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BSOS Summer Research Initiative

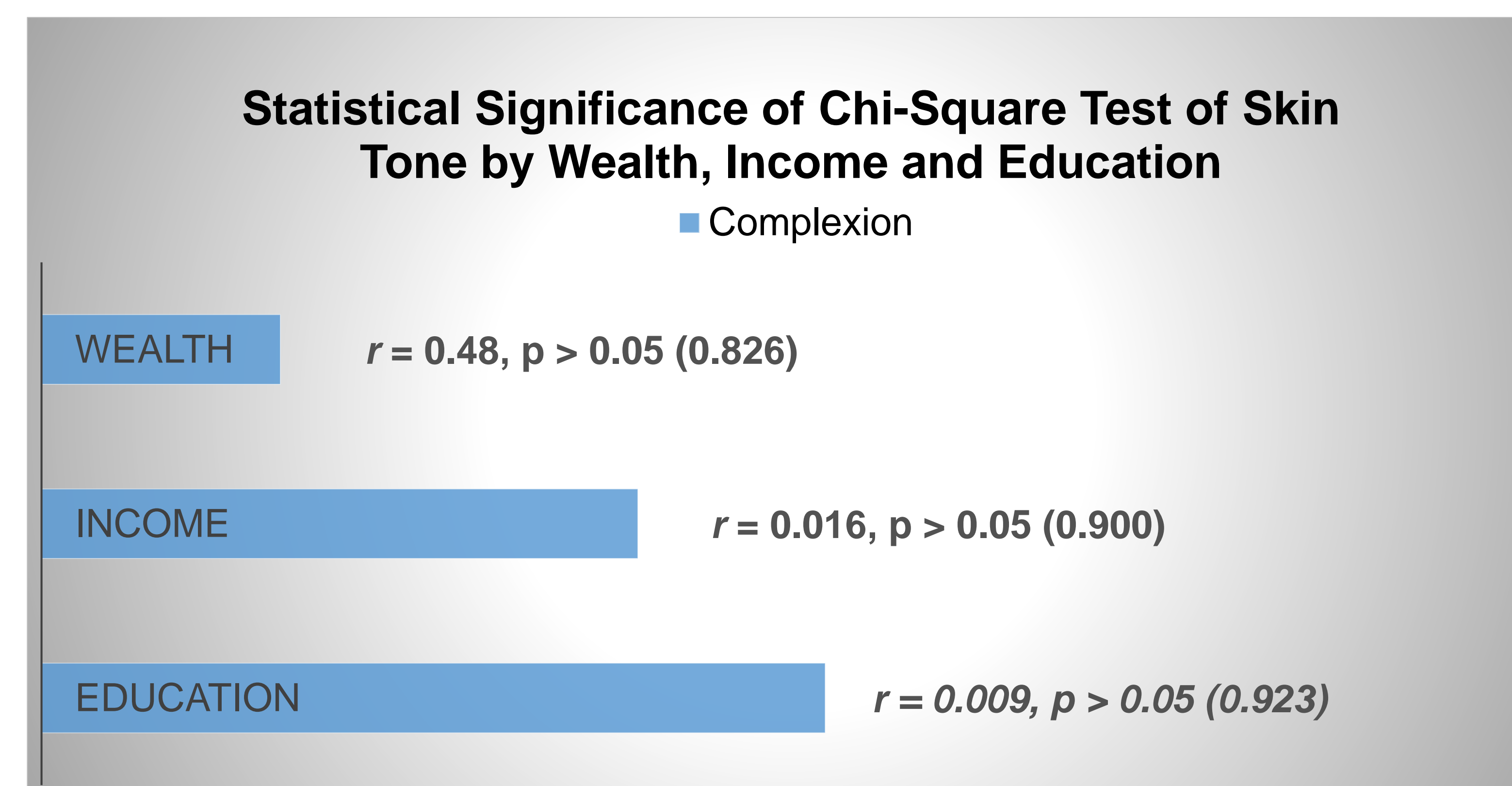
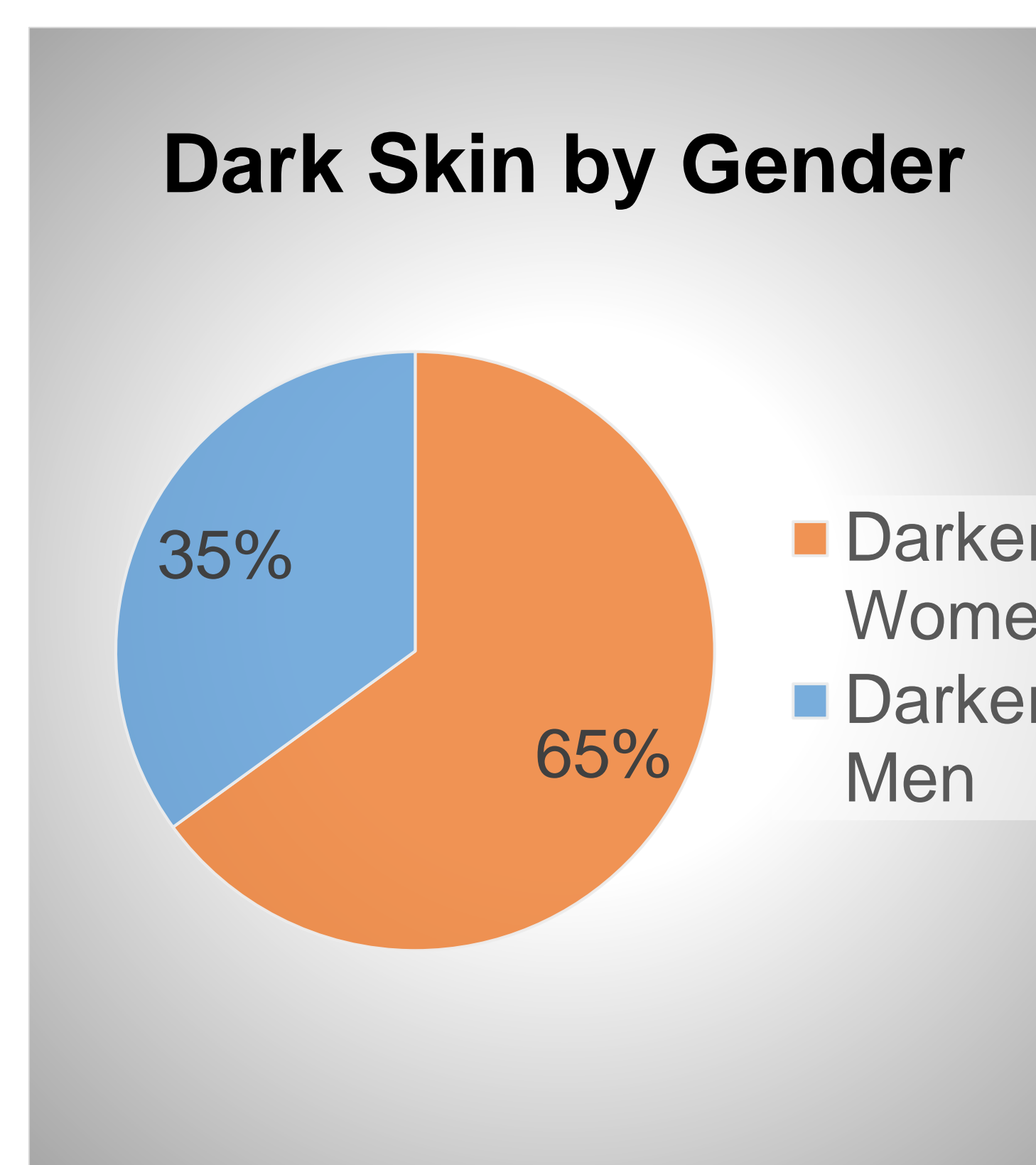
