

The Role of Color Psychology in Food Marketing

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the influence of color psychology on consumer perceptions and behavior in the context of food marketing. Colors play a critical role in shaping emotional responses, brand recognition, and purchase decisions, particularly in the highly competitive food and beverage industry. Using a combination of experimental design and consumer surveys, this research analyzes how specific colors (e.g., red, yellow, green) affect appetite stimulation, product appeal, and brand associations. The findings reveal that warm colors like red and yellow tend to increase appetite and attract attention, making them popular choices for fast-food branding. In contrast, green is often linked to health, freshness, and sustainability, influencing perceptions in organic or natural product categories. The study concludes that strategic use of color in packaging, advertising, and restaurant design can significantly impact consumer choices. Implications for marketers include aligning color schemes with brand positioning and target audience expectations to enhance marketing effectiveness.

Keywords: Color Psychology, Consumer buying behavior, Food Marketing, Branding and Packaging strategies and Mood

I. INTRODUCTION

In the highly competitive landscape of the food industry, capturing consumer attention and influencing purchasing decisions are critical for brand success. Among the many tools marketers use, color stands out as a powerful yet often underestimated psychological cue. Color psychology—the study of how hues affect human behavior and perception—has become a pivotal element in food marketing strategies. From packaging and branding to restaurant design and advertising, color influences how consumers

perceive taste, freshness, quality, and even the emotional appeal of food products.

This paper explores the intricate relationship between color psychology and consumer behavior in the context of food marketing. It examines how different colors evoke specific emotional and physiological responses, how cultural factors shape color associations, and how brands strategically use these insights to drive consumer engagement and sales. By understanding the psychological impact of color, food marketers can more effectively design experiences that not only attract attention but also build lasting brand loyalty.



Color psychology

This is the study of how colors influence human behavior, emotions, and decision-making. It's used in marketing, design, art, and even therapy to evoke specific responses.

Red

- **Emotions:** Passion, excitement, urgency, love, anger
- **Uses:** Often used to grab attention (sales, warnings), stimulate appetite (restaurants)
- **Examples:** Coca-Cola, YouTube

Orange

- **Emotions:** Energy, enthusiasm, warmth, fun
- **Uses:** To promote creativity and friendliness, sometimes affordability
- **Examples:** Fanta, Nickelodeon

Yellow

- **Emotions:** Happiness, optimism, warmth, caution
- **Uses:** Can evoke cheerfulness, but overuse may cause anxiety
- **Examples:** McDonald's (with red), Snapchat

Green

- **Emotions:** Nature, health, growth, balance, wealth
- **Uses:** Frequently used in eco-friendly or financial products
- **Examples:** Whole Foods, Spotify, Animal Planet

Blue

- **Emotions:** Trust, calm, reliability, sadness
- **Uses:** Popular in tech and finance because it builds trust
- **Examples:** Facebook, PayPal, IBM

Purple

- **Emotions:** Luxury, wisdom, creativity, spirituality
- **Uses:** Used in beauty, premium brands, or mystical/spiritual contexts
- **Examples:** Cadbury, Hallmark

Black

- **Emotions:** Power, elegance, sophistication, mystery
- **Uses:** High-end fashion, luxury, modern or minimalist design
- **Examples:** Chanel, Nike (often black & white)

White

- **Emotions:** Purity, simplicity, cleanliness
- **Uses:** Often used in tech, healthcare, and minimalist branding
- **Examples:** Apple, Tesla

Gray

- **Emotions:** Neutrality, balance, professionalism
- **Uses:** Often used in tech and corporate settings
- **Examples:** Apple (hardware), Mercedes-Benz

Cultural Differences

Color associations **vary by culture**. For example:

- **White** = purity in the West, but **mourning** in some Eastern cultures
- **Red** = danger in some contexts, but **good luck and celebration** in China

Applications

- **Marketing:** Color affects buying decisions (e.g. red for urgency in sales)
- **Interior design:** Warm vs. cool tones influence how a space feels.
- **Logos/branding:** Consistent color use helps brand recognition.

FOOD MARKETING

Food marketing refers to the strategies and techniques used to promote and sell food products to consumers. It involves understanding consumer behavior, creating appealing branding, and influencing purchasing decisions through various channels like advertising, packaging, social media, and retail placement.

Food marketing involves the strategic processes that bring a food product from the producer to the consumer, encompassing product development, packaging, pricing, and communication through various channels like advertising, social media, and labeling. Its primary aim is to increase brand visibility, drive sales, and foster brand loyalty by understanding consumer preferences and communicating a brand's message effectively. Key tactics include engaging social media campaigns, persuasive advertising, influential content marketing, and the strategic use of appealing visuals and informative food labels.

IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

Color psychology is additionally used in Branding and Marketing. Color has significance to marketers due to the fact that it may influence a consumer's sentiments and perception of products or services. Logos for businesses are crucial as they are capable of attracting additional consumers.

