Abstract

In this world the market expansion and new costumers attraction and keeping past costumers is the major concern of many companies. So that the companies and organizations use various trading methods because of high competing pressures. The main factor of costumer attraction in the modern world is the color of the goods due to expansion of self-service stores. As in the trading, the color impact costumer’s behavior directly and the effects of colors determine most of the costumers’ behavior, the psychology of colors developed in which you could not find a product without using of color psychology in its packaging design. Demographic features of people is one of important effective factors on selecting the colors in which the sex of people is most important case to be study. The aim of this study is the color categorization which is used in the goods’ packaging regards to people interests based on their sex. In this library research the researcher has attempted to present appropriate model in order to increase acceptance of the products packaging color by study of some reliable essays about color psychology in the products packaging and also differences of men and women in selecting the colors and the effects of the colors on the costumers’ purchasing behavior. The results show that men and women do not accept the colors as same each other and their interest in selecting the colors are so wide that by choosing a special color of a packaged product, that color attract a special sex and repulse the other sex to buy the product. Also in this research the various colors has studied and the acceptance of any color has compared in men and women and their purchasing behavior as they face with these colors.

keywords : Color , Gender , Marketing

Introduction

Every person has different physical and psychological characteristics. Physical characteristics including the body shape, voice, and walking pattern vary depending on gender and age (Chaffin, 2000) Emotional and psychological characteristics including concentration, memory, and visual and spatial recognition abilities also differ (Kers, Knez, 2000)

Hence, demographic characteristics were studied for interface design. An interface in which gender characteristics are applied can be effectively used for human-computer interaction, biometrics, web design, learning, demographic collection, and target advertising (Chin, Fu, Kannampallil, 2009)

The consumer behavior is a disputatious and challenging issue and involves the individuals and whatever the buy, why and how they buy, marketing mixed and market. Consumer behavior is a very interesting field to study. Since it is consumers who buy goods and services, they can use their daily experience in order to perceive the concepts and theories of this field. Perceiving consumer behavior and evaluation of the consumer performance is of particular importance considering cultural differences in different societies. Consumer behavior is a subtle phenomenon due to the fact that individuals do not always act overtly. Their performance as consumers is not often predictable and even explainable. Individuals gain practical experience through observing shopping behavior of others and doing their own shopping. (Johan, Michiel; 2010).

The modern society is society of consumers. The intensive nowadays globalization and competition regarding consumers make searching for alternative methods of influence of consumers. The immaterial and intangible
elements of the product affect the consumers’ buying decisions. The competitive fight obliges to use actively the marketing tools, which would create exclusivity, link with the consumer and recognition of brands. Some scientists argue that the classical marketing is not effective any more. The sensory marketing dictates the new concept in marketing. It suggests using all the human senses: sight, sound, smell, taste and touch. The sensory marketing is the innovative solution to create the emotional characteristics of the brand/product and to provide it with solid position in market, as well as to secure strong relations with a consumer (Hultén, 2011; Funk & Ndubisi, 2006; Kosslyn & Thompson, 2003). The sensory marketing provides an excellent opportunity to use color as the tool to form the product’s differentiation. The colors may create emotional connections resulting in differentiation of the products, acquired competitive advantage, reinforced loyalty, increased sales, shorter perception time of the brand mark, longer stay of consumers in the store, created positive emotions and relation with the consumer, encouragement to buy on impulse, and increased number of intentions to go shopping again. The scientists (Cian & Cervai, 2011; Kauppinen-Raisanen, & Luomala, 2010; Hulten, 2012; Leigh, Peters & Shelton, 2006) state that color is an inexpensive and effective tool used to create positive opinion of the consumers about the brand/product. The color psychology affects the human lives in many ways; however they often do not perceive the impact of selected colors for website, forms and packages, shop or office, when the marketing is being implemented or when the clothes for employees are selected. The color has a powerful impact on all the life aspects in the subconscious level. Even when no word is uttered, the understanding of meaning of colors in the business provides us with a priceless tool to obtain the best response to marketing and to create the successful business in the end.