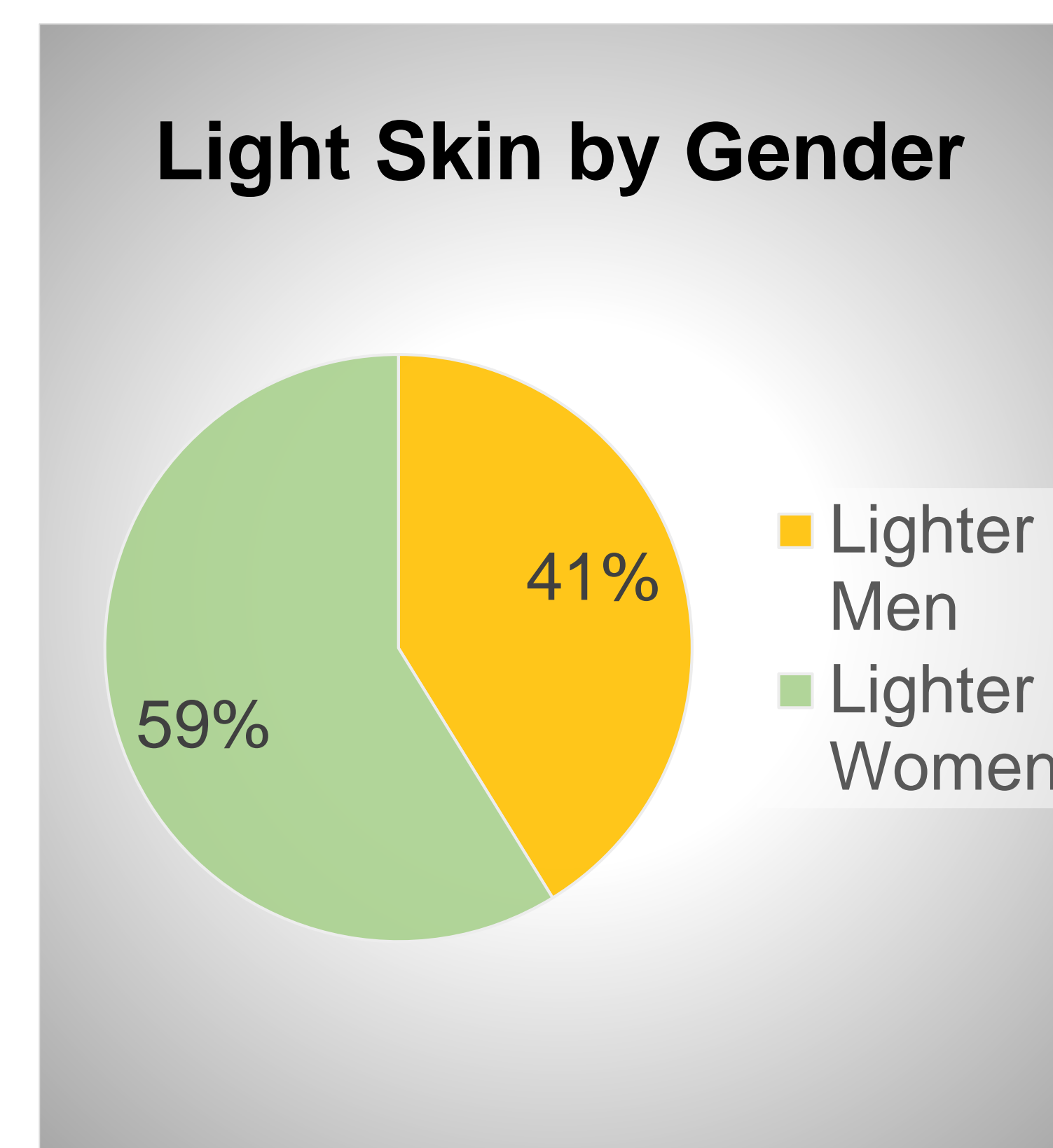