The use of Color in design can affect the emotions and moods of people viewing these color palettes. Yellow and orange are colors which render consumers famished in food marketing. Red colors is linked with emotions and passion. As a result, when one sees red coupled with yellow and orange, they become extremely famished. Green and earthy tones usually have a connection with Nutritious eating option, Eco-friendliness, Organic and Natural.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The study's major goal is to discover the difficulty that many developing firms face due to a lack of understanding about how to improve their enterprises with the help of marketing tactics, and Color psychology is crucial component of

Marketing strategy. It assists people in improving their businesses by building a strong impression of that company among its customers. 90% of consumers make rash decisions about things based only on their Color. Thus, the objective of this study is carried out to determine and identify what consumers think of how much the Color psychology marketing strategy influences them.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The main purpose of this study is to analyse the effectiveness of Color Psychology on consumer behaviour.

There are the specific objectives which are formulated for the study

1. To understand the significance of Colors and its psychology on consumers.
2. To examine the buyer's view of food product packaging strategies.
3. To evaluate the impact of package components on consumer buying behaviour.
4. To analyse the impact of Color psychology on consumer buying behaviour in special reference to Food Marketing.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this section, the researchers conducted a revised conclusion of several research papers and articles to

better clarify Color as a crucial factor in food marketing influencing consumer purchasing behaviour.

Color is a crucial component of marketing, particularly in the food industry. We eat with our lips, but we buy with our eyes. With so many options accessible to clients, Color is a simple and effective way to stand out[1]. Organic producers should carefully consider packaging color choices based on their target market and objectives. For emphasizing healthiness and sustainability, white and green are suitable, while black may appeal to those emphasizing premium quality. The nuances in consumer responses to colors highlight the need for a tailored approach, ensuring alignment with the values and preferences of diverse consumer segments in the dynamic organic food market.[2] Indeed, colour certainly also influence people's

flavour perception in more of a top-down manner as well. Here, it is relevant to note that researchers have demonstrated that labelling, branding, and other descriptive information can all modify the meaning of a given food colour and by so doing influence the perceived taste of a food or beverage.[3] color effects in marketing settings are neither universal nor arbitrary but rather systematically influenced by contextual factors including product category, brand positioning, consumer demographics, and cultural background.[4] The evidence that color can influence health judgments is strong. The most obvious evidence is that people use color as an explicit cue to make a judgement. They have declarative knowledge about the meaning of color cues and they apply this knowledge.[5]

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Sample Design: - The present study has been carried out in the area of Nagpur. So, the population of the study has consisted of all the youth and adult consumers of food marketing in same area. The study is based on collecting primary data about Color psychology in food marketing and its impact on consumers buying behaviour. The research is quantitative and deductive in nature, a positive approach was employed. Data was collected through self-administered questionnaire consisting of close ended questions from 15 consumers of Nagpur Maharashtra , in which the responses were Strongly agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree and Strongly disagree.

Sources of Data :-

Primary Data :- Data collected through Google forms. A link was shared with all the respondents and all the data was gathered and analysed.

Secoundry Data :- Collected from books, research journals, and online sources

Sample Size:- 15 respondents have participated.

DATA ANALYSIS

FINDINGS

1. One of the most established findings is that colors shape how consumers anticipate

taste and flavor before consumption.

Consumers often “taste with their eyes first,” and color significantly alters perceived flavor intensity even when the product itself remains unchanged.

2. Warm colors such as red, orange, and yellow are increased appetite stimulation, perceptions of sweetness and richness, faster eating behaviour. Many fast-food brands (e.g., McDonald’s, KFC) strategically use these colors because research shows they increase hunger and impulsive eating.
3. Cool colors such as blue, green, and purple are generally freshness, health, and calmness, lower appetite stimulation, perceptions of bitterness or mildness. Studies suggest blue is rarely used for food because it has few natural food associations and may suppress appetite.
4. Empirical studies show that packaging color significantly influences buying decisions, particularly in competitive retail environments. Bright and saturated colors capture attention on shelves, increase impulse purchases, effective for snacks, sweets, and fast food.
5. Color affects food marketing outcomes through emotional responses, which then influence decision-making. Studies indicate that emotions triggered by color mediate the relationship between packaging and purchase intention. This explains why luxury chocolates often use black and gold packaging, while children’s snacks use bright, playful colors.

CONCLUSION

A food chemist and Institute of Food Technologists representative, "Color creates a psychological expectation for a certain flavour that is often impossible to dislodge" (Harris). Nonetheless, according to an Advertising Age article, "Color has to be the single most overlooked, underutilized asset in the catalog of a brand's

sensor equities." As a result, certain businesses are missing out (Sturgess).

Color is significant to marketers since it is used in branding. Changing the Color of your product is the least expensive way to change it. Brands with multi-coloured and flavoured packaging take up more shelf space in supermarkets and thus draw more attention.

Color is a crucial component of marketing, particularly in the food industry. We eat with our lips, but we buy with our eyes. With so many options accessible to clients, Color is a simple and effective way to stand out.

This is basically a review study so that we may undertake a research study to better understand the aspects that influence consumer's buying behaviour in Food Industry.

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