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## Research Article

### Glow-Up or Fade Out? The Interplay of Glutathione Soap Use with Attitudes Towards Colorism and Celebrity Influence among Young Professionals

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## ABSTRACT

The growing market of glutathione products among young Filipina professionals reflects the enduring influence of colorism and celebrity-driven beauty standards in contemporary Philippine society. This study investigated the relationship between glutathione soap use and two potential influencing factors: attitudes toward colorism and celebrity endorsement-influence. An online survey was distributed to 207 young Filipina professionals (ages 22-35) residing in Metro Manila who had used glutathione soap for at least six months. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics, Spearman's Rank Correlation, and multiple linear regression. Results showed moderate glutathione soap use (Mdn = 3), with moderate frequency (Mdn = 3) but low intensity of use (Mdn = 2). Attitudes toward colorism were moderate overall (Mdn = 3), with strong self-concept association (Mdn = 4) and moderate ratings for impression formation, affiliation, attraction, and upward mobility (Mdn = 3). Celebrity endorsement-influence was moderate (Mdn = 3), with strong perceived attractiveness (Mdn = 4) but moderate trustworthiness and expertise ratings (Mdn = 3). Neither attitudes toward colorism ( $\rho = -0.001$ ,  $p = 0.986$ ) nor celebrity endorsement-influence ( $\rho = -0.118$ ,  $p = 0.089$ ) significantly correlated with glutathione soap use. The regression model explained only 1.8% of the variance in glutathione soap use ( $R^2 = 0.018$ ,  $p = 0.161$ ). These findings suggest young Filipina professionals exercise greater agency in navigating beauty standards than previously recognized, maintaining critical distance from colorist narratives despite acknowledging their societal impact. This research provides insights for the skincare industry, public health education, and sociological understanding of evolving beauty standards in post-colonial contexts.

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**Keywords:** Colorism, Glutathione Soap Use, Celebrity Influence, Filipino Beauty Standards, Skin Whitening

## Introduction

Colorism refers to discrimination based on skin tone, where lighter skin is systematically favored over darker skin, creating socioeconomic disparities across racial and ethnic groups (Reyes, 2020). In the Philippines, colorism's historical roots trace back to 15th-century colonial ideologies, when Spain and Portugal's "civilizing mission" portrayed fair-skinned colonizers as inherently more civilized than dark-skinned indigenous populations (Stuchtey, 2011; Ya Azibo, 2014). This ideology fundamentally reshaped Filipina identity through successive waves of colonization and continues to influence contemporary beauty standards.

The Spanish colonial period established a Filipina prototype characterized as submissive, pious, domestic, and valued based on the quantity of Western blood, which led Filipinas to aspire to the fairness associated with Spanish descent as a means of social advancement (Hall, 2001; Doran, 1993; Aguja, 2013). Following Spanish rule, U.S. imperialism further marginalized Philippine heritage by imposing Western cultural norms and using mass media to label the Filipino population as "little brown fellows" and other derogatory terms associated with negative attributes (Hernandez & Borlaza, 2024; Quimpo, 2000). These historical forces have created a deeply embedded preference for lighter skin tones that persists in modern Philippine society.

Despite significant advancements following independence, colonial legacies continue to influence contemporary Philippine beauty standards that favor lighter skin tones. Within this sociocultural context, light-skinned celebrities frequently appear in advertisements promoting whitening products, reinforcing the association between fairness, beauty, and success (Gorgonio Brandt, 2022; Pham, 2018). These advertisements typically feature influential pale-skinned public figures and dramatic transformations from darker to lighter skin tones to portray fair skin as aspirational and attainable.

The Philippine beauty industry has continuously reinforced these ideals, creating a robust market for skin-whitening products, with approximately half Filipinas using them (Lopez, 2022; Mendoza, 2014). Glutathione-based products represent a significant segment of this market. Glutathione is believed to lighten complexion through several mechanisms: reducing melanin synthesis by inhibiting tyrosinase activity and modulating melanocyte function; minimizing eumelanin (prevalent in darker skin) while boosting pheomelanin (prevalent in lighter skin); and acting as an antioxidant to manage skin pigmentation (Karunarathna et al., 2024; Sonthalia et al., 2016). However, the long-term efficacy of topical glutathione applications remains inconclusive, and the market lacks robust regulatory oversight (Karunarathna et al., 2024).

