

Color: The Mantra for Marketing

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Abstract—In the present scenario, color is emphasized as the most required component of the market and marketers. The customers are attracted using different colors for the products by the manufacturers. The competition prevailing in the market has made the organizations use several strategies using color. Now days the customers go to the various retail stores and buy the products by seeing the packaging as it creates an effective image of the product in their minds. The marketers have to understand the knowledge of the consumers to select the right color for product. The impact of the visual aspects helps the organizations to pass the information to the consumers. The color can affect the consumer's perception and their buying decision. The brands are also recognized because of the fixed colors of their products which provide them brand equity. Every color has been accepted in different way by the various cultures and the emotions attached to it is also different. Color is opted differently by the two genders. In this research paper how the color is used by different cultures, the sentiments associated are studied. A glance of the impact of the color on the consumer behavior is also studied. Without appropriate selection of color the marketers will not be able to attract the customers.

Keywords— *Market, Color, Competition, Packaging, Buying, Brands.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The behavior of the consumer is not the same always and it is a very challenging issue for the retailers and the producers. Their preference is not predictable and they go by their experiences, impulse nature of buying. Here the role of color can play an important role to influence the consumer perceptions and the behavior. The colors affect the consumers psychologically and that is revealed in the buying nature of the consumer. To understand the buying pattern of the consumers a firm has to make the strategy and consider factors like advertisement, satisfaction, prestige for observing the reactions of the individual as it would help in selling the product in the market. Color is a marketing communication tool wherein this medium can be used for rendering information to the consumers. The consumers associate the colors with certain meanings. The products

sold today focus on the specific colors. The principle of associative learning gives the relationship between color and emotions. The basic principles of color are hue, saturation, and value. *Hue* is explained as the wavelength of a color and determines its label, such as orange or green. *Saturation* is the intensity of a color. *Value* is how bright a color is. These three factors when combined together give the relationship of consumers how they recognize and associate with the color. Many companies spend millions on research on which color they should use for the consumers. The significance of color differs among different cultures. So the attitudes and preferences of the specific target audience must be considered while planning the color for the package. The products where the high involvement is required the customers give more importance to the color factor whereas in low involvement products also the customers the customers get attracted towards the colors. Colors help in retaining the images of the products in the brain more easily and while buying the products they can associate these colors to the products in the store. The color associations vary with the age, personality, gender and culture. The packaging of the products, consumer awareness operates on different psychological principles so it is very important to understand the principles of color and anticipating how consumers will react to the colors selected. The trends of the color fluctuate from time to time so it is necessary to work on the marketing research on color in order to make high selling, high profits and attain high customer loyalty.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The impact of red color on customer is more negative than the blue color. In other words, red reduced willingness to buy or the desire to browsing and search on the market. As respects the red is physically more arousing than blue, blue confers more positive values than red, and thus influences buyer perceptions and behaviors favorably (Bellizzi and Robert, 1992). The importance of color selection is a function of the price level of a product and average life. In high priced, high involvement and long life products, consumers are paying attention more on colors in their choice. In contrast, for Lower prices and low involvement

products, consumers are more flexible in their choice (Grossman and Wisenblit, 1999). To attract customer, color is considered to be a crucial factor. Being acquainted with psychological impact of colors and its different combinations would be of great help to designers. Designers pick out a particular color based on the nature of the product. In addition, particular colors could be signified by marketers by using association theory and be used as an experimental sign or image expansion (Rouland, 1999). The demographic differences such as age, gender and ethnic group are the reasons why the consumers accept and perceive color are differently. Younger people are more influenced by color. In other words, the perception and effect of colors is different in each age, for example: red evokes blood and passion of a group of more than 55 years of age, but this color (red) is a sign of love and blood in teens. Research also suggests that the admission of blue color by young and adult is more than older age groups (Akçay *et al.*, 2012). Human being has continuously been affected by colors either physically or psychologically. How humans are affected by colors has obviously a psychological nature which indirectly influences norms, reactions and individual behavior (Elm, 2012). Color is one of the first primary factors considered by consumers when you are shopping and is a very influential factor in product selection (Clarke and Honeycutt, 2000). The visual appearance of objects first moves to neural activity within diverse brain areas and helps in the product acknowledgment and detection. By using different methods, we can increase the quality of visuals used in ads and packaging. Now a days we see that product with an effective color scheming gains success in consumers while many products fail due to poor color scheming. Brightness of colors and their saturation levels have different impacts according to the saturation level. (Palmeri *et al.*, 2002). The activities people undertake when obtaining, consuming, and disposing of products and services are to be understood. During the long history of marketing, consumer behavior has always been an attractive field for marketers who are market-oriented rather than product-oriented, since it is the study of why people buy. With the insights gained about the reasons people buy specific products/ services or brands, marketers can then develop strategies to influence purchasing behavior of consumers (Blackwell, Miniard, Engel, 2006). Color can be distinguished in hue, brightness and saturation (Valdez & Mehrabian, 1994). Based on hue, colors are broadly divided into cool and warm colors. Cool colors are also known as colors with short wavelengths (i.e. violet and blue). Warm colors are also known as colors with

