

KWAME NKRUMAH UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

COLLEGE OF HEALTH SCIENCES

FACULTY OF ALLIED HEALTH SCIENCE

DEPARTMENT OF NURSING

DIPLOMA PROGRAMMES



**AN EXPORARORY STUDY AT NMTC, BEREKUM ON THE PRIVELENCE OF SKIN
BLEACHING AMONG NURSING AND MIDWEFERY STUDENTS OF DIFFERENT
AGE CATEGORIES FOR BOTH MALES AND FEMALES**

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HOLY FAMILY NURSING AND MIDWIFERY TRAINING COLLEGE, BEREKUM





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DECLARATION

We thereby declare that this submission is our work towards the diploma in midwifery and that, to the best of our knowledge; it contains neither material previously published by another person nor material which has been accepted for the award of the diploma in the university except where the acknowledgement has been made in the text.

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ABSTRACT

The study aimed to explore the prevalence of skin bleaching at NMTC, Berekum among nursing and midwifery student of different age category for both males and females. A quota sampling technique and a simple random sampling method was used to collect in-depth information for the study. The sample population was obtained using a convenient sampling technique. A total of 50 students were sampled for the study. The data for the study was collected by administering the questionnaire to the participants. The study found that the majority (90%) of respondents had heard of skin bleaching before. Out of the total respondents who have heard of skin bleaching before (80%), heard from their family, and (12%) had their source of information from friends, and (8%) indicated they heard about skin bleaching from the media. The study recommended that there should be a ban by the government on skin bleaching agents, and again health care providers should give health education on the health risk of skin bleaching. This will go a long way in reducing incidents of false information that sometimes have devastating psycho-social effects on students with regards to skin bleaching.

The study concluded that, skin bleaching has a high health risk on the individuals that practice it and hence, it should be discouraged.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We would like to extend our deepest gratitude and praise to the Almighty God for providing us with strength and knowledge for this study.

Our deepest appreciation also goes to our supervisor, for her constructive criticisms, objective guidance, and direction for the study and the entire staff of the College for their support throughout the study.

We are grateful to all the respondents for their contributions and efforts. Without them, the study would not be possible.

Finally, our sincere appreciation goes to the authors and publishers of pieces of literature used in the study. Thank you all and God bless you.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

According to World Health Organization (2021), defines skin bleaching as the intentional alteration of one's natural skin colour to one relatively if not substantially, lighter in colour, through the use of chemical skin lighting agents, either manufactured, homemade, or the combination of the two.

Skin bleaching is a depigmentation treatment to remove dark spots caused by aging, blemishes, disease, hormone changes and the sun. It is not intended to lighten your overall appearance for the sake of beauty. The key to finding the right lightening tool for your face is to understand the difference between a doctor-administered bleaching system and lightening and brightening products you can use at home. When used correctly, bleaching and lightening products and procedures can provide relief for people who are unhappy with their skin's appearance. (Lisa Finn, 2019)

Skin whitening is the practice of using substances, mixtures, or physical treatments to lighten skin color. Skin whitening treatments work by reducing the content of melanin of the skin. Many agents have been shown to be effective in skin whitening; some have beneficial side effects (e.g.: are antioxidants, nutrients, or decrease the risk of some types of cancer); some are a significant risk to health (for example, those containing mercury). (Wang, et al., 2021)

The Europeans penetration into the land of Africa did not only see the acculturation and proselytizing of Christianity and democracy but also saw the wanton looting of the rich mineral

resources of Africa, slave trade, breakdown of African values, and even the portrayal of black skin as inferior.

Many Africans have for time immemorial suffered the constant abuse of being referred to as 'monkeys'. The worst culprits of such abuse are our sportsmen and women who ply their trade in Europe and other parts of the world. Many African players have in the past reduced to tears by slurs from on-field opponents and spectators. Players like Mario Balotelli, Kelvin Prince Boateng, Samuel Eto, Julio Cesar, Sule Muntari and many others have had their fair share of this racist taunts.(Wang, et al., 2021)

Owing to the constant racial discrimination that many Africa are often subjected to, there has been a mad-rush by many Africans to look just like the white. Many Africans therefore apply toxic creams that bleach their skins. This craze for a lighter skin is dangerously recording an alarming proportion of which African women are the worst culprits (Mohammed, 2020).

In Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa and Togo, 25%, 77%, 27%, 35% and 59% of women, respectively, are reported to use skin lightening products on a regular basis. In 2020, nearly 40% of women surveyed in China (Province of Taiwan and Hong Kong Special Administrative Region), Malaysia, the Philippines and the Republic of Korea reported using skin lighteners.

In India, 61% of the dermatological market consists of skin lightening products. (WHO, 2022)

In Africa however, the practice of skin whitening is traditionally associated with colonial oppression. Those who practice skin whitening were we and are condemned as self-hating dupes, suffering from inferiority complex. Consequently those engaging in this practice often do so covertly.

A recent study by the University of Cape Town suggests that one woman in three in South Africa bleaches her skin. The reasons for this are as varied as the cultures in this country but most people say they use skin-lighteners because they want "white skin". (Pumza Fihlani, 2018)

“A study carried out in two cities in Burkina Faso (West Africa) reported the use of skin bleaching agents in 39.5% - 49.2% of women in Quagadougou. The size of the problem in Ghana is enormous and it cut across sex, age, group and class or professional groupings. Anecdotal evidence that as many as 50% - 60% of adult Ghanaian women have at one time or other bleached or used creams with the aim of bleaching or unknowingly. About 30% are currently bleaching. For men it is estimated that 5% have bleached before or still the process”. (Robinson, 2019)

According to the 2018 Ghana Health service report, approximately 30% of Ghanaian women and 5% of Ghanaian men were actively bleaching. This statistic has shot-up, and currently 50%- 60% of adult Ghanaian women are currently or have at one time or the other actively used bleaching agents.

1.2 Statement of Problem

As far back as 2018, a survey indicated that skin bleaching was at the peak of about 75% in Ghana and Nigeria and the worst of it all is that, education in these two countries was at its lowest. A survey in Accra between 2020 and 2021 revealed that about 26.6% of the population practice skin bleaching. These people end up by developing some problem in their bodies such skin pigmentation, liver and kidney damage. This has made it necessary to conduct thus research to assess the prevalence of skin bleaching among student nurses of Holy Family Nursing and Midwifery Training College – Berekum.

1.3 Objectives of the study

1.3.1 Main Objectives

The goal of the study is to know the factors that influence people to practice skin bleaching, its prevalence on the population especially the youth and also to find out their level of understanding with regards to skin bleaching.

1.3.2 Specific objectives

The study in tends to;

1. To assess the knowledge of the student nurse on skin bleaching
2. To determine the factors that can contributes to people involving themselves in skin bleaching activities.
3. To explore measures that can be used to prevent skin bleaching practices.
4. To determine the perception of skin bleaching
5. To determine the prevalence of skin bleaching

1.4 Operational definition of terms

Youth: any young adult between 13 – 30 years.

Skin: the body's outer which protects against heat and light, injury and infection.

Skin bleaching: the practice of using substances, mixing, or physical treatment to lighten the skin color whether intentional or unintentional.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

The literature reviews on skin bleaching makes this research a quality work piece. It form the details of the information laid out in the research work and helps produce a clear understanding of the topic. Below are the headings which are going to be discussed under the chapter.

1. The level of knowledge on skin bleaching
2. The factors that contribute to people involving in skin bleaching activities.
3. Measures that can be used to prevent skin bleaching practices

According to Serena (2019), skin bleaching is when you use a chemical agent to reduce blemishes, age spots, freckles, or other skin conditions. The popular and controversial practice of skin bleaching also called skin lightening, skin toning, and skin whitening, is the process of using homemade concoctions, dermatological or cosmetic products to remove melanin from the skin (Charles, 2018). These creams and products work to reduce the pigment in your skin which allows for a more even skin tone. Skin bleaching is also a practice where women (and some men) use various forms of skin whitening products in order to make their skin appear as white as possible. Bleaching of normal skins by black people is practiced by diverse communities worldwide. It involves the use of a wide range of products applied to specific or wide spread areas of the skin. The main function is to lighten normal light skin. This practice is seen at all ages and in both men and women, however some studies indicate a much higher prevalence in the young unmarried and educated women.

Unfortunately, there are many adverse reactions which occur as a consequence of this practice. According to the WHO 2022, the main adverse effect of the inorganic effect of the inorganic

mercury contained in skin lightening soaps and creams is kidney damage, but the chemical may also cause skin rashes, skin discoloration and scarring, as well as a reduction in the skin's resistance to bacterial and fungal infections. This ranges from a paradoxical increase in skin pigmentation to severe systemic problems such as mercury poisoning. There are several factors contributing to and perpetuating this behaviour: black people are at higher risks of pigmentary disorder of the skin.

