

Whiteness as Beauty

A critical analysis of South Korean tone-up cream and sunscreen advertorials

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ABSTRACT

Abstract: Do online shopping advertorials for whitening skincare products in South Korea perpetuate a racial hierarchy wherein whiteness is maintained as an ideal beauty standard? If so, how is this hierarchy articulated and reinforced with words and images? Adding a level of nuance to earlier research, my project undertakes a critical feminist discourse analysis method to examine 19 skincare advertorials on the South Korean beauty e-commerce site, Olive Young Global. This study breaks new ground by taking an inductive analysis approach to examining these advertorials to produce findings comparable to similar studies in other Asian countries. Thus, it works to confirm the overall message being communicated: that these products are sold as the key to a woman's quest for a white beauty ideal. This research will develop themes based on the exploration of these advertorials with some guidance from existing literature. The globalization of beauty promotes a falsely universal white(ned) woman as a beauty ideal, and this project evidences a nuanced analysis of the lexical choices and images employed to promote the idea that whiteness equates with beauty. This critical feminist discourse analysis provides insight into how a racial hierarchy is reinforced through mass media and how the exclusion of racialized women from spaces intended to empower all women reproduces the societal hierarchy among women within the beauty industry.

Introduction

Whitening products, such as tone-up creams and sunscreens, have become increasingly prevalent in the skincare industry in South Korea. These products aim to brighten the consumer's skin to achieve a whiter complexion, and they are often marketed toward women. In this paper, I will analyze skincare advertorials for whitening products on the Olive Young Global website, an online health and beauty store where consumers can purchase Korean products. Through this analysis, I will critically examine the notion of society's beauty ideal and how whiteness is represented in this standard. In doing so, I aim to understand the ways that skincare products perpetuate

a racial hierarchy and maintain power asymmetries between women, creating an environment where whiteness is valued over other identities.

Mass media, specifically advertisements, play a significant role in constructing societal values surrounding beauty. The images used in beauty advertising and the meanings they convey shape beauty ideals and influence individuals to consume goods to achieve these ideals using various products. According to Lazar (2006), beauty products are portrayed as empowering agents in advertisements because they help women achieve a certain beauty standard. Therefore, companies create a product's value by framing it as a tool that helps women attain

this ideal beauty standard. The advertisement of beauty ideals is an important concept to consider when examining the social consequences of this type of media for racialized women because of the implications present within these advertisements.

More specifically, skincare advertisements promoting skin whitening products like tone-up creams and sunscreens are significant to the study of mass media and racialized power imbalances among women because they idealize a characteristic associated with certain racial indicators. It is important to analyze the language used in these advertorials because this examination allows for an analysis of the various meanings underpinning the promotion of skin whitening products. It is also important to ponder the exclusion of racialized women from spaces meant to empower women and the social and political implications brought about by this exclusion. If skincare is presented as an empowering agent that allows women to realize a certain beauty standard, empowerment is conflated with whiteness, perpetuating the racial hierarchy pervasive in political discourse.

Therefore, through this research, I sought to answer the following questions: Do online shopping advertorials for whitening skincare products in South Korea perpetuate a racial hierarchy wherein whiteness is maintained as an ideal beauty standard? If so, how is this hierarchy articulated and reinforced with words and images? Through my research, I found these skincare advertorials conflate whiteness with beauty, and therefore marginalize women with tanned or dark skin, who are portrayed as undesirable, unnatural, and unbeautiful. Products like tone-up creams and sunscreens are promoted as means of achieving the beauty ideal of white skin, and the advertising of these products posits that dark skin warrants correction and improvement to attain this beauty standard. Thus, these skincare advertorials maintain a racial hierarchy, perpetuating the societal exclusion of racialized women and reproducing a societal hierarchy among women.

Literature Review

Postfeminism and Power Femininity

Beauty brands and products embody empowerment in their advertisements because companies present them as the agents of beauty, marketing these products as tools to empower women to achieve their “unrealized beauty potential” (Lazar, 2006, p. 506). This language premises beauty as something women cannot attain without the tools provided to them by beauty brands through the products they advertise.

