

THE IMPACT OF CONSUMER FAVOURITE COLOUR ON CONSUMER CHOICES

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DECLARATION

The materials in this research are original except for quotations, excerpts, summaries and references, which have been duly acknowledged.

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ABSTRACT

THE IMPACT OF CONSUMER FAVOURITE COLOUR ON CONSUMER CHOICE

This research investigates the impact of consumers favourite colour on consumer choices in Kota Kinabalu. Structured questionnaire was used to survey consumers in Kota Kinabalu. A total of 262 questionnaires were collected from respondents in Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia. These individuals were selected randomly. Only 196 copies of the questionnaire returned were usable thereby indicating a total response rate of 74.8%. The results show that blue is the most popular colour among the respondents. The results further show that colour preferences and normative colour are strong determinants of packaged products choice, while choice of CAR (unpackaged product) is determined by attitude towards colour, colour attractiveness, normative colour and colour preferences. Gender does not moderate the relationship between colour dimensions and choice of packaged products. Gender moderates the relationship between colour significance, attitude, colour attractiveness and colour preferences in one hand and choice of unpackaged product (CAR) in the other. Details of the findings and implications are being discussed.



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ABSTRAK

KESAN KEGEMARAN WARNA PENGGUNA KE ATAS PILIHAN PENGGUNA

Kajian ini menyelidik tentang kesan kegemaran warna pengguna ke atas pilihan pengguna di Kota Kinabalu. Soalan berstruktur telah digunakan dalam soal selidik di Kota Kinabalu. Sebanyak 262 soalan di kumpul balik dari para responden di Kota Kinabalu. Setiap individu dipilih secara rawak. Hanya 196 set soalan responden yang terpilih dan boleh digunakan dan menunjukkan kadar respon sebanyak 74.8%. Keputusan ini menunjukkan bahawa warna yang paling digemari di kalangan responden adalah warna biru. Di samping itu, keputusan juga menunjukkan warna pilihan dan warna normatif adalah factor penting bagi pemilihan produk berbungkus manakala pilihan produk tidak berbungkus di pengaruhi oleh perwatakan terhadap warna, daya penarik warna, warna normatif dan warna pilihan. Jantina tidak "moderate" dengan hubungan warna dan pilihan berbungkus. Jantina hanya "moderate" dengan hubungan di antara pengertian warna, watak, daya penarik warna dan warna pilihan dan juga pilihan produk tidak berbungkus (KERETA) dan sebaliknya. Keputusan dan implikasi yang terperinci telah dibincang dalam kertas kajian ini.



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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

Consumer choice is defined as the entire broad spectrum of things that affect, derive from or form the context of human consumption. The choice of consumers is complicated, rich and varied. However, sellers must make the effort to understand consumers if they want to experience sustained success. Belk and Dholakia (1996) argued that an emerging concern of the times is to understand the nature and origin of patterns of consumption. Furthermore, consumer behaviour research concerned with the questions why people buy what they buy has taken an interpretive turn towards attempting to understand the nature, meanings, and consequences of consumption (Hirschman 1992). Besides that, consumer demand, which advances in manufacturing and retailing technology and globalization contribute to an increasingly competitive market. In order to compete, retailers and manufacturers adopt aggressive product strategies designed to capture discerning consumers.

A popular strategy for the influence of consumer choice is the addition of colour. Colour can stimulate interest and subsequently increase the buying power of products. Colour actually improves the business from boosting the effectiveness of promotions to polishing the "halo" over the brand and even generating new revenue (Andrews, 1996).

Many factors can influence the need states of consumers and how consumers choose among competing offerings to satisfy those needs. One of the key determinants of customer choices of products, outlets and promotional campaigns, which are of interest to the present study, is colour. According to Collins paperback English

dictionary (1993), colour is a property of things that results from the particular wavelengths of light, which reflect or give out, producing a sensation in the eye. Marketing practitioners have often turned to colour consultants to help them determine products colours that appeal to consumers. For instance, Igloo Products Corporation used a colour consultant to develop coloured coolers for the firm. Igloo attributes the subsequent 15 percent increase in sales to the new colours (Lane, 1991).

Understanding the impact of colour dimensions on consumer choices is not only a new area of marketing research still in its infancy, but also very helpful to marketers who wish to capitalize on aesthetics in their marketing strategies.

