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## **COLOUR – PSYCHOLOGY IN MARKETING AND ADVERTISING**

Colour plays a vital role in packaging as it is easily observed in any supermarket. The colour of a package transforms it into an effective silent persuader: it captures attention, exhibits the product and differentiates it. The marketer must determine his target reaction to different colours. The dominant colour or colours chosen for the package must therefore not only be eye-catching, but must also convey an appropriate message. Communicating a message through the use of colours is an interesting but complicated process.

Colour perception is controlled by the human brain and not the eye. Pigments in the eye help to determine the colour and appropriate impulses are transmitted from there to the brain. The science of colour can best be described as the science of light. The sensory perception of colour depends on the wavelength of the light beams entering the eye. Colour-psychology is not primarily interested in how colours are produced or formed, but rather in the results or the effect colour has on the human being.

Colour preference differs from target market. Colour preference is influenced by the concepts associated with each colour. Any society tradition has strong influence on this association and on the acceptance of colour for various purposes, for example, blue for a boy and pink for a girl. It is interesting to compare these associated concepts with the message the marketer wishes to convey and the product's image. Bright colours such as orange, red and yellow are inclined to influence the autonomous nervous system including the digestive system. In experiments with animals it was found that red and yellow light stimulated hunger.

The Rorschach (ink blot) test shows that people who are emotionally receptive react freely to colours. Colours in the colour spectrum are generally associated with two types of emotion: on the one side there are the warm, active and exciting qualities of red, orange and yellow and on the other side the passive qualities of blue, violet and green. Most colours which contain red or yellow are seen to be exciting.

Apart from having an emotional influence, colours can influence physical reactions. Human responses are for example 12% faster than normal under red lighting. Different experiments also showed that warm colours like red are better attention-getters than cool colours such as green or blue. Some colours are more visible over a longer distance than others and sometimes a combination of colours can influence the visibility (or legibility) of a package design. In a supermarket environment artificial lighting may influence the perception of a colour on the package and must be taken into consideration in the design and testing.

Yellow or white objects appear larger than red, green or blue objects. Products which have red packaging also appear to be heavier than packaging with other colours. That is why red clothing is not recommended for overweight people.

Colour can also convey certain symbolic values which may influence consumers unconsciously. The colour scheme, for instance, must be considered carefully. It must be attractive with visual impact – but the psychological meaning of different colours must also be kept in mind.

Purple for example, has visual impact but unfortunately it has a negative connotation for some consumers who associate it with mourning. Green is not an appropriate choice for meat products but in canned vegetables it may create the idea of freshness.

It is evident that the different aspects of colour play an important role in marketing and packaging a product. Each colour has a unique ability to influence and persuade consumers to react to buying a certain product. It is interesting to note that bright colours like red are used in packaging and other promotional materials.