Additionally, agentive power embodies empowerment through the connection between consumerism and a woman’s self-determination (Lazar, 2006). A woman’s agency to act according to and achieve a standard of beauty is enabled by and derived from her consumption of beauty products (Lazar, 2006). Advertisements reflect this agency through transformative and resistive language and imagery, allowing women to feel they can control their physical appearances using beauty products (Lazar, 2006). Thus, beauty brands advertise this agency as a means of encouraging woman consumers to purchase products to allow them the power to achieve their personal beauty.

The notion of power femininity from the postfeminist perspective is important to consider, especially when examining beauty brands and product advertisements that embody empowerment. Postfeminism can be defined as the belief that full gender equality for women has been accomplished, signalling the end of feminist struggles (Lazar, 2006). Power femininity is derived from this perspective, as signifiers of “emancipation and empowerment” are incorporated into this postfeminist assumption, celebrating an increasingly feminine world (Lazar, 2006, p. 505). The portrayal of beauty products as empowering agents through which women can achieve a beauty ideal encourages a universal standard of beauty. Importantly, this globalization of beauty ideals can only be achieved through the erasure of differences among women from various geographical and cultural contexts (Lazar, 2006). This erasure is present in second-wave feminist theories, which idealize the straight, white, middle-class woman (Lazar, 2006). Beauty brands perpetuate this erasure by advertising a universal modern woman. The

uniformity presented by this woman carries negative implications, especially for women at the intersection of multiple marginalized identities. Therefore, power femininity, empowerment, and globalized beauty ideals communicated through advertising are important considerations for my research as I seek to understand the meanings underpinning advertorials that promote skin whitening products, such as tone-up creams and sunscreens.

Whiteness in Asian Beauty Ideals

Literature on whiteness in Asia is abundant, and many research findings suggest that whiteness is often conflated with beauty in Asian countries. However, before continuing with this discussion of the pervasive colourism in Asia, it is necessary to acknowledge that whiteness as an idealized beauty standard predates contact with the West (Cogeanu, 2015). Without this acknowledgement, this project could become Orientalist, and could suggest Asian cultures are easily influenced by Western consumption. According to Bettache (2020), globalization has transformed the norms of race-based hierarchies to reach new levels, strengthening those pre-existing norms in Asian countries. Therefore, although the idealized beauty standard of white skin existed well before contact with Western countries, the adoption of whiteness as a universal beauty standard began after extensive contact with colonial cultures and their related media forms.

Xie & Zhang (2013) found Chinese culture and advertising aimed at Chinese women emphasize skin beauty, specifically white or light skin tones for women. In Mak's (2007) study, the advertisements examined used a Chinese proverb, *Yi Bai Zhe San Chou* (fair skin can hide facial flaws), to promote whitening skin care products. Whiteness is also presented in advertisements for beauty and skincare products by the models used in these advertisements. The models in the Chinese skin beauty advertisements analyzed in Xie & Zhang's (2013) research had fairer complexions than their American counterparts despite a large demographic of Asian populations naturally possessing darker skin tones. Frith (2005) also found that white women made up the highest proportion

of models in both the local and global magazines analyzed in the study. Chan & Cheng (2012) added to this finding through their study of the portrayal of women in Hong Kong magazine advertisements, which asserted that white women are more often portrayed as the trendy beauty type than their Chinese counterparts. The difference in the value and the frequency of appearances between Asian and white women in these advertisements constitutes a racialized gender hierarchy, where whiteness is positioned as the ideal beauty standard all women should aspire to achieve. Equating whiteness with beauty in skincare advertisements is a common practice, as the research outlined above demonstrates, but the meanings underpinning this practice are not often explored. Many studies discussed earlier used a content analysis framework to examine these advertisements, but I will use a discourse analysis framework to understand the implications of advertisements for skincare products that promote whiteness. I will address the gaps that the existing research presents by analyzing the messages being conveyed by advertorials for skin whitening products, like tone-up creams and sunscreens in South Korea.