1.2 RESEARCH PROBLEM

Overlooking the influence of colour on consumer choices have robbed marketers a very important marketing tool. Until recently, marketers have failed to recognize the predictive power of colour on consumer decisions (Garber et al 2000). This realization has driven the current growing interest among researchers and practitioners in better understanding colour, its significance and characteristics, as well as, its effects on consumer choices. This study therefore seeks to understand the influence of colour on consumer choice of products choices. In Malaysia, the author is not aware of any research in this area before. This research gap and the need to bridge it form part of the impetuses for present study.

1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

There are several objectives, which the current research is poised to achieve. These are:

- To examine the influence of colour significance, attitude towards colour, colour attractiveness, subjective norm and colour preferences on the choice of packaged products purchase by consumers.
- To examine the influence of colour significance, attitude towards colour, colour attractiveness, subjective norm and colour preferences on the car (unpackaged product) choice.
- To understand gender differences in the relationship between colour dimensions and consumer choice of products.

1.4 SCOPE OF STUDY

The study focuses on the impact of the following colour dimensions eg. Colour significance, attitude, colour attractiveness, normative colour and colour preferences on consumer choice. The study attempts to unveil key colour attributes that influence the marketing choices on consumers in Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia. The survey which was conducted for a period of one month, uses structured questionnaire to collect the data on the role of consumers favourite colour on their choices of unpackaged products and unpackaged product (eg. CAR).

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

It is hoped that the findings of this research will make significant contributions to Industrialists and manufacturers. Understanding the extent of colour on consumer choice, diffusion stages, as well as the factors that determine consumer choice of colour will help in designing interferences that are salient in consummating greater purchase of such products. –

- It is hoped that the outcome of the current research will give a better understanding of the role of colour in consumer choices of products, outlets and advertising campaign.
- The research outcome will also help marketing managers in designing strategies that will help in reaching desired goals, such as increase in sales volume, revenue increase etc, by capitalizing on the strong impact of colour in packaging products.
- The research will add value by increasing the body of knowledge in the field of colour research in marketing.

1.6 RESEARCH DESIGN

The study focuses on the impact of consumer favourite colour on consumer choices. Therefore, the most appropriate unit of analysis in this investigation is the individuals since each individual might differ from another in terms of colour preferences on a particular product. The study is conducted by distributing a set of questionnaire to a selected sample of various individuals from all walks of life. An extensive review of existing literature in the form of seminar papers, journals and Internet sources and textbooks will be consulted. Appropriate analysis tools will be employed in processing the data.

1.7 ORGANIZATION OF STUDY

Chapter 1 introduces the research topic, as well as importance of colour. A brief definition of colour and the need for consumer choice. This chapter also defines the research problem, establishes the research objectives, the research questions, and

the significance of the study. An abridged research design and the summary of the chapter are also included.

Chapter 2 reviews the literature on the topic of research. Various literatures have been reviewed to help unveil the current understanding on consumer choice of colour. Various factors such as significance of colour, attitude towards colours, colours attractiveness, normative colour, and colour preferences will be investigated as they form the research model.

Chapter 3 discusses the research designs. A conceptual framework based on the above two chapters were presented and discussed in this chapter. The hypothesis and research methodology including sampling, data collection method, questionnaire development, measures and statistical analysis are also covered in this chapter.

The statistical result of the study of this research is analysed and discussed extensively in chapter 4. Finally, chapter 5 wraps up the whole study by discussing in the various finding and their implications, the limitations of the study, suggestion for further research, and concluding remarks.

1.8 SUMMARY

The increased global competition means far more volatile markets, shorter life cycles, and more sophisticated buyers which have all contributed to the emergence of high taste in desires and wants. Colours have been seen to be of great significance and play a vital role towards the selection and purchase of goods by various consumers. Hence, this study is to help in understanding the consumer's choice of products and

how colour determines such choices. These key determinants include the colour significance, attitude towards colours, colour attractiveness, normative colour, and colour preferences.



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CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Colours can have a positive or a negative responses and it speaks to moods and symbolic meanings. Colours such as red, orange and yellow are consider warm colours that shows bright and happy. Where else, pastels are soft and friendly and earth tones are considered natural. Blue and green are cool colours that show intellectual and calm.

The colour literature is vast and highly fragmented. There is no underlying theory of colour in marketing has yet been advanced. The area of research that can be used to explain a consumer's responses to the colours of products is associative learning. Associative learning occurs when individuals make connections among events that take place in the environment (Shimp, 1991). However, since an association is not directly observable (Mazur, 1990), a mechanism for creating the association, classical conditioning researchers examined physiology responses in which a conditioned stimulus (CS) and an unconditioned stimulus (US) were paired and would then elicit a conditioned response (CR). In Pavlov's famous study, the US was presence of food, the CS was the sound paired, the sound came to elicit the salivation, even in the absence of food.