This is a shame that such a misconception of self-identity issues persist within certain members of the black community. This in addressing this practice of skin bleaching, we need to undertake a parallel discourse about both the dangers and also issue of racial self-identity. Furthermore, it is also important to explain to individuals that individuals that diverse skin types have developed an adoption to the natural surroundings. Charles, (2018)

2.1 Knowledge on skin bleaching.

Majority of the users of skin whitening cosmetics made the discovery themselves aided by either their peers or by patent medicine vendors. Others were introduced to skin whitening by health workers, family members and the media. The usefulness of the black color of the skin in terms of protection from the excesses of ultraviolet rays and the harmful effects of skin lightening is largely reported as not satisfactory in a study conducted in Cameroon. According to Rusmadi et al. (2019), about 85% of the respondents among the undergraduate students knew about the active ingredients in skin bleaching agent they use before buying because of safety reasons. Majority, 95%, of them knew about the health effect attributed to skin lightening agents agreeing with the findings in South African study in which 89% respondents having knowledge of adverse effects related to skin lightening agents. Some 61% were able to mention examples of the dangerous ingredients such as mercury and hydroquinone in skin lightening agents. Skin

lightening agents can lead to cancer (35%), skin damage (25%), discoloration (6%) and infections (4%). It was demonstrated that most (83.6%) of high school girls in north-west of Nigeria knew that use of skin whitening agents is a risk factor for cancer. A Research conducted in Malaysia shows that majority of both undergraduates and postgraduates students are aware of the health effects related to skin whitening products. This is consistent with a study in South Africa where 89 per cent of the respondents agree that skin whitening can produce adverse effect to their skin infections (4%). It was demonstrated that most (83.6%) of high school girls in north-west of Nigeria knew that use of skin whitening agents is a risk factor for cancer (Amodu et al, 2019).

Women who have practiced skin bleaching for a long time complained of having bad side effects on their skin thus making their skin thinner and more prone to disorders. Others also talked about having aches or having a reverse effect and which turned their skins black. Some showed how their skins had developed ulcers and were prone to eczema, face covered in marks and black spots. Some who can afford plastic surgeries also confessed that they had done some just to improve the effects on the skin. (Amodu et al, 2019).

Prolong use of bleaching agents with the loss of protective effect of melanin pigment, combined with the exposure leads to increase risk of skin cancer. Other effects include poor wound healing especially with the prolong use of steroids on the skin. There is also a risk of systemic side effects including development of high blood pressure and diabetes. (Amodu et al, 2019).

Furthermore, mercury agents when applied to the skin in sufficient quantities can be absorbed leading to mercury poisoning which is manifested by a range of symptoms including psychiatric, neurological and kidney problems. Also the use of cosmetics products containing hydroquinone

can lead to kidney, liver diseases, skin cancer (squamous cell carcinoma), skin thinning, bad body odour, stretch marks and infections. Systemic side effects of some of these agents may be observed in babies if they are used by pregnant or breastfeeding women. (Black Health Matters, 2019). Zaheer, a skin specialist in Pakistan observed in his study. He described this as a “lethal combination”. They also have a very bad effect on their skin and make it thinner and more prone to disorders”. He also emphasized that, bleaching can have the reverse effect and turn the skin black. It is obvious that the tissue becomes very delicate and can be damaged even if it is a scratch. 10% of the respondents however shared different views. (Zaheer, 2018) They see bleaching as a good thing. They argue that, they look pretty, nice and attractive and people pay much attention to them. In Ghana, the level of knowledge on skin bleaching is minimal in the illiterate Ghanaian than with the literate Ghanaian who would be fortunate to know about the side effects of the bleaching product he/she is using. On the other hand the literate Ghanaian who is desperate to indulge in this bleaching practice, does not know about the side effects of the bleaching products he/she is using. Mostly they are lied to by the sellers of these bleaching products of their effectiveness to tone or lighten the skin than the destruction it would bring on the individual with its skin conditions and systemic diseases. The level of knowledge in skin bleaching practices is high among the student nurses due to the fact that they study across to know what affects the human body and how to treat them. (Zaheer, 2018)

2.2 The factors that contribute to people involving in skin bleaching activities.

In Ghana, anecdotal reports of high bleaching rates among certain urban communities resulted in a study supported by the Food and Drugs Authority to determine various facets of this practice. In Ghana some celebrities were allegedly reported to be bleaching. Some of which are Akosua Vee, Bukom Banku, Yvonne Nelson, Ama Boahemaa, Becca. In South Asian region there was

perception that skin color of the white race that were the colonizers was superior to the darker skin color. Perhaps this could be the reason why celebrities use skin lightening creams and make their hair look straight like that of the whites. About 64% of Nigerians feel that skin lightening has become highly predominant in the country. Various reasons were given for using whitening products. Some of these were to look more attractive to the opposite sex (32%), just to feel beautiful (35%) and to remove feeling of inferiority (4%). According to (Black Health Matters, 2019) A study showed that, most common perception of respondents in Lahore was that majority (82%) of men considers women with lighter skin appearance to be more beautiful and have greater chance of getting married (70.5 percent). There is perception that women with lighter skin tone implies that they belong to a higher social class (19.7 percent). A group of researchers reported that some respondents (25%) have the perception of lighter skin color implies that the user belongs to higher social class. There is opinion among ladies that fairness of the skin goes with added advantage of being more confident, powerful, sexy and more attractive to men. Whiteness of the skin is considered as superior to the blacks. The physical features such as skin color, hair color and straightness are believed to be part of beauty and attractiveness. There is attitude of some that fairness of skin is associated with intelligence, purity, power and success. It has also been concluded in one study that 25% the respondents have the perception that persons with lighter skin color belong to higher social class. No significant difference in the respondents' knowledge about skin whitening agents and perception between undergraduates and post graduates. Contrary to the popular belief that skin lightening is considered as cosmetic by some, dermatologists actually prescribe skin bleaching agents as treatment to for skin diseases. Skin lightening agents reduce pigment called melanin in the skin as mechanism of action to lighten

the skin to make it more uniform. Skin lightening agents have dangerous side effects ranging from skin irritations, itching, and discolorations such as ochronosis cancer.

In the recent years, the number of dark skin people who have bleached their skin to become white have grown expeditiously. The reason for this observation may be that, this group is more likely to be influenced by Western concept of beauty. (Black Health Matters, 2019). The use of skin bleaching products may be sought initially as a genuine treatment for this problem, however it may be inadvertent abuse due to lack of understanding about the appropriate use of this products. Nonetheless a significant proportion of individuals may intentionally abuse these products due to misconception about presumed superiority and desirability of fair skin. This assertion is supported by Cooper's study on skin bleaching in which users of bleaching agents have stated explicitly that their motivation is a desire to change their skin colour. (Cooper, 2020)

2.3 Perception of skin bleaching

Skin-lightening products are commonly used by black communities in South Africa and worldwide. This practice has deep historical and cultural roots and is associated with adverse coetaneous effects.

A cross-sectional survey of 579 African and Indian women aged 18-70 years was conducted in two large public hospitals in Durban, South Africa.

After the survey, there were 292 Africans and 287 Indians included in the survey sample. Of these 32.3% had used skin-lightening products (60% of Africans and 40% of Indians). Most of those who had used skin lighteners (85 of Africans and 76% of Indians) claimed awareness of the adverse effects of the products, although this did not appear to inform knowledge of the

product, how it was used, nor the decision to use the product. Most users (90%) expressed satisfaction with results achieved but 32% reported adverse events. (J Cosmet Dermatol. 2018)

2.4 Prevalence of skin bleaching

According to (Zaheer, 2018) Most African women believes that beauty is incomplete if the skin remains black. However, they would go to a great lengths to transform their natural dark skin color to a lighter one by bleaching it with chemicals, soaps, lotions, and other products. Most Africans woman have the notion that 'beauty talks while in white or fair skin' which lends credence to the active use of skin lightening agents by these blacks. This growing misconception about skin bleaching has pushed most African women into patronizing cosmetic agents such as kojic acid, corticosteroids, and hydroquinone-based products.

In Ghana, there has been a significant increase in men who are attracted by fair coloured woman. This has resulted to the high rate of skin bleaching in recent days. The prevalence of skin bleaching is reported to range 30.0–65.6% predominantly among females. (WHO 2021)

2.4 Measures that can be used to prevent skin bleaching practices.

Skin bleaching continues to be an unpleasant issue across the Caribbean, African, and Asian countries; however, the West African country Ghana is doing something about it. Ghana is waging war against the multi-billion dollar skin-bleaching industry with a fresh and strict legislation.(Dong, 2019)

Ghana has begun implementing a new ban on hydroquinone, the primary chemical in many skin-bleaching products. The ban is the latest salvo in a backlash against skin-bleaching that pits longstanding racial stereotypes against a growing beauty industry. The Acting Chief Executive

of the Authority, Mimi Darko told a parliamentary committee on the measures being put in place to crack down on the products in the market. According to her FDA has stopped registering products with the bleaching chemical hydroquinone and has launched a sensitization programme against the sale of the product in the market. (Dong, 2019)

Ghana is one of just three African countries along with Cote d'Ivoire and South Africa to regulate skin-lightening products, and it's Food and Drugs Authority (FDA) says the ban is a matter of public safety. Hydroquinone is widely considered a potential carcinogen and products containing it are already banned or restricted in Japan, Australia, and the European Union (though the efficacy of those bans is up for debate).

There is abundant historical precedent for using chemical products to achieve a lighter skin tone, but the practice has in recent years seeded a booming and controversial Industry.

The ban on skin bleaching creams followed that of neighbouring Ivory Coast, a major production point of bleaching creams. In other countries where bleaching products are not banned the government can increase the taxes being placed on those products so that it will increase the market prices of skin bleaching products.

Skin bleaching practices can be prevented when individuals understanding the dangers involved in irrational use of skin lightening agents. Massive campaigns about skin bleaching should be organized by non – governmental organization. Massive education on skin bleaching should embarked upon by health workers in the fight against skin bleaching.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter deals with the description of the Study Area and population, study design, sampling techniques; data collection methods and instruments; data analysis techniques; ethical consideration, study limitations.

