

# Impact of Color Customer Behavior

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**Abstract :** *Consumer behavior is the one of the significant areas to be focused in today's modern business. Therefore, this paper reviews previous studies about the impact of color customer behavior and find out the relationship between varying color and buying customer behavior.*

## Introduction

Humans sustain a long relationship with color. Historically, meanings are associated with a color. For instance, the color blue represents clean, calm, and the heavens, while the color red represents hot, dangerous, and blood. These color associations and perceptions have extended into sociology and have been incorporated into the marketing of consumer goods. For example, a popular powder laundry detergent added blue crystals to the white detergent and employed an advertising slogan "with added bluing for extra whiteness." A survey of supermarket shelves lends support to color associations with a multitude of blue colored detergents and packaging.

Some industry creative directors consider color the most important element of a package. Often, color identifies and distinguishes a company's goods from its competitors. Researchers have spent the last four decades examining the behavior of consumers in the market place. More specifically, researchers have examined the effect media advertising has on consumers' attitudes and evaluations of products and social issues. so this paper is going to examine how influence consumer behavior color. The purpose of this paper is to let readers know about the important relationship between color and consumer behavior.

## Consumer Behavior

The phrase "consumer behavior" refers to a discipline of social science research that examines how the consumer acts in the marketplace. More specifically, consumer behavior research focuses on: 1) what influence the consumer's actions in the marketplace and 2) how those influences affect the purchase behavior of the consumer. Consumer behavior refers to the feelings and thoughts people experience, and the actions they take while engaging in the consumption process. Consumer behavior also includes the things in the environment (product appearance, price information, advertisements, packaging, consumer comments, shelf positioning, etc.) that influence the feelings and actions of the consumer. In addition,

consumer behavior involves a process of exchange between buyers and sellers. People exchange money to obtain products or services. In short, consumer behavior involves the study of what things in the marketplace environment influence the feelings and actions of people while shopping. The behavior of consumers is constantly changing. The wants and needs of individual consumers, society as a whole, and specific consumer groups change at different times due to the constant evolution of feelings and attitudes.

## Color

Response to Color has fascinated psychologists for many decades. One of the first topical areas to be explored was that of Color preferences. Jastrow (1897) pointed out that although aesthetic judgments are generally considered to be peculiar to the individual, they are also subject to influences that are common to all humans. Thus, a distribution of particular likes and dislikes, such as Color preferences, may show a consensus and may lead to greater understanding of the influences underlying aesthetic preferences. Jastrow displayed a series of colored paper at the 1893 World Exposition, and had visitors to the display "vote for" their favorite Color. The general favorite was blue, followed by red. The least preferred Color were orange and its related hues, while greens, violets, and yellows were chosen by moderate numbers of people. According to Walton, Guilford, and Guilford (1933) combined and reported the results of Color preference studies conducted in university classes over a period of 20 years. Eighteen Colors were presented in pairs, each Color being paired with all other Colors, and the subjects indicated their preferences for one of the Color in each pair. From these responses, scale values were computed and plotted. Although the scale values of each Color fluctuated from year to year, the plots indicated that blue and red generally remained the most preferred Color, green received intermediate scale values, and yellow and orange were consistently least preferred over the years Jastrow (1897).

Color selections and their application may assist consumers with their purchasing behavior. For example, when a consumer needs to replace a routinely used item, the consumer scans the supermarket shelves for the packaging, color, then confirms the correct product choice by reading the brand name. Colors and shapes convey about 80%

of all visual communication. Consumers have developed a habit of using color as a means of gathering information. Thus, color must be considered as having an important role in marketing, advertising and academic research. Color in its basic nature refers to what the human eye sees when light passes through a prism and produces what is commonly referred to as violet, blue, green, yellow, orange, and red and is collectively referred to as the spectrum.

