

# Study On The Perception Of College-Going Male Students Towards Skin-Color Advertisements And Its Impacts On Their Mental Health

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## ABSTRACT

This research paper explores millennials' perceptions of mental health and the role of media advertisements in shaping their views toward skin color. The study will focus on understanding the attitudes and beliefs of millennials, defined as individuals born between 1980 and 2000, towards mental health and the impact of media advertisements on their understanding of mental health towards skin color issues. The research will utilize a quantitative approach, using a survey to gather data from a sample of millennials to examine their perceptions and attitudes toward skin color. A total of 58 responses is collected using the purposive sampling method. The study results provide insight into how millennials perceive mental health and the role of media advertisements in shaping their views on skin color.

**Keywords:** Mental Health, Skin Color, Media, Advertisements, Skin Color Perception

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## *Introduction*

Mediated information had influenced us in our way of living (Jamieson & Campbell, 1983). The portrayal of skin color in media advertisements has long been controversial. The media has often been accused of promoting unhealthy and unrealistic beauty standards, from the use of controversial skin-lightening creams to the lack of diversity in advertising campaigns (Laig, 1985). One of the most common forms of discrimination based on skin color in media advertisements is Often marketed toward people with darker skin tones, these products rds people with darker skin tones, claim to lighten and brighten their skin. However, these products often contain harmful chemicals that can damage the skin and contribute to several health problems. Additionally, these advertisements send the message that lighter skin is more desirable, leading to a damaging societal belief that lighter skin is superior. Another issue with the portrayal of skin color in media advertisements is the lack of diversity. Many advertisements feature predominantly white models, leading to a lack of representation of people with different

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skin tones. This lack of representation can contribute to feelings of inadequacy and low self-esteem for people who do not see themselves reflected in the media (Hunter, 2007). The influence of media on significantly played a significant role in shaping our culture and society, from the ideas and information we consume to how we perceive and behave. This is particularly evident in how the media presents and promotes certain beauty standards, including the desire for fairness in skin complexion. This desire has been fueled by media industries and cosmetic product manufacturers as a commodity to be sold to consumers. This impact can be seen in the widespread ideology of racism and colorism, where individuals with lighter complexions are often viewed as more desirable and receive more advantages and opportunities. The influence of media on these beliefs is clear, as media has the power to shape and reinforce stereotypes, influencing the audience's perception of different groups of people. This can have serious consequences, including promoting racism and negative effects on social relationships. However, it is important to note that media and its messages influence not all individuals equally, and some may resist or reject these narrow beauty standards. The media plays a significant role in promoting racism through advertisements by influencing audience stereotypes and perpetuating negative stereotypes of certain racial groups. This is often done through representation theory in the media, which can shape how people view and perceive different racial groups. For example, media advertisements may depict certain racial groups as more intelligent, successful, or attractive than others, creating harmful stereotypes and biases. Additionally, media advertisements may promote products or services targeted toward specific racial groups, further perpetuating and reinforcing negative stereotypes. As a result, media advertisements have the potential to contribute to the perpetuation of racism and discrimination in society. Jamieson and Campbell (1983) examined the portrayal of skin color in advertising in the United States. They found that white models were significantly more likely to be featured in advertisements than models of color. This study also found that when models of color were featured, they were often shown in subservient or inferior roles, further reinforcing the idea that white skin is superior.

Films also have played an important role in promoting racism through skin color. The portrayal of white skin as a symbol of beauty and success in films has significantly promoted racism. This is because such portrayals often reinforce the societal belief that white skin is superior and that people with darker skin tones are inferior. This can lead to harmful stereotypes and discrimination against people with darker skin tones. Films can also contribute to the perpetuation of colorism, which is the discrimination of people based on the shade of their skin within the same racial or ethnic group. This can lead to discrimination against those with darker skin tones within the same racial or ethnic group, further reinforcing the harmful belief that lighter skin is superior. It is important for filmmakers to be mindful of the impact of their portrayals on societal attitudes toward skin color and to strive for a more diverse and accurate representation in films.