The Cultural Impacts of Media on Perceptions of Beauty

Bissell & Chung (2009) measured the media use and preferences of Korean and American college students to examine the impacts of media on the students' perceptions of beauty. The study found that most participants in the study's sample group based their perceptions of beauty on images found in media, like images of celebrities. This finding is interesting in the context of my research because it demonstrates the extent to which individuals are influenced by media imagery. I can expand on these findings through my research. In this study, I will examine advertorials and their meanings to determine cultural understandings of beauty and investigate how individuals perceive race through the promotion of skin whitening products.

Morris (2014) posited that beauty ideals are culture dependent. Their study of the portrayals of women in outdoor advertisements presented different perceptions

of beauty in the six different cultures. Within these six cultures, most of the Asian countries examined, including Hong Kong, Japan, and South Korea, demonstrated similarities in their research results (Morris, 2014). Through my research, I seek to either accept or reject this argument by determining whether the messages underpinning the South Korean skin-whitening advertorials conform to the findings from the studies discussed in this section. The media heavily influences perceptions of beauty, so I will look at both the impact of media and advertorials on perceptions of beauty in terms of skin tone and what these perceptions imply about the differential values we put on race (Bissell & Chung, 2009).

Methodology

Original Source

I analyzed 19 of the advertorials for tone-up creams and sunscreens found on the Olive Young Global website at the time of analysis (March to April 2022). I chose to examine 19 advertorials by searching the term “tone up” on the website and refining my search to sun care, skincare, and makeup products for women. I further narrowed the scope of analysis by only analyzing products that included advertorials on the Olive Young Global website. Thus, the 19 advertorials examined in this project struck a balance between small *n* and large *N* analysis, allowing for generalized results while providing qualitative nuance to the findings. A small *n* study involves analyzing a smaller quantity of advertorials to conduct a deeper examination, while a large *N* study explores more advertorials, which allows for greater generalizability but a less in-depth analysis. Olive Young is the largest and most popular South Korean beauty and health store chain (BeautyTech.jp., 2019). Not only do they sell beauty products like makeup and skincare, they also sell health food and drink products. This broad range allows Olive Young to become an essential part of South Korean individuals’ daily routines, especially women’s routines. Previously, the products the company carried were limited to the Korean market, and international consumers were forced to use other websites like Yesstyle, Stylevana, and Soko Glam to order Korean products. As the chain expanded

their e-commerce market in an international context, the diversity and quantity of consumers have increased. This diversification is interesting to consider when examining the meanings underpinning the advertorials found on the website, as the messages can be conveyed to a larger, more diverse audience.

Advertorials as a Concept

An advertorial, in this context, is an advertisement in the form of editorial content (Gordon, 2022). Advertorials are different from traditional advertisements because although they appear to be objective pieces of content, they are advertisements for particular brands or products (Gordon, 2022). Thus, although these advertorials appear to be informational and distinct from advertisements in that they provide a semblance of objectivity, there are subjective meanings conveyed by this content.

Data Analysis Framework

I used an inductive approach to this study’s research to analyze the images and texts found in the advertorials and determine the meanings these advertorials present. Based on my preliminary literature search, there were some assertions and implications that I could apply to my research; hence I drew on Lazar’s frameworks to do so. However, there was not a clear discourse analysis framework for my research topic, so I used inductive research to develop some themes of my own. A discourse analysis framework involves taking a qualitative approach to examine beyond the tangible details in a source and instead analyzing the meanings the source conveys. Discourse analysis contrasts its quantitative counterpart, content analysis, in that content analysis counts the appearances of certain entities or concepts in media texts, and it provides measurable results. This discourse analysis reveals the construction and language of media texts that consequently shape social representations of political actors, issues, and phenomena. Therefore, although content analysis is more objective, discourse analysis allows the analyst to consider the context surrounding the issue being researched. By analyzing these sources on my own, I created research that relied on me as the observer to interpret the meanings of the sources being examined, but this approach provides a more thorough and holistic explanation of my findings than a purely quantitative approach would.

I used a combination of Lazar's (2007) feminist discourse analysis and Lazar's (2006) concept of power femininity to guide my data analysis. Lazar's (2007) feminist critical discourse analysis examined the gendered social orders and power asymmetries in political discourse. I extended this framework to my research by examining the social orders and asymmetric power relations among women through the intersection of race and gender.

