

The Psychological Aspect of Colours in Marketing: A Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis

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Abstract: Choosing a colour for designing a product and its packaging is one of the most crucial marketing strategies for attracting consumers in all businesses (Amsteus et al., 2015). This research offered some thoughts on the selection of colour in marketing, bearing in mind which colour attracts consumers' cognition and psyche. To know the impact of colours, multiple images of various products were taken as the source for critical discourse analysis semiotically to demonstrate how colours play a vital role in conveying a predetermined message. According to Khattak (2021), within 90 seconds, consumers can make their decisions regarding products while just seeing the product packaging colours. Approximately 62 to 90% of how consumer views product is based only on colour perception. This study determines the role of colours in designing a product and its packaging for attracting consumers' attention. According to the findings, colours are crucial for the psychology of marketing to engage consumers.

Key Words: Colour, Cognition, Marketing, Packaging, Product, Psychology

Introduction

Speech is the presentation of our perception and experience of our mind. As per Aristotle, language is a verbal sound made by individuals to express their thoughts, feelings, ideas, wants, and sentiments. One may consider colour to be a sort of non-verbal communication. Every colour inspires a certain meaning and emotion. Colour in branding affects how consumers feel about and interact with a company. Brands use colours as a tool to convey a certain message to consumers. Colours have the power to provoke strong emotions and transform our mindsets and influence everyone psychologically. In multimedia learning,

colour coding influences the cognitive dispensation of the learners. According to Hillstrom and Chai (Jamet et al, 2006). One of the prominent theories which are highly being used in different studies is Multimodal Critical Disclosure Analysis (MCDA) by Kress and Leeuwen. Multimodal discourse analysis is a technique that looks at a variety of communication modalities, such as images, text and colour. It is a method for discursive analysis that takes into account both how each mode communicates and how they all interact to form semiotic meaning. Kress (2010) asserts that combining colours, words and images into one sign provides great value.

Literature Review

The study of language usage, including language comprehension, language production, and first- and second-language acquisition is known as psycholinguistics. Colour psychology focuses on how colours affect behaviour. There is a lot of research on the topic. In branding, colour has an impact on how consumers relate to and perceive a brand. Customers are given a specific message by brands through the use of colour. According to Palmer (2018), 93% of purchasers pay attention to a product's appearance while making a purchase. Customers are psychologically affected differently by various colours such as red increases appetite, blue instills a sense of security, green fosters harmony, orange fosters ebullience, purple is linked to monarchy, and so forth. The classical conditioning theory suggests that product packaging directly influences a consumer's perception of the product. The influenced value perception of a product is bound to affect consumers buying decisions (Mittal, 2014). A helpful infographic made by Homestead (2022) discusses how colours affect individuals and how they are used in branding and marketing. Every object has a distinct hue, whether it is colourless or one of the primary colours like red, green, blue, white, black and grey, etc. There has been a significant amount of scientific investigation on the psychology of colour in all facets. The physiological model put forth by Goldstein (1942) serves as the theoretical foundation for the relationship between colour and psychological function. According to this model, the inherent physiological responses to colour result in emotional experience, cognitive focus, and motor behaviour. The colours that are viewed, have an impact on psychological functioning and psychologically meaningful connotations (Elliot and Maier, 2012). As per researchers, different colours provide different connotations such as, according to Schauss

(1979), pink was thought to lower physical strength and hostility. Black is linked to evil, death, and other depressing ideas (Frank and Gilovich, 1988). Red is associated with happiness and promotes non-systematic thought (Soldat et al., 1997). As a result, colour can be thought of as a particular kind of non-content visual stimulation. As a material-focused intervention in multimedia learning, colour coding affects students' cognitive processing (Hall & Sidio-Hall, 1994). The prominence of colour can draw learners' attention and direct them toward the pertinent visual information that designers want them to process (Hillstrom and Chai, 2006; Jamet et al., 2008). The visual design of multimedia has an impact on the learning process and learning effect from the standpoint of perceptual theory. Brand identity is heavily influenced by colour.

Van Leeuwen in his book, *The Languages of Colour*, treats colour as a mode. This moves away from the notion that colour has a single, unchanging meaning and toward an understanding of colour as having a variety of characteristics that influence the meanings we assign to colours. It also suggests that colour schemes are more significant than specific hues (Leeuwen, 2010).