Previous research on skin-whitening practices in the Philippines has primarily focused on either colorism's historical development (Cerezo, 2022) or the marketing strategies that perpetuate fair-skin ideals (Peterson, 2022; Gorgonio Brandt, 2022). Studies by Mendoza (2014) and Regencia et al. (2024) have established that professional women constitute the primary demographic of the Philippine skin-whitening market. Additionally, Gabucayan et al. (2022) and Correa et al. (2024) found that among several celebrity attributes (attractiveness, expertise, trustworthiness), physical attractiveness and expertise strongly correlated with consumer purchasing decisions, while trustworthiness showed negligible influence.

Despite this growing body of literature, a significant research gap exists regarding the interrelationship between colorist attitudes, celebrity influence, and glutathione product use, particularly among young Filipina professionals representing a key market segment. While existing studies have documented the prevalence of skin-whitening practices and identified some influencing factors, they have not adequately examined how young professional

women navigate these influences in their decision-making processes. This study addresses this critical gap by examining whether attitudes toward colorism and celebrity influence significantly correlate with glutathione soap use among young Filipina professionals in Metro Manila, providing insights into how this demographic navigates beauty standards in contemporary Philippine society.

The study is grounded in three theoretical frameworks. Cultivation Theory (Gerbner, 1973) posits that prolonged exposure to media messages shapes viewers' perceptions of reality, making them more likely to adopt similar attitudes. Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977) suggests that individuals acquire behaviors through observing and imitating others, particularly influential figures like celebrities. Intersectional Theory (Crenshaw, 1989) examines how overlapping social identities—such as gender, race, and class—collectively shape experiences of oppression and privilege, providing a framework for understanding how skin tone intersects with other aspects of identity to influence beauty practices.

This research aimed to answer four specific questions:

1. What is the frequency and intensity of glutathione soap use among young Filipina professionals?
2. What are their perceived attitudes toward colorism regarding self-concept, affiliation, attraction, impression formation, and upward mobility?
3. What are their perceptions of the influence of celebrity endorsement based on attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise?
4. How do attitudes toward colorism and celebrity endorsement relate to their glutathione soap use?

By addressing these questions, this study contributes to a more nuanced understanding of how colonial legacies, media influences, and personal agency interact in shaping beauty practices among young professional women in post-colonial contexts, with implications for theoretical development and practical interventions to promote more inclusive beauty standards.

## Methodology

### Research Design

This study employed a quantitative research design to investigate relationships between glutathione soap use (the dependent variable) and two independent variables: attitudes toward colorism and celebrity endorsement influence. This approach facilitated examination of behavior patterns and consumption trends through statistical analysis of survey data, allowing for systematic investigation of the research questions.

### Population and Sampling

The target population comprised Filipina professionals aged 22-35 who resided in Metro Manila and had used glutathione soap for at least six months. Using purposive and snowball sampling techniques, 207 respondents were recruited through glutathione soap and skincare-related Facebook groups. This sample size exceeded the calculated ideal sample size 202, determined using G\*Power with  $\alpha = 0.05$ , power = 0.75, and effect size = 0.18325. Considering the specialized population and response challenges, a power threshold of 0.75 was selected as an appropriate balance between statistical rigor and practical feasibility. Recruitment occurred across multiple Facebook groups related to skincare to minimize potential sampling bias from similar social networks.

### Data Collection Instrument

Data was collected through an online survey questionnaire consisting of three main sections:

1. **Glutathione Soap Use:** Measured frequency (5-point scale from "Infrequent Use" to "Regular Use") and intensity of use (5-point scale from "Minimal Use" to "Heavy Use").
2. **Attitudes Toward Colorism:** A 15-item questionnaire based on the In-Group Colorism Scale (Harvey et al., 2017), with three questions per dimension: Self-Concept, Affiliation, Attraction, Impression Formation, and Upward Mobility. Items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree."