These are the guiding questions I asked when analyzing the skincare advertorials:

1. What kinds of models are being used for the products, and what does the choice of models mean in terms of beauty ideals?
2. Who is the target audience of these advertorials?

Lazar (2006) posited that power femininity is presented in advertisements for beauty brands in four ways, all of which are connected through the notion of empowerment. I took this framework and applied it to my research by analyzing these advertorials to determine the meanings underpinning the promotion of these skincare products.

Thus, the questions guiding my analysis from this framework were:

1. What is being communicated through these advertorials?
2. What sorts of terms are being used to describe the beauty ideals or the end goals these products will bring about?

I expected to find that the advertising of skin whitening products in South Korea presents these products as tools to achieve the beauty ideal, which conforms to characteristics associated with whiteness. I also expected to find that beauty brands present whiteness as the universal standard of beauty, signalling that women need to incorporate these skin whitening products into their routines to achieve this ideal beauty standard. As Mak (2007) found, women in China favour white skin and use products to achieve this beauty ideal associated with purity. Dark skin, therefore, is associated with being ugly and of lower socioeconomic status (Mak, 2007). Therefore, a woman's beauty and value are derived from her complexion, and white skin is conflated with beauty and status.

I expected to find that a racial hierarchy underpins the meanings presented through the advertorials on the Olive Young Global website. Findings from Chung & Bissell (2009) suggested South Korean college students ranked white women with stereotypically white characteristics higher than those deviating from this ideal when the students were asked to use their conceptions of beauty to rank the women. I then expected to find that the products and their advertising on the Olive Young Global website continue to exclude racialized women from spaces intended to empower all women, an exclusion which reproduces the societal hierarchy among women within the skincare and beauty industry.

Findings and Discussion

Terminology Translations

Some of this terminology may not have been translated with complete accuracy from the Korean terms used on the website. However, I used Google Translate to translate keywords I found and, in the instances where this translation was not adequate, I relied on my knowledge of the language to guide further translations. Also, the original Korean terms have been included with their translations to allow Korean speakers to understand the terms better and non-Korean speakers to seek more information about the terms.

Korean Models and Korean Women's Beauty Standards

For the most part, these advertorials use Korean women models who fit the Korean beauty standard. This standard is characterized by a fair, dewy, glass-like complexion, double eyelids, a high nose bridge, and red- or pink-tinted lips (Wang, 2022). Overall, the use of these models perpetuates the idea that women should look naturally beautiful, as natural makeup is often perceived to be more attainable than heavier, more noticeable applications (Wang, 2022). However, there are some interesting outliers to note in the examination of who is representing these products and how they define beauty ideals.

The beauty brand Innisfree does not rely heavily on models in advertorials for their Jeju Cherry Blossom Tone-up Cream and Tone Up Watering Sunscreen, but rather relies more on the research and surveys the brand carried out to collect statistics and data about these products and their effectiveness (*Dewy Glow*,

n.d.; *Tone Up Watering*, n.d.). Although there are some pictures of Korean women models who display the characteristics of traditional Korean beauty ideals in the company's advertisements, these advertorials do not use the models to promote beauty ideals as the end goal of the product. The beauty brand SKINFOOD also demonstrates a similar approach, but to a greater extent in that their advertorial uses no models (*SKINFOOD Tomato*, n.d.). The advertorial heavily promotes the tomato ingredient in the product as the whitening element and emphasizes the ultraviolet (UV) protection aspect of the product more than the brightening effect most advertorials promote.

Two companies use celebrity endorsements to allow themselves legitimacy in promoting their products. 9wishes uses a relatively young Korean actress in an embedded YouTube advertisement for both the brand and Olive Young (*9wishes VB Glow*, n.d.; *9wishes VB Ultimate*, n.d.). This actress possesses the characteristics of traditional Korean beauty ideals, so this advertorial is not a big outlier in that sense. AGE 20's uses a Korean Olympic volleyball player, Kim Hee-Jin, as a model for their product alongside a Korean woman model who displays traditional Korean beauty standards (*AGE20's Clear*, n.d.). Kim Hee-Jin plays sports and has short hair, so she is not traditionally feminine like the other model, but the athlete still maintains the beauty standard in that she has fair skin, double eyelids, and a tall nose bridge.