In our daily life, there are plenty of things that we have taken for granted in the sense that we do not notice, acknowledge, enjoy them fully or sometimes even complain about. Among those precious gifts existing in our life there are the ability to see things in colors and the color itself. Color is a part of our everyday life. People define objects, spaces and also their emotions with colors. Color which has the effect to lead and affect our judgments and perceptions is studied extensively in the literature. Color preferences of individuals are regarded as linked with subjectivity (Ekici, Yener and Cangiz, 2006), so that subjective criteria of individuals such as cultural and individual differences lead to their judgments on color preferences (Ou, Luo, Woodcock and Wright, 2004a). In addition to culture, demographic variables of individuals such as age and gender could have an impact on their responses to color (Manav, 2007). Manufacturing companies must consider the demographic characteristics of the target society such as gender and age in producing each product.

**Consumer behavior**

Consumer behavior studies decision-making strategies and processes involved in acquiring new goods. This dynamic process includes numerous factors, both external and internal, which influence the consumers’ behavior. There is no doubt, that external factors have great impact on decision-making behavior, but in this study, I would like to focus and more deeply investigate the psychological variables involved. I would also like to point out that many of the theories mentioned below might sound as old and historical, but I decided to dedicate them enough space in the presented study, because most of them are still one of the most important sources of information regarding shopping behavior and up-to-date researches continually use them as a base for their studies.

**color**

Color affects every moment in life. It is an important marketing communication tool, a memorable visual element and carries key symbolic and associative information about products (Garber, et al., 2000). It strongly influences the clothes we wear, the car we drive, the backpack or hand bag we choose to use, the shoes or sneakers we wear and the furnishings in our homes. The product’s color may play a significant role in the consumer’s purchasing decisions for certain products (Ogden et al., 2010, Akcay et al., 2011). Many companies in the world hire color consultants to help identify the best color for their product, one which would appeal to their potential buyers. 62-90% of a product purchase decision is based on the color of the product and the decision is made within minutes of seeing it (Singh, 2006; online, pcimag.com, 2002). Color is a highly noticeable attribute for presenting images. It improves recognition, memory and increases subjects’ attention (Wichmann, et al., 2002). Color entices people to interact with and, quite possibly, purchase a product. Therefore it is essential to consider color when developing marketing communication strategies. (Akcay, et al.,
2011; pcimag.com, 2002; Clarke and Honeycutt, 2000; Wagner, 1988). It is very important to understand consumer’s color choices and update or change colors regularly, especially with high risk purchases such as cars and furniture. An understanding of a consumer’s color choice is very complicated and probably based on wide range of color associations for different product categories (Akcay et al., 2011; Grossman and Wisenblit, 1991; Triplett, 1996).

Culture and Color Preferences

There are also researches which has similar findings of color preferences for different cultures. In the study of Dittmar it is found that German adults mostly preferred blue and least preferred yellow from the colors blue, green, red and yellow. (Dittmar, 2001) Although the contexts are different, Camgz, Yener and Güvenç found a similar result as blue was the most preferred color of Turkish subjects regardless of the background color. Despite cultural differences, these studies show that blue is the most preferred color in both cultures. (Camgz, Yener, Güvenç 2002)

Another example for this argument is the experiment of Cernovsky, Haggarty and Kermeen that defines color preferences of two different cultures: Arctic Inuit and Southern Canadians. Although the subjects in these two cultures had been grown in completely different physical and cultural environments, differences in color preference were not found between these groups. Thus, the research indicate that although culture appears as an important factor in color preferences, the influence of it should not be overestimated because different experiments provide conflicting results. (Cernovsky, Haggarty, Kermeen 1998)

Meanings of colors

Color is an optical and psychological factor everywhere. Colors affect our emotions at work and at play. Emotional stability and efficiency depend to a great extent on environment, of which color is a most important element. By learning the nature of color we can harness its power and use it for our emotional well-being, our general welfare, and as a means of influencing people.