### ***Literature Review***

Many previous studies have raised the notion of Colorism that is being spread by various media platforms. It is important to note that colorism is not limited to non-white racial groups. In fact, it can also be found within white racial groups, with lighter skin being seen as more desirable and associated with higher status. This preference for light skin is often perpetuated and reinforced by media and advertising, which frequently portray lighter skin as the standard of beauty and success. The impact of colorism can be seen in various aspects of society, including employment, education, and even interpersonal relationships. It is a deeply ingrained and

systemic issue that needs to be addressed and dismantled to create a more equal and just society. More simply, Colorism is “the propensity to judge someone's race by how light or dark their complexion is by how they act or perceive them” (Maddox and Gray, 2002). Studies of Asian Market Intelligence have shown that for an Asian to believe that one is beautiful, one must be white (Lee, n.d.). An Asian saying states, “one white cover-up is three ugliness” (Martin, 2009), Whitening products are consumed by 50% of women in Taiwan, Hong Kong, South Korea, and the Philippines in the year 2004 according to research (Carrer, 2010), White skin can also make skin appear younger because it conceals signs of aging including dark spots and wrinkles. Different whitening products such as deodorant, lotions and beauty merchandise were being purchased by Asian people (Chin, n.d.). One study by Hunter (2007) examined the portrayal of skin color in media advertisements in the Philippines, finding that most advertisements featuring beauty products and services promoted the idea of white skin as the ideal. The study also found that these advertisements often featured white or light-skinned models, reinforcing the idea that white skin is more attractive. Another study by Laig (1985) explored the impact of media on individuals' perceptions of skin color, finding that media advertisements significantly impact individuals' perceptions of beauty and attractiveness. The study found that individuals exposed to media advertisements promoting the idea of white skin as desirable were more likely to hold negative views of their skin color and to strive for lighter skin.

### ***Theoretical Framework***

The changing perception towards skin color through various media advertisements could be understood through Agenda setting theory and persuasion theory. According to the notion of agenda-setting, the media can "affect the relevance of items on the public agenda, whereas the persuasion theory deals with messages aimed at subtly changing the behavior attitudes

### **Objectives**

The primary objectives of the study are:

1. To study the media perception towards Colorism (through advertisements)
2. To study mass perception towards Colorism (through the use of beauty products)
3. To assess whether the youths are breaking skin color stereotypes.

### ***Methodology***

The current study is purely descriptive. Both primary and secondary data were used. Using a survey method, we gathered primary data for this study. For the survey, we employed both closed- and open-ended questionnaires. In the current study, we have given primary data first importance and have taken information straight from the field. The descriptive method was used to gather both quantitative and qualitative data for this investigation. Cross-sectional study design was employed.

### ***Sampling***

The population of the study comprised the youths residing in hostels. The universe of the study is the capital of Madhya Pradesh state, Bhopal.

### ***Data Analysis and Findings***

**Table 1 showing demography of the respondents.**

SN		Category (s)			
1	Age (in years)	18-22 years	23-27 years		28-30 years
		39.7% (23)	50% (29)		10.3% (06)
2	Education	Senior secondary	Graduation	Post-graduation	Others
		19% (11)	36.2% (21)	29.3% (17)	15.5% (09)
3	Occupation	Students		Others	
		67.2% (39)		32.8% (19)	

- Table 1 show that the age of the respondents was in-between 18-30 years in which maximum number of respondents (50%) was in the age group of 23-27 years. 39.7 % respondents were in the age groups of 18-22 years and least number of respondents (10.3%) belongs to the age group of 28-30 years.
- In the mean while, the age of the respondents also reflects the occupation of the respondents. Since, the survey was done on a boy hostel, maximum number of boys has come from outside of Bhopal for their studies. 36.2% respondents have completed their senior secondary and are in their graduation studies.29.3% respondents are doing post graduation from different colleges of Bhopal. 15.5% respondents are doing various job oriented vocational courses from Bhopal and 19% respondents have come to the city for their senior secondary education.
- Out of all, 67.2% respondents are students and 32.8% respondents are in various jobs.

**Consistency Measures**

Consistency of all the factors towards skin color perception and media in the questionnaires was checked through item to total correlation. Under this correlation of every item with total was measured and the computed value was compared with standard value.