Therefore, from this analysis of the models used in these advertorials, it can be seen that there is a clear promotion of traditional Korean beauty standards, and this promotion is especially clear when looking at the complexions of these models. These companies use marketing to suggest that their products will help consumers achieve these beauty standards, thereby placing whiteness on a pedestal as a beauty ideal to be attained.

Young Korean Women as the Target Audience

For the most part, these advertorials seem to be targeted toward Korean women in their 20s and 30s, as most of the models appear to be in this age range and the reviews embedded in these advertorials are from Korean women who fall within this range as well. However,

considering that these advertorials are found on the Olive Young Global website, an e-commerce website that ships to many countries, these products could be marketed toward women more broadly around the world. From this conclusion, we can also hypothesize that these advertorials are marketed toward Korean women living in foreign countries where it is hard to access Korean makeup and skincare products. However, it is difficult to determine whether these factors contribute to the perpetuation of a racial hierarchy through the marketing of skin whitening products, like tone-up creams and sunscreens.

Some advertorials specify their target audiences through the skincare needs they claim to address as well as the desired outcomes advertised. Some of these claims are problematic in that they contribute to the conflation of whiteness with beauty. For example, the advertorial for the SOME BY MI V10 Vitamin Tone-Up Cream recommends the product for those who do not want to be "shy among people in a travel group or night-sleeping [*sic*] work meetings" (*SOME BY MI V10*, n.d.). Further, the brand's advertorial for its Rose Intensive Tone-Up Cream claims that the product is suitable for those whose "[boyfriends come] suddenly," or for those who are concerned about "[their] pigmented skin" (*SOME BY MI Rose*, n.d.). These claims are harmful to women because they demonstrate that if women have dark skin, they should be embarrassed or should not feel confident showing their natural skin to their peers. Claims like these are especially problematic for young girls in school, as the last product is directly recommended for use by this demographic, which allows these girls to equate whiteness with beauty from a young age.

Advertorial Terminology for Beauty Ideals and Results

Natural Beauty

The concept of “natural beauty” is heavily prevalent in these advertorials, appearing in 14 of the 19 I have studied in my research. This concept is often used in the context of the advertorial promoting the product as a means for consumers to achieve lighter skin complexions such that these complexions look natural, as though there was no product used. For example, the colorgram advertorial for the Rosy Tone Up Cream tells consumers that the cream will produce a “better version of [consumers’] natural skin tone” (“원래 내 피부인 듯 자연스럽게”) (*colorgram Cream 50ml*, n.d.), and the advertorial for the brand’s Rosy Tone Up Cream Sun demonstrates the same language through the use of phrases like “as if [consumers] are born with [flawless skin]” (“타고난 듯 자연스럽게”) (*colorgram Cream Sun*, n.d.). Another example is the VB Ultimate Tone Up Cream from 9wishes, which claims their product will lighten users’ skin so that the lightened result looks “as if it is [the consumers’] own skin” (“내 피부인 듯”) (*9wishes VB Glow*, n.d.).

The concept of natural beauty used in these advertorials suggests two things. First, it further emphasizes the Korean beauty standard of natural-looking makeup, as women are expected to wear makeup such that it is not dramatic and obvious they are wearing makeup (Wang, 2022). Also, this concept suggests that light skin is natural, and therefore dark skin is unnatural. For Black and Brown women, and even those who have tanner skin tones, naturally light skin is impossible, and therefore these women are situated outside of the beauty ideals. This dichotomy between light natural and dark unnatural skin tones suggests that there is a racial hierarchy embedded within these advertorials that conflates whiteness with natural beauty.