More recently, the consumer behaviour literature has expanded the application of classical conditioning to include instances when the CS consists of a product or brand and the US consists of pleasant scenes or images (Grossman and Wisenblit, 1999). For example, Stuart et al. (1987) paired a brand of toothpaste with images of water scenes and subjects developed more favourable attitudes toward the toothpaste than a control group. Many consumers have favourite colours, a

phenomenon that may have been created via an association with a favourable stimulus. However, favourite colour does not adequately explain consumer colour choices for products. Consumers have likely developed a wide range of colour associations for various product contexts, which makes the task of understanding colour responses more complicated (Grossman and Wisenblit, 1999).

2.1.1 SIGNIFICANCE OF COLOUR

Colours have both scientific significance and relevance to manufacturers. Despite claims that these preferences are unsystematic and that saturation and brightness exert more influence on judgements than hue, a substantial body of research suggests that the rank order of preference for hues – blue, red, green, violet, orange, yellow – emerges with some degree of consistency and in particular, blue is regularly preferred to other hues (Crozier, 1999). For example, Williams (1996) reports on international differences in taste which British retail companies have to take into account when selling, say fashion items even within Europe. Apparently, red lingerie sells very well in Spain but only if it is Flamenco Red whereas Lilac sells poorly in Scandinavia, because it is asserted, this is the colour of mourning there (Crozier, 1999).

According to Crozier (1999), Spanish women who buy Flamenco Red underwear might be averse to swimwear or to a shirt or trousers in this colour. Clydesdale (1993), describes an experiment where some participants felt ill when a change in lighting conditions revealed to them that they were eating "blue steak, red peas, and green french fries". There is some evidence that preferences among simple coloured stimuli do generalize (Crozier, 1999). Taft (1997), showed that preferences among simple chips did correspond well to actual object are guided by what Taft has called "generalized conceptions of colour-object

appropriateness”(p.48) which are presumably influenced by cultural conventions and stereotypes.

White-Sax (2000) stated that, “ when it comes to a product design, much more importance is now being placed on how texture, patterns and specialty effects influence colour. Where else Kohl (1998) stated that white is associated with peace and purity, red is the colour of blood represent strength, health and passion. In addition to that, light blue of the sky is the colour associated with calmness and with healing. She also describes purple colour associated with royalty of its rarity and expense. Green is the colour of cool sides. She also describes yellow as the feeling of joyous and brightness.

According to DeVonn (2002), colours convey different meanings in different culture. Kohl (1998) stated that colour represents different aspects of the spiritual world and can influence the way humans feel and act. Many studies have been done where the significance of colour and its effects on mental and physical health. From her point of view, she said that colour represent different beliefs and powers in the spiritual world. Colour is a part of the “aura” that each soul projects and connected to the physical body. Aura is consider a perfect indication of the goodness or evilness of a person and which includes their body, mind and soul.

2.2.1 ATTITUDE TOWARDS COLOUR

Attitude toward a behavior (A) “refers to the degree to which a person has a favorable or unfavorable evaluation or appraisal of the behavior in question”(Ajzen,1991,p.188). An individual’s attitude toward a behavior is determined by beliefs about consequences of the behavior and the individual’s

evaluation of the consequences. There is substantial evidence in organizational behavior and management information systems research (e.g., Davis, 1989; Davis, et al., 1989; Mathieson, 1991; Taylor & Todd 1995) suggesting that the key underlying cognition determining an individual's attitude toward the behavior of adopting and using a new technology in the workplace is her/his perceptions about the usefulness of the technology (i.e., the extent to which a person believes that using a particular technology will enhance her/his job performance). With regards to colour, an individuals attitude towards a particular colour will affect the person's choice of product bearing that colour.