**Table 2 showing internal consistency of the factors towards skin color perception and media**

SN	Statement	Mean	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if item deleted	Status
1	Do you feel that media is spreading Colorism in society?	2.38	.901	.861	Accepted
2	Are you influenced by the media to use a particular brand or product?	3.31	.892	.866	Accepted
3	Do you feel using fairness product can enhance your skin	3.02	.947	.855	Accepted

	color tone?				
4	Do you feel that the endorsers are the main reason behind spreading Colorism?	2.72	.677	.884	Accepted
5	Do you feel essence of accomplishment after purchasing advertised grooming products?	2.79	.901	.862	Accepted
6	Is vanity a motivating factor behind using products to change the skin color tone?	3.57	.950	.859	Accepted
7	The motivating force behind advertisements promising change of color tone is a part of our cultural stereotyping?	3.83	.972	.859	Accepted
8	Do you think fair skin is a symbol of presentation in society?	2.29	-.560	.972	Dropped

Cronbach's Alpha had been obtained .897 after reliability test through SPSS which is more than the cut off value (.7). In above table of consistency measures mainly two things are considered, first Corrected Item to Total Correlation values which is acceptable if greater than. Secondly Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted value for each item is evaluated and if found value greater than the calculated reliability value (.897) than that item should be dropped from the questionnaire and not considered for further study, so that from above table of consistency statement no. 8 has been dropped from further study.

### ***Reliability Measurement***

Reliability through Cronbach's Alpha test had been applied to calculate the reliability of all items of questionnaire. It is considered that the reliability value more than to standard value of Cronbach's alpha (0.7) is good.

***Table 4.1 showing Reliability Measurement***

<b>S. No.</b>	<b>Reliability Method</b>	<b>Calculated Value</b>
1	Cronbach's Alpha	.897

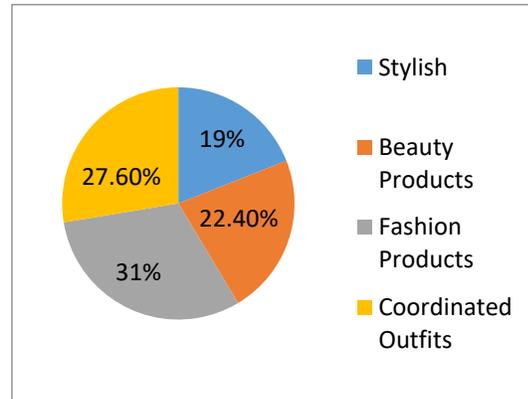
Cronbach's Alpha value had been obtained i.e. 0.897 after reliability test through SPSS which is more than the cut off value (0.7) indicating that the questionnaire used for data analysis was extremely reliable and provide us relevant information as the researcher want from the data side.

**Showing types of advertisements appeal respondents most**

**Table 2**

Category	Frequency	Percent
Stylish	11	19%
Beauty Products	13	22.4%
Fashion Products	18	31%
Coordinated Outfits	16	27.6%

**Chart 3**



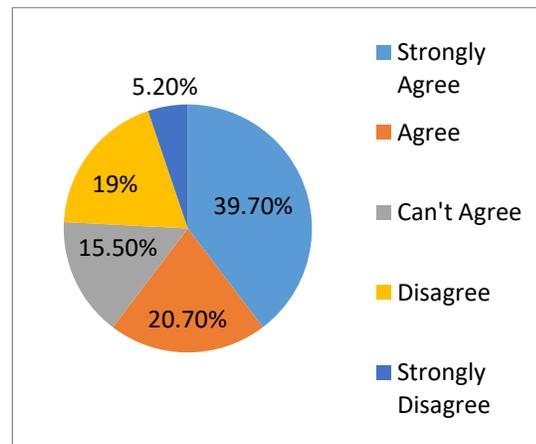
In the era of this metro-sexuality and masculinity every youth wants to look good and stylish, so the media is promoting and branding youth centric products and this is the effect where 31% respondents said advertisements that shows fashion products appeals them most. 27.6% respondents prefer and influenced by coordinated outfits advertisements. In terms of beauty and grooming products, 22.4% respondents said they get influenced by advertisements that show these products and 19% respondents said that stylish advertisements appeal most.

**Showing perception of people towards media is spreading Colorism in society**

**Table 3**

Category	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	23	39.7%
Agree	12	20.7%
Can't Agree	9	15.5%
Disagree	11	19%
Strongly Disagree	3	5.2%

**Chart 2**



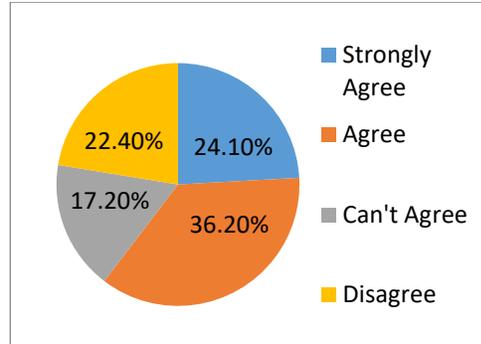
Since media has brought the entire community together it is also spreading some particular notions in society. In the context of racism, dermal perception and colorism in society, it is always seen that media greatly impacts society through advertisements, movies or any other mode. 39.7% respondents are strongly agree with the statement that media is spreading colorism in society. 20.7% respondents are agreeing on this. 19% and 5.2% respondents have strongly disagreed and disagreed that media is not spreading any colorism in society. 15.5% respondents are neutral on this statement.

