

# An Examination of Package Colour of a Local Product in Indonesia on Consumer Response

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## ABSTRACT

Colour is an integral element of corporate and marketing communications. It influences consumer perceptions and preferences, purchase and consumption behaviour, and helps companies position and differentiate from the competition. This applies to food product and beverages. For example, (Hynes, 2009) stated that colour is an integral aspects of logos and product packaging (e.g. Coca-Cola red, IBM blue, Cadbury purple) and is presumed to be used in shaping image/personality and facilitating reflexive purchasing behaviour. Regarding logos, (Labrecque *et al.*, 2013) found that the most commonly utilized colour in major companies' logo is blue, that has been linked to perceptions of competence in this context. Another example can be found in case of an internationally recognized beverage product; Pepsi; that partially changed their colour in its logo and package, which most of them are blue, to avoid controversy. On the other hand, Coca-Cola uses red. It has been noted that companies fail simply because of inappropriate choice of product or its package colours. Package colour attracts attention, especially when consumers seek variety in their brand choices. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that the same colour can have different meanings in different contexts, leading to different implications. Bellizzi in Aslam, Mubeen M. (2005) stated that perspective of colours is not "universal". Consequently, use of colour in an unthoughtful manner in a particular market has often led to an error cultural meaning.

**Keywords:** Colour, Package Colour, Decision Making

## 1. INTRODUCTION

A package is a critical factor in the consumer decision-making process because it acts as a strong cue at the time of purchase (Silayoi and Speece, 2007). As a synonym for package, packaging signifies the activities associated with the packing of goods/product, handling, unpacking and display of primary package. In other words, packaging has a twofold meaning; one of package itself and the other is the process associated with the actual use of the package (Bramklev, 2009). It physically protects and identifies the product, and also benefits in warehousing and distribution of goods. It ensures safe delivery of product to the end consumer in good condition.

There are some elements of packaging; label, material, colour, design, shape, and size. According to several authors, colour is a significant feature in a package (Ampuero and Vila, 2006; Ares and Deliza, 2010; Hutchings, 2003; Marshall et al., 2006). It brings messages about the product to consumer's mind and act as a cue to purchase. These messages help consumer in their choice of a product.

Colours play an important role in affecting human perceptions. The effect of colours for human is very strong (Elliot et al., 2007; Piqueras-Fiszman and Spence, 2011). They take a part in individuals' daily lives and influencing peoples' interactions. Colours are ubiquitous in consumer context, and also are the key features in product packaging, especially in the food industry (Deliza et al., 2003; Hine, 1995; Hutchings, 2003; Piqueras-Fiszman and Spence, 2011). In food industry, packaging acts as major part in attracting consumer attention, influence their product perception and purchase decision (Ares and Deliza, 2010). For some cases, colours of package represented the flavour of the food (Piqueras-Fiszman et al., 2012). These colours form product recognition in consumers' mind. Specific products are frequently sold in different colours or/and with different colours of package (Bagchi and Cheema, 2013).

The focus of this study is to understand consumers' reaction to the package colour of a local product (food) with small brands in a particular region (Yogyakarta, Indonesia). We includes responses such as colour association, word of mouth, perceived

quality, and intention to purchase. Regarding colour association, several authors argued that consumer association regarding package colour were mostly related to flavour (food and beverages)(Ares and Deliza, 2010). Thus, differences in expected liking might be related to the expected flavour that could led to willingness or unwillingness to buy.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Colour is often considered in terms of aesthetics. Colour is meaningful and influential on people's affect, cognition, and behaviour. Humans experience the world as a colourful place. Colour is perceived on every object that humans view in their daily life, even in their dreams (Rechtschaffen & Buchignani, 1992). Colour consideration emerge regularly in our decision making and conversation, as we choose which colour clothes to wear, pick a colour for our new car or computer, and comment on the colour of our friend's skin, hair, or makeup.

Many literatures that is robust, well-developed and focused on certain things. First, how that colour is defined and modelled (i.e. colour physics); second, focused on the way colour terms are represented in language (i.e. colour linguistics and categorization); next, pointed at various practical issues such as colour reproduction, colour deficiency, and colour appearance phenomena (e.g. illusions); and finally focused on how the humans' eye and brain process colour stimuli (i.e. colour physiology and neuroscience). The last focusing will be likely related to centre of attraction of this current study; the consumers' reaction to the package colour; that no doubt, it will be processed through humans' eye and brain.

Colour plays a significant role in global marketing communication. Not only helps enhance brand recognition, colour also translates intended visual impressions into product. Colour create desired atmosphere in a retail outlet and influence consumers' behaviour. The impact of colour can be attributed to a wide range of colour associations in which colour is seen as either a symbol or a sign. Colour as an emotion messenger has attracted enormous interest from researchers in different disciplines, who have given various names to work in this area such as "colour meaning", "colour image", "colour emotion", and "colour expectations".

