A STUDY ON THE PREFERENCE OF COLOUR OF THE HOTEL GUEST AND EMOTIONAL EFFECT OF PRIMARY COLOURS

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ABSTRACT

Background: *Colours in any space have a huge impact on how a person feels and behaves. Thus, the colour scheme of a room plays a major role towards the mood of the guest which in turn tends to increase the level of satisfaction of the guests.* **Objectives:** *The objectives of the present study are: To find the most desired colour preferred by guest in their rooms, to find the association of preference of colour with gender of the respondent and to identify emotions attached with primary colours.* **Methodology:** *The research design for this study was descriptive. The sample size for the study was 200. Sampling technique used was Convenience Sampling. Subjects were from Delhi/NCR in the age group of 18 to 55 years. 105 males and 95 females responded. The study entailed an analysis based on the prepared questionnaire in relation to the topic of the research. The results were then drawn out on the basis of frequency analysis and chi square test using MINITAB 14 software.* **Results:** *The findings of the present study revealed that a majority (44.5%) of the responders would like their guest room to be in neutral colours. Also, it was observed that people felt uncomfortable (32.5%) by looking at the colour red, happy (31%) with the colour yellow and relaxed (49.5%) with the colour blue. P value of Chi square test was less than 0.05, therefore there is significant association between preference of colour and gender.* **Conclusion:** *The most preferred colour scheme in the guest rooms was found to be neutral. Also, among the three primary colours, blue was the colour that was mostly associated with positive emotions, red with negative while the reactions for the yellow colour were mixed. Hence, more of blue and related colours should be incorporated in the guest rooms.*

Key Words: *Colour Scheme, Emotions, Sensitization, Guest Room, Preferred.*

INTRODUCTION

Guest Rooms are the most important component of any hotel revenue generation also the comfort of the guest is the prime motive in any hotel. Comfort and relaxation do depend on the level of service provided by the hotel, however, the colour of rooms and lobby or the architectural shapes of room and bathrooms also provide a sense of relaxation and gives the feeling of home away from home.

Colour is one of the most wonderful experiences that one generally ignores. If one sees around, colour is found everywhere surrounding him/her. Life is interpreted as much through colour as it is done through shape, texture and sound. For studying the impact of colours, Colour Therapy was developed and put to place by many researchers. In the research done by Then (2005) colour therapy given was a holistic and non-invasive therapy that involved the use of colours for treating different physical and psychological ailments of an individual. Colour Therapy has a set of principles which helps in creating harmonious colour and colour combinations for healing. Colour therapists believed that each organ and body system has its own characteristic energy, and disorders can be healed by applying colour of the corresponding energy to the whole body or to the organ which requires healing. Colours are visible light energy of certain wavelengths. Photoreceptors in the retina, called cones, translate this energy into colours. The retina contains three kinds of cones each for blue, green and red. One perceives other colours by combining the above said colours. Throughout in the life one sees ocean of colours. Colours affect emotions and wellbeing of an individual. Shades of blue are considered to be restful and can be used to help lower blood pressure, improve sleep and to reduce pain perception. In contrast, exposure to red light has the opposite effect and can cause raised blood pressure and feelings of stress as it triggers the release of adrenaline.

O'Connor (2011) gave information on colour psychology and colour therapy in popular culture. Many articles may be found on Internet websites which are devoted to colour and a range of psychological, biological, and behavioural effects. As per O'Connor (2011) the information available, which varies from small summaries with attractive titles to lengthy and comprehensive discussions, are presented in a good manner making the reader believe about a range of claims such as red is arousing and physically stimulating and blue colour is considered to be relaxing, calming and healing.

Some researchers have also worked on how the human brain responses to different colours as well**.** Wolfson (2000) carried out his research on similar grounds, where different background colour (option of red colour and blue colour) and sound levels (loud against quiet) were manipulated in a series of computer games. Players that used the blue screen improved gradually over the sessions, whereas players using red screen peaked midway and then deteriorated gradually towards the end. A similar pattern for heartbeats was also found, suggesting that arousal was implicated in the effect. Sound alone was found to be having little impact, but the combination of red background colour with loud sound was associated with perceptions of excitement and playing well. The results suggested that the aura of a computer game may affect cognitive and physiological responses of an individual.