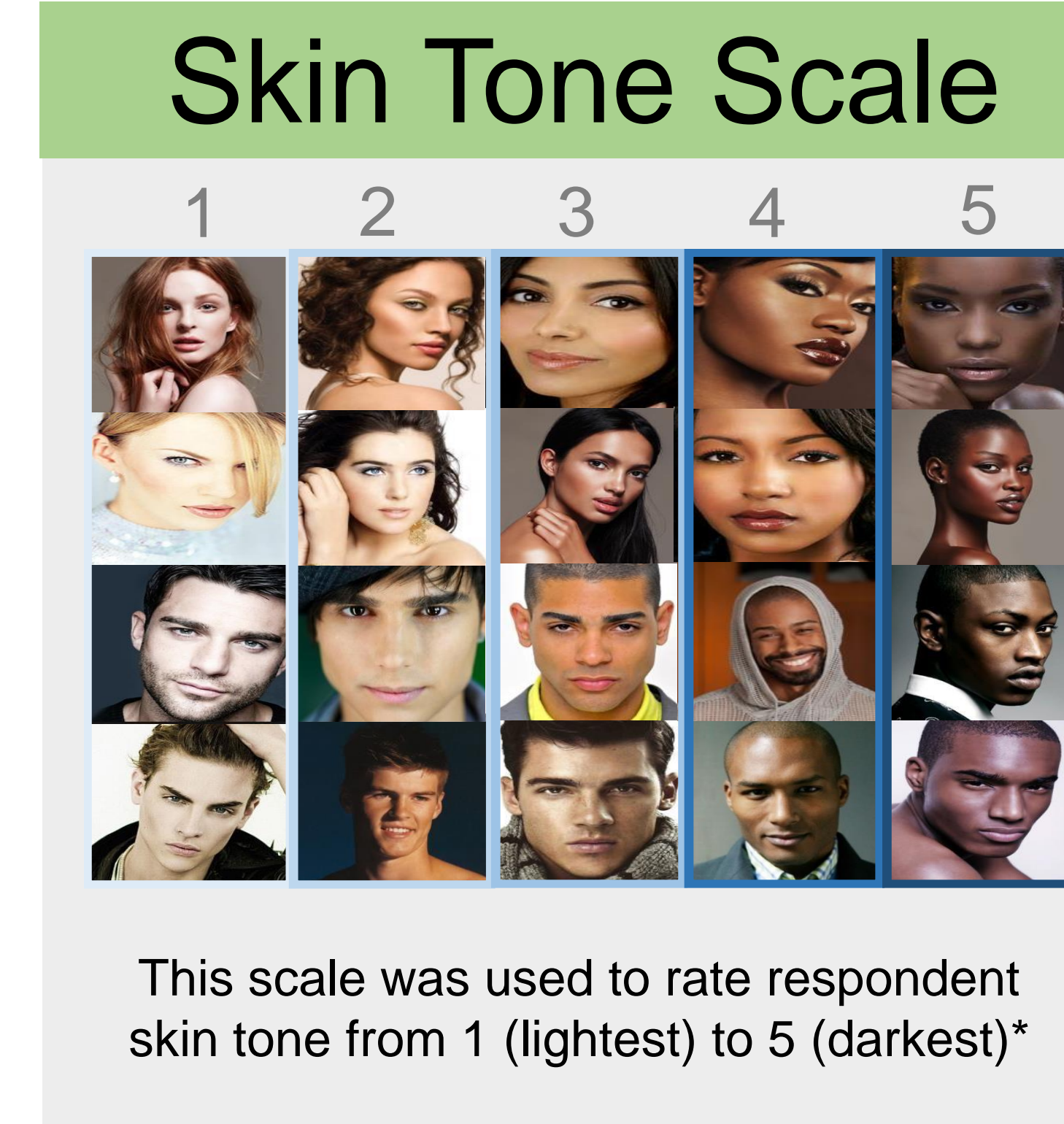
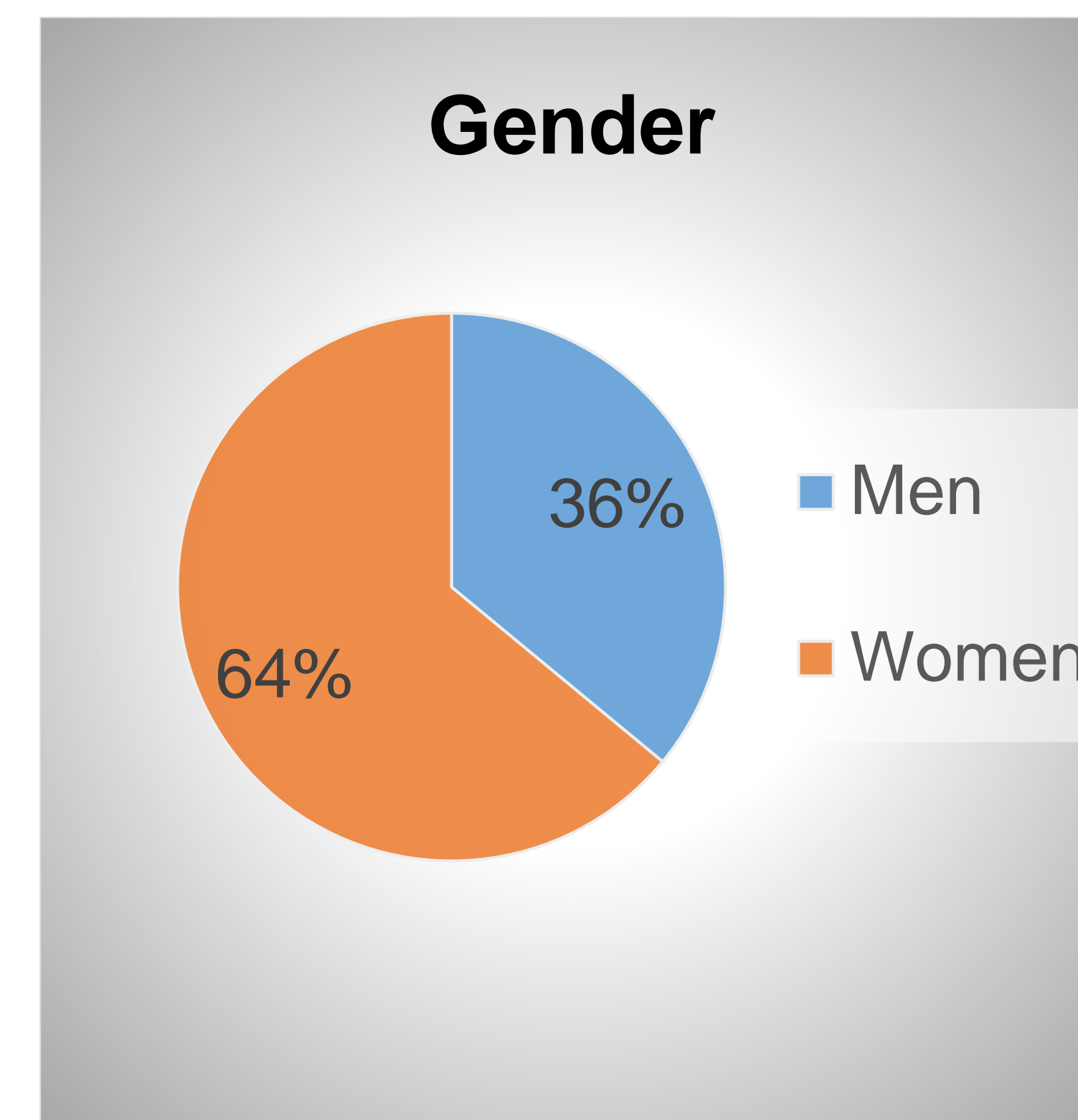
Introduction