long wavelengths (i.e. red and orange). There exists a hierarchy in color from violet, blue and green (short-wavelength colors) to yellow, orange and red (long-wavelength colors) (Crowley, 1993). The emotional reactions evoked by color are results of learned associations based on culture and characteristics of an individual. (Tofle, *et al.*, 2004). Color may evoke associations and reactions. The meaning of color is bipartite. First, the meaning of colors can be a result of learned associations, for example red, orange and green colors on traffic lights. Second, the meaning of colors can be determined by nature (i.e. associations between black and death) (Elliot, Maier, 2007). A group of people were shown three second advertisement and it was found that 62% developed associations with the brand based on the colors they saw (Chang and Linn). The most common words used to describe colors were studied. In this study, 75% of participants described red with words like "anger," "energy" and "passion." Orange and yellow elicited more cheerful descriptions. Green and blue were described as "peaceful," "relaxing," "clean" and "calming." 69% of participants associated black with evil or death, while over 88% of participants used words such as "innocence," "happy," and "euphoria" to describe white. 70% of participants associated pink with femininity. Brown, grey, and purple had less agreement on their meaning. The study also reports that the brighter a hue, the more positively it is perceived. This research shows that some colors have stronger associations than others, which is important to keep in mind when designing the package for a product (Clarke and Cotsall, 2008).

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the association of color with culture and sentiments of the people.
2. To study the impact of color on consumer behavior.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research is based on the secondary data which is collected from the various sources journals, magazines, data from the organizations following color as the strategy and the feedback of the customers.

COLOR WITH CULTURE AND SENTIMENTS

Colors play a fundamental role in our lives it helps us to associate with the various aspects of our culture. Blue has many positive associations it represents trust, security, authority and peace. It can also represent depression and sadness. In Hinduism, blue is strongly associated with Krishna, who embodies love and divine joy. Since it is associated with trust blue is a color often used by banks:

CitiBank, Chase, Capital One. However the calming effects also make blue a friendly and inviting color, which explains its adoption by Facebook and Twitter. Light blue is refreshing and calm. Dark blue represents the professionalism. In Western cultures, green represents luck, nature, freshness, spring, environmental awareness, wealth whereas in Eastern cultures, green symbolizes youth, fertility, and new life. It is one of the stable colors bridges between stimulating warm colors (red, orange, yellow) and calming cool colors (blue, purple). Red symbolizes excitement, energy, passion, action, love, and danger in Western cultures. In eastern cultures, it symbolizes good luck, joy, prosperity, celebration, happiness, and a long life. In India, red is associated with purity, sensuality, and spirituality. The color increases blood circulation, breathing rates, and metabolism. The color yellow is associated with happiness, cheeriness, optimism, warmth, joy, and hope. Orange represents autumn, harvest, warmth, and visibility in Western cultures. In Hinduism, saffron (a soft orange color) is considered auspicious and sacred. The white color, symbolizes purity, elegance, peace in western cultures but in Asian countries, white represents death, mourning, and bad luck. Black symbolizes sophistication and formality, but it also represents death, evil, mourning, magic, fierceness, illness, bad luck, and mystery. As globalization took place the companies are the concepts of color are helping them to produce the products as required by the consumers. Different colors have different effects on the males and the females. A study by Casparie Connie (2007) offers the following classification: For females the top three favorite colors are Blue, Purple and Green (all cool colors). The least favorite colors in women are Orange, Brown and Gray (warm and neutral). With increase in age the preference to green decreases and the liking towards purple increases with age. Orange is not preferred by females. In males the top favorite colors are green and black (2 cool and one neutral color) and the least favorite color is brown, orange and purple (neutral, warm, mixed colors). Females tend to have broader range of color preferences and these preferences are typically different from those of males. In addition, it is not rare that a number of Western males are red/green color blind. However, there are also unisex colors such as blue, red, black, white, silver or gold which can be used in marketing materials targeting both males and females. The more mature we become, we switch from bright and primary colors in solid blocks to more subdued and sophisticated colors with patterns. Reaching the adulthood, people seem to be less open for experimenting new colors; instead they rather stick with their safer

favorites. In a similar manner with age, the more educated people get the more complex their color choices seem to be, with relatively unusual names given. Moreover, climate and the nature of the living environment have huge impacts on people's color perception and preferences. People have a tendency to duplicate the colors that they are familiar with and become part of their lives. Thus, it is to believe that people from tropical climate respond more positive to bright and warm colors, while who live in colder regions prefer cooler and more toned down colors. (Scott-Kemmis 2013).