In order to utilize color in marketing activities, marketers ought to understand which emotions and also the needs behind that each color can trigger from the target customers. The meanings associated with colors vary from culture to culture; there are no absolutely universal meanings applied for any color. Nowadays, the most widely known researches about what feelings that colors represent and trigger are from North America. With the global spread of North American culture, the interpretation of color meanings by people around the world has been alternated and gradually shares some common points. The North American set of color meanings presented below is also rather similar to the Western world and it is the most closely applicable to the Finnish culture. (Scott-Kemmis 2013)
Demographic Variables and Color Preferences

Because these variables cause physiological and psychological differences, researchers (Dittmar, 2001; Ellis and Ficek, 2001; Zentner, 2001) studied the impact of these variables on color preferences. Just like the effect of culture, gender is also a controversial issue. Relation between gender and color preferences is displayed by some experiments; on the other hand the results of other researches do not verify this relation. Although there are several studies about gender, the nature of relationship between gender and color preferences is not clearly stated. Different experiments indicate different relations between gender and color preference.

Lange and Rentfrow claim that gender differences in color preferences exist since females prefer yellow more than male. (Lange and Rentfrow, 2007) Ellis and Ficekreveal that there is a significant difference in color preferences of male and female subjects; males prefer blue and females prefer green. (Ellis, Ficek, 2001) Singh also claims that gender differences exist in the perception of color. (Singh, 2006) From another perspective, de Destefani and Whitfield claim that females look like better prepared to handle color selection and preference than males during the decision making process. (Destefani, Whitfield, 2008) On the other hand, in the experiment of Camgiz and et.al gender has an insignificant influence on color preferences of the sample group. (Camgiz, et al., 2002) The experiment of Zentner provides similar results; there is not any evidence for widespread gender stereotypes in color preferences of 3 to 4 years old children. (Zentner, 2001) The extensive experiment of Ellis and Ficek shows that sexual orientation of individuals (either heterosexual or
homosexual/bisexual) does not affect their color preferences. (Ellis and Ficek, 2001) Most of the researches show that one could not ignore the changing relation between age and color preferences (Dittmar, 2001; Zentner, 2001; Manav, 2007). In some researches, age is used as a base of the study while expressing the most and the least preferred color of individuals (Terwogt and Hoeksma, 1995; Dittmar, 2001; Zentner, 2001; Pitchford and Mullen, 2005). Psychological, biological, occupational and medical issues may be the reasons of age-related changes in color preferences in adulthood (Dittmar, 2001), so that it can be said that color preferences change during life span of individuals. According to the research of Manav age is a significant and defining factor in the preference of achromatic color black. (Manav, 2007) The well-known color preference for blue appears to change with age in the experiment of Zentner. But, the experiment of Terwogt and Hoeksma shows that the most preferred color blue did not change in three different age groups (7 years, 11 years and 30 years old) of In the research of Pitchford and Mullen (2005), it is found that children’s least preferred colors (brown and gray) are the ones that appear late in their conceptual development. According to this result, there could be a possible link between the color preference and color cognition of individuals. There is also another suggestion that color preferences of children are presented before correct color naming (Pitchford, Mullen, 2005), so that the relation between linguistic evolution of color terms and the organization of color perception in early childhood is another potential link of color preferences in young children (Zentner, 2001).

