# Colour Marketing: A Psychological perspective to attract customes

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## Abstract

Colors have always played a significant role in impacting one's moods, emotions, feelings, sensations and perception and seem to offer possibilities for multifaceted interpretation rather than leaving room for only one way of looking at it. Different signs merge in a person's experience of a product as colors do not function separately and individually, but from multi-layered references and can influence consumers' purchase decision, how they see things, their emotions, choices and thus are integral to the realm of advertising and marketing. The present article attempts to highlight the significance and importance of colors in daily life and to understand the influence of colors on the psychology of customers and its impact on branding. The article is completely based on secondary data based on Review of Literature and case studies. The articles recommends the usage of colors in today's era where customer is very prone to attraction and usage of creativity and innovation.

**Keywords:** Colors Marketing, Consumer Psychology , creativity and innovation.

## Conceptual Framework:

*What is the first brand that comes to your mind when you think of color red? Majority of you would say Vodafone or Coca Cola.*

*Or a company associated with the color Blue? The top of the mind brands would be Samsung or Pepsi.*

*Similarly, the color Yellow would help us associate with a brand like McDonalds or Idea telecom.*

All this is possible because companies and brand associate themselves with a certain color, which identifies with their business, vision, positioning and helps in creating a certain image in the mind of a customer. Colors are extremely important for companies to help create a brand image. All the important characteristics of a brand i.e. logos, ad campaigns, print material etc use the color in such a way that it helps customers to associate with the brand. Obviously, with the limited number of colors and the large volumes of brands, it takes years of focused marketing to build a perception in the mind of the customer.

Colors are important in marketing to create a brand. Every color has a unique characteristic which psychologically leaves an impression about a particular product or service. Hence, companies make it a point to be absolutely precise when it comes to giving a color for their marketing campaigns or making logos etc. Some ways in which human psychology perceives colors are discussed below.

Every color gives two effects when it comes to human psychology, which can be effectively used by companies for their marketing.

## RED:

The color red positively highlights Power, Energy, Passion but contrary it shows Danger, Warning, Anger etc. Hence a lot of brands use the color red to highlighe positive energy, which makes their brand powerful & prominent. For e.g. a brand like Coca Cola shows energy & supremacy.

### BLUE:

Blue is a popular color which shows Cool, Serenity, Trust as a positive trait and Cold, Unfriendly etc as another trait. Hence many brands which associate themselves with freshness and coolness use the color blue. For eg Pepsi brand shows coolness and youthfulness.

### YELLOW:

Warmth, Optimism, Happiness are the positive impacts of Yellow color. On the other hand, it highlights Caution, Fear, Anxiety. Thus, many family brands use the color yellow as a symbol of happiness. Eg McDonalds' logo "M" shows the cheerfulness which kids & families can get from the brand.

### GREEN:

The color green is projected as Freshness, Nature, Hope and gives a positive vibe. The other side of green depicts Stagnation, Boredom, Sickness. Thus, marketing using the color green usually showcases freshness and exhibits exuberance. Eg Starbucks' green logo showcases freshness and natural coffee.

### BLACK:

Black color is a symbol of Power, Elegance, Authority. But as a negative trait, black also depicts Oppression, Evil etc. Hence some of the most powerful luxury brands associate themselves with the color black, showcasing supremacy and stylishness. Eg popular automobile companies like Mercedes, BMW etc have a strong attachment with the color black to show dominance and grace both.

### WHITE:

Purity, Clarity and Sophistication is showcased by the color white in a positive sense. But from a negative contrast, white also highlights Emptiness, Coldness etc. For eg Apple products like iPhone, iPad are always in white, showing the classy & sophisticated products that they are.

Similarly, all the other colors help form a connect or link between the brand and the customer. Thus, this becomes very critical when it comes to marketing a particular brand or company. Colors are not just restricted to logos. Colors are important when it comes to making an advertising campaign, where use of colors develop the mood of the customer. Colors are also extremely important when it comes to TV Commercials, online ads etc as they contribute in retention and recall. These days, colors are also essential in developing websites, apps etc as they are the most frequently used touch point for customers.

As much as a product quality or marketing or ad campaigns can do for a brand, there exists a much more subtle component in marketing, which plays with the subconscious human mind. And that element is the "COLOR" being used!

Colors have always played a significant role in impacting one's moods, emotions, feelings, sensations and perception and seem to offer possibilities for multifaceted interpretation rather than leaving room for only one way of looking at it. Different signs merge in a person's experience of a product as colors do not function separately and individually, but from multi-layered references and can influence consumers' purchase decision, how they see things, their emotions, choices and thus are integral to the realm of advertising and marketing. However, as a marketing tool, color can be a sublimely persuasive force; and as a functional component of human vision, color can capture attention, relax or irritate the eyes, and affect the legibility of the text and - All things put together, the right colors empower and contribute to the success of an advertising campaign, a product, a service, or even an interior space and in contrast wrong colors can be a costly mistake.