3. **Celebrity Influence:** A 15-item questionnaire adapted from the Source-Credibility Scale (Ohanian, 1990), measuring three dimensions: Attractiveness (five items), Trustworthiness (five items), and Expertise (five items). Items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree."

The instrument's reliability was assessed through a pilot study with 20 respondents who met the sample criteria. Cronbach's Alpha coefficients indicated acceptable internal consistency for each scale: Glutathione Soap Use ( $\alpha = 0.733$ ), Attitudes Toward Colorism ( $\alpha = 0.724$ ), and Celebrity Influence ( $\alpha = 0.702$ ).

### **Data Collection Procedure**

Data collection occurred in February 2025. Participants were provided with study information and required to give informed consent before accessing the questionnaire. The survey was distributed through Facebook groups related to glutathione soap and skincare. To ensure confidentiality, no personally identifiable information was collected, and data was stored securely with access limited to authorized researchers.

### **Data Analysis**

Data analysis proceeded as follows:

1. **Descriptive Statistics:** Calculated median scores for each variable, with qualitative interpretations based on the following standardized criteria:
  - For attitudes toward colorism and celebrity influence: 1-2 = Negative/Weak, 3 = Neutral/Moderate, 4-5 = Positive/Strong
  - For glutathione soap use: 1-2 = Low, 3 = Moderate, 4-5 = High

This standardized scale interpretation was established to ensure consistent variable analysis and facilitate meaningful dimension comparisons.

2. **Correlational Analysis:** Given the ordinal nature of the data, Spearman's rank correlation coefficient ( $\rho$ ) was used to determine relationships between variables. Effect sizes were interpreted using established thresholds: 0.00-0.09 = Trivial, 0.10-0.29 = Small, 0.30-0.49 = Medium, and 0.50-1.00 = Large.
3. **Regression Analysis:** Multiple linear regression was performed to assess the unique contribution of each independent variable to the dependent variable while controlling for other effects. Standardized beta coefficients were reported to enable direct comparison of the relative significance of each variable.

The significance level for all statistical tests was set at  $p \leq 0.05$ .

## **Results**

The study investigated the relationships between glutathione soap use, attitudes toward colorism, and celebrity endorsement influence among young Filipina professionals in Metro Manila. This section presents findings from 207 respondents, organized into four components: glutathione soap usage patterns, attitudes toward colorism, perceptions of celebrity influence, and the relationships between these variables.

### **Level of Glutathione Soap Use**

As shown in Table 1, respondents reported overall moderate glutathione soap use (Mdn = 3). Frequency of use was rated moderate (Mdn = 3), while intensity of use was rated low (Mdn = 2).

*Table 1. Respondents' Level of Glutathione Soap Use (n = 207)*

Glutathione Soap Use	1	2	3	4	5	Median	Interpretation
Frequency	17 (8.2%)	38 (18.4%)	79 (38.2%)	44 (21.3%)	29 (14.0%)	3	Moderate
Intensity	73 (35.3%)	42 (20.3%)	31 (15.0%)	27 (13.0%)	34 (16.4%)	2	Low
Overall						3	Moderate

*Note:* Frequency: 1 = Infrequent Use, 2 = Occasional Use, 3 = Moderate Use, 4 = Frequent Use, 5 = Regular Use; Intensity: 1 = Minimal Use, 2 = Light Use, 3 = Moderate Use, 4 = Generous Use, 5 = Heavy Use; Interpretation: 1-2 = Low, 3 = Moderate, 4-5 = High

A notable finding is the higher percentage of respondents reporting minimal intensity of use (35.3%) compared to other intensity levels, indicating many users may be experimenting with the product rather than fully committing

to it as a primary skincare solution. This measured approach contrasts with such products' often exaggerated marketing claims, suggesting users maintain some skepticism about their effectiveness or necessity.

### ***Perceived Attitudes Toward Colorism***

Table 2 presents respondents' attitudes toward colorism across five dimensions.