**Gender stereotypes**

Gender is a psychologically powerful social category that people want to know about others in an interaction (Nowak & Rauh, 2006). People automatically apply gender assumptions to other people, they are gender stereotyping and perpetuating these stereotypes (Jung & Lee, 2006). The concept ‘stereotype’ according to Jung and Lee (2006) is ‘a relatively rigid and oversimplified conception of a group of people in which all individuals in the group are labeled with the so-called group characteristics’. Another important concept is ‘gender roles’, which refers to a set of social and behavioral norms that a society considers appropriate for men and women to think, look like, and behave (World Health Organization, 2013). Gender roles are culturally determined and the behavior of people is consistent with the gender role that is considered as ‘masculine’ or ‘feminine’ (Jung & Lee, 2006). Combining the concept of stereotypes and the concept of gender roles Jung and Lee (2006) suggest that men and women have distinct psychological traits and characteristics and these traits and characteristics are rigidly held and oversimplified by society. Much of the impact that people have on others in society occurs because they correspond with the expectations people have about how the other should behave. Many of the expectations that people have about others arise from gender roles (Eagly, 1983). For example, men are seen as being more aggressive, dominant, competent and persuasive in communication, whereas women are seen as being more reticent, passive and cooperative (Sheehan, 1999). Dominant behavior by men tends to be well-received and has greater power and status, whereas dominant behavior by women tends to be poorly received. Besides that, the communication style of women is seen by society as socially and emotional oriented whereas men perform a more task-oriented communication style (Eagly, 1983; Nass & Moon, 2000). The language that women choose is more expressive, nurturing, and supportive, while men choose for reactive, self-oriented and opinionated language (Sheehan, 1999). Besides that, Eagly (1983) suggests that men and women differ in how influential and easily influenced they are. Men are more influential while women are more easily influenced by other people. These differences arise largely from formal status inequalities. Eagly (1983) argues that men are more likely than women to have high-status roles. Besides that, in general, evaluations, advices or opinions of males tend to be received as more valid than evaluations of females (Nass & Moon, 2000). All these traits and characteristics arise from gender stereotypes and gender roles. Gender stereotyping may influence self-perception and perception of others in society just as it influences the perception and judgment of any object, including products and brands (Jung & Lee, 2006; Nowak & Rauh, 2006). A number of studies in the consumer behavior literature have addressed that brands and products in the marketplace possess gender (Jung & Lee, 2006; Nowak & Rauh, 2006; Sirgy, 1982). The perception of a product or brand is not only determined by the physical characteristics of the product or brand, but these perceptions are also formed by other associations, such as stereotypes of the typical user (Sirgy, 1982). The perception of a product or brand can be formed to a stereotypic image of the generalized user (Sirgy, 1982). For example, the users of the brand Chanel are mainly women, however the users of the brand Hugo Boss are primarily men. The use of a gendered brand or product has advantages and disadvantages. One important advantage of a gendered brand or product is that they use their masculine or feminine association to attract the
right target group (men or women) (Grohmann, 2009; Jung & Lee, 2006). However, this advantage could be a hindrance for brands or products trying to extend beyond their current market segment, because these brands or products could be hampered by this strong association (Jung & Lee, 2006).

Gender stereotypes influence the attitude and behavior of men and women. Grohmann (2009) suggests that both men and women need to express their masculinity/femininity through brand or product choice and consumption, but men and women are different in their attitude towards these brands and products. Men perceive a typical masculine brand or product to be extremely masculine and a feminine brand or product to be extremely feminine (Jung & Lee, 2006). Men tend to find their sexual identity, more than women, in products and brands they buy and use (Jung & Lee, 2006). Lii & Wong (1982) indicated that men hold an unfavorable position towards femininity and perceive their own masculinity as more desirable.

