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Research Article

CONSUMERS' PREFERENCE TOWARDS COLOURS WITH RESPECT TO SELECT PRODUCTS

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ABSTRACT

Colours exercise powerful effects and induce reactions based on both instincts and associations. Colours alter the meanings of the objects or situations with which they are associated and colour preferences can predict consumers' behavior. It is argued that a consumers' perspective of colour research and application is imperative for developing marketing strategies. This article reviews the preferences of colour among students in Chidambaram region with regard to mobile phone pouches, hand bags and soft drinks. The result shows that yellow, black and orange are the most preferred colours for the products mobile phone pouches, hand bags and soft drinks respectively.

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INTRODUCTION

Colour is ubiquitous and is a source of information. People make up their minds within 90 seconds of their initial interactions with either people or products. About 62-90 per cent of the assessment is based on colours alone. So, student use of colours can contribute not only to differentiating products from competitors, but also to influencing moods and feelings – positively or negatively – and therefore, to attitude towards certain products. Given that our moods and feelings are unstable and that colours play roles in forming attitude, it is important that managers understand the importance of colours in marketing. The study is designed to contribute to the debate.

Colour

Colour provides a unique source of information for picking out an object from its background (detection). Besides aiding our ability to detect the presence of objects, colour also helps us recognize (identification) and distinguish (discrimination) them from other objects in the environment. Evidently, colour provides a clear landmark that allows us to direct our attention to objects within a cluttered environment, thereby improving our ability to notice changes in those objects or to judge their shapes (Brawn and Snowden, 1999). Colour also makes it easier and faster to recognize objects, and it helps us to remember what we've seen (Gegenfurtner and Rieger, 2000). So, colour has emotional and aesthetic impact, but the main purpose of colour perception is to help us detect, discriminate, identify, and remember objects.

Colours are having several meaning. Red stimulates appetite and energy levels, raises blood pressure and makes a person feel hot. Blue is non-threatening and is a colour of trust and dependability. Green is one of the most-often cited favorite colours. It represents nature, environment, health, good luck, renewal, youth, vigor, safety, sourness, spring, generosity, fertility, Christmas, jealousy, inexperience, envy, money and misfortune. Orange is a safe colour and alerts our attention. Orange is a combination of yellow and red. It is stimulating but less so than red

Colour is an integral element of corporate and marketing communications. It induces moods and emotions, influences consumers' perceptions and behaviour and helps companies position or differentiate from the competition. However, the literature in the public domain has a largely focus and the notion of colour Universality is fraught with risk. A large section of the colour research on products, packages and advertisements remains unpublished because of competitive concerns (Bellizzi *et al.*, 1983). Inappropriate choice of product or package colours may also lead to strategic failure (Ricks, 1983). Although sketchy business anecdotes are available, many of the questions related to colour remain unanswered. Assuming a narrow perspective of colours as 'universal' and applying it to alien markets has often led to cultural faux pas and there is need for a systematic colour theory in marketing.

Judgments about colours are frequent in the market place. Consumers often buy products in the colours that they find most pleasing at the time of purchase and, knowing that, firms often rely on colours to appeal emotionally and aesthetically to

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consumers. The colourful mobile phone pouch, bags and soft drinks use colours to influence consumer preference, recall, search patterns, inferential processes, and ultimately, decision making (Gorn *et al.*, 1997; Miller and Kahn 2005). Colours are powerful signals, in part, because of their readily accessible emotional tones. Indeed, research has shown that colours are associated with and inducers of specific emotional states (D'Andrade and Egan, 1974; Valdez and Mehrabian, 1994). However, in spite of the robust evidence of colour's impact on emotion, the literature is surprisingly silent about the inverse relationship—that is, the impact of a viewer's emotion on his/her colour preference. The current research, therefore, investigates whether and how emotions influence colour preference. Because colours are so spontaneously linked to emotional states. Studying the impact of emotions on colour preference can also help us tackle another critical question, yet to be systematically explored in the emotion and aesthetics literature.

Literature related to the research

Goldstein's (1942) proposed that red and yellow are naturally experienced as stimulating and disagreeable, that these colours focus people on the outward environment, and that they produce forceful, expansive behavior, whereas green and blue are experienced as quieting and agreeable, focus people inward, and produce reserved, stable behavior. Subsequent researchers have tended to interpret Goldstein's proposal in terms of wavelength and arousal: Longer-wavelength colours like red are experienced as arousing, and shorter-wavelength colours like green are experienced as calming (Stone & English, 1998).

Existing research on these proposals tends to be sparse and spotty, occasionally supporting some hypotheses but not others. Although the popular and even scientific literatures commonly state as fact that long-wavelength colors are arousing and shortwave length colours are calming, the actual data simply are not supportive. Frank and Gilovich's (1988) proposal is supported by some data, but that preferred by Soldat *et al.* (1997) is not.

Furthermore, the extant research on colour and psychological functioning in general is plagued by several weaknesses. First, perhaps due to the applied nature of the work, many studies have neglected to follow basic experimental procedures such as experimenter blindness to hypothesis and condition. Second, many of the manipulations in these studies have been uncontrolled (e.g., presenting color on an office wall for 4 days) or have altered participants' typical perceptual experience (e.g., presenting color via overhead lights).