### **The Power of Color**

Individuals are often unaware of the tremendous influence Color have on them. Color attracts attention mostly because they are more vibrant than black and white. In regard to visual communication, there is power in the visibility of Color. Color attracts attention based on visibility. The color seen from the greatest distance attracts the eye quicker. When testing for Color visibility ratings the Color is often presented on a gray background. The maximum visibility and attracting power of a Color can be strengthened when it is used or placed with its complement. However, pure complementary Color vibrates, making them difficult to view. For example, it is believed that the Color yellow-orange has the greatest visibility and is most powerful when placed with its complement of blue-violet. To gain maximum visibility with complementary colors, one of the colors should be deepened or the two colors should be separated by white. To ensure maximum visibility a color should not be mixed with its complement or mixed with white (tint) or black (shade).

Mixing one color with another even has slightly changed the character of the first color, thus changing its power of visibility. For example red mixed with a slight amount of blue will alter the visibility of the red. Adding blue results in the red looking less like a pure red but more of a red-violet. The degree of coolness and warmth of a Color is an important component in visibility. Warm Color possesses more visibility and the higher the warmth the higher the visibility. Cool color possesses less visibility and the higher the coolness the lower the visibility. It is plausible that pure warm color should be used for maximum visibility for visual communication. When determining which color to use for maximum visibility the color of the background (the color that the highly visible color is placed on) should be considered. For example, a yellow orange has good visibility against a dark blue-violet background, but will have poor visibility against an orange background. When creating visual communication the background must be considered to achieve maximum visibility. Color with maximum visibility should not be used for text. Highly visible

Color is difficult to view for a prolonged period of time. Tests have demonstrated that Color has the power to increase the retention of an image in one's memory (Cheskin 1954). In the market place image retention is an important factor developing brand identity. The trademark of a business, product, or service serves the purpose of getting consumers accustomed to seeing the trademark image associated with the business, product, or service. The trademark with the greatest retention power is considered the best brand identity builder and has the potential to gain popularity over its competitors. For example, the trademark of the fast food chain McDonalds is yellow arches and the phrase the "golden arches" is often used in place of the name McDonalds. The phrase "golden arches" is a visual description of the trademark and Color and is used interchangeably with the restaurant name. In the marketplace, especially the supermarket, highly visible Color placed on packaging play an important role in catching the consumer's eye. The purpose of Color in the marketplace is to catch the buyer's eye. If the packaging does not catch the buyer's attention there is little chance the product within the packaging will end up in the consumer's home (Cheskin 1954). High Color visibility on packaging assists packaging with its role of the "silent salesman" as well as influencing the consumer at the point-of-purchase.

### **Color and Perception**

Research has revealed that certain Color spark specific brain activity and evoke emotions (Sharpe, 1974). As early as 1925, Matthew Lukiesh explained Color associations in *The Language of Color* (Lukiesh, 1925). Through experiments and references to art and literature Lukiesh discovered an association of Color to events, emotions, objects, and ideas that created a foundation for a language of Color. The Color associations, as explained by Lukiesh, are red--danger and blood; yellow or orange--warmth and sunlight; green--nature, springtime, and youth; blue--the sky or heavens and divinity; purple--royalty, superiority, and dignity; white--purity and innocence; black--fear, crime, and danger; and gray--age and maturity. Lukiesh conducted an experiment to test Color preference. He determined that a Color preference is influenced by factors of association and environment or influenced by aspects of everyday life. For example, the Color yellow could be preferred because it releases a reminder of the Color of grandma's kitchen and the cookies she used to bake. The results revealed men have a propensity toward blue and women have a propensity toward red.

The Lukiesh's experiment also revealed that both men and women prefer pure Color to tints (Color

with white added, i.e. pastels) or shades (Color with black added, i.e. burgundy, dark blue). A survey of current packaging designs suggests Lukiesh's, Schaie and Heiss' traditional Color associations appear to be evolving over time, but remains cited within academic research regarding Color associations. For example, yellow-green on food packaging was discouraged because yellow-green may be associated with spoiled or molded food but based on yellow-green is used in food packaging. Another example is the informal, societal yellow/coward association. Yet, yellow has an alternate association of patriotic support (i.e., yellow ribbons around trees to support fighting troops). The majority of the Color associations for red, yellow and blue, remains the traditional citations, although the Color associations appear to be evolving. Maybe after 40 years, it is time to test the Color associations against today's society.