Gender-stereotyped preferences

For decades, researchers have been studying how children develop gender-stereotyped behaviour, such as preferences for pink or blue. Some have suggested, for example, that since gender-stereotyped colour dressing is so common in infancy, infants develop a preference for these familiar colours as they grow older (Chiu et al., 2006; Cohen, 2004). Researchers have shown that male and female infants as young as 5 months of age become familiar with vastly different surroundings: while female infants were often dressed in pink, had pink pacifiers, and yellow bedding, boys were more likely to have blue bedding and curtains in their rooms (Pomerleau, Bolduc, Malcuit, & Cossette, 1990). Since parents surround girls with objects that are pink and boys with objects that are blue, infants may develop a preference for these colours based on familiarity. Another possibility is that once children identify with a certain gender, they seek out gender-related information and choose toys and colours that are commonly associated with that gender. This idea is not new. Kohlberg’s (1966) early work on gender development suggests that children seek out gender-related information and look for ways to conform to these gender norms. More recent cognitive theories of gender development are in line with Kohlberg’s original view. Gender schema theory, for example, suggests that over the course of development, children form gender schemas – or representations of information about gender and themselves – by acquiring knowledge from the environment and incorporating that knowledge into their schemas (Martin, Ruble, & Szpkrybalo, 2002). This view and several cognitive and constructivist views of gender development suggest that once children recognize their own gender, they actively seek out gender-related information and integrate that information into their developing concept of gender. Ruble and colleagues similarly propose that children are ‘gender detectives’ and create their own concepts of what gender means to them by actively seeking out gender-related information (Martin & Ruble, 2004; Ruble et al., 2007). However, it is still unclear from the literature whether children’s personal preferences beginning in infancy shape the development of gender stereotypes, or whether children’s growing knowledge about gender leads to gender-stereotyped preferences (Liben & Bigler, 2002). These issues will be one of the main focuses of the current investigation.

Personality and Color Preference

McInnis conducted a study to investigate trends in the relationship between color preference and selected traits which generally reflect personality. Her study was designed to gain some insight into consumer preferences and satisfactions as they might relate to interior decorating. McInnis’ investigation was done in Tallahassee, Florida, with 161 Anglo adult subjects. Of these, 51 were males and 110 were females. The subjects ranged in age from eighteen to fifty. According to the McGuire-White Index of Social Status, sixty-five subjects were upper-middle class or above, sixty were lower-middle class, and thirty-six were upper-lower class or below. Educational levels were as follows: seventy-four respondents did not extend beyond high school, forty-eight had either attended or had been graduated from college, and thirty-nine had done some graduate work. Annual incomes ranged from below $4,000 to above $20,000. Seventy per cent of the respondents chose cool colors. The less saturated hues were also favored more frequently than fully saturated hues. Items which the data revealed were significantly related to colors which respondents chose included sex, source of income, colors desired in the home, colors chosen for clothing, geographic area in which reared, entertainment in the home, and the enjoyment of outdoor activities. McInnis found that both sexes preferred cool colors. Respondents earning wages or weekly checks chose warm, dull colors more often than cool colors. Monthly salaried subjects preferred cool colors but liked bright or dull hues almost as well. All subjects wanted their favorite colors
dulled in their homes. Almost 67 per cent of those with a preference for bright-cool colors also liked to wear them. Sixty-three per cent of those preferring dull-cool colors wore them. The respondents who preferred warm colors wore bright-warm colors 41 per cent of the time and wore dull-warm colors 46 per cent of the time. (Mclnnis,1963)

Mclnnis findings showed that people who spent their childhood in the West or Midwest chose warm colors and, particularly, dull-warm colors. Those from areas described as green and flat liked cool colors, with emphasis on dull-cool hues. Warm-color keyed people entertained more often in their homes and were more active outdoors than cool-color keyed people. They also tended to have several types of informal parties, whereas, cool-color keyed people entertained formally. Although not statistically significant, the data from the study by Mclnnis indicated some trends relative to color and personality. Warm-color subjects seemed to be more active in hobbies, art expression or appreciation, listening to music of many types, and clubs and organizations. They appeared to be extraverted. Cool-color subjects tended to favor antiques, little variety in music, reading, church organizations, and being alone. These might be classified as activities associated with the introvert. There was some evidence in the data from Mclnnis study to support the theory that warm colors are preferred by lower socioeconomic groups and by younger groups. (Mclnnis,1963)

A study by Barrett and Eaton tested the hypothesis that a preference for tints or strong color is associated with certain personality characteristics. Of the 114 students taking part in the experiment, 49 preferred hues, 45 liked tints best, and 10 preferred shades. Ten subjects had no definite preference. With so few choosing shades, statistical significance could not be determined. Barrett and Eaton suggested "that preference for shade may be related to feelings of anxiety". The findings of the study showed that individuals who preferred color or hue responded directly and with interest to the external environment. Persons who preferred tints viewed the external world subjectively, living within their own thoughts and adapting less readily to the outer world. An analysis of the data collected by Barrett and Eaton revealed group characteristics similar to those of introverts and extraverts. (Barrett, Eaton, 1947)