Lively and Youthful Skin Appearance

The terms “lively” and “youthful” appear in a number of the advertorials on the Olive Young Global website, as these words can be found in six of the 19 advertorials analyzed in this study. Most advertorials claim to “recharge the liveliness” (“생기 충전”) (*colorgram Fixing*

Cushion, n.d.) of the skin or make the skin appear “full of life” (“칙칙낫빛 새로그침”) (*peripera Milk*, n.d.), as depicted in the colorgram Rosy Tone Up Sun Cushion and the peripera Milk Blur Tone Up Cream advertorials, respectively (*colorgram Sun cushion*, n.d.; *peripera Milk*, n.d.). Further, some advertorials claim they will make consumers’ skin textures “smooth and tight” (“탱글 촉촉”) (*colorgram Cream 50ml*, n.d.) and give skin a “youthful tone” (“순수 피부”) (*WAKEMAKE Vegan*, n.d.), as seen in the colorgram Rosy Tone Up Cream Sun and WAKEMAKE Vegan Clean Tone Up Sun Cream advertorials, respectively.

The use of the terms “liveliness” and “youthful” conflates white skin with youth and the energy associated with this era of a woman’s life. These terms are problematic in that they portray the skin tone of youth as white, and this white ideal is portrayed as something women should attempt to achieve through the consumption of certain products. This advertising can especially harm young girls, as they are being marketed as the standard for whiteness and beauty, and if they do not fit within this standard, they also are encouraged to use these products to achieve the light skin suitable for their age.

Skin Correction and Improvements

The use of these products to correct and improve the skin, or even make it appear as though the woman is using a filter or Photoshop in real life, is also a prevalent theme in the advertorials I have analyzed in my research, as it is evident in six of the 19 advertorials studied. In the AGE 20’s advertorial for the Clear Glass Essence Tone up Pack, the company claims that the product will provide a “retouching correction effect” (“보정효과”) (*AGE 20’s Clear*, n.d.) as if the user has received retouching like they would when having photos taken at a studio. Further, the brand Glint promotes their Tone Up Cream by claiming that using the product will make you look “as if you corrected your skin with a selfie filter” (“셀카 필터로 보정한 듯”) (*Glint Tone Up*, n.d.).

These terms perpetuate a harmful narrative: that women should try to correct their skin tones if they have dark complexions either through products or digital enhancements. These digital enhancements, like Photoshop or selfie filters, are portrayed as making a woman more beautiful by making her skin whiter.

Moreover, these advertorials claim to allow women to experience this digital enhancement in real life through the products the advertorials promote. Therefore, this theme demonstrates the racial hierarchy wherein whiteness is conflated with the beauty ideal and skin whitening products are promoted as means to achieve this ideal.

Other Promoted Aspects of the Products

There are notable aspects of the products promoted in these advertorials other than the ones studies so far. While they may not be directly linked with the racial hierarchy I am seeking to examine through these advertorials, these features bring up interesting considerations as they contribute to the legitimacy these products are granted in the beauty industry.

Mask- and Smudge-Proof Products with Long-Lasting Effects

The theme of mask-proof products with long-lasting effects was most significant in my analysis of additional benefits promoted by the advertorials, appearing in 11 of the 19 that I examined in my research. Mask-wearing has been common in many Asian countries since before the practice became common worldwide, and South Korea is no exception, but the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic has brought about a new wave of beauty brand marketing; individuals are now looking for products that can withstand hours of mask-wearing (La Cosmétique, 2021). This theme relates to the concept discussed earlier: how some brands market products toward women who want to feel confident on overnight trips or vacations. A long-lasting, mask- and smudge-proof tone-up cream or sunscreen allows women to keep their toned up skin for longer periods, reinforcing the value of lighter skin complexions. This value is taken to the extreme as women are encouraged to mask their true skin tones with these products even when sleeping or away from home for a long time. Therefore, the benefit these advertorials are promoting reinforces the racial hierarchy wherein whiteness is conflated with beauty, and dark skin tones are shamed.

UV Protection

This study noted that UV protection was a significant benefit many advertorials promoted, as it was found in eight of the 19 advertorials I analyzed in my research. If they were not explicitly sunscreen products, most of the tone-up creams found on the Olive Young Global website contained SPF in some form, and this aspect was emphasized in the advertorials examined. Although the UV protection benefits of these products may not directly contribute to demonstrating a racial hierarchy wherein whiteness is conflated with beauty, this aspect exemplifies how these companies legitimize the use of these products. Sunscreen is an important step in many individuals' skincare routines, as UV damage can lead to an increased risk of skin cancer (Chen, n.d.). Therefore, by incorporating UV protection benefits into these products, these companies necessitate the consumption and use of these products in women's beauty regimens, which can further perpetuate the racial hierarchy these products maintain.