3.1 Study area

The research was conducted at Holy Family Nursing and Midwifery Training College – Berekum, locate at Atanotia a suburb of Berekum in the Bono East Region. The school as part of Berekum municipality enjoys majors and minor rainy seasons. The major one starts from March to July and the minor rains start from August to September. Apart from this rainy season, they also experience dry seasons which starts from October to February. Holy Family Nursing and Midwifery Training College – Berekum has a total student and teacher’s population of about 575 and 22 respectively.

3.2 Study population

The target population of the study is the students of the Holy Family Nursing and Midwifery Training College – Berekum including both males and females between the ages 19 – 28 years. Basically, the population is the complete set of individuals, objects or scores that an investigation is interested in studying.

3.3 Study Design

A cross sectional survey was used for the study which aimed at determining the conception of the students of Holy Family Nursing and Midwifery Training College – Berekum on the prevalence of skin bleaching. A cross sectional survey is a survey based on observations of different age group of developmental groups at a single point in time for the purpose of inferring time relating changes. The design was chosen because it was realized that most of the target population (students of Holy Family Nursing and Midwifery Training College – Berekum on the prevalence of skin bleaching) were of different age group and sex.

3.4 Data Collection Technique.

Quota sampling technique and simple random method will be used for the study. This sampling method gives each member of the population an equal chance of being chosen or selected for the sample. Some advantages of this method are; it is difficult to achieve in practice, it also requires an accurate list of the whole population and it is expensive to conduct as those sampled may be scattered over a wide area. The total number of students is 575. Out of these, 120 students have one way or the other used bleaching agents. 150 students who form the study population will be sampled using simple random sampling and using the quota sampling techniques 50 will be selected from 3 classes. The names of all the 150 will be written on piece of papers and placed in a box, and then a member of the research team was made to pick a name after reshuffling. This was done repeatedly until the 15 respondents will be sampled from two classes then 20 from one class. We used this simple random sampling method because it is the simplest sample technique which requires less time and cost.

3.5 Data Collection Tools

The tool used for the collection of data was well structured questionnaire. This was to assess the level of knowledge on skin bleaching. The questionnaires were both close ended questions (Yes/No) and open-ended questions (test on knowledge) which gave the respondents room to express themselves freely and fully.

The questionnaire was divided into three sections, section A consists of the background information of respondent, section B was to ascertain the participants' knowledge and availability of information on skin bleaching, section C was about their perception and practices towards the effects of skin bleaching.

The 50 questionnaires were distributed to the students of Holy Family Nursing and Midwifery Training College - Berekum. The questionnaires were taken from respondents immediately they finished answering them.

3.6 Ethical consideration

The respondents were well informed about the purpose of the study. The right of each respondent was respected and their personal integrity safe-guarded. The respondents were allowed to participate and withdraw from the study if and when they felt like. The study was also carried out with no physical or psychological harm on the respondents. They were assured of confidentiality of the information that was obtained from them hence names and addresses were omitted in the questionnaire.

3.7 Limitations of the study

The time and nature of our academic programme called for the use of quota and simple random sampling. Simple random sampling and small size together did not allow for generalization of the findings.

Some of the respondents were reluctant to give accurate information even though they were educated on the need to provide valid information on the questionnaire with regards to the study. Since some of the respondents did not understand the relevance of the research and they were helped by educating them, there was the tendency that the information provided might be altered.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with the analysis of data and results obtained from the study. The data and results obtained were analyzed in tabular, bar and pie chart forms and presented in percentages.

The analysis comprises of the demographic characteristics of respondents, and the knowledge on skin bleaching.

4.2 Demographic characteristics of respondents

Table 1 : The age distribution of respondents

Age group (years)	Number of respondents	Percentage (%)
18 – 23	25	50
24 – 29	20	40
30 – 35	5	10
Total	50	100

Source: Field data, 2023

From the table above, it was realized that majority of the respondents 25 (50%) were within the ages of 18 – 23 years, then 20 (40%) respondents were within 24 – 29 years and 5 (10%) were within the ages of 30 – 35.

Table 2: The gender distribution of respondents

Gender	Number of respondents	Percentage (%)
Males	16	32
Females	34	68
Total	50	100

Source: Field data, 2023

From the table above, it was realized that majority of the respondents 34 (68%) were females, then 16 (32%) respondents were males.

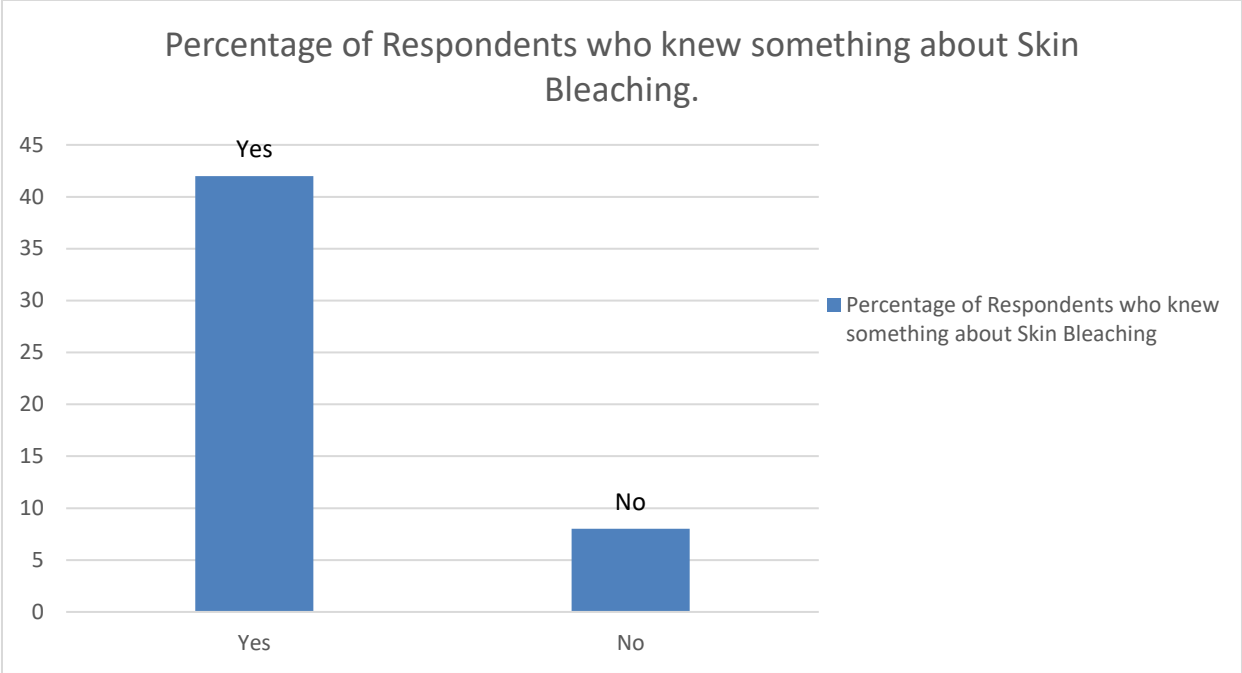
Table 3: The complexion of the respondents.

Complexion	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Fair	17	34
Chocolate	22	44
Dark	11	22
Uneven pigmentation	0	0
Total	50	100

Source: Field data, 2023

From the table above shows that 17 (34%) of the respondents were fair, 22(44%) are chocolate, 11(22%) and 0(%) had no even pigmentation.

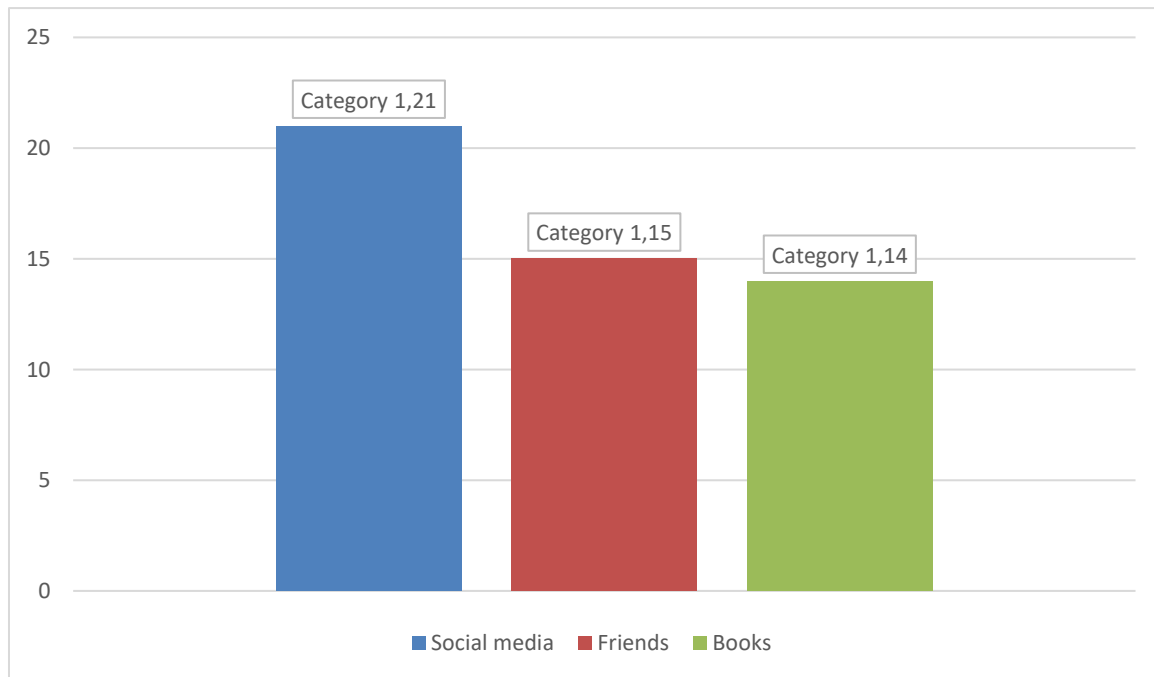
Figure 1: Percentage of Respondents who knew something about Skin Bleaching



Source: Field data, 2023

In figure 1 above all thirty respondents 42(84%) knew something about skin bleaching and 8 (16%) knew nothing about skin bleaching.