The present paper attempts to highlight and discuss the following research questions:

1. What is the significance and importance of colors in daily life (with special reference to

marketing)?
2. How colors act as a medium in influencing the psychology of customers, contributing towards their branding, advertising, marketing and sale, based on a comprehensive review of literature and some noted case studies?

## Research Methodology and Objective of the article

The present article attempts to highlight the significance and importance of colors in daily life and to understand the influence of colors on the psychology of customers and its impact on branding. The article is completely based on secondary data based on Review of Literature and case studies. The articles recommends the usage of colors in today's era where customer is very prone to attraction and usage of creativity and innovation. Furthermore the perception and application of color is strongly influenced by ones innate physiological and psychological predisposition, personal experiences, age, gender, personality, income, ethnographic and demographic factors that makes its application effective within the domain of marketing all the more cumbersome and challenging.

## Findings and Implications

- Colors in marketing and advertising

The psychology of color plays a seriously important role in marketing and advertising, thus for market researchers and new startup owners it is important to understand the basics of the psychology of color, see how it intersects with marketing and advertising and feel comfortable using color to further  specify marketing and advertising goals.

- **Brain on color**

Color and the way humans perceive it plays a crucial role in marketing and advertising. There's an entire field of research dedicated to it, in fact! Color psychology is the study of how colors influence human emotions and behaviors. The reactions to color are based on a complex series of interactions between  cultural background, family upbringing and  personal tastes.

Color can affect  perceptions in both obvious and subtle ways. The hue of a product can convince that it tastes fresher and can even enhance the effectiveness of medication (and placebos) for instance, Blue is used to tint pills that calm or induce sleep, while yellow or red are usually the colors of choice for stimulants.

Every brand and business uses colors deliberately in their product designs, packaging, advertisements and websites. High-level marketing and advertising rely in part on the ability to select colors that support the brand and the company's mission. The psychology of color can and must be used to trigger the right responses from consumers if a marketer wants to ensure that the advertising and marketing materials will have the impact they want.

- **How colors get us to buy stuff**

Among consumers, colors are closely connected to buying decisions. Color is the primary reason **85 percent of consumers** give for choosing what they buy and up to **90 percent of impulse decisions** about products are based solely on color. Researchers have also found that **42% of consumers** form an opinion of a website based on the site's design, including color, more than any other factor. And **52% of the time** inferior design and the poor use of color will influence a consumer's decision to avoid returning to a particular site.

Consumer research has found numerous links between consumers' purchasing decisions and specific colors—connections which can be used for branding choices.

Here's the scoop: Orange, red, royal blue and black appeal to impulse buyers.

Teal and navy blue are the comfort zone for bargain hunters.
When it comes to clothing, softer colors like pink, sky blue and rose are the sweet spot for traditional shoppers.

Consumers have emotional reactions to colors they see in marketing, and those reactions come with specific expectations. Part of those expectations have to do with how appropriate the "fit" between the color and the brand seems to be. We expect to see red and yellow on a sign for Coca-Cola or McDonalds.

- **Cultural colors**

Successful marketing and advertising also anticipates cultural differences in color perception. The same color can mean very different things to different audiences. Take golden, In most cultures,  golden has a playful, bright, cheerful festive meaning,  making it a common choice for things having to do with families and children.

 Many cultures associate yellow with gold, and therefore with success, quality and money. In India yellow is the color of commerce, and in many African nations yellow is reserved for those of higher social rank. Conversely, in many Latin American cultures yellow is associated with mourning and death. Egypt shares this morbid association, but in general yellow is connected with prosperity and happiness in the Middle East.

- **Action-oriented colors that will inspire anyone**

The best color for call-to-action buttons has spawned extensive research, yet the results are not entirely clear. What we do know is that context is important to buying decisions, and sometimes the optimal button color depends on overall design and the specific brand and product. That said, there are a few rules of thumb that are good to follow. First, your call-to-action button color must be easy to see, but not an eyesore; it should complement the website's overall design yet contrast with it enough to eliminate any searching for it. Second, call-to-action buttons generally, and checkout buttons in particular, should be big, clean, and simple, set against plain backgrounds that aren't distracting.

General research has found that there are three colors that tend to perform best for call-to-action buttons. Red is easy to see, stands out against most designs, and suggests urgency and excitement. Green is a more calming color, but sometimes it helps to soothe certain shoppers into a decision, especially if your service or product is in any way connected to relaxation, peace, psychology or the environment. Finally, the orange/yellow range is associated with warmth, happiness and action. Seen Amazon.com lately? Lots of that orangey-yellowy color.

