmful effects of skin whitening use was deemed promising by an overwhelming majority of participants. Opening a dialogue on the colourist nature of thinking, practices, and assumptions can

be key to initiating change. In addition, that the products were marketed to promise change in these stereotypes and specifically the celebrity endorsers were identified as having a lot of power on the motivation to use skin whitening products. Therefore, possible regulations regarding the marketing practises, or a shift in celebrity endorsement could trigger change.

11. Limitations & Future Research

Although this study was designed to minimise biases, there are limitations due to the finite amount of time and resources that could be devoted to it. In particular, shortcomings can be identified for the qualitative empirical study, regarding the sampling and coding method used, and interviews conducted, and for the narrative literature review. The convenience and snowball sampling approach imply that participants were not selected randomly and as a result certain subgroups are over- or underrepresented in the sample. Also, self-selection bias may have occurred, given those who volunteered to participate might hold more extreme opinions on the topics addressed by this study. Moreover, regarding the interviews, some language barriers may have caused unintended responses from the side of the respondents. In addition, the way questions were framed and the overall ordering of the questions in the questionnaire, may have shaped different responses. Related to this, some different types of response bias might have occurred, including demand, acquiescence and cognitive bias. Furthermore, the method and flexibility adopted during the data analysis and literature review may have had their limitations, regarding transferability of the findings. In particular, open coding and a narrative literature review, in general, are not objective, but shaped by the perception of the researchers involved [26,32]. Given that some of the concepts distinguished in this study, for example stereotyping and discrimination, lie very close near each other and are vast, other researchers may interpret the data differently, depending on the personal definition adopted. The flexibility introduced, given the exploratory nature of the study, may have had a positive effect on the existence of confirmation bias on the one hand, whilst awareness of this bias and taking care of frequencies of individual codes could have mitigated its effects. On the other hand, anchoring and priming bias may have directed the individual researchers in a certain direction, although the harmonisation of individual codes after the independent coding stage may have reduced their impact at an early stage, considering the empirical study.

The authors acknowledge further research could be directed to more rigorous analyses of the investigated relationship between colourism and marketing. Notably, these investigations may enhance the transferability of the results found in this exploratory study. Further research may also want to consider the role of gender and gender inequality, and the beauty ideal in the Philippines in relation to the topics focused on in this paper. In addition, the research focus could be expanded to neighbouring countries and regions. Lastly, the prevalence of celebrity endorsement as motivator can be regarded as a promising area for future research in this field, especially given the rising importance ascribed to influencer marketing.

