

Examining Colorism Among Female African American Exotic Dancers in Philadelphia and Neighboring Counties

By Rose Brown



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Identity

Previous
studies

Understudied
population





Colorism

Differential treatment based on skin color, especially favoritism toward those with a lighter skin tone and mistreatment or exclusion of those with a darker skin tone, typically among those of the same racial group or ethnicity.

Background & Objective

- Many African American women are subject poverty and systematic oppression
- Some choose to turn to the sex industry
- A prevalence of colorism in this industry
- This study examines colorism in the female African American community at exotic dance clubs in Philadelphia and neighboring counties



Study Design

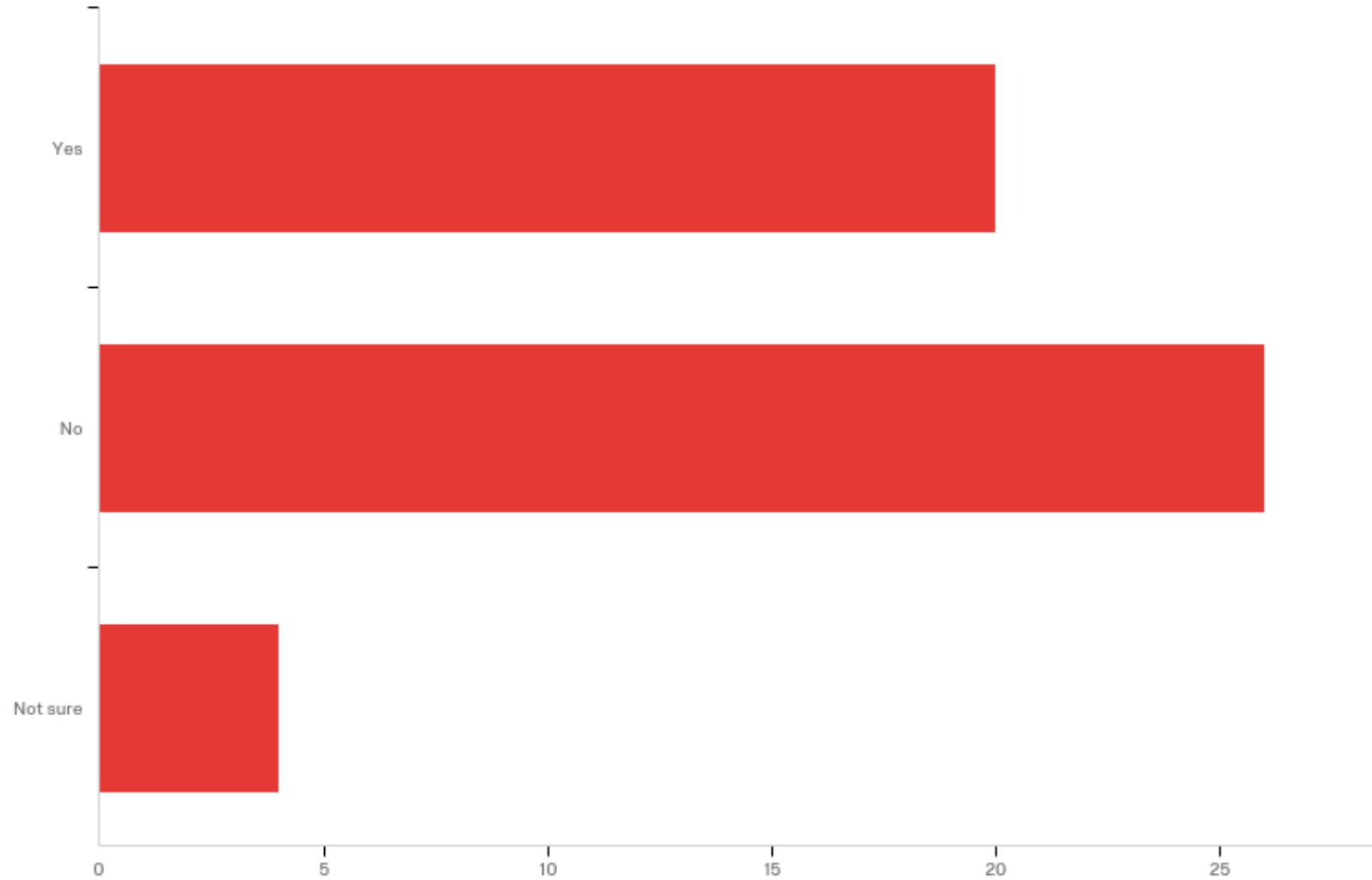
- A mixed methods study of the impact of colorism on the lives of exotic dancers in Philadelphia and neighboring counties, using a convenience sample of five-ten female African-American dancers.
- Target population: Female African-American exotic dancers in Philadelphia and neighboring counties.
- Contacted management to gain referrals to dancers who would possibly be interested
- Dancers then completed a survey via Qualtrics
- Participant recruitment and data collection took place April 2019