How to use colors precisely to further your specific marketing and advertising goals
Take a closer look at each type of color and individual color to get a better sense of how to use them:

## Warm colors

Red, orange, yellow and all of their variations are the warm colors. In general they are energizing, enthusiastic, happy, passionate, playful and positive.

*Red (primary color)***Positive associations we commonly have with red include comfort, confidence, excitement, love, passion, strong emotions and warmth.**

Negative associations that can come along for the ride with the color red include anger, danger, fire, violence and warfare. Sometimes these "negative" associations are exactly what will sell your product! Some designs use both the positive and negative connotations of red to support the product, like this movie poster that exudes confidence and passion *and* danger and violence.

Red's known physical effects on the body include a rise in blood pressure and respiration rate, and enhanced metabolism.

*Orange:* **Positive associations that typically come along with orange include affordability, beauty, earthiness, energy, enthusiasm, excitement, friendliness, health and vitality, humor, playfulness, seasonal changes and warmth.**

Orange is an interesting color in that there aren't many negative associations with it; maybe prison togs, but that's about it, and that's maybe not a strong enough association to affect your branding. A known physical effect that is associated with orange is appetite stimulation, so you'll see a lot of orange in food and drink branding.

Orange also appears frequently on discount sites.

*Yellow (primary)***Positive associations commonly felt with yellow include attention-grabbing, cheerfulness, energizing, happiness, hope, playfulness and warmth.**

Negative associations for yellow include anger, caution, cowardice, danger, deceit and frustration. Just like with red, sometimes these negative associations can be powerful marketing tools in their own right:

Yellow is known to brighten the mood in the short-term, so this physical effect should be on your mind as you plan to use it. Common design uses for soft yellows include branding for products and services involving children (like the birthing service from the introduction). Bright yellows are often used for foods or for "fun" or playful products.

Darker yellows and golds are typically used for an antique look and the feeling it provides of permanence or long-lasting appeal.

- **Cool colors**

**Green, blue, purple, and every variation in between them are the cool colors. They are generally perceived are more calming, professional, relaxed, and reserved than the warm colors.**

*Green (secondary)***Positive associations that are inherent to our perception of the color green are abundance, balance, calm, fertility, good luck, growth, harmony, health, money, nature, new beginnings, renewal and soothing.**

Negative associations that come along with green include envy, greed, jealousy and lack of experience. Known physical effects attributable to green are lowered heart rate and blood pressure. Common design uses for green include suggestions of nature, stability, renewal, and wealth. Brighter greens are frequently used for energizing and vibrant design concepts:

Whereas more natural looking avocado and olive greens are often used to suggest the natural world.

Darker forest greens are best used to signal wealth and stability.

*Blue (primary)***The positive associations typically associated with blue include calm, authority, masculinity, conservative in the broader sense (but in a narrower political sense can also mean liberal), peace, non-threatening, reliability, refreshing, serenity, responsibility, strength, stability, and tranquility.**

Negative associations for blue include depression, distance, sadness, and to a much lesser extent, adult themes and vulgarity. Blue is known to calm and relax the body. Some common design

uses include baby blues for children's services and products and pastel blues for relaxing and calming effects.

Bright blues tend to be used to suggest an energizing, refreshing feel:

While teals and turquoises are used for creative, imaginative, or progressive ventures.
Finally, dark blues are frequently used for financial services, corporate designs, medical services and other places where strength, trust and reliability are important.

*Purple (secondary)***Positive associations we make with purple here in the U.S. include creativity, imagination, individuality, luxury, magic, military honor, mystery, romance, royalty, spirituality and wealth.**

Like orange, its opposite color, we don't have any real negative associations with purple (other than the obvious residual sadness we feel after the death of Prince, which is in line with the cultural associations with mourning that purple holds in India, Brazil and Thailand).

Common design uses for lavender or light purples are for beauty and pampering brands and services:

**Neutrals:** Neutral colors may seem less exciting, but they are central to branding because they are what you use to balance focus and accent colors to create the effects you're looking for. Neutrals also have their own meanings, so it's good to be aware of what they are.

**White:** *Positive associations with white include brides, cleanliness, goodness, health, innocence, peace, purity, simplicity, virginity and youth.*
Negative associations with white include blandness, cold, dullness, impersonality, sterility and lack of inspiration. Known physical effects of white are a cooling sensation. White is commonly used in design as a backdrop, typically for a high energy contrast:
Or to allow other colors or pure design elements to stand out:
White can also be used in large quantities of negative space to create minimalist designs or to communicate both winter and summer, oddly enough.

*Black:* **Positive associations and negative associations with black have a lot of overlap, but in general the positive tend to include elegance, fashion, formality, Halloween, magic, mystery, power, sexuality and wealth.** *Elegance:*
More purely negative associations include bad luck, control, evil, death, mourning, intimidation and the occult. Black is sometimes linked to feelings of depression. It is commonly used in design to convey an elegant, mysterious, or edgy mood, or to suggest high quality.