Kurt (2014) conducted researches that contributed towards understanding of the effect of colours on our feeling and decision making ability. Study was also carried out to understand the use of colours for different spaces to suit the purpose for which they are designed.

This reaction to colours on our brain activity has been used all around us in a very subtle manner without most of us noticing it. The colours are used as a marketing tool in various media and advertisements to make the products attractive, which in turn tricks the customers into buying products and services that they usually don't intend to. Thus, colour acts as a strong marketing tool that influences decision of buying in many customers. Kumar (2017) stated that marketing professionals must explore the harmony of colours for successful marketing of products. Nearly all products sold today have colourful facades. Selecting the right colours to display or market has an enormous impact on sales of that product. While no single set of rules governs the choice of colours, research has established general guidelines based on the principle of associative learning, the relationship between colour and emotion. The researchers made a diagnostic study on the psychology of colour influencing the buying pattern of a customer. Secondary data has been extensively used in the research. Colour properties like hue, saturation and value were discussed. Different aspects such as usage of colours in the packaging of products, earning brand image, how colours help marketers to communicate the brand to customers and how to match colours with customer's personality were extensively discussed. Conclusions were drawn based on this diagnostic study.

Colour is an omnipresent perceptual stimulus that is often considered in terms of aesthetics. Researches on the similar grounds carried out by Elliot (2014) clearly show that colour can carry important meaning and can have an important impact on people's affect, cognition, and behaviour.

Something as simple as the colour of the wall of a bedroom has a great impact on the human brain, which may lead to change in the behaviour pattern. Thus, it is important to keep these aspects in consideration as the quality of a Guest's stay is the most important aspect for any hotel. A happy customer in turn helps to ensure good revenue generation and future business.

Paulesu (1995) carried out research to study the Colour-word synaesthesia that may result from the activity of brain areas concerned with language and visual feature integration. In the case of colour-word synaesthesia, conscious visual experience appears to occur without activation of the primary visual cortex part of the brain.

As per Then (2005), colours affect our emotions and wellbeing. Shades of cool colours such as blue, for example, are restful and can help to lower blood pressure, improve sleep cycle and reduce pain perception. In contrast, exposure to warm colours, such as red, have the opposite effect and

can cause raised blood pressure and feelings of stress as it triggers the release of adrenaline (fight or flight hormone).

With the advent of the modern society and urban lifestyle, the impact of colour and light conditions on our emotional and physical and mental health is gaining greater importance than ever before. Similar research by Abbas (2005) suggested the impact of different colours and lighting conditions on people, using non-invasive means. Close correlations between cardiac activity, our emotions and health are well reported in literature and hence it is expected to be a good measure of environmental conditions on people. Electrocardiogram (ECG) is the non-invasive recording of the cardiac activity. These experiments show that there is a change in the heart rate due to change in the colour of our surroundings and lighting conditions.

Bonnardel et al., (2017) concluded in their study that the males of Indian and British origin have a liking for blues and greens, whereas the females of Indian and British origin has inclination towards pink and purple. Ellis (2001) has mentioned that North American College male students had a preference for blue where as female students had a preference for green and blue. As per Hill (2013), the emotions attached with red colour are enthusiasm, warmth, energy, stress and hostility. The emotions attached with yellow colour are apprehension, terror, intense sadness, irrational thinking, emotional vulnerability self-esteem, congeniality, optimism, and even artistry. The emotions attached with blue colour are clarity of thought, mental focus, serenity of the mind, coldness, isolation, and emotional unavailability.

As per the literature review it is seen that a lot of work has been done on the emotional effect of colours on human psychology. Therefore this study is focusing on analysing the preference of colour by the guest in the hotel guest room and if there is any difference in preference of colour because of the gender of the guest. This study will be helpful for the interior decorators in streamlining the colour scheme for the hotel guest rooms and creating more relaxing environment in the hotel.