#### **Packaging Design Color and Consumer Decision-making**

Some researchers have determined Color is crucial in capturing the attributes of a product, and packaging Color is a dominant visual attribute that can be seen from a considerable distance by shoppers. Studies suggest that redesigned packaging Color that are moderately to very dissimilar to the original packaging Color are considered novel and attract the consumer's attention and increase the consideration for purchase (Garber et al, 2000) study indicates that a change in package Color can enhance brand consideration for consumers who are not loyal to a particular brand. Other researchers have determined that packaging redesigns that apply Color and graphics extremely different from old packaging designs so much that it pushed the product beyond the acceptable regions of the product category, have negative effects on the attitude toward the package and the intent to purchase (Sable, et al, 2010). Various studies have found that packaging is a mean of attracting customer's attention towards a product (Lewalski, 1988).

Goldberg et al. (1999) emphasized that if non-verbal communication like Color etc, if they are removed from packaging and the use of verbal communication is increased (like images) then it highly attracts the customers especially when the brand is unfamiliar with the consumers.

Packaging applications have many color-coded messages which are associated with the particular product category (Stewart 2004, p. 7). Garber & Hyatt & Starr (2000); Koch & Koch, (2003) say that in case of food packaging, color can influence product expectations and perceptions (such as, taste) (Kauppinen-Räsänen & Luomala 2010).

According to (Kauppinen-Räsänen et al. 2010), Product packages in similar colors may attract attention by means of brand or product category. Dissimilar or novel colors may attract and be preferred by those customers who like novelty. The right choice of colors is an important factor in creating the impression needed to influence brand and product selection (Gofman et al. 2010)

#### **Color in Advertising and Consumer Influence**

It is a common practice to use Color in advertising to influence emotions and consumer behavior. Unfortunately, there is limited empirical research investigating Color in advertising. Researchers discovered that attention to advertisements increased when advertisements were printed in color rather than black and white. Also, advertisements printed in color did not elevate consumers' regard for the product or service advertised but did elevate their regard for the manufacturer or company. In other words, the advertiser or manufacturer yields a greater chance of gaining prestige in the market by printing advertisements in color and, thus, has an increased chance of being remembered. Color preferences differ between men and women. Yet, more recent research has refuted Color preference differences in gender when speaking more from a physiological aspect and less of a social, environmental, and cultural aspect. For example, exposure to certain Color (e.g., red) yield virtually identical responses (increased blood pressure, eye blink frequency, and respiratory rate) for men and women (Hupka et al, 1997). In addition, there may be Color preference differences between ethnic groups based on the differences in Color usage in print advertisements appearing in magazines that target black audiences or white audiences.

It has been concluded that advertisers are not utilizing Color to improve advertising response, and further research is needed regarding Color preferences according to race and gender. Furthermore, there is a need to examine ethnic and cultural differences in Color preferences and Color associations (Stanton et al, 1994). There have been studies on environmental Color and its influence on shopping behavior. One study examined Color in a retail store design and the ability of Color to attract consumers toward a retail display. Warm Color yielded a stronger attraction and pulled consumers further into the retail store than cool Color. Warm Color may be an optimal choice when the desire is to attract consumers into a retail establishment; however, some warm Color such as red were found to be negative and intense.

Color in ads and packaging and advertisements have strong impacts on consumer purchase decisions according to a number of researchers. Color create brand identity and students could

easily identify brands through color scheming. Color indicates the style followed by a consumer who purchases that product. The results of the study done by North et al. (2003) indicated that style is the most essential trait of clothing to women when making buying decisions, and price is the second most important trait. This shows that style which includes Color schemes, designs, and appearance of the product is a very important issue to be considered while planning for a new product. Red and green have different motivation level and behavioral impacts on individuals.

