

Role of Product Colour in Consumer Behaviour

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Abstract: *In the present scenario, rapid market development and attraction of new customers & even preserving the old customers is the concern of many business organizations. Therefore, due to the intense competition, companies and organizations use diverse techniques of marketing. Due to the development of self-service stores the product selection of customers without any interference by the seller, one of the most important factor in today's scenario to attract new consumers is the colour of the product that exhibits more in product's packaging. Packaging a product is the unique blend of numerous components each of which can be effective in creating a certain image in the minds of consumers. Colour is the foremost factor in the attractiveness of packaging. The motive of this study is to address the difficulties that is being faced by the managers and packaging designers in conveying of the message as intended by the organization through the product's colour.*

A greater understanding of the impact of these visual aspects allows the marketing professionals to direct the content of their messages in a better way and find a much suitable position against the competing products. In this study, the researcher has attempted to review the relevant research papers and explain the importance of colour in attracting the customer. In this research, the consumer behaviour, the factors influencing the behaviour and the relevance of the element "Colour" have been carefully scrutinized, and then, the characteristics of different colours and their purpose and role in marketing have been described. The final section gives recommendations on how to attract more customers with regard to the functional nature of each product and its appropriate colour.

I. Introduction

The consumer behaviour is a controversial and demanding issue and involves the individuals and whatever they buy, why and how they buy, marketing mixed and market. Consumer behaviour is a compelling field to study. Since it is the consumers who acquire goods and services, they can use their day to day experiences in order to comprehend the concepts and theories of this field. Identifying consumer behaviour and appraisal of the consumer performance is of specific importance considering cultural dissimilarity in different societies. Consumer behaviour is a complex phenomenon due to the fact that individuals do not always behave frankly. Their performance as consumers is not usually foreseeable and even explainable. Individuals gain practical experience by observing shopping behaviour of others and doing their own shopping. (Johan, Michiel; 2010).

Human being has often been affected by colours either physically or psychologically. How humans are affected by colours is clearly a psychological nature which indirectly affect norms, reactions and individual behaviour. (Elm, 2012). Buying behaviours are the decision processes and acts of people that are involved in buying and using of products. For understanding the buying behaviour, we need to understand why consumers make the purchases and what factors control consumer purchases, and the altering factors in our society.

A firm needs to inspect buying behaviour because buyer's reactions to a firm's marketing strategy has a great impression on the firm's performance. It emphasises that a firm should make such strategies, which satisfies customers and therefore need to examine that what, when and where and how consumers buy. Marketers can better forecast how consumers will respond to marketing strategies. Consumer behaviour depends upon many factors

Brown said that most of the buyers were greatly influenced by a numerous factor, including prestige, advertising, and satisfactory familiarity in use, but in most occasions the authentic liking for a meticulous chief brand seemed pitiful. However, one significant factor is the psychological impact on consumer's mind of a particular product. (Brown, 1950) Sewall said that in market segments a lot of people were monitored, showing different intentions to purchase similar product. Colour is one of the basic things, which have a psychological impact on consumers mind and in result on his buying behaviour.

In our day to day life, there are plethora of things that we have taken for granted in the sense that we do not notice, acknowledge or even enjoy them to the fullest or sometimes even complain about them. Among those precious gifts existing in our life there are the ability to see things in colours and the colour itself. (Sewall

,1978)

Colour has an impact on every moment in life. It is a vital marketing communication tool, a memorable visual element and carries key symbolic and associative information about products (Garber, et al., 2000). It explosively influences the clothes we wear, the car that we drive, the backpack or hand bag that we choose to use, the shoes or sneakers we wear and the furnishings in our homes. The product's colour might play a remarkable role in the consumer's purchasing decisions for certain products (Ogden et al., 2010 ;Akçay et al., 2011). Many companies in the world hire colour experts and consultants to help identify the best colour for their product, one which would appeal to their potential buyers. 62-90% of a product purchase decision is based on the colour of the product and the decision is made instantly on seeing it (Singh, 2006; online, pcimag.com, 2002). Colour is a highly noticeable attribute for presenting images. It improves recognition, memory and increases subjects' attention (Wichmann, et al., 2002)

Psychological impact of colours on the process of consumer shopping behaviour has been examined in this article. To attract customer, colour is considered to be a crucial factor. Being acquainted with psychological impact of colours and its different fusions would be of great help to designers. Designers pick out a particular colour based on the nature of the product (Rouland, 1999). In addition, particular colours could be symbolized by marketers by using association theory and can be used as an experimental sign or image expansion.