IMPACT OF COLOR ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

The environmental factors such as noises, sizes, shapes, scents, and colors influence consumer perceptions and purchases. The consumers with different personality, age, gender, and cultural background associate with certain colors when exposed to their environment. While designing or marketing of a product the psychological effects cause of the color should be taken into consideration. Colors influence the emotions and behavior and make the product impressive and attractive. The impulse buyers, the shoppers on the budget and the traditional buyers have different color choices and associate different places with them.

Type of shopper	Venue	Color
Impulse shoppers	Fast food, outlet malls, clearance sales	Orange, red, black, royal blue
Shoppers on a budget	Banks, larger department stores	Navy blue, teal
Traditional buyers	Clothing stores	Pink, sky blue, Rose

Source: Lam, Shun, and June Campbell. *Color and Consumer*. Chart. *Kissmetrics*. Color Marketing Group, n.d. Web

Marketing has become a two way interaction between the marketers and the consumers. It is vital for marketers to understand how their consumers respond to their marketing effort. The hierarchy (or sequence) of communication effects which consists of seven stages: exposure, attention, perception, learning, attitude, action, and post-purchase. However, like other economics and business models, it is not necessary that consumers follow this sequence in all purchasing situations; this model rather provides marketers a logical framework to integrate psychological concepts with the purpose of interpreting: why and how people respond to marketing activity. (Evans, Jamal , Foxall ,2006).



Fig.1: Sequential effects of response to marketing (adopted from Evans, Jamal, Foxall, 2006)

The first impact on consumers psyche is the color on the products packaging. So the positive and negative impacts have to be clearly understood. The television advertisements have great impact on the consumers. They emphasize on color instead on the quality of a product. Therefore, if an advertisement has good color scheme it will attract a lot buyers for the company. Color is the most effective and powerful tool for retailers to attract and draw their customers. Color can affect a variety of people's feelings towards a particular product; it carries meaning through associations of mind and body. For a retailer color is the most important ingredient in increasing the sales of the product and achieving the profits. The retailers use color to use it as an advantage to reach the target market. Without color the market would be never interesting for the consumers.

The package designs send message to the customers using colors which create help in creating associations with the product. For example Surf detergent is blue and it is associated with cleanliness, emphasizing the product's promise of clean. Tata Tea has the package as green it is associated with nature and all-natural, and healthy ingredients. Apple's products are in black and white which reflects it is as an exclusive, high-quality item. The consumer's ability to identify or associate a product with a brand is the recognition of the brand. This is because the same colors and shapes are used for the packaging and branding of the product. This is present in every characteristic of the brand. For example, the store and consumer products should have the same color and brand logo. It also conveys traits about a company and reflects a company's personality, or, *brand image*. In this sense, color serves as a hidden treasure which the company would use for attaining the competitive advantage.

IV. CONCLUSION

The decision of buying a product no doubt depends on the quality of the product but the color on the package also insists the customers for purchasing the product. The customers when they buy products which they have not planned an attraction towards the color of the product

makes them do the impulse buying. Color works as a two way communication for both the companies and the customers. The marketers produce colorful products which are bought by the consumers which in turn increases the turnover of these companies. Color is so powerful that the brand image of the companies is set in the mindset of the consumers and this way the company gets brand recognition. In every culture the significance of the color is different. Certain colors are positive in some cultures and they are negative in the other. So the organizations have to consider this fact and use the colors appropriately. Again the likings of the males and females are different in terms of the colors. The products that are specified for the gender have to make according to them. The colors are chosen as per the emotions of the individual, if the person is lively and happy the individual would prefer the bright colors and if he or she is sad they would prefer the pale colors. The warm colors are used like red, yellow are used for energy drinks, chocolates, and cars they give a feeling of energy and excitement. The companies intend to induce the tranquility, peace and comfort to their customers; they must use cool colors like blue and green in their products. The inappropriate use of colors in products prevents them from buying the product. The colors psychology is used by the consumers as they buy their products in self-service stores. The use of attractive packaging makes one product more prevalent than the other. If a consumer has a favorite color he would focus on that color of the product leaving the rest but if the other products are more attractive he or she would look through the product and can change their mind while buying the product. Color has a significant role on the consumers and the marketers, both benefit from the colors the customers satisfy their emotions and the marketers attain their profits.

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