#### **Color Associations and Consumer Influence**

Consumers use packaging cues to give meaning to products and brands. For example, research indicates that a shiny label on a wine bottle indicates a less expensive product, and consumers will pay a higher price for gold foil wrapped candy boxes. Color is a commonly used cue to identify brands and shape perception of products. Research supports consumers use Color to perceive weight as well as temperature. The Tom et. al. (1987) study indicates that product perception is more influential than the product's objective reality. Consumers were given three different "flavors" of pudding. The three flavors were vanilla pudding with food coloring added (dark brown, medium brown, and light brown) to create the three pudding flavors. In their study it was concluded that Color proved to be more critical than taste in the consumer's identification and evaluation of the product (Hung et al, 2009).

Of the participants, 62% perceived the darkest brown pudding as having the best chocolate flavor and 61% of the participants perceived the darkest brown pudding as being the thickest. Tom et al. (1987) conclude it's not the product's objective reality that influences the consumer but their own subjective perception, and ultimately, consumers buy what they perceive. Unfortunately, few industry and academic studies on the impact of Color in packaging design exist (Hung et al, 2009). Perhaps commercial research was conducted on Color and packaging, but remained unpublished for proprietary reasons (Aslam,2006). This assumption is based upon the numerous marketing reports that appear in the public domain (such as, trade magazines, newspapers, and popular magazines) that forecast Color trends for the marketplace. Yet, academic studies on Color, packaging design, and consumer behavior utilize foundational Color associations established 80 years ago. The commercial studies overwhelmingly rely on sales trends. A sound theory of Color for marketing has not been established, hence the continual use of old foundational Color theory and Color association. The study of Color in the arena of marketing remains an infant state . It is proposed that further

research be conducted regarding color as it is used in the market place. More specifically, investigate the influence of packaging Color on consumer decision-making (Garber et al, 2000) .

#### **The Impact of Color on Consumer Behavior**

In the context of consumer behavior, numerous researchers have identified that, based on the impact that Color has on consumers, certain products gain increased marketability. Too often, Color functions as a means to build a strong corporate image if a firm manages to communicate a meaning of prestige to consumers. Moreover, given that consumers perceive Color differently based on their cultural and psychological influences, firms that are able to take advantage of different consumer reactions to the use of Color in marketing, can build a strong competitive advantage and increase the potential of success for their products and services. The use of Color in marketing evokes a series of diverse emotional responses and attitudes based on the influence that each Color exerts on each personality (Aslam,2006). Given Color is the first attribute that consumers notice on a product packaging Color can build sustainable consumer perceptions. Actually, it has been suggested that Color is the first attribute that consumers are attracted to when they seek for brand differentiation.

The use of Color in marketing has also the power to influence the consumer perceptions of price and quality. Consumers classify products into expensive and below average based on Color. For instance, in consumers' minds, black or gray products are typically perceived as expensive and valuable, whereas white products are often perceived as cheap. In this context, marketers use particular Color to convey quality signals to consumers and influence their purchasing decisions. In this context, color becomes an integral constituent of marketing strategies. Research also suggests that when Color is used as a marketing cue it contributes positively to organizational performance. Instead, unfortunate choice of product Color may lead to strategic failure.

#### **Conclusion**

Color is important not only in terms of aesthetics, but also because it carries meanings that can influence affect and behavior. People's daily experiences are saturated with Color, however scant research focuses on the influence of Color in marketing. Marketers have long used Color to catch consumers' attention and as a visual mnemonic device to support recognition. To connect with consumers and effectively communicate a brand's meaning, marketers continually need new and compelling means to reach consumers. Color can encourage connections

with consumers and should be embedded in a brand's DNA. Unfortunately for marketers though, the marketing literature offers them few guidelines, even as Color grows more important and the need for such investigations grows more imperative. Color may assist consumers with their purchasing behavior. For example, when a consumer replaces a used item, The he or she will scan the supermarket shelves for the familiar packaging color then confirm the correct product choice by reading the brand name. Color and shapes convey about 80% of all visual communication. Therefore, consumers have developed a habit of using color as a means of gathering information. Thus, color must have an important role in marketing and advertising and impact on consumer buying decision making.

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