

## Abstract

Consumers' product choice is influenced by product's physical appearance to a great extent and therefore, a product's market share is largely influenced by product aesthetics. An extensive consumer-product interaction takes place due to the outer appearance of the products. Visual sense is the most dominant in product-buying experience. The visual appearance of products plays a large role in decisive consumer response. Therefore, understanding the visual interest of consumers is very important.

This visual attention or visual interest is captured by the physical attributes of products e.g. colour, form, texture, graphics, typography, detailing, etc. Among various physical attributes of a product, colour and form capture maximum visual attention and thus play significant role in consumers' product choice decisions. Physical properties of products elicit certain appearance attributes which are contextual depending on the category of the product. Since we buy different products for different use, we perceive them differently and our visual evaluation differs depending on the context and category of the product. Following an extensive literature review, it has been observed that there is rarely reported empirical evidence regarding how people make choice of colour and form for a particular product and how consumers' preference of colour and form varies from one product category to another.

In the present research work, empirical studies were carried out in order to understand visual behavior of young Indian consumers which provided augmented valid results. The aim was to understand the choice making of products based on two important physical attributes, i.e. colour and form for few daily consumer products by the Indian student population. To achieve this aim, six objectives were set to carry out research step by step. Prior to conducting experimental research three hypotheses were formulated for ensuring an appropriate direction to the research work.

From the earlier reported literature, it is understood that the colour and form are most influential compared to other physical attributes of a product and thus present research focuses on these two aspects during product selection process. The study focuses on the young student population of India because this age group has an inclination towards buying interesting, colorful and extra-ordinary products. Therefore, students from an Indian higher education institution (Under-Graduate and Post-Graduate level, age: 18-25 years) where students are of cosmopolitan in nature, have been chosen to be the target population. The current research involved detailed studies

with both subjective and objective measurement techniques. In case of subjective preference, standard questionnaires were used whereas for the objective/quantitative technique, visual attention analysis by eye tracking was adopted. In questionnaires a suitable measurement scale was constructed aiming at the preference study which is associated to visual attractiveness, likeliness for colour and form, product purchase intentions, etc. Inferential and descriptive statistics were used for analysing the generated data.

Observations of current research revealed that most of the participants (95%) chose different colour variations (due to varying saturation value) of different primary colours rather than choosing variations under a single primary colour which they earlier chosen as their favourite colour among primary colours when asked verbally. Studying the preference of colour and form among different product categories demonstrated that colour is always not preferred over form; and vice-versa. Preference differs with change in category of the product. Participants' preference towards colours and forms under present study varied significantly across product categories.

The upshot data produced from current research, regarding Indian Consumers' (Indian Consumers: Undergraduate and Postgraduate students from a premier higher education institution) preferences towards colour and form among different products categories would be useful to product designers and marketing managers to formulate design strategies. The reference database on consumer preferences developed in this thesis can serve as a ready manual providing direct information about what kind of colours and forms to be used for gaining the attention of the consumers. The research methodology followed in the current research can guide similar studies related to preference of colour and form involving different other products. Limitations of this research and the future scope of work have also been highlighted in the present thesis.