It is important to market to teens because of their large discretionary income and ability to purchase luxury items. The teen market has many opportunities for marketers, but there are also many challenges involved in the marketing process (Chaet, 2012). Their buying power is huge because most of their money is spent directly on themselves, as they usually do not have many financial responsibilities. But recent unemployment rates among teenagers have been increasing and have impacted their buying power. Teens tend to spend their money on clothes, food and candy, soft drinks and recorded music. They influence household spending of big and small purchases. Older teens have more influence on personal computers, cell phones and personal care products. Magazines have a huge

influence on teenager's lives. They are bombarded with advertisements and they trust magazine advertising more than other media. Most teens consider themselves to be brand loyal and have an emotional connection with products (Carter, 2011). Male teen shoppers are believed to buy brand; while female teens tend to buy style. Females prefer softer colours and males prefer brighter colours. Females are more likely than males to have favorite colour (Khoub, 2003). Though several studies were focused on college students but the influence of colour on college students is found to be less. The present market comprises of youngsters as its predominant decision makers are buyers. Hence, it is important to study about the influence of colour college students.

Objective of the study

To identifying the consumers' preferences towards colour with regard to select product categories.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research conducted was descriptive research for the study. Descriptive research includes surveys and fact finding questionnaires. Descriptive research was conducted to evaluate existing system.

The technique used for the research is the non probability. Because, the respondents is infinite. The sampling technique selected for the study is convenient sampling technique. The respondents are students and the sample size for the study was 230 students studying in various departments of Annamalai University, Chidambaram. The primary data collection method was survey method.

The products chosen for the study are mobile phone pouches, hand bags and soft drinks. The products are selected based on pretest conducted among 25 students. In pretest the students were asked to give the names of five products for which they give more importance to colour. Based on the response, top 3 products are chosen namely mobile phone pouches, hand bags and soft drinks.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

After conducting the study the questionnaires (230) were collected and analyzed using simple percentage method. The result are given in the following table.

Table Respondent's preference of colours for select products

Colour	Mobile phone pouches		Bags		Softdrink	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Red	34	15.5	35	15.9	19	8.6
Blue	37	16.8	35	15.9	18	8.2
Yellow	38	17.3	29	13.2	43	19.5
White	21	9.5	15	6.8	28	12.7
Green	9	4.1	6	2.7	15	6.8
Black	32	14.5	39	17.7	30	13.6
Orange	30	13.6	27	12.3	58	26.4
Purple	17	7.7	10	4.5	5	2.3
Brown	12	5.5	35	15.9	11	5.0
Grey	2	0.9	14	6.4	7	3.2

The result from the above table shows that the respondents while purchasing mobile phone pouch, yellow (17.3%) is the most preferred color. The next preferences are blue (16.8%), red (15.5%) and black colors (14.5%). However, orange color is preferred by 13.6 percent of the respondents which is

followed by white (9.5%), Purple (7.7%), brown (5.5%), green (4.1%) and grey (0.9%) colors. From the above it is concluded that the yellow and blue are the most preferred colors in Mobile phone pouches while Brown, Green and Grey are the least preferred colors.

On purchasing bags respondents prefer black (17.7%), red (15.9%), blue (15.9%), brown (15.9%), and yellow colors (13.2%), while orange (12.3%), white (6.8%), grey (6.4%), purple (4.5%), and green, (2.7%). colors are preferred by less number of respondents. Hence, it is concluded that blue, red, black and brown are the most prefer colors of bags while, purple and green are the least preferred colors.

Likewise in soft drink purchase, majority of the respondents prefer Orange color (26.4%). The next preferences are yellow (19.5%), black (13.6%) and white colors (12.7%). However, red color is purchased by 8.6 percent of the respondents which is followed by blue (8.2%), green (6.8%), brown (5.0%), grey (3.2%), and purple (2.3%). Therefore, it is concluded that orange and yellow are the most preferred colors in soft drink while, Brown, grey, and purple are the least preferred colors.

Colour is an influential factor that must be considered in all aspects of a business's marketing mix. Colour should play a vital role in the advertising and marketing strategy of a firm (Elliot & Maier, 2014). Product colour is an important influencing factor in the purchase of certain product categories. For example, Madden *et al.* (2000) state that colour is one of the top three factors that influence consumers when buying an certain products. Consumers prefer certain products in specific colours. Blue, red, black and white are consumers' most preferred colours when buying certain products (Fehrman & Fehrman 2000; Grossman & Wisenblit 1999).

It is interesting to note from the present study that the black and red are the most preferred colours in hand bag category. It is quite obvious that any person prefer black colour bags because, black colour does not project or highlight stains. However, red colours are also more attractive in nature. Hence, black and red are occupied a permanent place in the consumers' mind while they purchase hand bags.

In mobile phone pouches category, students now-a-days prefers fancy colours that should attract others attention. Yellow, blue and red are basically attractive in nature therefore students prefer those colours as their mobile phone pouches. As far as soft drinks are concerned, students prefer the regular colours of soft dinks namely orange, yellow and black. Most of the soft drinks come in these three colours. This study was aimed to identify the other preferred colours in soft drinks category, but consumers restrict their preference to orange, yellow and black colours.

CONCLUSION

These findings can help organizations targeting specific product to design their products to maximize exposure to students. We therefore recommend that certain colours besides students preference be used for purchasing purposes when targeting products. Marketers of the selected products targeted at students should consider the colours preferred by the target market to improve the sales.

Further, research could be preferred by considering different brands in same product category which will give to identify product differentiation.

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