***Showing responses of respondents towards influenced by media to use a particular brand or product***

**Table 4**

Category	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	14	24.1%
Agree	21	36.2%
Can't Agree	10	17.2%
Disagree	13	22.4%

**Chart 3**



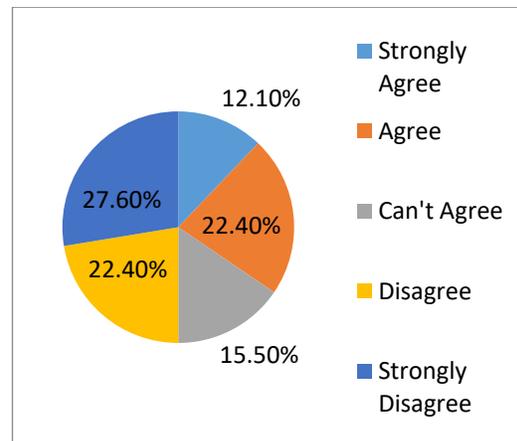
Out of all 36.2% respondents have said that they are influenced by various media advertisements to use a particular brand, 24.1% respondents are agreeing. 22.4% and 17.2% respondents said that they are not influenced by any media advertisements to use any particular brand or products.

***Showing responses of respondents towards can fairness creams enhance skin color?***

**Table 5**

Category	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	7	12.1%
Agree	13	22.4%
Can't Agree	9	15.5%
Disagree	13	22.4%
Strongly Disagree	16	27.6%

**Chart 4**



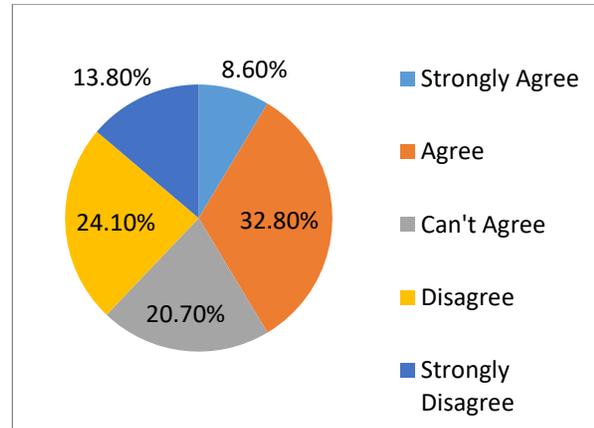
Can fairness cream enhance the color of skin? This question is quite famous among media researchers. There are so many products that promises and claim that by using their product, one can enhance the color of the skin. But do people really believe on this? The data revealed that 27.6% and 22.4% respondents strongly disagree and disagree on this statement. They have completely denied that the color of one's skin color can be enhanced by any fairness cream. 22.4% and 12.1% respondents have agreed that the products can really enhance their skin color and are quite effective. Out of all only 15.5% respondents are neutral and have said nothing on this.

***Sowing responses of respondents towards are the endorser's main reason behind spreading Colorism?***

**Table 6**

Category	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	5	8.6%
Agree	19	32.8%
Can't Agree	12	20.7%
Disagree	14	24.1%
Strongly Disagree	8	13.8%

**Chart 5**



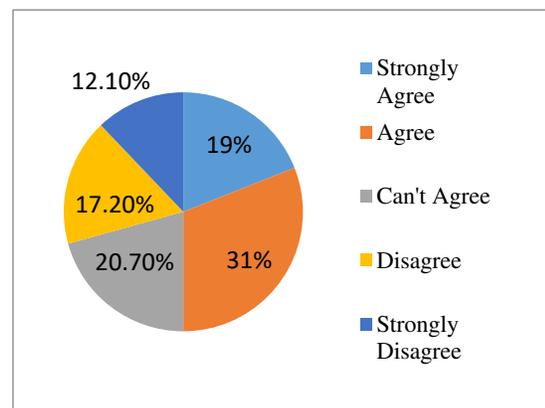
There are so many celebrities who have become the main face of any beauty or grooming product brand. They promote the product saying that it will be enhancing the skin tone. Somehow these all endorsers are spreading colorism and racism in society directly or indirectly. Almost 40% (Agree and strongly agree) of respondents have said that yes the endorsers are the main reason. On the other hand, 37.9% are those respondents who do not blame any endorsers. For them, users are only responsible to buy any product not the endorsers. 20.7% respondents are neutral on this statement.