Research Questions

1. How do colours affect our cognition in marketing?
2. Are specified colours intentionally chosen for the purpose of marketing?
3. How do the product's manufacturers use colours to improve their marketing?

Purpose of The Research

1. To identify the language of colours in the psychology of marketing.
2. To find out the effect of colours on human cognition.
3. To find out the manipulation of the colours on the consumers.

Research Methodology

Materials

Different products were chosen as the material of the study. The source of the visual form of products was different social websites namely Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, and Google. The packaging of Dove, Lux, Olay, Garnier, Nivea, Himalaya, War Paint, Sunsilk, and Lotus was the discussion of the study. This research was an attempt to analyze the psychological aspects of colour in marketing.

Method

The multimodal critical discourse analysis (MCDA) by Kress and Leeuwen was used to analyze the data with a specific focus on the colour of product packaging. Through this multimodal analysis, the colours of different brands' packaging were taken as part of the discussion. Considering the need of consumers, the manufacturers chose the colours of the product's packaging in a way that attract them and make them feel the need for that particular product and solution to their problems.

Procedure of Analysis

Data Collection

The research data consisted of multiple popular marketing products and to analyze these products, the researchers took these images from different social websites such as Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube.

Data Analysis

To analyze the impact of colours on the psychology of marketing, the researchers used Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA) by Kress and Leeuwen. They analyzed why the manufacturers prefer one colour over others while keeping in mind the psyche of the customers and how that colour attracts the consumers towards the purchase

of that particular product.

Delimitation

Out of the innumerable colours we perceive every day, the researchers put in discussion only nine colours such as white, black, red, orange, purple, yellow, blue, green and pink. Apart from this delimitation of selected colours, the theory of multimodal critical discourse analysis by Kress talks about three aspects namely text, image and colours, but as the topic of this discussion is colour, so, the present study focused on this aspect. Hence, the application of theory about the selection of colour is another limitation of this study.

White Colour



Figure 1

White colour is often used in product packaging. It stands for simplicity, elegance safety, cleanliness and purity. In the

traditional and conservative context, cosmetics and products in White are used in marketing and branding to illustrate a sense of security, and freshness, as well as to generate contrast. (Cherry, 2022). For instance, the entire Dove product lineup, Johnson & Johnson as well as The Ordinary, Himalaya Baby Products all iPhone or iPad packaging is white. The product images which are white in colour show the simplicity and purity of this object. They are the symbol of love, freedom and peace.

Black and Grey Colour

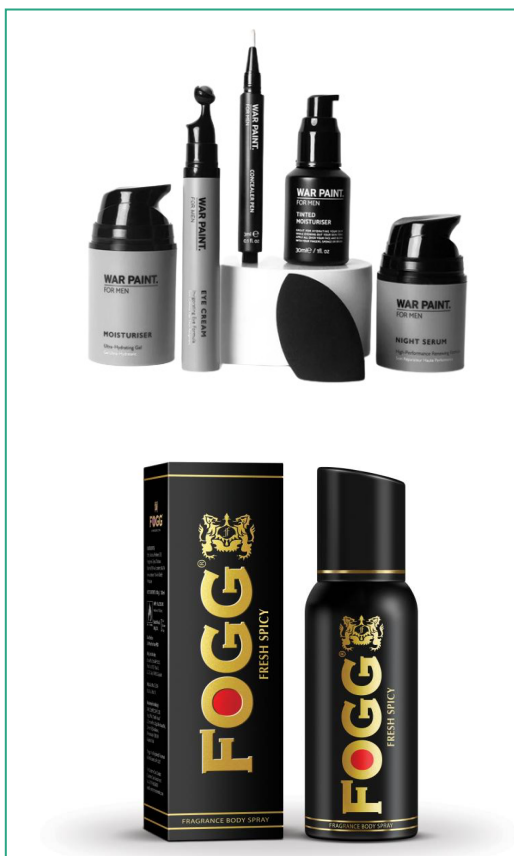


Figure 2

The black colour usually indicates supremacy, control, power, seriousness and sophistication (Bourn, 2016). The

manufacturers often use black packaging in cosmetics. By considering the target audience in mind, brands utilize black as the second prominent colour. War Paint for Men and Bettr are abundant examples as their skincare products have entirely black packaging with the addition of glossy black or silver accompaniments for the purpose of adding more elegance to the products. The products in this image all are in white and grey colours, which provide the consumer's boldness, sophistication and strong powerful meaning.