Research on Colour scheming is resulting in increased awareness and popularity among numerous marketing researchers. The main reason behind this is that human brain receives signals faster through eyes rather than ears. Young supported this by demonstrating the impact of luminous body and its coloured particles, when they get into the eyes of a human being. It's obvious that one feels the visuals readily and uses other senses afterwards.

(Young ,1802) Palmieri and et al explained that the visual appearance of objects first moves to neural activity within diverse brain areas and helps in the product acknowledgment and identification. By using divergent methods, we can increase the quality of visuals used in ads and packaging. Now-a-days, we see that product with an effective colour scheming attains success in consumers while many products fail due to poor colour scheming. Brightness of colours and their saturation levels have different impacts according to the saturation level. (Palmeri et al.,2002)

Consumer Behaviour

Blackwell, Miniard and Engel define consumer behaviour as —activities people undertake while obtaining, consuming, and disposing of products and services. During the long history of marketing, consumer behaviour has always been an appealing field for marketers who are market-oriented rather than product-oriented, since it is the study of why people buy. With the insights acquired about the reasons people buy particular products, services or brands, marketers can then develop strategies to influence purchasing behaviour of consumers.

Sequential Effects of Response to Marketing

Marketing activities are no longer behaving as a one-way road from marketers to audience. It is important for marketers to truly understand how the audience in general and consumers in particular acknowledge to their marketing efforts. Evans, Jamal and Foxall introduced a model called as the hierarchy (or sequence) of communication effects which comprises of seven stages —exposure, attention, perception, learning, attitude, action, and post-purchase

However, like other economic and business models, it is not mandatory that consumers follow this order in all purchasing conditions; this model rather provides marketers a logical structure to integrate psychological concepts with the purpose of illuminating: why and how people respond to marketing activity. (Evans, Jamal, Foxall ,2006)



Fig 1: Sequential Effects of Response To Marketing

Colour

Colour can be differentiated in hue, brightness and saturation (Valdez & Mehrabian, 1994). Based on hue, colours are broadly divided into cool and warm. Cool colours are also known as colours with short wavelengths that's is violet and blue. Warm colours are also known as colours with long wavelengths i.e. red and orange. There exists a hierarchy in colours from violet, blue and green i.e. short-wavelength colours to

yellow, orange and red that is long-wavelength colours (Crowley, 1993). Brightness and saturation also play a significant role in the perception of colour. Brightness regulates the lightness or darkness of a colour. Much light reflection indicates a light colour, lower light reflection indicates a dark colour. Saturation points to the purity of a colour: high saturation depicts a pure colour and low saturation a pale, greyish colour. Colours are seen as more pleasant by an increase of both characteristics (Camgöz, Yener&Güvenç, 2002; Crozier, 1996). Hemphill proved that bright colours are related with positive feelings such as happiness, joy and hope. Grandjean also proposed that brighter colours are examined as being friendlier, more cultured, pleasant and beautiful. In contrast, dark colours can evoke negative feelings, such as boredom and sadness (Camgöz et al., 2002).

Elliot and Maier found that colours may stimulate associations and reactions. According to the researchers, the meaning of colour can be dual. First, the meaning of colours can be a result of learned associations, for example red, orange and green colours on the traffic lights. Second, the meaning of colours can be deduced by nature i.e. relation between black and death. (Elliot , Maier ,2007) Tofle, Schwartz, Yoon and Max-Royale also stated that emotional reactions evoked by colour are conclusions of learned associations based on culture and characteristics of an individual. (Tofle, et al ,2004)

Wexner analysed the relation between colour and mood. Participants were faced with coloured cards and asked to indicate their relations with different moods. Cool colours were associated with calmness and serenity. In contrast, warm colours were associated with stress and excitement. However, the participants in the study were only exposed to coloured cards and not actually situated in a coloured environment. According to Wexner there is a relationship between wavelength and level of arousal. These findings were later confirmed by Valdez and Mehrabian who concluded that long-wavelength colours were more arousing than short-wavelength colours (Valdez & Mehrabian, 1994).