Knowledge of consumer's colours preferences is consequential because marketers who recognize which colours in their lines sell best may be able to trim product offerings and reduce manufacturing costs (Trent, 1993). Similarly, other firms have examined consumer's colour attitude in order to determine their product's colour or colour range. Producers of School supplies, such as Mead and Pentel, believe that colour is the product variable that attracts consumers and allow consumers to make fashion statements (Grossman and Wisenblit, 1999). A new trend has emerged in which marketers feel that it is important to update colours regularly (Triplett, 1996). For example, automobile manufacturers change approximately 30 percent of their colours each year and use colour consultants to advise them on the colour palette three to four years before a colour is introduced (Triplett, 1995b). However, research on colour attitude for products suggest that consumers often conform with norms in their colour choices for certain product categories, particularly high risk purchases. Understanding the attitude's factors that could enter into consumer's colour decision may help to prevent marketers from wasting time and energy chasing the latest trend (Grossman and Wisenblit, 1999).

2.2.1.1 COLOUR GENERATES POSITIVE ATTITUDES

Over the past twenty years, global sourcing, multiple-channel retailing, the proliferation of mass merchandisers and demanding consumers have contributed to the development of a dynamic and highly competitive apparel market (Thomas, 1993). In order to compete in today's market, retailers and apparel manufacturers are increasingly adopting new product strategies, including both new innovations as well as product line extensions to capture sales from discerning consumers. The design, production and distribution of new products in apparel retailing currently occurs at much faster rates compared to a decade ago (Biederman, 2000).

(Quoted From: www.colorreceipts.com, "The Power of Color: A research report on Color Receipts and their positive impact on Consumer Choice".)

"Adding colour branding on receipts may be the most powerful way to implement. By displaying the logo and a message in colour will go a long way toward aligning the store experience with the brand experience. The receipts can communicate with the consumers in real time with messages that are noticeable and relevant. In a fiercely competitive business environment, receipts become the brand's voice of appreciation to consumers by building the consumer loyalty. Colour effects and directs the decision making process of the customer. It identifies a company, its product lines and the quality of the merchandise. It's being call "The Power of Colour ". The power of adding colour to products is a way to enhance a brand to become more attractive and recognize in the market".

2.2.1.2 HOW COLOUR INFLUENCES BEHAVIOUR (PHYSIOLOGY RESPONSES TO COLOUR)

Researchers have suggested that colour associations may have been formulated early in human history when man associated dark blue with night and therefore, passivity and bright yellow with sunlight and arousal (Luscher and Scott, 1969). Cool colours, such as blue and green are considered calming and warm colours, such as red and orange are considered arousing (Kreitler and Kreitler, 1972; Berlyne, 1960; Birren, 1978; Costigan, 1984; Davidoff, 1991). Knowledge of the physiological effects of colour has been used by institutions to sedate people without the use of drugs (Grossman and Wisenblit, 1999).

In one study, pink was found to calm inmates in institutions and is now used for this purpose when anger is detected. Dentists have been known to paint the walls of the office blue to allay patient fears (Costigan, 1984).

Marketing practitioners have also used the association of arousal for warm and calming for cool colours in retail settings (Grossman and Wisenblit, 1999). An anecdotal example is the use of the colour red in casinos to stimulate gambling. In a formal study of the effect of colour on consumers in retail setting, Bellizzi et al. (1983) manipulated the background colour of a photograph of a furniture store and measured consumer's perceptions of the store and numbers of store attributes. The results indicated that warm colours such as red and yellow were more exciting, while cool colours such as blue and green were more calming.

However, other associations that consumers have may interfere with a marketer's intent for the use of that colour (Grossman and Wisenblit, 1999). For instance, outdoor colours, such as green and blue are associated with sporting goods stores and even though red may stimulate approach behaviour in general, it is not

likely to be appropriate for such a retail environment (Grossman and Wisenblit, 1999). One study that explains the dual nature of colour response is Crowley (1993). The findings suggest that colour may have both an arousal component and an evaluative component. From an associative learning perspective, the dual nature of colour responses makes intuitive sense as researchers in classical conditioning process may result both from belief formation, a cognitive process and through direct affect transfer, a more emotional process (Kim et al., 1996;1998).

2.3.1 COLOUR ATTRACTIVENESS (COLOUR AND APPEARANCE)

According to Crozier (1999), hue refers to what we have so far been calling colour, red green, yellow, etc., and corresponds to the wavelength end of the spectrum and red and orange at the high end.

Value is a function of the energy of the light source and corresponds to the amplitude or height of the wave, although it is also related to hue, in that some hues appear brighter than others even when all have equal amplitudes (Crozier, 1999).

Chroma refers to the apparent purity of the colour and is associated with the complexity of the light wave, in that light wave that is composed of only a few different wavelengths will appear most saturated and least diluted. Chroma is not independent of value as marked changes in amplitude will affect the purity of the hue.