*Table 2.* Respondents' Perceived Attitudes Toward Colorism (n = 207)

Dimension	Median	Qualitative Interpretation
<b>Self-Concept</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>Strong</b>
My skin tone is an important part of my self-concept	4	Strong
My skin tone is a big part of my identity	4	Strong
My skin tone affects my self-esteem	3	Moderate
<b>Impression Formation</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>Moderate</b>
There are real differences between light-skinned and dark-skinned people	4	Strong
People with fairer skin tones tend to be more pleasant people to deal with	3	Moderate
You can tell a lot about a person by their skin tone	2	Weak
<b>Affiliation</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>Moderate</b>
The majority of my current friends have the same skin tone as I	4	Strong
Most of my friends tend to have the same fair skin tone	3	Moderate
I am usually uncomfortable being around people who have darker skin tones	2	Weak
<b>Attractiveness</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>Moderate</b>
I prefer a romantic partner who has the same skin tone as me	3	Moderate
A fairer skin tone makes others more attractive	3	Moderate
I prefer light skin over dark skin when choosing romantic interests	2	Weak
<b>Upward Mobility</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>Moderate</b>
Skin tone plays a big part in determining how far you can make it	4	Strong
If you want to get ahead, you have to have a fairer skin tone	3	Moderate
<u>Even if you work hard, your fair skin tone matters most</u>	2	Weak
<b>Overall</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>Moderate</b>

*Note:* Qualitative Interpretation: 1-2 = Weak, 3 = Moderate, 4-5 = Strong

Overall, respondents reported moderate colorist attitudes (Mdn = 3). Self-concept emerged as the strongest dimension (Mdn = 4), indicating that respondents' self-perception is significantly influenced by their skin tone. The other dimensions—impression Formation, Affiliation, Attraction, and Upward Mobility—all received moderate ratings (Mdn = 3).

Notably, 72.5% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that skin tone is important to their self-concept, highlighting how deeply ingrained it is in personal identity formation. However, a surprising pattern emerged when examining individual items: respondents acknowledged the societal impact of skin tone (e.g., 50.3% agreed or strongly agreed that "Skin tone plays a big part in determining how

far you can make it") while showing less personal endorsement of explicitly colorist attitudes (e.g., only 33.8% agreed or strongly agreed that "I prefer light skin over dark skin when choosing romantic interests"). This unexpected discrepancy suggests awareness of colorism's existence in society without necessarily endorsing such beliefs personally.

### **Influence of Celebrity Endorsement**

Table 3 presents respondents' perceptions of celebrity endorsement across three dimensions. Overall, the influence of celebrity endorsement was rated as moderate (Mdn = 3). Attractiveness emerged as the strongest dimension (Mdn = 4), while Trustworthiness and Expertise were rated as moderate (Mdn = 3).

*Table 3. Respondents' Perceived Influence of Celebrity Endorsement (n = 207)*

Dimension	Median	Qualitative Interpretation
<b>Attractiveness</b>		
In general, I see the fair skin tone of celebrity glutathione soap endorsers as attractive	4	Strong
I see them as elegant based on their fair skin tone	4	Strong
I see them as beautiful based on their fair skin tone	4	Strong
I see them as sexy based on their fair skin tone	4	Strong
I see them as classy based on their fair skin tone	3	Moderate
<b>Trustworthiness</b>	3	Moderate
I find them honest in their glutathione soap testimonials	4	Strong
I find them sincere in their glutathione soap testimonies	4	Strong
I find them reliable in their glutathione soap testimonials	3	Moderate
I find them dependable in their glutathione soap testimonials	3	Moderate
In general, I find celebrity glutathione soap endorsers trustworthy	2	Weak
<b>Expertise</b>	3	Moderate
I believe they are qualified as glutathione soap endorsers	4	Strong
I believe they are skilled as glutathione soap endorsers	4	Strong
I believe they are knowledgeable as glutathione soap endorsers	3	Moderate
I believe they are experienced as glutathione soap endorsers	3	Moderate
In general, I believe celebrities have enough expertise as glutathione soap endorsers	2	Weak
<b>Overall</b>	3	Moderate

*Note:* Qualitative Interpretation: 1-2 = Weak, 3 = Moderate, 4-5 = Strong

A striking finding emerged in the analysis of celebrity endorsement-influence. While respondents rated celebrities' general attractiveness highly (62.8% agreed that celebrity endorsers' fair skin is attractive), they simultaneously questioned their qualifications to recommend skincare products. Only 39.6% of respondents agreed that celebrity glutathione soap endorsers are trustworthy (Mdn = 2), and just 44.9% believed celebrities have sufficient expertise in this area (Mdn = 2). This discernment challenges assumptions about

celebrity endorsements' unilateral persuasive power.