Figure 2: Sources of Respondents Information



Source: Field data, 2023

Figure 2 above indicates that 21(42%) of the respondents heard about skin bleaching from the social media, 15(30%) heard it from their friends and 14(28%) read skin bleaching from books.

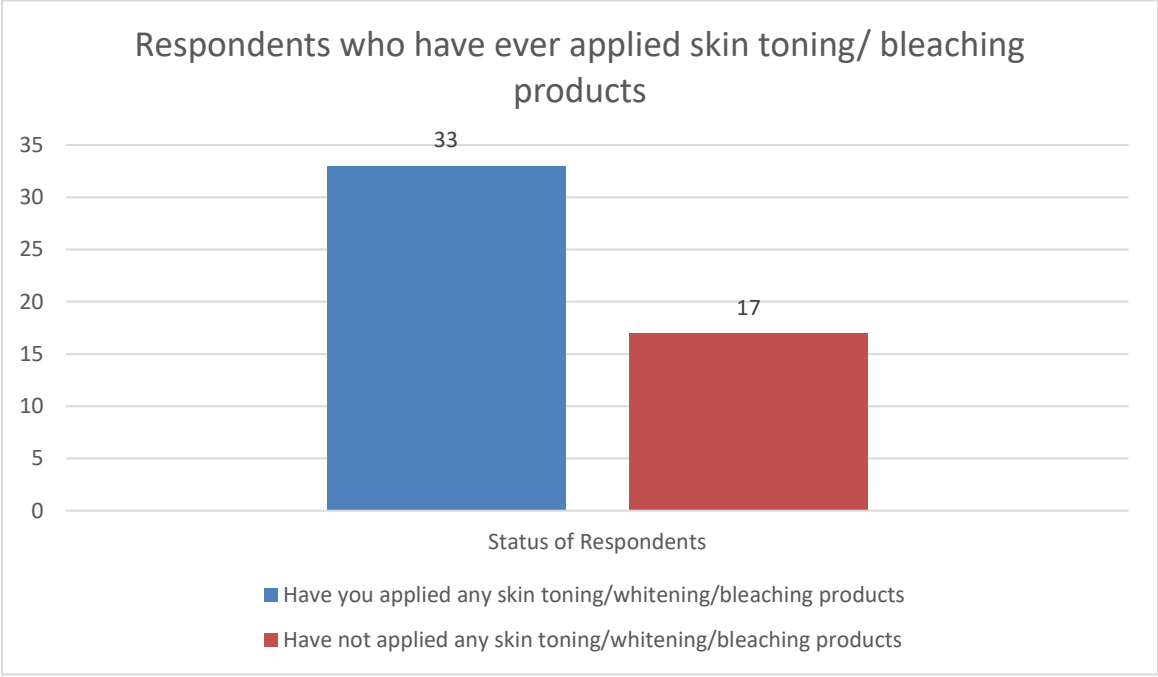
Figure 3: Percentage of Respondents who know any products used for toning/whitening/bleaching



Source: Field data, 2023

From figure 3 above, 42 (84%) do know any skin bleaching products and 8(16%) do not know any skin bleaching products.

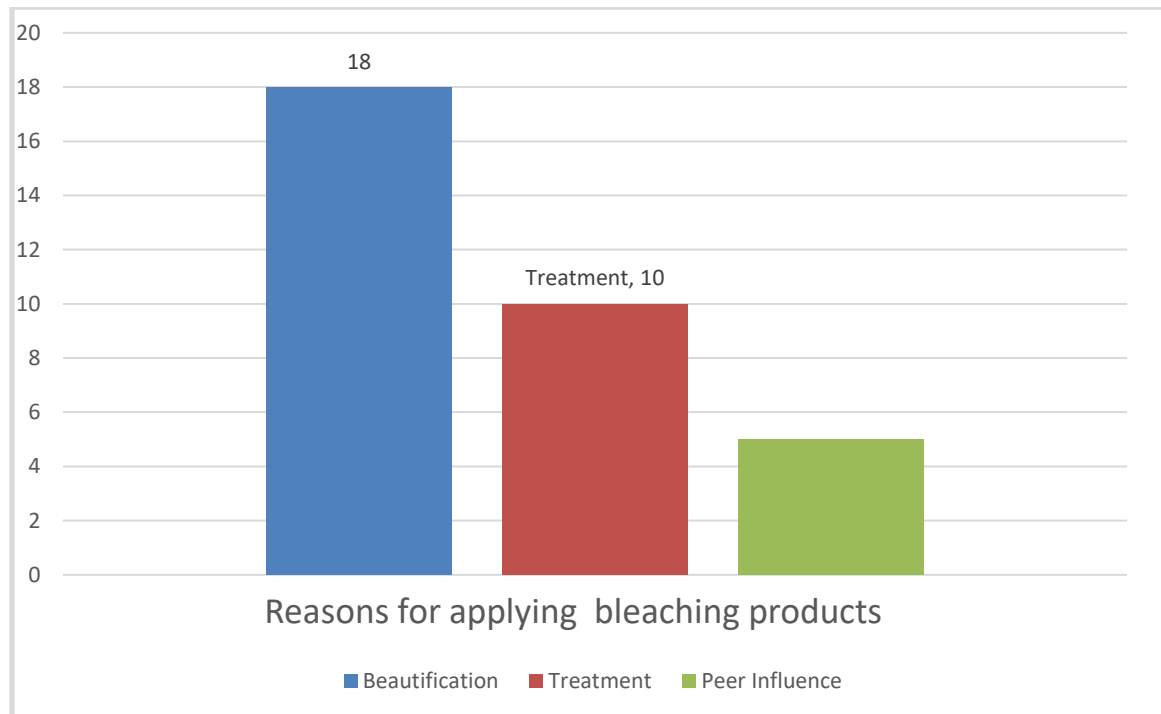
Figure 4: Percentage of Respondents who have ever applied skin toning/whitening/bleaching products.



Source: Field data, 2023

Figure 4 above indicates that 33(66%) have applied any skin toning/whitening/bleaching products and 17 (34%) have not applied any skin toning/whitening/bleaching products.

Figure 5: Reasons for applying skin toning/whitening/bleaching product.

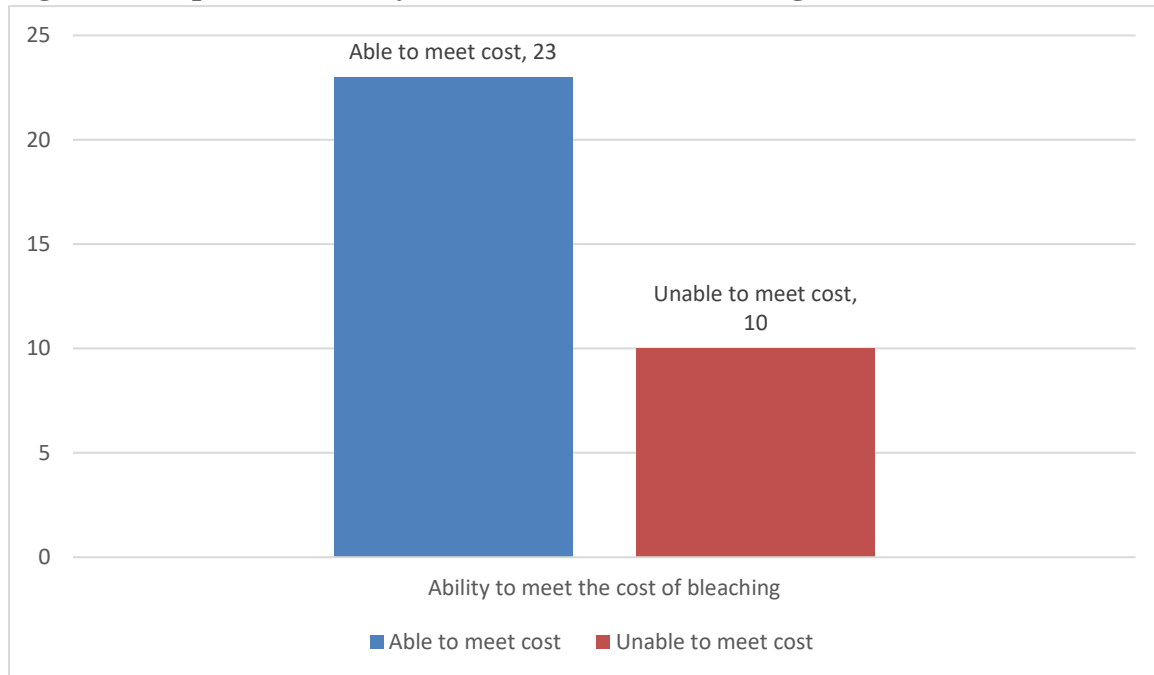


Source:

Field data, 2023

From figure 5 above: out of the 33 respondents who had applied toning/whitening/bleaching skin products, 18 (54.5%) applied the skin bleaching products for beautification purposes, 10 (30.3%) applied due to treatment of skin diseases and 5 (15.2%) applied due to peer influence.