Colours have the capability to lure attention, this is called the approach orientation of colour (Bellizzi, Crowley and Hasty, 1983). Retailers can use this to kindle approach behaviour. Research of Bellizzi and Hite demonstrated that in a blue shopping environment as compared to a red one, people were more inclined to look around and buy products. In a less distracting blue environment, less purchasing decisions were postponed and more money was spent. (Bellizzi , Hite ,1992) Bellizzi, Crowley and Hasty examined approach behaviour and attractiveness of different colours in an experimental study. The study quantified the distance and angle at which participants were sitting down relative to a coloured wall. (Bellizzi, Crowley and Hasty, 1983)

Meanings of Colours

In order to employ colours in marketing activities, marketers ought to understand which emotions & needs each colour can trigger from the target customers. The meanings related with colours may vary from culture to culture; there is absolutely no universal meaning applied for any colour. Today, the most popular researches that depicted what feelings that colours may represent and trigger are from North America. With the global expansion of North American culture, the definition of colour meanings by people around the world have been alternated and gently shares some common points. The North American set of colour meanings shown below is also similar to the Western world and it is the most closely applicable to the Finnish culture. (Scott-Kemmis 2013).

The Connotations of Colors in Daily Life and Marketing

Color	Connotation
Red	celebration, purity, passion, strength, energy, fire, love, excitement, speed, heat, arrogance, ambition, leadership, masculinity, power, danger, blood, war, anger, revolution, and communalism
Blue	depression, tranquility, trust, confidence, conservatism, dependability, wisdom, wealth royalty, truthfulness, and creativity
Green	growth, rebirth, renewal, nature, fertility, youth, good luck, generosity, health, abundance, stability, and creative intelligence
Yellow	sunlight, joy, earth, optimism, intelligence, hope, liberalism, wealth, dishonesty, weakness, greed, decay aging, femininity, gladness, sociability and friendship
White	youth, sterility, light, reverence, truth, snow, air, cleanliness, coldness, fearfulness and humility
Black	absence, rebellion, modernity, power, sophistication, formality, elegance, mystery, style, evil, emptiness, darkness, seriousness, conventionality, unity, sorrow, professionalism, and sleekness
Gray	elegance, respect, reverence, wisdom, old-age, pessimism, boredom, decay, dullness, urban sprawl, intense emotions, balance, mourning, and neutrality
Orange	energy, heat, fire, playfulness, gaudiness, arrogance, warning, danger, desire, royalty, and religious ceremonies and rituals
Brown	calmness, boldness, depth, natural organisms, richness, tradition, heaviness, poverty, dullness, roughness, steadfastness, simplicity, dependability, friendliness and aids in stimulating appetite and is popularly used for advertising various bakery products, chocolates, foods and flavors
Pink	gratitude, appreciation, admiration, sympathy, socialism, health, femininity, love, marriage, joy, innocence, flirtatiousness, childlike behavior and symbolizes sweet taste
Purple	nobility, humility, spirituality, ceremony, mystery, wisdom, enlightenment, flamboyance, exaggeration, sensuality, pride, and lavender essence
Indigo	spirituality and intuition
Violet	elegance, grace and artistic creativity
Magenta	artistic creativity
Rose	optimism, hope and love and used in advertising to signify rosy flavors

Basis Of Colour Preferences

The colours that we perceive in this world are not exactly the same, they are different due to their dependence on lighting condition, observing patterns as well as surrounding environment, particularly other adjacent colours, can affect the manner the brain perceives a specific colour.

Furthermore, even when we can see the same colour, how we perceive it, what it means to us and which emotions it can trigger from us vary largely from one individual to another. The reason for this ununiformed and varied colour perception and preference is that they are coloured by our gender, our age, our education, our culture we grew up in and preconceived colour beliefs of the societies we live in, our childhood associations with certain colours, and our life experiences, whether those associations are negative or positive (Scott-Kemmis 2013).

In a study by Choungourian it was found that variations in colour preferences indicate individual differences. Choungourian's subjects were from four diverse national backgrounds—the United States, Lebanon, Iran, and Kuwait. There were 160 subjects, with an equal representation of males and females for each nationality. Some marked variations in colour preferences were observed among the subjects from the different countries. Americans had the highest preference for red and blue, but these were not preferred by subjects from

the other countries. "Blue-green, which is the least preferred in the United States, takes as its preference value the first position in Iran and Kuwait ,Choungourian's findings indicate definite cultural differences in colour preferences.