Small number of studies about physiological and psychological effects of colour has been stated with regard to marketing implications. The literature on colour psychology is vast. This required us to conduct our review of the extant research in a selective subject. There are many other interesting bodies of work emerging in colour area, and in the following, we briefly touch on a highlight that focuses on the area of small brand in particular region and consumer behaviour. Some of the previous researches in this area focus on atmospherics, addressing issues such as the influence of building, store, and website colour on drawing consumers in, keeping them engaged, and enhancing their shopping experience. In the past research, it is said that blue appears to be a highly positive colour, as blue stores and websites are rated as more relaxing, less crowded, and even more trust worthy (Alberts & van der Geest, 2011; Gorn et al., 2004; Lee & Rao, 2010; Yiiksel, 2009). Another focus in this area is on the role that colour plays in company and brand identify and recognition. Colour is often an integral aspect of logos and product packaging (e.g. Coca Cola red, IBM blue, Cadbury purple) and is presumed to be used in shaping image/personality and facilitating reflexive purchasing behaviour (Hynes, 2009). While Labrecque et al. (2013) stated that the most commonly utilized colour in logos of major companies is blue, which has been linked to rough perceptions of competence in this context (Labrecque and Milne, 2012). A third line of research in this area focuses on the effect of colour on consumer's evaluations of and purchasing intentions toward products. Consumers have been shown to prefer unusual colour descriptions of products; for example red for Coke, green for Kermit (Miller & Kahn, 2005); and male consumers have been shown to perceive greater savings when product prices are presented in red rather than black (Puccinelli et al. 2013). Consumers also desire that the colour of a product match its intended use or purpose. Specifically, they prefer blue for products that are functional or associated with water, and prefer red for products that are luxury items or are associated with status, such as sports car (Bottomley & Doyle, 2006; Hanss et al., 2012; Ngo et al., 2012). On a general note, several researchers caution against making broad, global statements about colour in the area of consumer behaviour because consumer attitudes and behaviours are presumed to be influenced by context-free colour preferences that vary by country, race, sex, and age (Aslam, Mubeen M, 2006; Chebat and Morrin, 2007; Funk and Ndubisi, 2006). Based on this statement, we want to know about the colour impact in a particular region, Indonesia. We try to against the broad and global statement about colour, that some other researchers said it is varied by some criteria, especially as a package colour for local food product.

## 3. COLOUR ASSOCIATION AND SOME CONSUMER RESPONSE

Some researcher have offered theoretical statement focused on learned association to colour and their possible influence on affective, cognitive, and behavioural responding. For example, Frank and Gilovich (1988) suggested that black is associated

with negative concepts such as evil and death and prompts people to behave more aggressively toward others. In similar, Soldat et al. (1997) proposed that red is associated with happiness and blue is associated with sadness, and that these colours lead to information processing and behaviour consistent with these emotions. (Elliot et al., 2007), in the study about colour and its psychological functioning, argued that much of the pre-twenty-first century writing on colour and psychological functioning focused on applied questions, such as “Does the colour on an office wall influence worker productivity?”, “What colours are most fashionable?”, “What colours enhance the taste of food?”, with little or no interest on theoretical considerations. Without intending to confront this opinion, we say that there is a bigger part of writing about colour application and its usefulness in human life until now, compare to writing about its theory. As stated before, colour brings important meaning and role in people’s affect, cognition, and behaviour, including people’s decision making and conversation in their daily routines.

Elliot and colleagues (2007), in their research of the effect of red on performance attainment, proposed that viewing red in an achievement context can undermine performance on challenging tasks that require mental manipulation and flexibility. They stated that red is associated with failure and danger and evokes avoidance motivation in such contexts, which impedes performance attainment. As red has more special attention from the researchers, blue and green seem reasonable for consideration because of their have positive links in the natural realm (e.g. blue sky and water, green foliage and vegetation). Both of them have been shown to be associated with positive content; blue represent openness and peace (Mehta and Zhu, 2009; NAz and Epps, 2004); green is thought as calmness and success (Clarke and Costall, 2008; Moller et al., 2009). A few studies have yielded preliminary evidence that one or both of these colours may have positive implications for performance or experience during task engagement in some instances. Yellow is commonly used to indicate caution in signage and brake lights. A few studies have hinted that yellow may have inimical implication for performance outcomes.

The same colour can have different meanings in different contexts, leading to different implications. For example, the extant literature shows that red carries negative, threatening meaning when seen on an opponent or test of ability and evokes avoidance-relevant affect, cognition, and behaviour; but red carries positive meaning when seen on a potential mate and facilitates approach-relevant responding (Elliot et al., 2007). Another example, in human daily life, red is likely to be connected to courage (positive meaning) and, stop or prohibited in doing something (negative meaning).