Red Colour

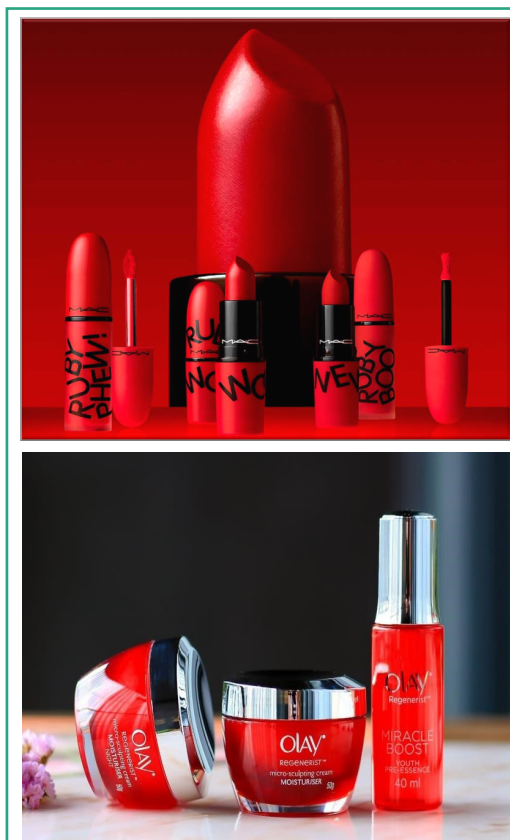


Figure 3

The red colour is famous for stimulating the human senses. It symbolizes spark, desire, power, and eagerness. The brighter version inspires stimulating vibes and enthusiastic

desire while the darker version gives more grand appearance. Red frequently revitalizes appetite. To create excitement, they employ the colour red and other phrases like happiness in their branding. (Ferreira, 2019). For instance, certain products from Olay and MAC Cosmetics Ruby's Crew, Regenerist line-up comes in red packaging, and other products namely Coca-Cola, KFC and Nescafe. This beauty product is in a red prominent colour that is showing a feeling of aspiration, beautification, spark and fervour among the product consumers.

Yellow



Figure 4

The effects of yellow include excitement, enrichment and intellectual motivation. Young people are often attracted by yellow packaging. In a variety of colours scheme, the human eye is most sensitive to the colour yellow. Yellow encourages sharp critical

thinking (Kelly, 2019). Product manufacturers make use of yellow colour when the products include lemon extracts and also for sunscreen. For instance, a well-known brand Garnier has various products in yellow packaging because of the use of lemon extracts in products. Another example of sunscreen that comes up with yellow packaging is Neutrogena Beach Defense. In terms of packaging, the yellow colour denotes uniqueness, novelty and amusement (Roberge, n.d.). Hence, the use of yellow colour in packaging is an exceptional opportunity that wishes to make the masses cheerful. Examples: Ponds Facial Cleanser, McDonald's, Sunflower Oil, Amul, Lego. The striking yellow in the images above represents the product consumers with the ideas of optimism, freshness, and the invigorating scent of lemon, all of which contribute to a fresh, healthy appearance and mental state.

Purple



Figure 5

The purple colour imparts various effects not only on the mind but also on the body including inspiring feelings and relaxing both the mind and anxieties. The purple colour is usually linked with monarchy, dignity, opulence, supremacy and motive (Bourn, 2016). Mostly, purple colour is associated with women's products to capture them. This colour hits men's psychology as well and enact in their depiction. Such as Lux body wash, Blesso Bleach Cream, Cadbury, and Hallmark. The purple colour of this product is giving soothing effect and also works as an eye-catching concept. The above pictures symbolize royalty admiration dignity and respect, it is not wrong to say that the manufacturers choose these products to provide consumers with the feelings of royalty, admiration and dignity.