In a recent study of color and texture preferences and extraversion introversion, Shipman classified 89 seventh grade girls using the Junior Eysenck Personality Inventory (Junior EPI) and an adaptation of the McGuire-White Index of Social Status. Findings showed that there was no significant difference between either color or texture choices and classification as extravert or introverted; there were no differences between warm-cool qualities and socioeconomic status and rough-smooth qualities and socioeconomic status. In general, subjects preferred warm colors rather than cool colors. There was a high positive correlation among the factors of warm color preference, introversion, and middle socioeconomic status. (Shipman, 1971)

Favorite Color by Gender

When this data is examined further and filters of gender and age are applied, some interesting results surface. The two pie charts below represent favorite colors of each gender. A review of color studies by Eysenck in the early 1940’s notes that St. George maintained that blue for men stands out far more than for women. Related to different colors, Eysenck’s study also found that the most significant gender difference is yellow being preferred to orange by women and orange to yellow by men. Natalia Khouw states, “this finding was reinforced later by Birren in 1952 who found men preferred orange to yellow; while women placed orange at the bottom. Both these published results correlate to the survey results collected in this study. (Hallock, 2003)
color preferences differ by the age of the participant. Birren states in his book that blue and red maintain a high preference throughout life, but colors seem to drop down the list while other colors become more preferred. Yellow, for example, is well liked by children, but begins to drop away by people as they become adults. Birren states, “With maturity comes a greater liking for hues of shorter wave length (blue, green, purple) than for hues of longer wave length (red, orange, and yellow)” As you can see, blue, green, and purple make up the majority of responses. What’s interesting is the preference of green in the younger age groups and the preference of purple in the older age groups. One could say, by looking at this graph alone, that as people become older their preference for purple increases, while their preference for green decreases. Previous academic or research publications regarding this specific anomaly were not found during this project so the ability to compare and contrast these results with other results isn’t possible at this time. M. M. Terwogy and J. B. Hoeksma did a research study on colors and emotions with regards to preferences and combinations and they noted that as people get older, their preferences are likely to change as a result of social and cultural influences. They state, “As children grow up they learn that the expression of anger is often punished. They also learn that the color black (within Western culture) is associated with mourning.” (Hallock, 2003)

CONCLUSION

It is necessary that the products producer companies equipped themselves with trading modern methods which is based on the consumer’s behavior study and recognition due to the inherent differences of the individuals’ emotions in this competitive world. These producers should have delicacy in the selecting of packaging and advertising methods due to their product type and target markets. Nowadays the color psychology in the packaging of the products is a significant method to attract customers due to expansion of chain stores and self-service and fading of sellers’ role. This study shows that men and women differ in most of their passions and interests with each other and for them there are significant differences in acceptance or rejection of various colors and the color which interests men may repulse the women, so it is very important to select the colors of the products which the results of (Hallock, 2003) and (Singh, 2006) studies show this issue. The findings of this study show that women due to their passions pay more attention to colors which the results of (Destefani, Whitfield, 2008) study also confirm this issue. In the products designing if a product is to be produced only for men, it is recommended to use blue color and if the product is produced only for women it is recommended to use purple color, packaging and advertising. In some cases the product which is produced for both men and women, the researches show that blue and green is the appropriate option; the results of (Hallock, 2003; Ellis, Ficek,2001; and Zantner,2001) studies confirm this finding. Colors which should not use for men are orange, brown and purple that not only not attract them but also repulse them of buying that product. Also women do not select gray, orange, yellow and brown. In some cases in which there should be used various colors in packaging of the products, it is recommended that combining of the colors have to be selected due to the sex of people which their contrast observed and the dominant colors selected according individuals interest. The results of (Hallock, 2003) study confirm this issue.

References