***Showing responses of respondents towards feeling essence of accomplishment after purchasing advertised grooming products***

**Table 7**

Category	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	11	19%
Agree	18	31%
Can't say	12	20.7%
Disagree	10	17.2%
Strongly Disagree	7	12.1%

**Chart 6**



The main reason behind buying and using any beauty products for the beautification of the body and so the media always shows a well-groomed male model with using a grooming product. But does it really work? Yes, 31% and 19% respondents have strongly agreed and agreed on this statement that they feel an essence of accomplishment after purchasing and using an advertised

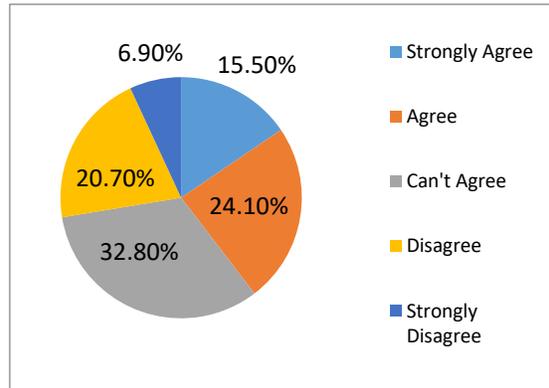
product. 20.7% respondents are neutral on this statement. 17.2% and 12.1% respondents (29.3%) are disagreeing on this statement.

***Showing responses of respondents towards vanity a motivating factor behind using products to change the skin color tone***

**Table 8**

Category	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	9	15.5%
Agree	14	24.1%
Can't Agree	19	32.8%
Disagree	12	20.7%
Strongly Disagree	4	6.9%

**Chart 7**



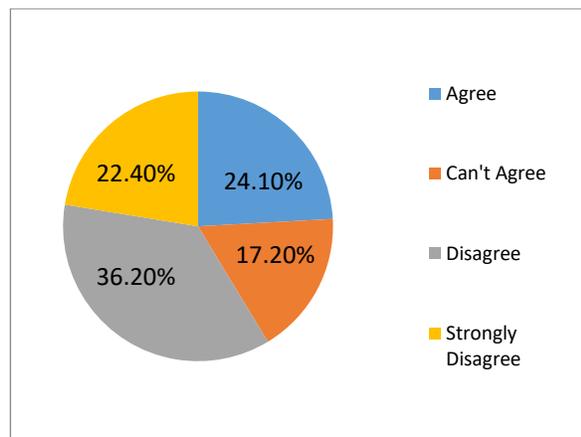
Out of all, 32.8% respondents are neutral on the statements that vanity a motivating factor behind using products to change the skin color tone. 24.1% respondents have agreed on this and 20.7% respondents have said that there is no any reason behind using any beauty product. 15.5% respondents are agreeing very strongly on this and only 6.9% respondents have strongly denied on this statement.

***Showing responses of respondents towards motivating force behind advertisements promising change of color tone is a part of cultural stereotyping***

**Table 9**

Category	Frequency	Percent
Agree	14	24.1%
Can't say	10	17.2%
Disagree	21	36.2%
Strongly Disagree	13	22.4%

**Chart 8**



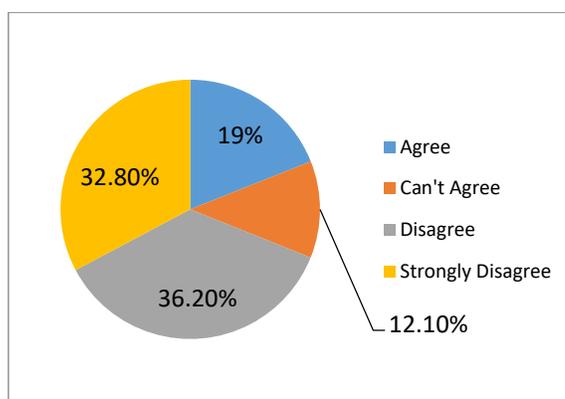
Out of all, 36.2% respondents have said that they do not agree on the statement that promising change of color tone is a part of cultural stereotyping. 24.1% respondents have agreed on this. They think the perception towards changing using color tone is a part of cultural stereotyping. In the mean while 22.4% respondents have strongly disagreed and 17.2% are neutral.