### ***The Interplay of Glutathione Soap Use, Attitudes Toward Colorism, and Celebrity Influence***

Table 4 presents the results of the correlational analysis between the independent variables (attitudes toward colorism and celebrity endorsement-influence) and the dependent variable (glutathione soap use).

**Table 4. Correlation of Attitudes Toward Colorism and Celebrity Endorsement with Glutathione Soap Use (n = 207)**

Variables	Spearman's rho (p)	CI 95%	p	Effect Size	Interpretation
Attitudes Toward Colorism and Glutathione Soap Use	-0.001	-0.126 - 0.136	0.986	Trivial	Not Significant
Celebrity Endorsement and Glutathione Soap Use	-0.118	-0.256 - 0.021	0.089	Small	Not Significant

*Note:* Effect Size Interpretation: 0.00-0.09 = Trivial, 0.10-0.29 = Small, 0.30-0.49 = Medium, 0.50-1.00 = Large

This study's most unexpected and significant finding was the absence of meaningful correlations between the variables. The analysis revealed a trivial negative correlation between attitudes toward colorism and glutathione soap use ( $\rho = -0.001$ ,  $p = 0.986$ ), suggesting a negligible relationship. Additionally, a small negative correlation existed between celebrity endorsement and glutathione soap use ( $\rho = -0.118$ ,  $p = 0.089$ ), which approached but did not reach statistical significance.

To further examine these relationships, multiple linear regression analysis was conducted (Table 5). The overall model did not reach statistical significance ( $F(1.342, 0.729) = 1.840$ ,  $p = 0.161$ ) and explained only 1.8% of the variance in glutathione soap use ( $R^2 = 0.018$ ), a remarkably low explanatory power that challenges conventional assumptions about the drivers of skin-whitening product use.

**Table 5. Regression Analysis of Attitudes Toward Colorism and Celebrity Influence with Glutathione Soap Use (n = 207)**

Independent Variables	B	SE B	$\beta$	t	p
(Constant)	3.580	0.498	-	7.190	<0.001
Attitudes Toward Colorism	-7.225E-5	0.110	0.000	-0.001	0.999
Celebrity Influence	-0.209	0.109	-0.133	-1.906	0.058

*Note:*  $R^2 = 0.018$ ,  $F(1.342, 0.729) = 1.840$ ,  $p = 0.161$

Attitudes toward colorism showed a negative but non-significant effect on glutathione soap use ( $B = -7.225E-5$ ,  $t = -0.001$ ,  $p = 0.999$ ). Similarly, celebrity influence exhibited a negative relationship approaching significance ( $B = -0.209$ ,  $t = -1.906$ ,  $p = 0.058$ ), with the highest standardized beta coefficient ( $\beta = -0.133$ ), suggesting a comparatively greater potential influence relative to other predictors in the model, though still minimal in absolute terms.

## Discussion

This study reveals complex relationships between glutathione soap use, attitudes toward colorism, and celebrity endorsement influence among young Filipina professionals, challenging conventional assumptions about beauty

product consumption motivations in post-colonial contexts. The findings are organized around four key themes: (1) product usage patterns and consumer pragmatism, (2) colorism awareness and identity formation, (3) celebrity influence and consumer discernment, and (4) theoretical implications with broader societal implications.

### **Product Usage Patterns and Consumer Pragmatism**

The moderate frequency ( $Mdn = 3$ ) but low intensity ( $Mdn = 2$ ) of glutathione soap use suggests a pragmatic rather than enthusiastic adoption pattern among young Filipina professionals. This measured approach significantly departs from the often-exaggerated efficacy

claims in product marketing and indicates consumer skepticism despite product incorporation into regular routines. A notable 35.3% of respondents reported minimal intensity of use, suggesting experimental rather than committed product engagement. This finding aligns with Karunaratna et al.'s (2024) conclusion that while glutathione poses minimal risks when skin-whitening, its long-term efficacy through topical applications remains scientifically inconclusive.