The objectives of the present study were:

- To find the most desired colour preferred by guest in their rooms
- To find the association of preference of colour with gender of the respondent.
- To identify emotions attached with primary colours.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design: The research design of the present study is descriptive in nature.

Locale: The study was conducted in Delhi/ NCR.

Sampling Design: A total sample a 200 was taken for the present study. The samples were selected on Convenience method. 105 (52%) males and 95 (48%) females responded to the questionnaires. The respondents were from different age group. From 18 years to 25 years 116 (58%) participants responded. The above data shows that the gender wise respondents were almost equal in number, whereas, more of young participants have responded to the questionnaire. The data was collected from the participants who visit different categories of hotels.

Tools and Technique: For data collection questionnaire was used. The questionnaire had questions pertaining preference of choice of colour scheme and the questions were made to record emotions of the respondent on seeing the Primary Colours (Red, Blue and Yellow). Known people (family and friends across Delhi/NCR) were send the questionnaire via e-mail and were asked to fill the questionnaire. The questions were multiple choice questions where the respondent was suppose to pick only one choice.

Data and Statistical Analysis: The collected data was then analysed based on frequency and percentage. Minitab 14 software was used for Chi Square Test of Association to find the association between the preference of colour and gender of the respondent.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The questionnaire was filled by following participants:

Table 1: Age wise classification

Age Bracket (years)	Participants (n)	Percentage (%)
18-25	116	58%
26-32	31	15.5%
33-45	32	16%
46 and above	21	10.5%
Total	200	100%

From 18 years to 25 years 116 (58%) participants responded, 31(15.5%) participants responded from the age group 26 years to 32 years, 32 (16%) participants responded from the age group 33 years 45 years. 21 (10.5%) respondents were more than 46 years of age.

Table 2: Gender wise classification

Gender	Participants (n)	Percentage (%)
Male	105	52%
Female	95	48%
Total	200	100%

105 (52%) males and 95 (48%) females responded to the questionnaires.

The respondents were asked how frequently they visit the hotels. The following table (Table 3) gives the details of the frequency of the visit of the respondents.

Table 3: Frequency of Visit to Hotels

Frequency of Visit to Hotels	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Once in 2 Weeks	20	10%
Once in Month	38	19%
Once in 6 Months	78	39%
Once in a Year	64	32%
Total	200	100%

There were 200 responders who gave their responses on the survey. After tallying the responses of these responders, we found that 10% responders visit hotels once in two weeks, 19% once in a month, 39% once in 6 months and 32% once in a year. Thus, it can be seen that at least 71% responders visit hotels once in a year.

The respondents were asked which category of hotels they generally prefer to stay in. The responses are summarised in table 4.

Table 4: Type of Hotels the Respondents Visit

Type of Hotels	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Budget Hotels	77	38.5%
Star Classified Hotels	81	40.5%
Inns & B&B	11	5.5%
Resorts	31	15.5%
Total	200	100%

200 responders gave their response on the above question for the survey. It was found that a major percentage of the responders prefer to stay in budget or star classified hotels with the percentage of former as 38.5% and that of latter as 40.5%. The percentages of people who prefer to stay in resorts were only 15.5% and those with Inns and B & B's as their preference were 5.5% which is

the least among all of the given options.

To get the results for first objective, the respondents were asked which colours they prefer in a hotel guest room. The result for this question is given in Table 5.

Table 5: Preference of Colour in Guest room

Preference of Colour	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Neutral	89	44.5%
Warm	14	7%
Cool	39	19.5%
Pastel	30	15%
Mix of different Colour	28	14%
Total	200	100%

200 responders gave their answers on the preference of the colour for the guest rooms. After tallying their response, it was found that a major percentage of responders prefer neutral colours (which includes white, black, brown, beige, grey) in the guest rooms which is 44.5% and the least preferred colour scheme turned out to be warm (which includes red, yellow and orange) with only 7% of the responders. Also, we found that around 19.5%, 15% and 14% people prefer cool (which includes blue, green and purple), pastels and mixed colour schemes in their guest rooms respectively.