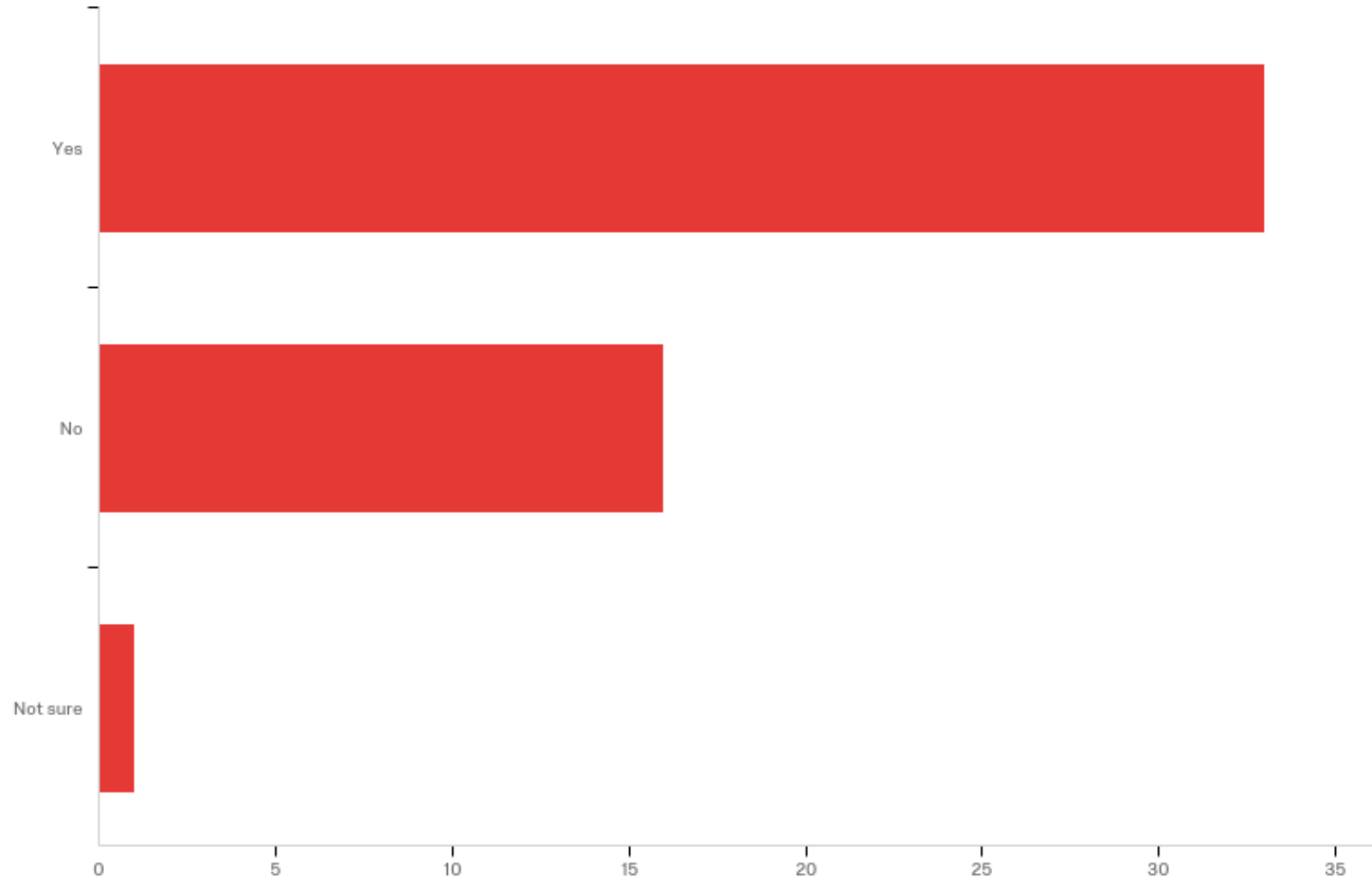
Quantitative Findings



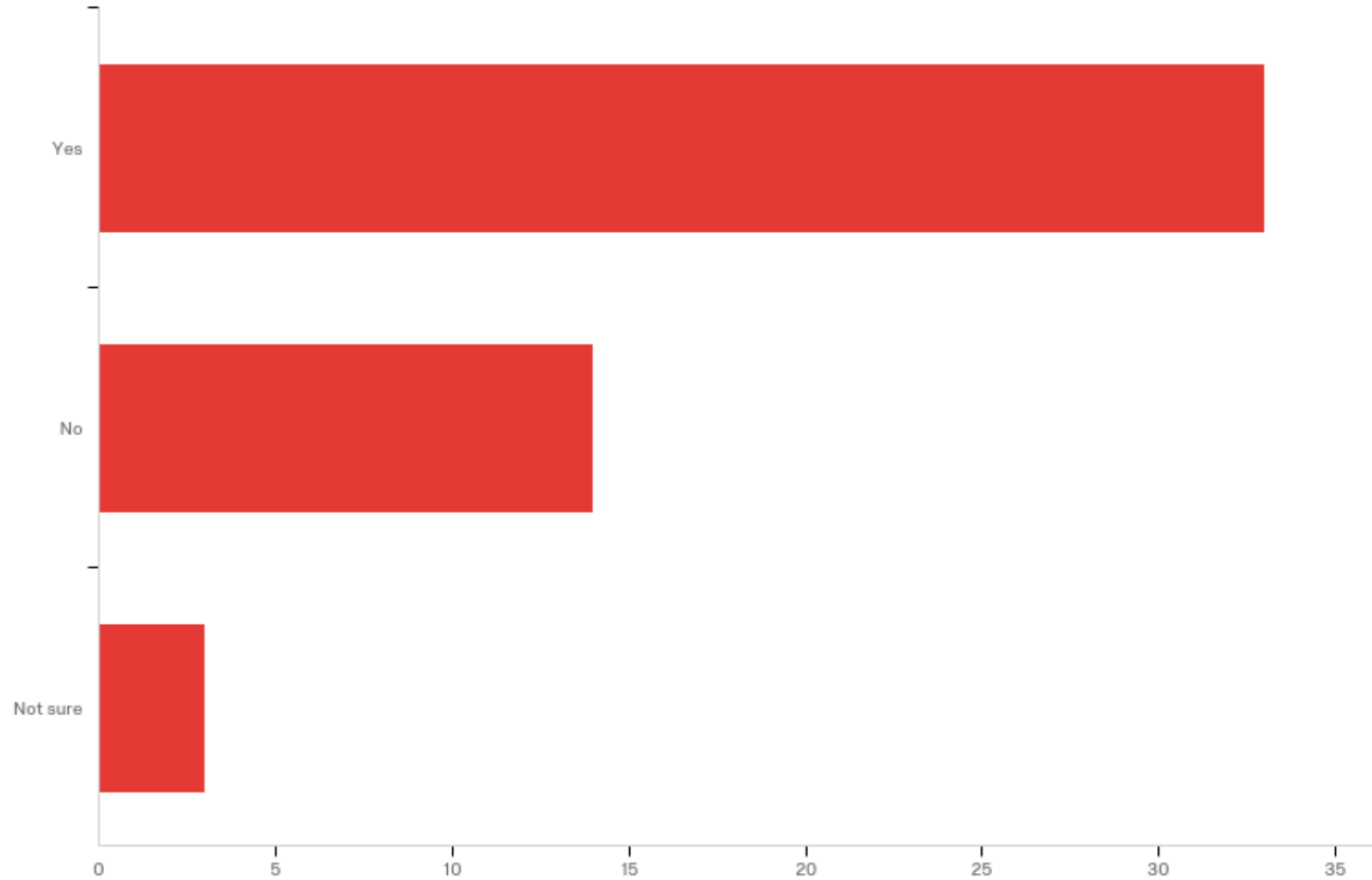
Q1 - Do you find that the manager only hires exotic dancers of a certain skin tone?