The findings challenge Mendoza's (2014) characterization of Philippine skin-whitening consumers as uncritically accepting of marketing claims. Unlike Mendoza's observation that consumers generally find whitening products effective (69.1%) despite limited awareness of potential risks, our study reveals a more cautious consumer approach characterized by moderate frequency but deliberately limited intensity of use. This suggests an evolution in consumer sophistication where young professional women maintain agency in their product consumption decisions despite pervasive marketing.

### ***Colorism Awareness and Identity Formation***

The results demonstrate a sophisticated relationship between self-concept and colorist attitudes among young Filipina professionals. The strong association between skin tone and self-concept ( $Mdn = 4$ ) confirms the profound impact of historical colonial influences on Filipino beauty standards documented by Hall (2001) and Doran (1993), who traced the valorization of Western physical features through the Spanish colonial legacy. However, the moderate ratings for other colorism dimensions indicate a nuanced position that recognizes skin tone's social significance without necessarily endorsing discriminatory colorist beliefs.

This finding parallels Elmi's (2024) observation that women of color often acknowledge societal beauty standards while personally embracing more inclusive concepts of beauty. The significant disparity between respondents' recognition of colorism's societal impact (50.3% agreed skin tone affects career advancement) and their endorsement of colorist preferences (only 33.8% preferred lighter skin

in romantic partners) suggests an emerging critical consciousness that echoes Cerezo's (2022) observation of changing aesthetic standards and increased agency among Filipinas in contemporary Philippine society.

This cognitive dissonance between acknowledging systemic colorism while rejecting personal colorist beliefs represents an important advancement beyond what Reyes (2020) observed in her semiotic analysis of skin lightening in the Philippines. While Reyes identified the cultural contradictions embedded in skin-whitening practices, our findings suggest an active negotiation process in which young professional women distinguish between recognizing systemic discrimination and their personal value systems.

### ***Celebrity Endorsement-Influence and Consumer Discernment***

The study reveals a selective, discriminating response to celebrity endorsements that challenges conventional marketing wisdom. The strong influence of celebrities' attractiveness ( $Mdn = 4$ ) aligns with research by Gorgonio Brandt (2022) and Pham (2018), who highlighted the prevalence and persuasive visual impact of pale-skinned celebrities in skin-whitening advertisements. However, the moderate ratings for trustworthiness and expertise, with only 39.6% considering celebrity endorsers trustworthy and 44.9% believing celebrities have sufficient expertise, indicate a significant level of consumer skepticism.

This discernment supports and extends Gabucayan et al.'s (2022) finding that while physical attractiveness influences consumer perceptions, trustworthiness has minimal impact on purchasing decisions. Our results suggest that young Filipina professionals distinguish between appreciating celebrities' aesthetic appeal and accepting their product endorsements as credible, a level of marketing literacy not previously documented in the Philippine context. This challenges the conventional marketing assumption that celebrity influence translates directly into consumer adoption, suggesting that consumers can admire celebrity appearance while maintaining critical distance from their product recommendations.

### **Theoretical Implications and Alternative Explanations**

Perhaps most significantly, the correlational analysis revealed minimal relationships between the variables studied, with the regression model explaining only 1.8% of the variance in glutathione soap use. The trivial correlation between attitudes toward colorism and glutathione soap use ( $\rho = -0.001$ ) directly contradicts findings by Reyes (2020), which emphasized colorism's strong influence on consumers' personal skincare choices. Similarly, the small negative correlation between celebrity influence and glutathione soap use ( $\rho = -0.118$ ) challenges conventional marketing assumptions about celebrity endorsement efficacy.

These correlation patterns have significant theoretical implications for understanding beauty practices in post-colonial contexts. First, they challenge the explanatory power of Cultivation Theory (Gerbner, 1973) in this context, as prolonged exposure to media beauty standards does not directly influence product usage behavior. Cultivation Theory fails to account for consumers' ability to evaluate media messages rather than passively absorbing them critically. Second, they suggest limitations in Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977) when applied to beauty product consumption, as observation of celebrity behavior does not strongly predict imitation through product adoption. This theory underestimates the complex cognitive processing before imitation occurs, particularly among educated consumers.