Females tend to have wider range of colour preferences and these preferences typically differ from those of males. In addition, it is not rare that a number of Western males are red/green colour blind. However, there are also unisex colours such as white, black, blue, red, silver or gold which can be used in marketing materials to target both males and females. The more mature we become, we switch from bright and primary colours in solid blocks to more subdued and sophisticated colours with patterns. Reaching the adulthood, people seem to be less open for experimenting with new colours; instead they rather stick with their safer favourites. In a similar manner with age, the more educated people become the more complex their colour choices seem to be, with relatively unusual names given. Moreover, climate and the nature of the living environment have huge impacts on people's colour perception and preferences. People have a tendency to duplicate the colours that they are familiar with and become part of their lives. Thus, it is to believe that people from tropical climate respond more positive to bright and warm colours, while who live in colder regions prefer cooler and more toned down colours. (Scott-Kemmis 2013).

Role of Colour in Consumer Behaviour

Relationship between colours and buying behaviour is very intense. Product's packaging and colour have direct and foremost impact on consumers psyche. Therefore, it is important to do research on this topic to differentiate which colour mostly impact positively and which impact negatively on consumer's choice and consequently on buying behaviour. The conclusion of Brody et al. (1981) research shows that T.V advertisements have a great influence on children consumerism. So, the children do not know about the considerable components or quality of a product. They are only mesmerized towards the colours of the product. Therefore, if an advertisement has good colour scheme, it will surely attract a lot of children and therefore buyers for the company. A good commercial attracts children's attention and hence persuade their parents for buying the product (Brody et al., 1981).

Earlier studies unveil that roughly 80 percent of the hiring decisions are based on exterior factors, and that 65 percent of that involves clothing colour. Brown and green seem to arouse confidence hence, some designers use this information for intake interviews. In addition, black and deep blue colours imply authority. All this shows the importance of colours in human perception and hence decisions.

It is undeniable that colour can help in attracting consumers' attention since by nature we humans can quickly spot colourful items and on general level, colour tends to grab the attention more than monochrome. The reason is that our pre-attentive system of the brain has been designed and evolved to easily detect colour from the external environment, and more importantly this system has the immediate function of selecting items for subsequent attentional processing. However, in the world, colour never stays alone and it is impossible to be perceived on its own but in the symphony with other adjacent colours; thus using colour to capture consumers' attention can face some obstacles of depending largely on the surroundings in which the item with target colour(s) is placed and indeed different colours possess unique attention values. (Evans ym. 2006, 33; Jansson-Boyd 2010, 50.)

II. Conclusion

Today, companies have realized the miraculous effect of colours. Colours can arouse the interest and thus increase the desire to purchase the product. The results of Bellizzi's study (1983) and his colleagues also confirm this issue. Colours in marketing directly affect the consumer behaviour and the effects of colours determine the behaviour of many consumers. The results of this study indicate that colours can stimulate the interest and increase the desire to purchase the product and the results of Elliot's study (2004) and his colleagues confirm this issue. Colours improve the business in increasing the advertising effectiveness to eliminate the ambiguities of brands and even creating the new income. Consumers consider some colours as associated with specific products which make the understanding of how people react to colours much more difficult. Each colour must be used in a suitable product according to its psychological characteristics and the results of Scott-Kemmis's study (2013) confirm this issue. Manufacturing companies that intend to produce a product which boosts energy, sense of exhilaration, and excitement in people must use warm colours like red, yellow and orange such as the production of energy drinks, sport cars and chocolates that the lovers give to each other on Valentine's Day. On the contrary, when the companies intend to induce the tranquillity, peace and comfort to their customers, they must use cool colours like blue and green in their products such as comfortable furnishings, bottles of mineral water, bed clothes, and so on. A study by Wexner (1954) confirms these results. The inappropriate use of colours in products not only attracts the customers but also may prevent them from buying the product. Today, due to the development of self-service stores and the fewer roles of sellers, the

colours psychology has become more important in the production and packaging of products, so that it greatly guarantees the preservation of manufacturing companies. The use of attractive and eye-catching packaging makes our products to show off more among thousands of items in stores' shelves and encourage customers to buy. The results of this study show that colours can have different connotations in different cultures and ethnicities. Cultural differences play an important role in the interest or hatred towards various colours that are consistent with the results of Choungourian's study (1972). Colours in products for children play a significant role to attract them and the results of Brodly's study (1981) and his colleagues also confirm this issue. Manufacturing companies must consider the demographic characteristics of the targeted society such as age and gender in producing each product.

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