According to colour psychology, the pink colour is linked with feminine traits, calmness, affection, innocence, cuteness, sympathy, genuineness, and beauty. and kindness. The colour pink has a creative and artistic vibe (Cherry, 2022). It gives the feeling of safety and calmness. The softer side usually uses in product packaging for attracting females and young girls. While the darker side of pink stands for sophistication and dignity. Products like Ponds' body lotion and facewash and Sunsilk's shampoo in pink packaging are the best to find out the value of the pink colour for drawing consumers' attention.

Pink



Figure 6

Blue

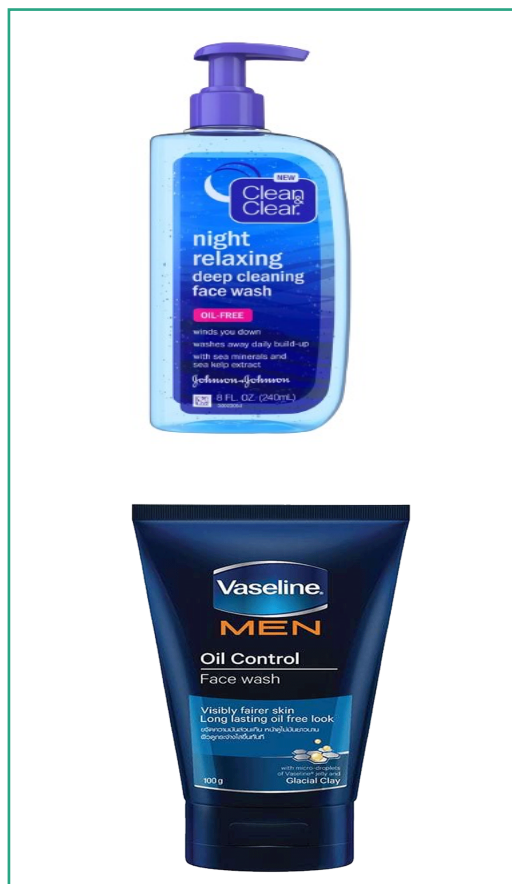


Figure 7

The most secure colour for a brand to utilise is blue. Although the blue packaging seems uninteresting and unsurprising, it also conveys dependability and trustworthiness older viewers are captured by the darker blue, whereas younger audiences are attracted to the lighter shades. Blue is one of the safest colours to use on product packaging regardless of the age or gender of potential customers. Blue is linked with cleanliness in colour theory. Numerous brands make use of blue to convey a clean, almost medicinal feeling. The significance of the colour blue is intimately related to the sky and the ocean in colour psychology. When manufacturers incorporate the colour blue into branding, their customers may experience stability, harmony, tranquility, calmness, and trust regarding their company (Ferreira, 2019). Products such as Vaseline and Clean & Clear Facewash.

Green



Figure 8

For natural or environmentally friendly, brands generally use green packaging. The colour green is a good contender for nutraceuticals because it symbolizes all-natural and organic products. Because of its connection to nature, most people find calming effects through green colour. To recall information, the colour green may therefore trigger an optimistic bias (Cherry, 2022). Almost all of Himalaya's Subway and others products such as Green Tea, and Alea Velo have green highlights on their packaging to indicate that they are made from plants. Another customized skincare company, Mario Badescu, employs green in its slogan and packaging to symbolize life and growth. Darker green colours are frequently connected with more luxurious products, while softer green colours are preferred for goods related to nutrition or safety. So through, the above-discussed traits of green colour, we can predict that the owner of the products has chosen this colour for the type of consumers looking for the development of growth freshness and harmony.

Orange



Figure 9

In psychology, orange is linked to curiosity, emotional stability, self-assurance, fun, adventure and friendliness positivity (Bourn, 2016). The connotations of various orange shades vary, though. Working with orange can be tricky. However, if done properly, it may work wonders for various brands. This is a lively and energizing colour (Edwards, 2013). Although it's not as aggressive as red, it can still draw attention, so it's best to wear it sparingly. The orange colour signifies optimism and confidence. Lotus Herbals Safe Sun Sunscreen, Re'equil Fanta, Orange Juice, and Payless Shoe which come in orange use an orange colour scheme for their brands. Because the orange colour gives feelings of optimism and energy, various brands use it to bring among consumers the message of positivity. Hence, it is not wrong to say that manufacturers have chosen this colour to assure the product consumers that they will get benefits and solutions to their problems.