*Gray:* **Positive associations with gray include formality, professionalism and sophistication. Negative associations are as you'd guess: moodiness, dullness and depression. Common design uses of gray are in corporate designs:**

*Brown and beige:* **Positive associations for the poor, under-appreciated and misunderstood color brown are comfort, dependability, down-to-earth sensibility, earthiness, family, handiness, masculinity, reliability, steadfastness and warmth.**

Negative associations are dullness, dirtiness and lack of freshness. Common design uses for browns are to suggest natural, earthy or organic qualities:

- **Humans are visual creatures -- so visual, in fact, that color plays a much bigger role in influencing what we purchase than we might think.**

## Color Psychology

Color psychology is an area of research that looks at how color influences our behavior and decision-making. When used in marketing, for example, different colors can impact the way buyers perceive a brand in ways that aren't always apparent, such as how certain hues can increase appetite.

For most marketers, the ultimate goal is to persuade consumers to make a purchase. Experienced marketers know that influential words and enticing images alone will not enable them to achieve their goal. Instead, they have to support their initiatives with psychological tools to connect with customers, convey brand messages and drive conversions.

One such tool at their disposal is color, which can enhance their messages, inspire consumers to take action or help them stand out from their competitors. Not surprisingly, understanding the psychology of color is essential for developing winning marketing campaigns and creating persuasive brands.

## How Personal Factors Influence the Psychology of Color

The psychology of color suggests general guidelines for the ways that various hues and shades influence consumer behavior. However, a number of factors may also influence the way that individuals perceive and react to color, and marketers should be aware of how they may impact the way consumers respond to color.

### Gender

Studies have shown that gender tends to have a measurable impact on the psychology of color. For instance, both men and women may prefer blue over all other colors, but men have the strongest preference for this hue. Along the same lines, both men and women tend to prefer cool colors like blue and green, but women demonstrate a much stronger preference for this color family.

Many of these nuances may be based in science, as women perceive more colors and have a greater awareness of differences among colors than men do. These differences in perception and preference should inform marketers' use of color psychology.

### Nationality

Marketers may be eager to apply theories of color psychology to campaigns that span multiple countries or even the entire globe. However, consumers in different nations are likely to experience and react to color differently. While in India consumers may typically view yellow as optimistic and purple as soothing, shoppers in different regions may have entirely different perceptions of these hues.

To ensure that their campaigns have the desired effect, global marketers may consider conducting local studies. This may help them gain a better understanding of how the psychology of color affects their target audiences.

## How Color Can Impact Branding

While many marketing experts have attempted to distill colors down to a few basic properties or perceptions, psychology can help businesses develop a deeper understanding of the implications of color choice. For instance, it is important to know that green does not always translate to growth and red does not always mean excitement. However, even if one particular color cannot always convey a specific message, several studies have revealed that color is essential to branding.

For instance, a study published in the journal *Management Decision* supports the theory that color is critical for conveying information. The study says that people make decisions within 90 seconds of their first impression of a product, and color alone contributes up to 90 percent of the information that forms the decision. This suggests that marketers must understand how the colors they use affect consumers' ability to differentiate products and identify brands.

A study published in the journal *Marketing Theory* demonstrates how important the psychology of color is to branding, revealing that many consumers assess how appropriate a color is to a brand when making a decision. When consumers perceive a color to be incongruous with a brand, they may not respond to it as positively as they would to a color that they believed to be more appropriate to the brand's message. In fact, appropriateness might be the most important factor for consumers when evaluating a brand's use of color. So, marketers should be well aware of their desired brand perception, and whether the colors they use align with it.

**How Color Can Generate Conversions**

Developing a clear brand identity that generates a positive response among consumers is a sign of success, but marketers also need to generate conversions and drive sales in order to meet their goals. A study published in the *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science* suggests that the psychology of color may also be key to accomplishing this objective. The study demonstrates that consumers' response to a brand's identity and its use of color may also affect their affinity for a brand. This means that marketers who successfully use color psychology can influence purchasing habits and brand loyalty.

While no one color has been proven to drive sales more successfully than others, the use of color psychology does appear to impact a brand's ability to make itself stand out. Many brands make use of the Isolation Effect, a principle that suggests that a unique color in a field of uniform hues will stand out more. Brands that apply this psychological principle to brightly colored call-to-action buttons on their monochromatic landing pages, or to bold packaging that stands out among competitors on store shelves, may have much more success in driving consumers to purchase.

**The current article concludes and the recommend the fact that in today's era of globalization , competition is very tough and thus its very important to attract new customers and retain old ones. The customer today is more attracted to creativity and innovation and, thus colors and their usage effectively play an important role in developing market .**

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