The findings more strongly align with Intersectional Theory (Crenshaw, 1989), suggesting that young Filipina professionals navigate complex intersections of identity, recognizing systemic colorism without fully internalizing it in their product choices. However, even this theoretical framework requires modification to account for the significant agency demonstrated by participants in navigating beauty standards.

Given the minimal explanatory power of the studied variables, alternative factors that might influence glutathione soap use among this demographic include:

1. **Health and skincare benefits beyond whitening:** Glutathione's antioxidant properties and potential benefits for overall skin health may motivate use independent of colorist attitudes.
2. **Peer influence and social networks:** Direct recommendations from trusted peers may supersede media influences and personal attitudes toward colorism.
3. **Product accessibility and marketing exposure:** Frequent in-store promotions, product accessibility, and habitual purchasing patterns might influence usage regardless of underlying attitudes.
4. **Experimentation with trending products:** The desire to try popular skincare innovations may drive more usage patterns than deeply held skin tone beliefs.
5. **Status signaling beyond skin tone:** Using premium or trendy skincare products may serve as class markers or signals of sophistication independent of their skin-whitening effects.

These potential alternative explanations merit further investigation to develop a more comprehensive understanding of beauty product usage in post-colonial contexts.

### **Broader Societal Implications**

These findings demonstrate that young Filipina professionals exercise greater agency in navigating beauty standards than previously recognized in the literature, which concurs with studies by Correa et al. (2024) and Neves et al. (2023). While acknowledging historical and cultural forces that have shaped Filipino beauty ideals, these women maintain critical distance from colorist narratives in their personal product choices. This conclusion indicates an evolution in how young Filipinas reconcile traditional beauty standards with emerging values of diversity and self-acceptance in the post-colonial Philippine context.

The results suggest that conventional marketing strategies for skin-whitening products may lose efficacy with educated, professional consumers. The disconnect between attitudes

toward colorism and actual glutathione soap use suggests that anti-colorism campaigns focusing solely on changing beliefs may have a limited impact on product consumption patterns. Similarly, the negative correlation between celebrity influence and product use challenges the effectiveness of celebrity endorsements for this demographic. This indicates the need for more sophisticated, transparent marketing approaches that address practical motivations beyond skin lightening and acknowledge consumer discernment.

## Conclusion

This study investigated the relationship between glutathione soap use and two potential influencing factors—attitudes toward colorism and celebrity influence—among young Filipina professionals in Metro Manila. The findings revealed moderate glutathione soap use characterized by moderate frequency but low intensity, moderate colorist attitudes with strong skin tone-related self-concept, and moderate celebrity influence with strong perceived attractiveness but more skeptical views of celebrity trustworthiness and expertise.

The most significant finding was the absence of meaningful correlations between attitudes toward colorism, celebrity influence, and glutathione soap use, with the regression model explaining only 1.8% of the variance in product use. This challenges conventional assumptions about the drivers of beauty product consumption in post-colonial contexts and portrays young Filipina professionals as discerning consumers who navigate beauty standards with greater agency than previously recognized.

These results have important implications for the skincare industry, public health education, and sociological understanding of evolving beauty standards. They suggest that addressing colorism requires approaches beyond changing consumer behavior or beliefs, including broader sociocultural initiatives promoting diverse beauty standards and educational interventions that foster positive identity formation independent of physical appearance.

## Recommendation for Future Research

Future research should investigate the alternative factors potentially driving glutathione soap use identified in this study, such as health benefits beyond whitening, peer influence, product accessibility, and status signaling. Methodologically, a mixed methods approach incorporating qualitative interviews could provide deeper insights into the cognitive processes underlying the apparent disconnect between colorist attitudes and product use. Longitudinal studies tracking changes in attitudes and consumption patterns over time would also enhance understanding of how young Filipina professionals navigate evolving beauty standards.

Comparative studies across different socio-economic groups and age cohorts within Philippine society could also illuminate how education, class, and generational differences influence the relationship between colorist attitudes and beauty practices. Cross-cultural comparisons with other post-colonial contexts would enrich theoretical frameworks for global understanding of colorism's complex manifestations.

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