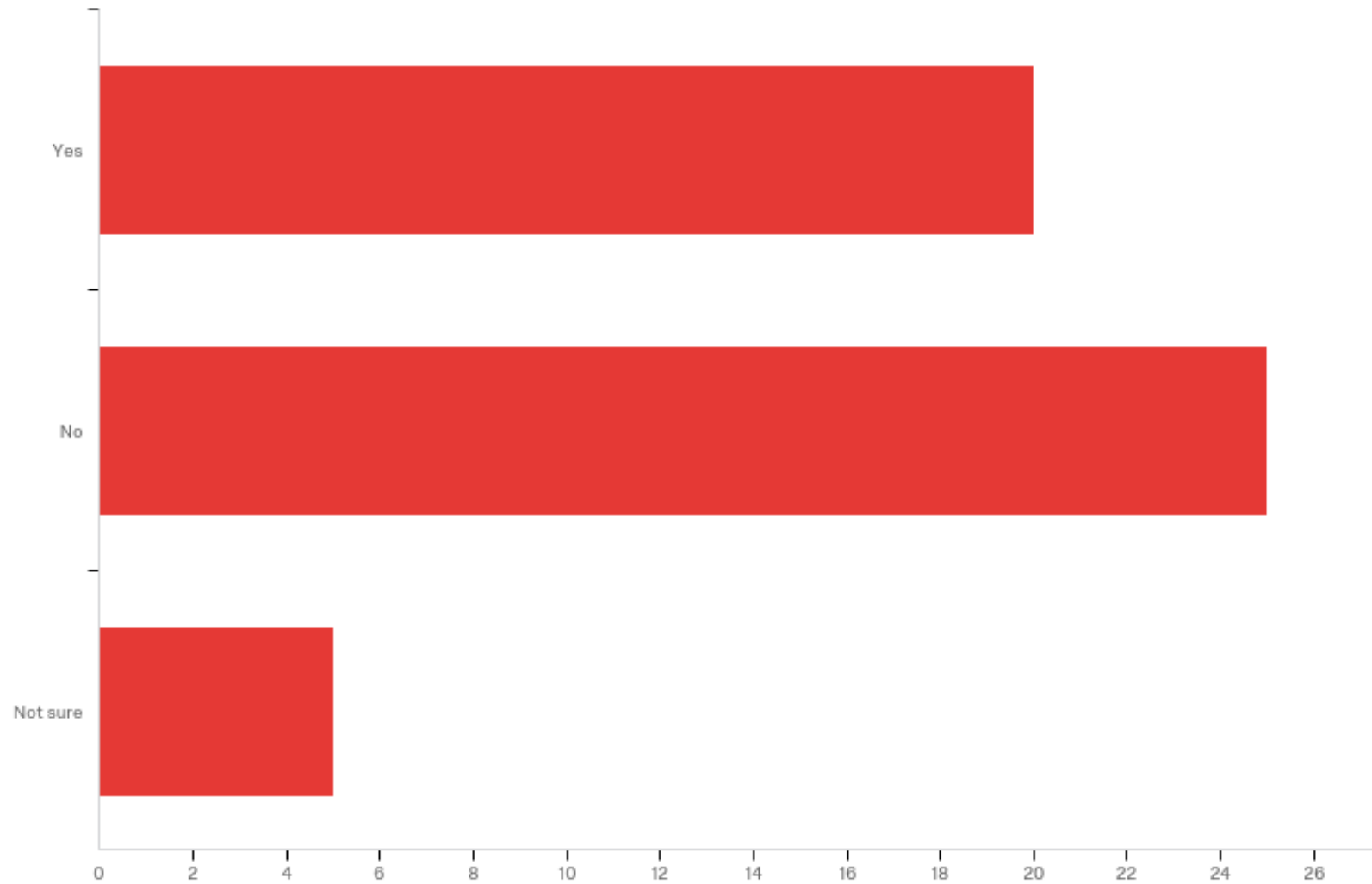
Q2 - Do you feel there is competition among dancers in this establishment because of the differences in their skin tone?