12. Conclusion

Underlying interactions between colourism and marketing were detected and underpinned by skin tone stereotypes related to the beauty paradigm embedded in society. Especially the idealisation of prospects and celebrity endorsement, which also tend to rely on these stereotypes, were identified as possible perpetuators of the dynamics between colourism and marketing through skin whitening products. The dynamics between colourism and marketing tend to cause psychological and physical harm, possibly facilitated through the lack of education provided, and to some varying extent, the price of skin whitening products. To initiate change given the status quo, the challenge lies within the social perception and the acknowledgement of the pervasiveness of the current colourist stereotypes. Therefore, opening a discourse on the colourist nature of thinking, practices, and assumptions next to possible regulations, regarding the marketing practises, may be essential.
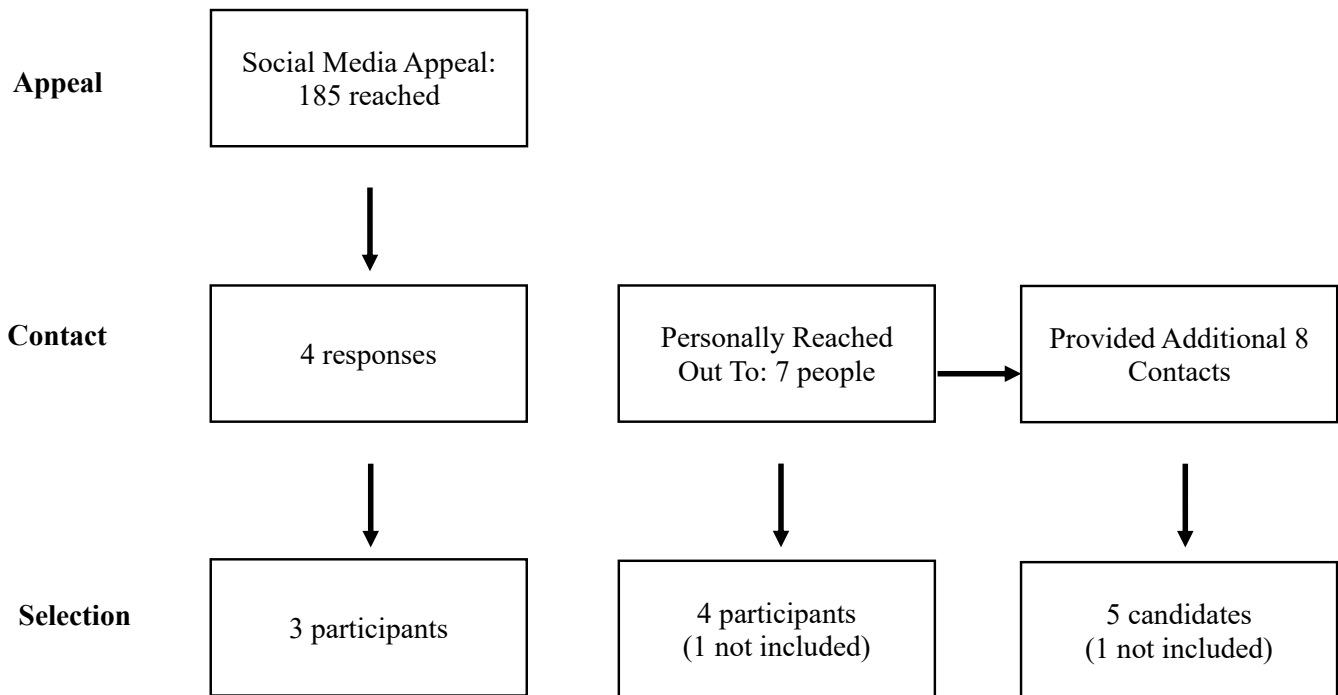
Appendices

Appendix A: Sampling Process

Appeal	Social Media Appeal: 185 reached
Contact	4 responses	Personally Reached Out To: 7 people	Provided Additional 8 Contacts
Selection	3 participants	4 participants (1 not included)	5 candidates (1 not included)

Appendix B: Semi-structured interview questionnaire

Demographics

- Which age group do you fit into? 18-25, 26-35 or 36-45?
- Which gender do you identify as?
- What is your current marital status? Single, actively dating, married, established partnership?
- What is the highest level of education you finished or are completing? And where?
- What is your current occupation?
- Where were you born and raised?
- Where do you currently live?
- Where have you lived before?
- How long have you lived in the Philippines and how recently?
- Which nationality do you hold?
- Which ethnicity do you identify as?

Stereotypes

1. To the best of your knowledge, do you recognize any kind of stereotypes in daily life? If yes, how do you feel about that? Do you think that they have any impact on you? Which one(s) affect you the most?
2. Do you think that these are related to success? If yes, how? In your opinion, what is success? Does it have a social aspect?
3. Looking at these pictures, would you say that you could identify / "see" yourself in one of these? How do you feel about it? Where would you like to fit in?
4. Do you think these people have similar experiences in terms of being member of our society? Do you think they are treated in the same way (equally) in society?
5. What does colourism mean to you?
6. How do you see the role of marketing in society? What about the marketing in skin whitening ads?
7. What's your opinion on this? Do you think it's useful, impactful, something else? How?
8. What is your experience/opinion with such products (personal/others)
9. In your opinion, why do people buy these products? What could their goal be?
10. Are there any factors that could influence your/others' use of such products? Which ones?
11. Is there anything else you would like to add/ask?

Skin-whitening use

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