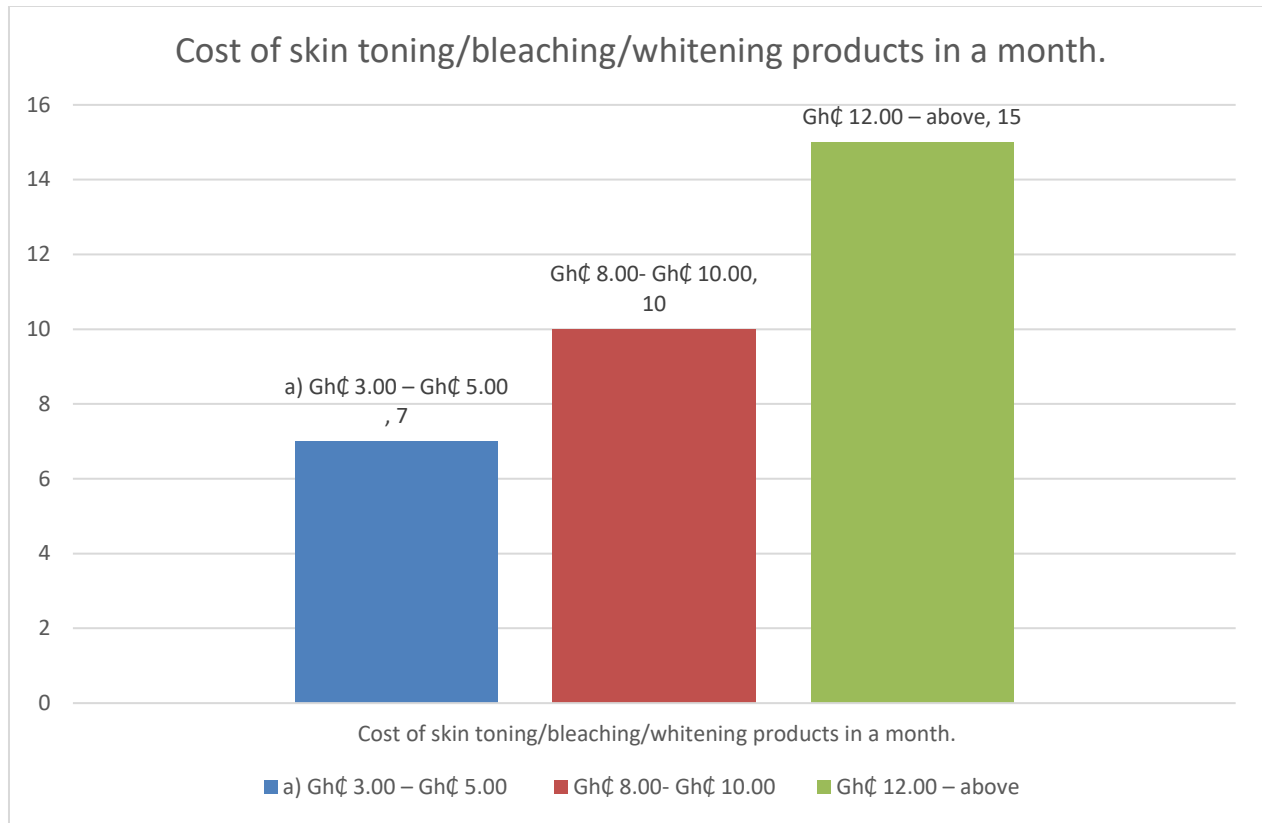
Figure 6: Respondents ability to meet the cost of bleaching. 6



Source: Field data, 2023

In figure 6 above, 8 out of the 33 respondents who applied skin toning/whitening/bleaching products, 23 (69.6%) respondents who bleach were able to meet the cost of bleaching products while 10(30.4%) were not able to meet the cost of bleaching products.

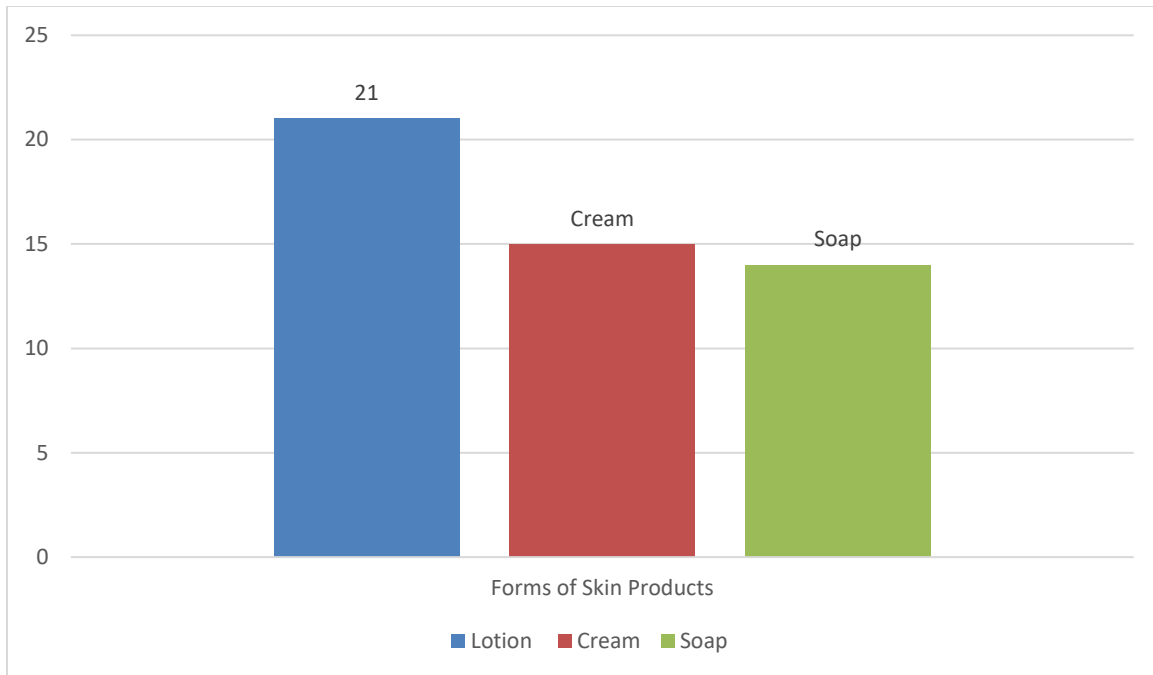
Figure 7: Cost of skin toning/bleaching/whitening products in a month.



Source: Field data, 2023

From the 33 respondents who applied the skin toning/whitening/bleaching products 7 of them responded that their products cost from Gh¢ 3.00 – Gh¢ 5.00 in a month, 10 of them responded that their products cost from Gh¢ 8.00- Gh¢ 10.00 in a month and 15 of them responded that their products cost from Gh¢ 12.00 – above in a month.

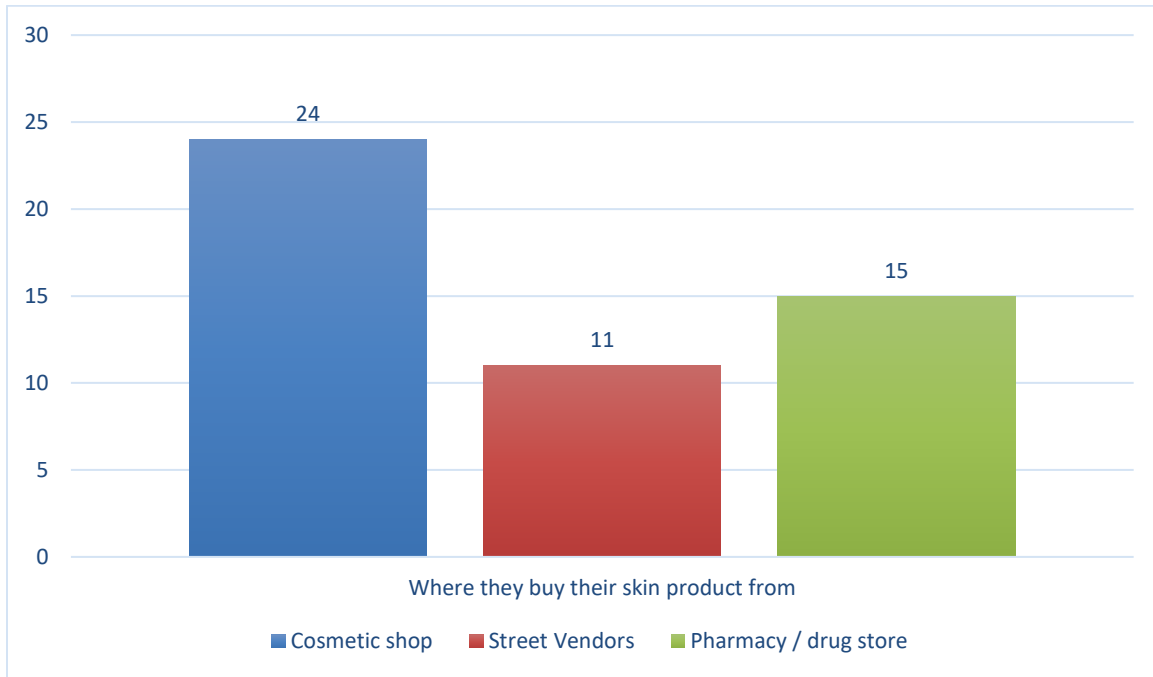
Figure 8: Forms of Skin Products.