Consumers learn colour associations, which lead them to prefer certain colours for various product categories (Grossman and Wisenblit, 1999). Using colour as a cue on packaging can be potentially strong association, especially when it is unique to a particular brand. Underwood (2003) and also Malkewitz (2008) in Gollety and Guichard (2011) argued that colour is an element that likely to generate a positive association. Consumer association regarding food package colour were mainly related to flavour (Hutchings, 2003; Marshall et al., 2006). Differences in expected liking due to package colour might be related to consumers’ hedonic reaction towards the expected flavour of food. Packagers have also used colour to influence perception of package weight (Warde, Flynn, 1926) in Ares and Deliza (2010) as well as to create psychological meaning (Marquiles, 1970; McNeal, 1973; Birren, 1973, 1945; Hattwick, 1950; and Ketcham, 1958) in Bellizzi and Hite (1992). This could explain the fact that colour had a larger influence than shape in consumer decision making (Ares and Deliza, 2010).

A package is known to have four main attributes of “containments”, “protection”, “utility-filling and dispensing” and “communication” (Soroka, 2009) in Singh et al. (2012). Colour can be associated with all five attributes of packaging as mentioned above. It is widely agreed upon by marketers, advertisers and graphic artist that the influence of colour on consumers definitely influences their purchased decisions (Grossman and Wisenblit, 1999). Packaging often influences consumer decision making through its symbolic or aesthetic qualities (Creusen and Schoormans, 2005; Rompat et al., 2009) in Singh et al. (2012).

Numerous studies have been published over the years documenting the role that packaging colours plays in driving consumers’ expectations (e.g. (Ares and Deliza, 2010; Deliza et al., 2003; Marshall et al., 2006; Piqueras-Fiszman and Spence, 2011). Regarding expectation, Summers (1970) found that people who get what they expected and tend to enjoy experimenting products are more likely to be opinion leaders. This kind of word of mouth communication (the generic opinion leaders) was found to be positively related to the consumer packagegoods (Feick& Price, 1987) in (Sun et al., 2006). Researchers have demonstrated that shoppers often do not read the information that is presented on packages (Charters, Lockshin, & Unwin, 1999) in Piqueras-Fiszman and Spence (2011); they mainly recognize what they want or need in order to make a quick purchasing decision. Since colour is perhaps the one feature of the packaging that triggers the fastest response (Swientek, 2001), it is essential to consider in the design process the associations and expectations that consumers have in order to ensure effectiveness and the successful communication of brand/sensory qualities.

#### **4. METHODOLOGY**

This study is conducted through three stages of quantitative method. The first stage is conducted through open questionnaire about colour preference. Participants will be asked about what colour they do like the most and what colour that comes in their mind related to the product package. The finding of first stage is applied in the questionnaire of next step. This questionnaire will mainly examine the consumer's response of package colour. Participants will be asked about colour related to some consumer response including colours association, word of mouth, quality, and their intention to buy. There will be small treatment based on the colours as the results of the first stage of data collection. While stage two act as pilot study with small sample, stage three is the main sample (about 450 participants). The data will be analysed with analysis of variance.

#### **5. CONTRIBUTION**

This research will enhance the body of knowledge with respect to impact of colour on choice. It will provide insights to practitioner by confirming or contradicting the current understanding of the extent of the impact of colour on consumer response. For local food product with small brands in particular region that not internationally renowned, package colour will be associated to different meanings due to different culture. In Indonesia, a region where a lot of small brands grow with their local products, there is no study before about examination of package colour on consumers' decision making. Besides lacking of study in colour of food package, based on previous statement, researcher interested in examining the package colour influence on consumers' mind in this region. For this region, this study contributes the information about colour in marketing that could lead to company performance in market competition. The methodological approach to address key research object is analysis of variance, which has hardly been used in previous studies. Most of them have used conjoint analysis and structural equation modelling. Therefore, this research also has a methodological contribution.

#### **6. RESEARCH QUESTION**

This research aims to investigate the impact of colour of product package on some consumer responses. Here, based on previous studies, researcher included colour association, word of mouth, perceived quality, and purchase intention as consumer responses. Some treatment based on colour of package is conducted. This treatment is applied after through preliminary study and pilot study to test the questionnaire before.

Therefore, some research questions are emerged:

##### **Research Question 1**

What are the impact of colour of package to some consumer responses including consumers colour association, word of mouth, perceived quality, and purchase intention?

The product here is a particular food product from a particular region in Indonesia. So, the next research aim is related to the particular region with its particular culture. Based on discussion from some previous studies, researcher have intention to know more about the impact of colour of package on some consumer response including colour association, word of mouth, perceived quality, and purchase intention in this region particularly.

##### **Research Question 2**

What are the specific impact of colour of package to some consumer responses including consumers colour association, word of mouth, perceived quality, and purchase intention in particular region in Indonesia (Yogyakarta)? Is there any specific differentiation compare to previous studies in other region?

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