Conclusion

Although there were some interesting outliers to consider in the research process, the analysis of these tone-up cream and sunscreen advertorials warrants an acceptance of my hypothesis that a racial hierarchy is perpetuated through this advertising. Whiteness is conflated with beauty and dark or tanned women are further marginalized through this form of marketing, as they are seen as undesirable, unnatural, and simply not beautiful.

The advertising of skin whitening products in South Korea presents the use of these products as a means of achieving the beauty ideal wherein whiteness is valued as beautiful and desirable. The terms used to describe the products in these advertorials associate positive connotations with lighter skin tones, using verbiage like "bright" and "lively." Thus, dark and tanned skin complexions are portrayed as undesirable and unnatural for women. Also, whiteness has been presented as a universal standard of beauty, suggesting that for women to achieve the ideal beauty standard, they must incorporate these tone-up creams and sunscreens into their beauty routines. The use of language like "skin correction" and "improvement" reinforces the harmful

narrative that dark skin should be corrected and improved to achieve a whiter, more beautiful complexion. Further, a racial hierarchy underpins the meanings presented in the advertorials on the Olive Young Global website, as whiteness is promoted as superior to darker and tanned complexions. Therefore, these advertorials suggest that a woman's beauty is derived from her skin tone. The concept of "natural beauty" prevalent in many of the advertorials analyzed suggests that darker complexions are unnatural, and once women lighten their skin with these products, these women will achieve "better versions" of themselves. Finally, the products and their marketing on the Olive Young Global website perpetuate the exclusion of racialized women from spaces, like the beauty industry, that are intended to empower all women. Therefore, this exclusion reproduces the societal hierarchy among women within the beauty industry.

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Appendix

The following are the advertorials used for this study. All sources were originally found on the Olive Young website; some advertorials used in this study that have been removed from the Olive Young website have been found on other beauty brand websites and cited accordingly.

AGE 20's Clear Glass Essence Tone up Pack (including refill) (*Age 20's clear*, n.d.)

CLIO Pre-Step Peach Tone Up Primer (*Pre-step peach*, n.d.)

colorgram Rosy Tone Up Cream 50ml (*Colorgram cream 50ml*, n.d.)

colorgram Rosy Tone Up Cream Sun (*Colorgram cream sun*, n.d.)

colorgram Rosy Tone Up Fixing Cushion SPF50+/PA++++ (discontinued) (*Colorgram fixing cushion*, n.d.)

colorgram Rosy Tone Up Sun Cushion (*Colorgram sun cushion*, n.d.)

Dr. G Brightening Cover Tone Up Sun Cushion 15g (*Dr. G*, n.d.)

espoir Water Splash Cica Tone Up Sun Cream SPF50+PA++++ 60ml (*Espoir water*, n.d.)

Glint Tone Up Cream 45mL (*Glint tone up*, n.d.)

innisfree Jeju Cherry Blossom Tone-up Cream 50ml (*Dewy glow*, n.d.)

innisfree Tone Up Watering Sunscreen SPF50+ PA++++ 50ml (*Tone up watering*, n.d.)

9wishes VB Glow Tone Up Cream 30ml (*9wishes VB glow*, n.d.)

9wishes VB Ultimate Tone Up Cream 30ml (*9wishes VB ultimate*, n.d.)

numbuzin No. 3 Porcelain Base-skip Tone Up Beige 50mL SPF50+ PA++++ (*Numbuzin no. 3*, n.d.)

peripera Milk Blur Tone Up Cream 60ml (*Peripera milk*, n.d.)

SKINFOOD Tomato Tone Up Sun Cream (*SKINFOOD tomato*, n.d.)

SOME BY MI Rose Intensive Tone-Up Cream 50ml (*SOME BY MI Rose*, n.d.)

SOME BY MI V10 Vitamin Tone-Up Cream 50ml (discontinued) (*SOME BY MI V10*, n.d.)

WAKEMAKE Vegan Clean Tone Up Sun Cream SPF50+/PA++++ 50mL (*WAKEMAKE Vegan*, n.d.)