Source: Field data, 2023

In figure 8 above, out of the 50 respondents, 21(42%) used lotion forms of skin products only, 15(30%) used cream form of skin products and 14(28%) used soap forms of skin product.

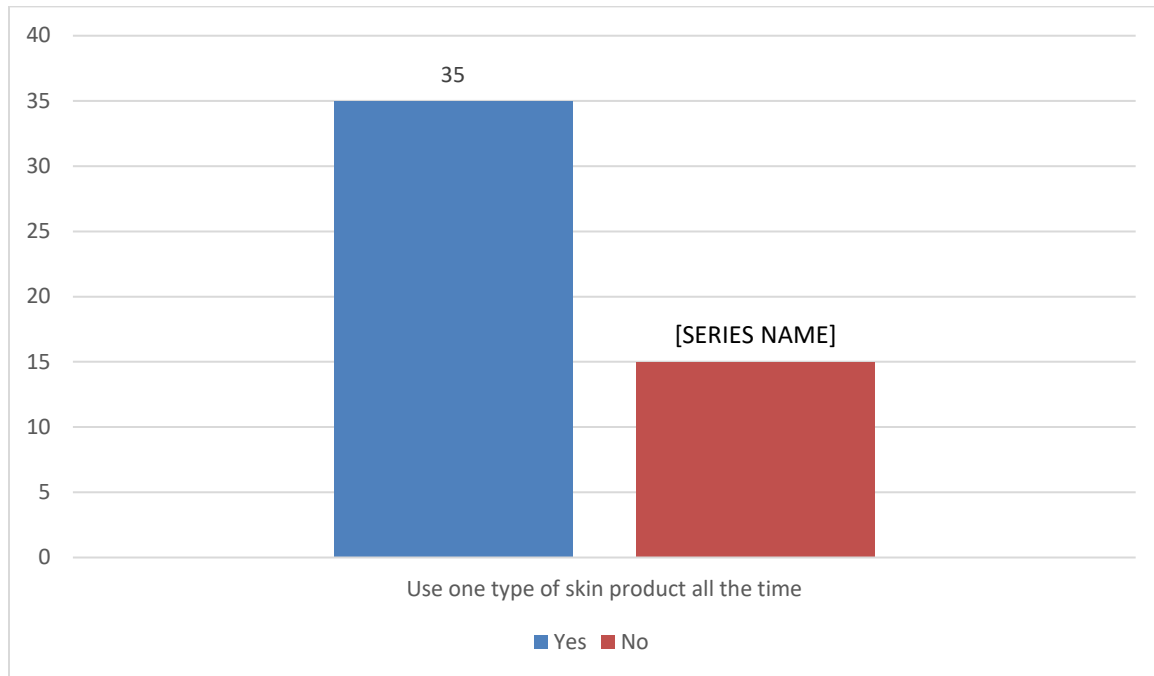
Figure 9: Where the respondents buy their skin products from.



Source: Field data, 2023

From the figure 9 above, 24 respondents buy their skin products from the cosmetic store, 11 respondents buy their skin products from the street vendors and 15 buy from the pharmacy.

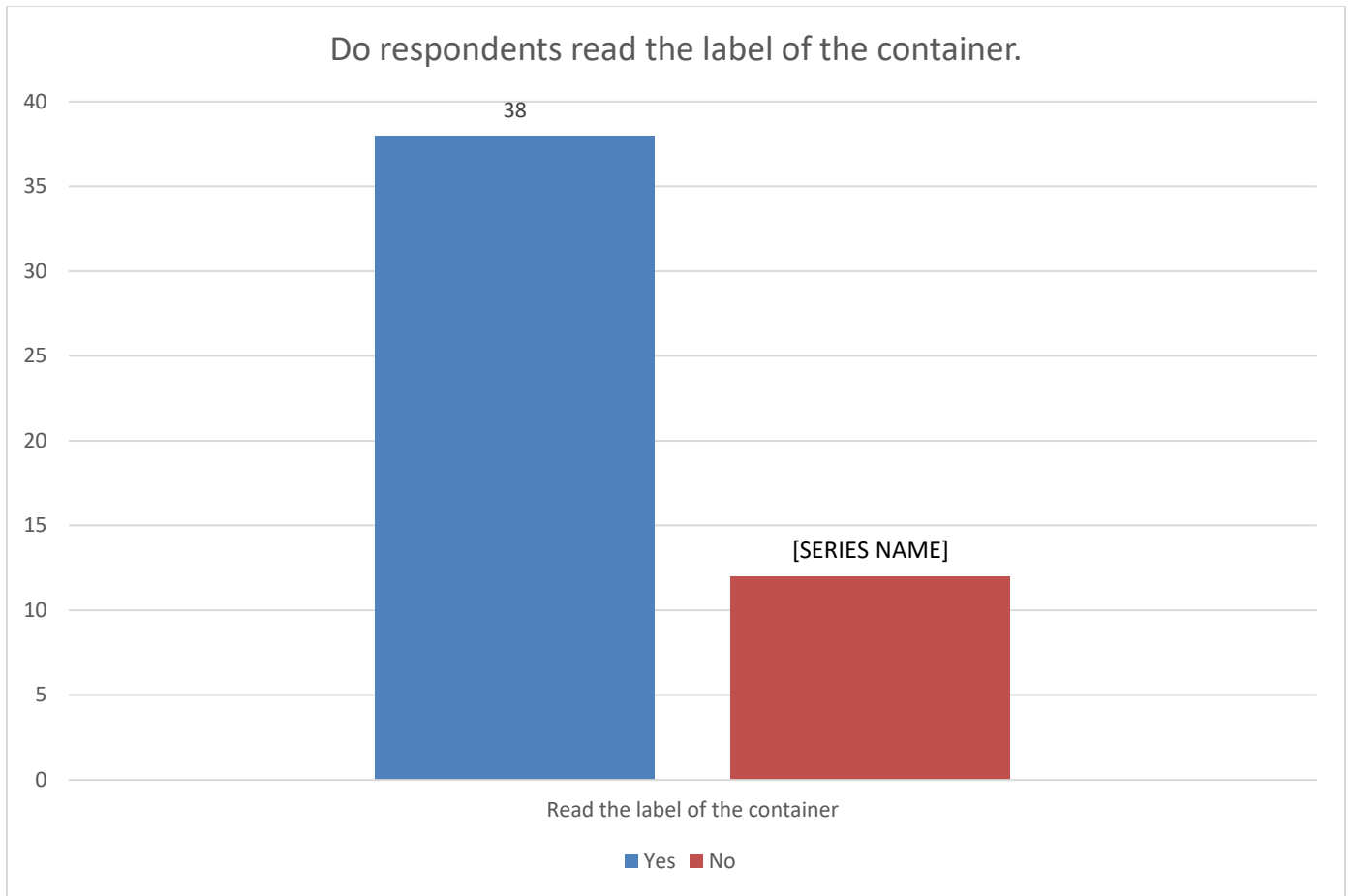
Figure 10: Do respondents use one type of skin products all the time.



Source: Field data, 2023

From figure 10, 35 out of the 50 respondents use one type of skin products all the time and 15 of the 50 respondents use more than one type of skin product.

Figure 11: Do respondents read the label of the container.