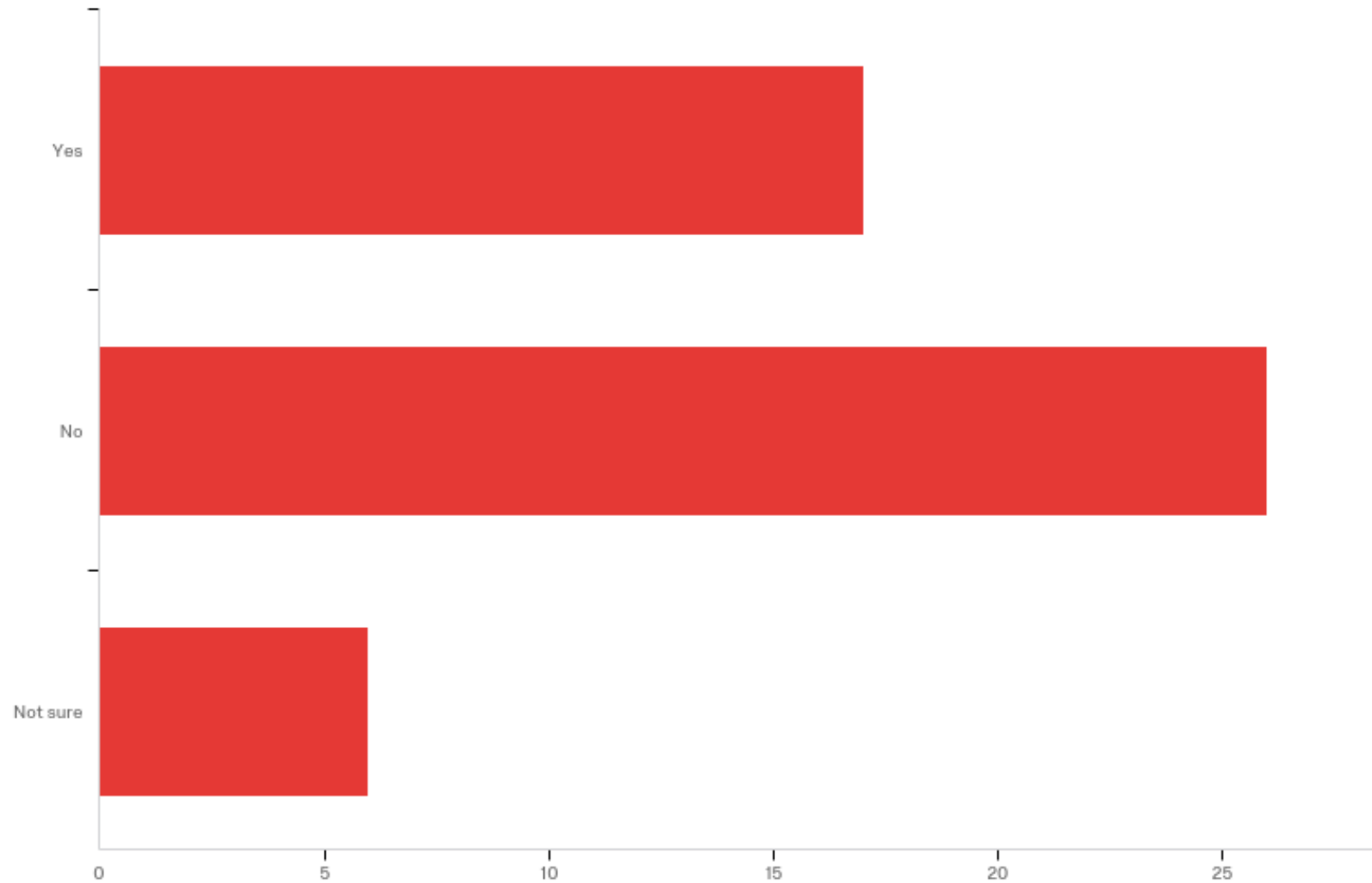
Q3 - Do you believe that clients prefer dancers based on their skin tone?



Q4 - Do you believe you have been treated better than other dancers at your club because of your skin tone?



Q6 - Do you believe you have been treated more poorly than other dancers because of your skin tone?



Qualitative Findings

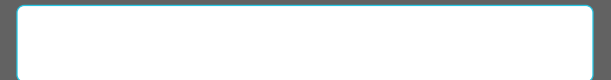


Qualitative Findings

- “At white clubs they usually look at me as being Spanish because I don’t look black. I have more of a hands of getting hired than a brown skin girl”
- “A guy will pick someone lighter or mixed over me due to my features.”
- “A lot of establishments will hire me because I am fair skinned as opposed to some of my peers who are more darker will get denied an audition all together.”
- “Management always lets certain girls with a lighter skin tone get away with a lot more.”
- “Yes I have had people only want to see me because of my skin tone I’m light skin and some well most men would prefer lighter women.”



Next Steps



Advocacy

“Action starts first with advocacy!”

- Buzzfeed
- University of Pennsylvania School of Social Policy and Practice
- Daily Pennsylvanian
- University of Pennsylvania School of Social Policy & Practice social media handles
- AfroPhilly
- Philadelphia Biz Journals
- Black Wall Street
- Philly Voice
- Philly Magazine
- Power 99
- IHeartMedia
- 105.3 FM

BuzzFeed News



Population Recommendations



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Work at Black Owned Clubs





Share your
experience



Work at
predominantly
black clubs

Stand with those
not hired because
of their skin tone



Strike



In Hindsight

Protocol

Reframe study questions, location research, professional relationship cultivation

- At times participants could not fully comprehend the questions or certain terms were confusing. Include different answer choices
- It took a great length of time to research potential locations and cultivate trusting professional relationships with managers and staff

Mental Preparation

Therapy, additional consultations with PENN IRB

- Did not consider how this study would impact my mental, emotional, and spiritual health.
- There were times I felt unprepared based off of the specific regulations imposed after the study was approved






Questions





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Thank You

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References

- <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/colorism>