***Showing responses of people towards fair skin is a symbol of presentation in society***

**Table 10**

Category	Frequency	Percent
Agree	11	19%
Can't Say	7	12.1%
Disagree	21	36.2%
Strongly Disagree	19	32.8%

**Chart 9**



There are so many movies and advertisements in which the fair skin is given more priority. Has the fair skin become the status and presentation symbol in society? India is a multi cultural nation and the ethnicity of this country is quite vast so the color of the skin varies and changes by region to region. The data of the study revealed that out of all 69% respondents have said that they do not think that fair skin is a symbol of status and presentation in our society. Every person has its own essence and qualities and if we only be centered towards the color of the skin, it would be not so fairer of the entire society. On the other hand, 19% are those respondents who are in support of this statement. They think if a person is not fair and well groomed, he or she cannot give more impact on other people. Only 12.1% respondents are neutral on this statement.

***Table 11 showing responses of respondents towards beauty products participants' purchase and use after watching advertisements***

Category	Frequency	Percent
Bleach	9	15.5%
Fairness Cream	15	25.9%
Face tone	10	17.2%
Face wash	19	32.8%
Face pack	5	8.6%

Out of all, 32.8% respondents have bought face-wash after watching its advertisements. 25.9% bought fairness cream, 17.2% bought face tone, 15.5% bought bleach and only 8.6% have bought face pack.

*Showing responses of respondents towards the frequency and content of beauty products in media should be*

Category	Frequency	Percent
Decreased	7	12.1%
Filtered	12	20.7%
Gender Specific	13	22.4%
Logical	11	19.5
Honest	15	25.9%

The data revealed that respondents want (25.9%) media advertisements to be honest. 22.4% wants gender specific advertisements, 20.7% wants filtered and 19.5% wants logical advertisements on beauty products. 12.1% respondents want the frequency of beauty products advertisements to be decreased.

### *Major findings and conclusions*

- Advertisements that shows fashion products appeals respondents most.
- 39.7% respondents are strongly agree with the statement that media is spreading colorism in society.
- 36.2% respondents have said that they are influenced by various media advertisements to use a particular brand.
- 50% of respondents completely denied that the color of one's skin color can be enhanced by any fairness cream.
- Almost 40% (Agree and strongly agree) of respondents have said that yes the endorsers are the main reason.
- 31% and 19% respondents have strongly agreed and agreed that they feel an essence of accomplishment after purchasing and using an advertised product.
- 32.8% respondents are neutral on the statements that vanity a motivating factor behind using products to change the skin color tone.
- Out of all, 36.2% respondents have said that they do not agree that promising change of color tone is a part of cultural stereotyping.
- The data of the study revealed that out of all 69% respondents have said that they do not think that fair skin is a symbol of status and presentation in our society.
- The data revealed that respondents want (25.9%) media advertisements to be honest.

How are we going to conclude such a vast topic on the basis of these findings? Media has been playing a major role in society in the context notion building for any particular thing.

Discrimination on the basis of skin color is not a new phenomenon but in the era of this media world, where almost everything is being advertised on mass level, products that claim enhancing of skin color are destroying the culture and ethnicity of society somewhere. As the findings of the reveals that youths are very much influenced by media adverts for their daily needs. They are influenced by the endorsers of the product and it shows that how media and its opinion leaders are regulating the mindset of people. On one side people are saying that beauty products cannot enhance the color of skin but on the other side they feel an essence of accomplishment after using a particular beauty product. This study examines the role that media has spreading colorism in society and considered the question of whether or not media reinforces racism in our communities. More specifically, this research looked at how the media impacts the portrayal of advertisements by showing and a well-groomed man using a beauty product. One interesting point that is not discussed in this research is the difference in the extents of impact on men and women by norms, media, and technology as related to their use of whitening products and subscription to related treatments.

Hence, in one form or another, this study revealed that media is influencing and appealing people to use a particular beauty product but people have developed this notion that the color of skin cannot be enhanced through any cream or beauty products.

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