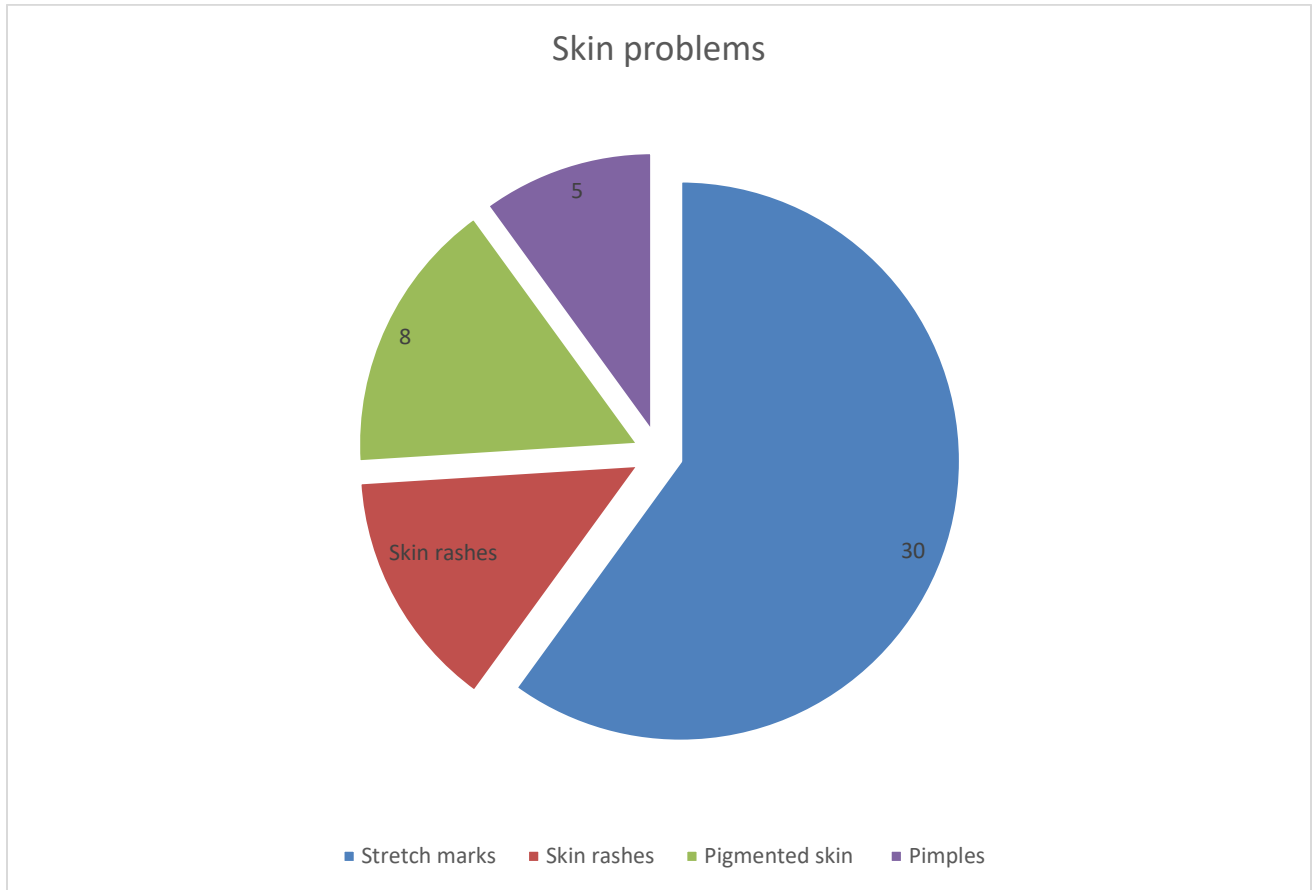
Source: Field data, 2023

From figure 11, 38 out of the 50 respondents read the label of the container and 12 out of the rest do not read the label of the containers of their skin products.

RESPONDENTS VIEWS ON BLEACHING

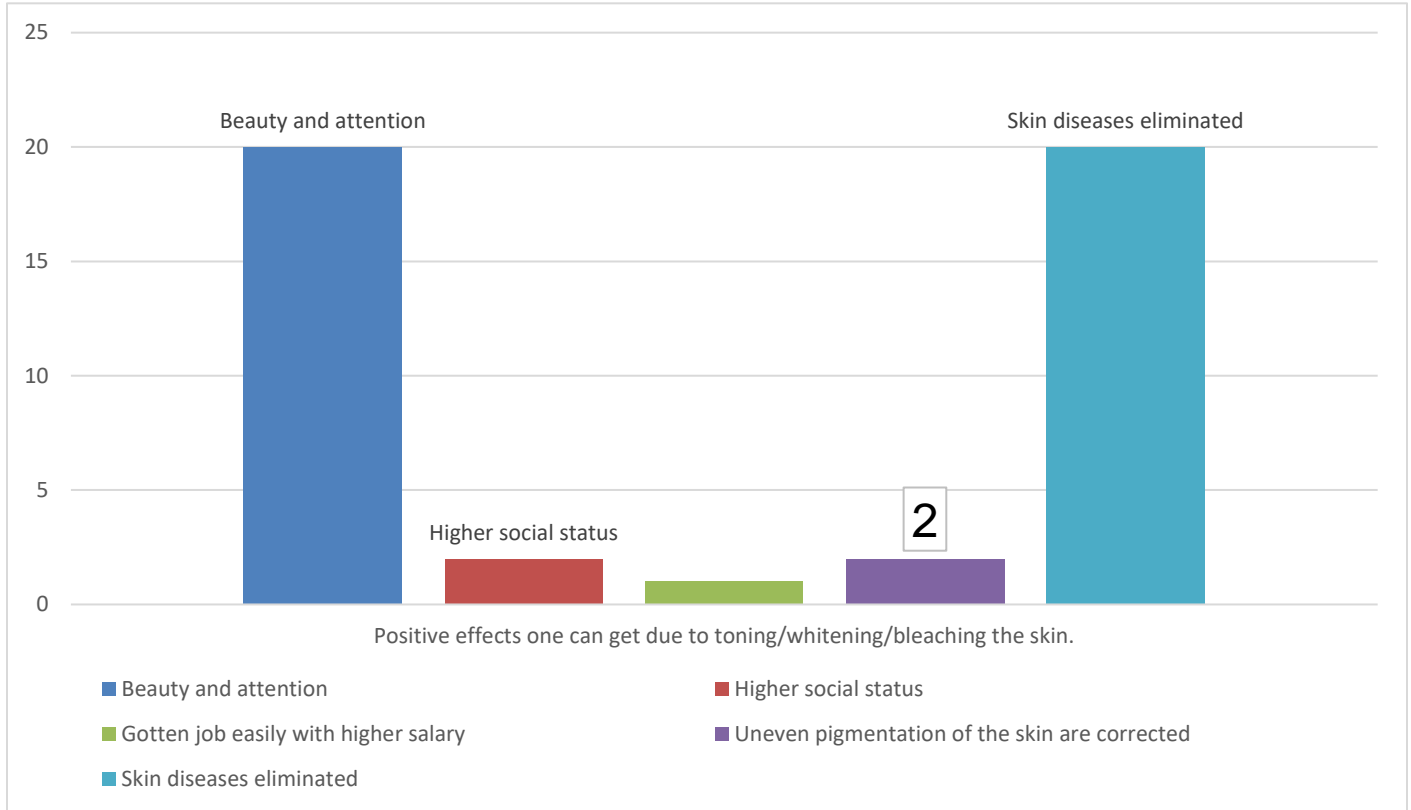
Figure 12: Skin Bleach Problems

Skin problems



In figure 12 above, out of the 50 respondents 30(60%) said one can get stretch marks if the individual involves in skin bleaching, 7(14%) said the individual can get rashes if the individual involves in skin bleaching, 8 (16%) can get pigmented skin if the individual involves in skin bleaching and 5 (10%) can get pimples if the individual involves in skin bleaching.

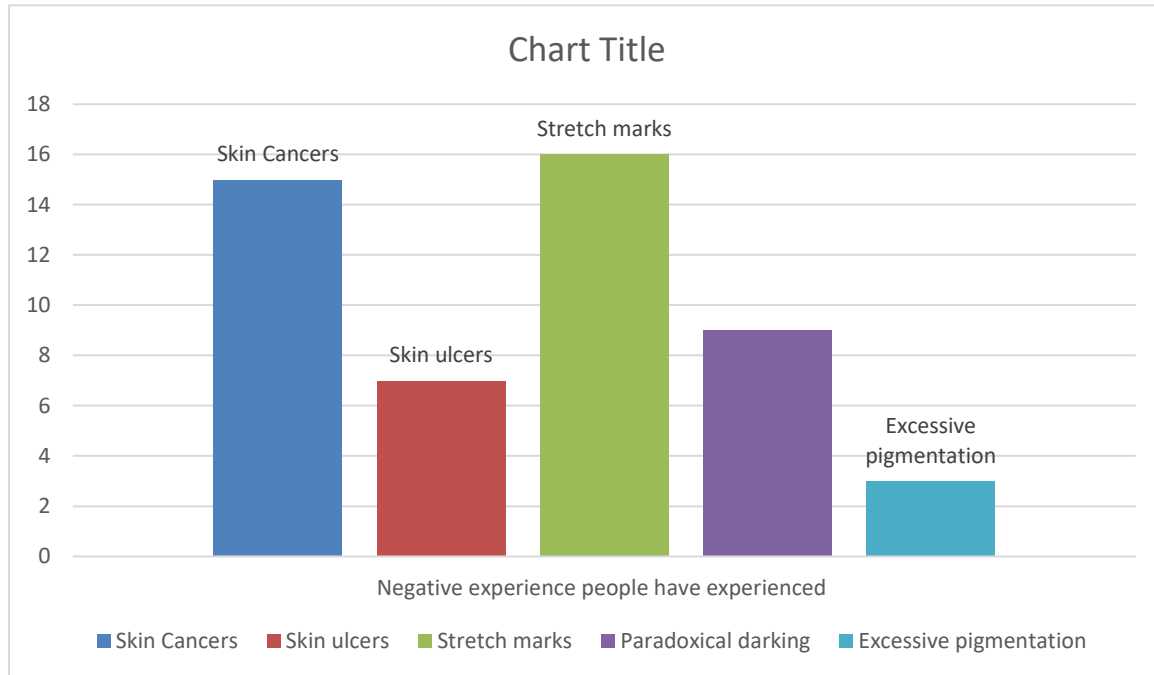
Figure 13: Positive effects one can get due to toning/whitening/bleaching the skin.



Source: Field data, 2023

From figure 13: 20 respondents said that beauty and attention were the positive effects that the individuals gets, 2 respondents said High social status, 1 said gotten job easily, 2 said uneven pigmentation were corrected and 20 said the skin diseases were eliminated.

Figure 14: Negative experience people have experienced



Source: Field data, 2023

From figure14 above: 15 respondents said the negative impacts on peoples life after bleaching is skin cancer, 7 said Skin Ulcers, 16 said Stretch Marks, 9 said Paradoxical darkening and 3 said Excessive Pigmentation.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The discussion is solely based on the findings from the study and the ideas from the literature reviews. Comparison had been made with researchers that have been conducted on the topic by other researchers. Basically, people of different age groups for different reasons. As gathered from the field, out of the 50 respondents, 33 (66%) respondents have ever bleached with varying degree of reasons.

A survey conducted in Accra – Ghana by Robinson between 2020 and 2021 revealed that about 26.6% of the total population practice skin bleaching. This really confirms the outcome of our research study that in every society, there are a number of people who practice one form of skin bleaching or the other.