Colour Theory

The collection of principles and instructions which designers utilize for designing a product for commercial use through pleasing colour combinations in the visual intersection is called a colour theory. Product designers often use a colour wheel to select the finest colour and denote wide collective knowledge regarding human visual ability, psychology, culture and much more.

Colour theory involves both the science and art of utilizing colours. It describes the way humans recognize colours and the visual impact of how colours merge, match or differ from each other. It also includes the idea colours communicate; and the ways to imitate colours.

Finding and Discussion

Crowley states that colour permeates so many aspects of daily life that it is easy to take it for granted. Despite this, several times throughout decades of psychology study,

different physiological and psychological impacts for different colours have been discovered. According to research from the University of Loyola in Maryland, colour accounts for 80% of brand identification (Hagen, 2022). Colour influences target audiences' behaviour and enhance marketing item activity. According to a study conducted by Xerox Corporation, 92% of respondents were of the opinion that the presence of colour determines the ability of a presentation to impress, 90% genuinely thought that colour can catch in new clients, 90% assumed that audiences remember colour presentations and documents the best, and 83 % believed that colour gives the impression of success (Belle, n.d.). Hence, we may say that language of colours plays an integral role in the psychology of marketing as it influences the human psyche and attract them to choose products according to their needs. In this regard, Bellizzi, Crowley, and Hasty stated that colour has the capacity to both attract customers and create an appealing image in the design of retail stores. It makes sense that a marketer would want a consumer to have a positive and favourable attitude towards the product to promote purchases of that particular product. Therefore, from a psychological perspective, colours may also be used to create an unconscious or involuntary attitude toward a product. In addition to automatically and naturally triggering biological and neurological responses, colours may also evoke particular emotions and moods. Each person may have quite distinct emotions with various colours and meanings that each colour may have for that person. As a result, choosing what colours to employ for advertising, the evaluative appeal of colours is a very important component that must be taken into account. Though most colours already have significant social connotations, which the majority may already accept or agree with, society has already formed these associations. It is very challenging to

associate colours with particular meanings as the psyche of individuals varies from each other. Thus, their connotation with various colours varies along with their opinions and sentiments toward that particular colour. Though, despite differences, the community has already set powerful links with many colours with whom the overall population may both already approve or admit. For instance, the packaging with white colour delivers the meaning of simplicity, safety, innocence and cleanliness. black deliver the consumers with boldness, sophistication and strong powerful meaning. Red colour arouses the feeling of aspiration, beautification, spark and fervour. Just like these colours, certain meanings are associated with specific colours and provide consumers with some particular message (NICOLAE Popa & Tamba-Berehoiu, [2013](#)).

Conclusion

As we know, language always conveys a specific meaning no matter in verbal or written form or the form of signs. In the same way, colours are also symbolic as they are associated with certain meanings and connotations. Therefore, we may say that the language of colours is symbolic as it delivers the people with different kinds of meanings linked to a particular colour.

Colours play an integral role in every sphere of human life and their importance can not be ignored in the field of marketing. As humans, we find colours very appealing to our psyche. Therefore, to attract customers, the product manufacturers design and choose colours to attract the target audience. According to studies by the Henley Centre, 73% of the decision to buy a product is decided in the market (Morton, [2019](#)). By this, it is not wrong to say that when customers visit the market, they explore different products and perceive different colours. But they focus only on that product whose colours symbolize the solution to their problems and needs. For instance, people looking for black and shiny hair prefers black shampoo, while as yellow colour symbolizes vitamin C, likewise, product manufacturers often use orange colour for sunblocks. Keeping in mind the impact of colours on human cognition, the manufacturers select colours after careful consideration. Therefore, apart from the packaging, logos, ingredients, brand and the product itself, colours have a great impact on the psychology of marketing as the language of colours explains the purpose of that particular product and attracts people towards the product which makes the job of the manufacturers of selling their products much easier.

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