- Colorism is the preferential treatment of people based on skin tone (Forester-Scott, 2013).
- Colorism is typically discussed in terms of intraracial discrimination and prejudice, but colorism permeates racial boundaries and can occur interracial (Forester-Scott, 2013).
- The effects of colorism can have negative social, economic, and personal impacts on both individuals and groups (Diette, T. M., et al., 2008).
- **Research Question:** how, if at all, does colorism present itself within the Black middle class?
- This quantitative analysis examines different life outcomes of members of the Black middle class based on their skin tone—wealth, income, and education.

Data and Methods

- This study is part of a larger project that consists of a population of 74 members of the Black middle class in the Washington, D.C. metro area.
- Respondents are 25 years or older, single, living alone, and childless (SALAs)(Marsh et al., 2007).
- Respondents were interviewed and given a self-reported survey. Respondents and interviewers reported skin tone*
- Data was recoded and analyzed in SPSS:
 - ❖ Skin tone: “lighter” (tones 1-3) and “darker” (tone 5), tone 4 omitted.
 - ❖ Wealth and income: “below \$50,000” and “\$50,000 or more”
 - ❖ Education: “Bachelor’s degree or less” and “Advanced degree”
 - ❖ Age: “below 35” and “35 and older”.
- The final sample consists of 37 respondents.
- Bivariate analyses with a Chi-Square test:
 - ❖ Independent variable: skin tone
 - ❖ Dependent variables (life outcomes): wealth, income, and education
 - ❖ Control variables: gender and age.

Measures of Central Tendency			
	Average	Median	Range
Age	38	37	25-56
Income	\$96,814	\$94,500	\$34,500-\$150,000
Wealth	\$87,486	\$124,500	\$4,500-\$150,000



Results and Discussion

- The results of the descriptive statistics:
 - ❖ More than half (64%) of the sample consists of women
 - ❖ There is a higher percentage of lighter skin women (59%) than lighter skin men
 - ❖ Two-thirds (65%) of darker skinned respondents are women

Life outcomes:

- The results of the Chi-Square tests for skin tone and the outcome variables are:
 - ❖ Education, income, and wealth are not statistically significant
- Statistical significance of Chi-Square tests controlling for gender:
 - ❖ Education, income, and wealth are not statistically significant
- Statistical significance of Chi-Square test controlling for age:
 - ❖ Education, income, and wealth are not statistically significant

Discussion:

- Results indicate that skin tone is not a significant factor amongst SALAs.

Limitations and Future Research

- This analysis only compares the outcomes of individuals of the Black middle class who are single (not married), living alone (without a romantic partner), 25 or older, and childless. As a result, this study can not be considered a complete analysis of the Black middle class.
- A qualitative analysis of the experiences of people in the Black middle class who have experienced forms discrimination related to colorism.

References

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