On the question on whether they had knowledge 8 (16%) did not have knowledge on skin bleaching and 42 (84%) had knowledge on skin bleaching and its effects. According to Rusmadi et al. (2021), about 85% of the respondents among the undergraduate students knew about the active ingredients in skin bleaching agent they use before buying because of safety reasons. Majority, 95%, of them knew about the health effect attributed to skin lightening agents agreeing with the findings in South African study in which 89% respondents having knowledge of adverse effects related to skin lightening agents.

On the question on who had ever applied skin toning/bleaching products, it was realized that 33 (66%) had applied skin toning/bleaching products for different reasons. According to Cooper, (2021) on skin bleaching the users of the various bleaching agents gave stated explicitly that their motivation is a desire to change their skin colour. Also some skin bleaching products may

be sought initially as a genuine treatment for this skin diseases or infections, however it may be inadvertent abuse due to lack of understanding about the appropriate use of this products.

On the question of why they bleach, it was realized that 66% of the respondents who admitted they bleach gave different reasons why they bleach. Out of the 33 respondents, 18 of them bleach for beauty. That is why they believe that bleaching will make them look beautiful and attractive. 5 of them also said they bleached due to peer pressure and 10 of them bleached/applied due to treatment of skin diseases.

These findings congruent with the findings from the research conducted by Bernice (November 2022) on the effects of skin bleaching. She observed that many dark skinned women from Africa, the Caribbean and other parts of the world bleach in order to get power, success, recognition and beauty, respect and attractiveness. They believe that being light skinned would improve their prospects for attention, love, acceptance etc. this clearly shows that all who bleach do so with a specific reason.

Many of the respondents as indicated in figure 12 stated various skin problems one can encounter due to bleaching and confessed that, skin bleaching is harmful. Out of the 50 respondents, 30 (60%) said that one can get stretch marks as a result of skin bleaching/toning. 7(14%) said that the individual can get skin rashes if the individual involves in skin bleaching, 8 (16%) can get pigmented skin if the individual involves in skin bleaching and 5 (10%) can get pimples if the individual involves in skin bleaching.

These harmful effects stated by the respondents agree with what Zaheer (2021), a skin specialist in Pakistan observed in his study. He described this as a “lethal combination”. They also have a very bad effect on their skin and make it thinner and more prone to disorders”. He also

emphasized that, bleaching can have the reverse effect and turn the skin black. It is obvious that the tissue becomes very delicate and can be damaged even if it is a scratch. 10% of the respondents however shared different views. They see bleaching as a good thing. They argue that, they look pretty, nice and attractive and people pay much attention to them.

People who bleach and those who do not bleach know one or more side effects of bleaching. From the studies conducted, 15 respondents said the negative impacts on peoples life after bleaching is skin cancer, 7 said Skin Ulcers, 16 said Stretch Marks, 9 said Paradoxical darkening and 3 said Excessive Pigmentation.

A study conducted by Black Health Matters, (2016) on the side effects of skin bleaching observed that, apart from skin disorders those who bleach develop other systemic effects. Some of these are diabetes, development of high blood pressure and poor wound healing. Also, there may be psychiatric, neurological and kidney problems etc. using mercury products. According to Robinson, there are many bleaching agents. Some of these agents are hydroquinone, mercury salt and steroids. She observed that these agents come in different forms. From the on – going discussion. It's realized that bleaching is an international concern with the greatest evidence in Africa and the Caribbean islands.

Conclusion

Skin bleaching is the use of a chemical agent to reduce blemishes, age spots, freckles or other skin conditions. It can be intentional or unintentional depending on the individual. The main function of skin bleaching/toning/whitening is to lighten the normal skin. The practice is seen in both men and women. In the course of the research we found out that majority of the student nurses had knowledge on skin bleaching and some of them had even applied skin bleaching

products for different reasons such as beautification, skin treatment and peer influence. Skin toning/bleaching/whitening has both positive and negative effects. Some of the positive effects or advantages practicing were beauty and attention, skin disease elimination, higher social status, uneven pigmentation of the skin were corrected and got jobs easily with higher salaries. The negative effects of practicing skin toning/bleaching were stretch marks, skin rashes, pigmented skin and pimples. Skin bleaching also causes some systemic conditions such as skin cancer. From the study most of the respondents believe that bleaching has a severe effects on the individual and should be discouraged.

Recommendations

Upon the findings of the study the following recommendations have been made

1. Government should ensure that there is a ban on the importation of bleaching agents is enforced or impose huge tax on them and regulated well by blocking all the bleaching products from entering the country.
2. They should also ensure that the public is well educated on the skin bleaching practices to reduce its prevalence rate in the country.
3. Health care providers must give education to the first year students of Holy Family Nursing and Midwifery Training College – Berekum on the health hazards that skin bleaching can cause.
4. All training institutions in the country should monitor students on skin bleaching to ensure that they do not indulge in the practice
5. Special clinics and hospitals to treat skin infections resulting from bleaching must be set up.
6. Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's) must create awareness to the public on the effects of skin bleaching. We also recommend the research for further studies.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Respondent,

We are students of NMTC, Berekum conducting a research on the topic *“the prevalence of skin bleaching among nursing and midwifery student of different age category for both males and females”*. Any Information provided is confidential. You can choose to withdraw your participation at any time. It will take you approximately 30 minutes to answer the questionnaire.

PART A: STUDENT’S DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

1. Gender: (a) Male [] (b) Female []
2. Age: (a) 18–23years [] (b) 24–29years [] (c) 30–35years []
3. Marital status: (a) Married [] (b) Single [] (c) Divorced []
4. Ethnicity:
5. Religious background: (a) Christian [] (b) Islam [] (c) Traditionalist []
6. Program: (a) Nursing [] (b) Midwifery []

PART B: ACCESSING STUDENT KNOWLEDGE ON SKIN BLEACHING.

1. Do you have any knowledge about the prevalence of skin bleaching?

- A. Yes [] B. No []

2. What is skin bleaching about?

A. Changing human colour

B. Using chemicals on the skin

C. Making the skin smooth

3. What's your first source of information about skin bleaching?

A. Friends

B. Media (Radio and TV)

C. Family

D. Other (Specify).....

4. Skin bleaching causes stretch marks.

A. Yes []

B. No []

C. Not sure []

5. Does skin bleaching causes social stigma

A. Yes [] C. Not sure []

B. No []

6. Skin bleaching causes cancer

A. Yes [] B. No [] C. Not sure []

PART C: PERCEPTION ON SKIN BLEACHING

7. Do you use skin whitening creams because of the environment you are located within?

A. Yes [] B. No [] C. Not sure []

8. Do you see bleaching more of a beauty factor?

A. Yes [] B. No [] C. Not sure []

9. Do you think if you have alighted complexion you will be treated better?

A. Yes [] B. No [] C. Not sure []

10. Do you find skin bleaching more of a beauty factor?

A. Yes [] B. No [] C. Not sure []

11. Do you think skin bleaching can be addictive?

A. Yes [] B. No [] C. Not sure []

12. Why do people apply skin toning creams?

A. To lighten the skin []

B. To remove rashes []

C. Others (Specify).....

13. Why haven't you use skin lightening creams before?

A. I don't really like it []

B. It's not good for the skin []

C. Others (Specify).....

14. Have you ever used bleaching creams before but has stopped for now?

A. Yes [] C. Not sure []

B. No []

15. Are you still using bleaching creams on your skin?

A. Yes [] B. Not sure [] C. No []

16. Skin bleaching can cause pimple and other skin disease?

A. Yes [] B. Not sure [] C. No []

17. Which gender bleach the most?

A. Males [] B. Females []

18. Are skin lightening creams more harmful to the skin?

A. Yes [] B. No [] C. Not sure []

19. Can bleached skin go back to normal?

A. Yes [] B. No [] C. Not sure []

20. Does your skin get darker when you stop bleaching?

A. Yes [] B. Not sure [] C. No []

PART D: PREVALENCE OF SKIN BLEACHING

21. Whets has resulted to the widespread of skin bleaching in recent days?

A. Aim foreskin beautification []

B. To remove dark spots []

C. Others (Specify).....

22. Do you think marital reasons has influence a significant number of females to bleach their skin?

A. Yes [] B. No [] C. Not sure []

23. Which gender group has caused the greater spread of skin bleaching?

A. Males [] B. Females []

24. Do you think fair coloured ladies attraction to men has resulted to the high spread of skin toning?

A. Yes [] B. Not sure [] C. No []

25. Has the widespread of skin toning caused skin problems?

A. Yes [] B. Not sure [] C. No []

Thank You for your Participation

APPENDIX 2

NATIONAL CATHOLIC HEALTH SERVICE (DIOCESE OF SUNYANI)
HOLY FAMILY NURSING AND MIDWIFERY TRAINING COLLEGE
BEREKUM



BANKERS:

Ghana Commercial Bank, Berekum
Agric Development Bank, Berekum
Fidelity Bank, Berekum



P. O. Box 21,
Berekum, B/A
Ghana, W/Africa
Tel. 0352222124
Fax: 0352222474

Our Ref.HFNMTC/GC/011/082323

Your Ref.

Date August 23, 2023

Dorcas Osei
Holy Family NMTC
Post Office Box 21
Berekum

Dear Miss Osei

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

With reference to your Memorandum dated August 22, 2023, I write to notify you that the students listed below have been granted permission to conduct their research in the College on the topic 'Assessing the prevalence of Skin Bleaching at Holy Family Nursing and Midwifery Training College, Berekum'

1. Anane Vera Oppong
2. Kwafowaa Veronica
3. Agyenim Boateng Patricia

Thank you.

Yours sincerely

Rev. Sr. Margaret Afrifa
Academic Coordinator, Nursing

For: Principal