Table 6: Contingency Table of Gender and Preference of Colour

	Cool	Mix	Neutral	Pastels	Warm	All
Female	6	7	47	29	6	95 (48%)
Male	33	21	42	1	8	105 (52%)
All	39 (19.5%)	28 (14%)	89 (44.5%)	30 (15%)	14 (7%)	200 (100%)

Chi Square test of Gender and Preference of Colour

Pearson Chi-Square = 52.022, DF = 4, P-Value = 0.000

Since the P value of Chi Square test is less than .05, therefore the null hypothesis is rejected. Thus, it may be said that the preference of colour and gender has association. Similar results were seen in the research of Bonnardel et al (2017) where the authors concluded that the males of Indian and British origin have a liking for blues and greens, whereas the females of Indian and British origin has inclination towards pink and purple. Thus, even Bonnardel et al., (2017) concluded that the preference of colour and gender is associated.

For second objective, the questions were asked regarding what is the first emotion that strikes the viewer when looking at the primary colour i.e. Red, Yellow and Blue. 6 basic emotions were considered to record the reaction of people while looking at primary colours (Cherry, 2021).

Table 7: Emotions Related with Primary Colour

Emotions	Red Percentage (n)	Yellow Percentage (n)	Blue Percentage (n)
Calm and Relaxed	5.5% (11)	25.5% (51)	49.5% (99)
Sadness	0.5% (1)	4.5% (9)	6% (12)
Anger	29% (58)	2.5% (5)	Nil (0)
Happy	11% (22)	31% (62)	16.5% (33)
Uncomfortable	32.5% (65)	20.5% (41)	15.5% (31)
Excitement	21.5% (43)	17% (34)	12.5% (25)
Total	**100% (n=200)**	**100% (n=200)**	**100% (n=200)**

For the above question it was found that around 5.5% (n=11) responders felt calm and relaxed, 0.5% (n=1) responders felt sad, 29% (n=58) responders felt angry, 11% (n=22) responders felt happy, 32.5% (n=65) responders felt uncomfortable and 21.5% (n=43) of the responders felt excited when they looked at the colour red. Wolfson (2000) research on the similar grounds, background colour (red/blue) and sound (loud/quiet) were manipulated in a series of computer games. Players using a blue screen improved gradually over the session, while red screen players peaked midway and then deteriorated. A similar pattern for heart rate was found, suggesting that arousal was implicated in the effect. Sound alone had little impact, but the red/loud combination was associated with perceptions of excitement and playing well. Even in this study we may observe that the 54% of the respondents felt uncomfortable and excited.

From the responses, we found out that 25.5% (n= 51) of the responders felt calm and relaxed, 4.5% (n=9) of the responders felt sad, 2.5% (n=5) of the responders felt anger, 31% (n=62) of the responders felt happy, 20.5% (n=41) of the responders felt uncomfortable and 17% (n=34) of the responders felt excited while looking at the colour yellow. Kaya and Epps (2004) mentioned in their research that yellow had 93.9% of the positive responses in terms of emotions. The yellow was assumed to be lively and energetic with positive emotions like happiness. Yellow colour was associated with sun, blooming flowers, summer.

By tallying the responses, it was found that a majority number of responders, which is around 49.5% (n=99), felt calm and relaxed when they looked at the colour blue. On the other hand, there were 0% responders who felt anger when looking at blue colour. We also found that 6%

(n=12) responders felt sad, 16.5% (n=33) responders felt happy, 15.5% (n=31) responders felt uncomfortable and 12.5% (n=25) responders felt excited while looking at the colour blue. Similar results were seen in the study of Then (2005) where he mentioned colours affect our emotions and wellbeing. Shades of blue, for example, are restful and can be used to help lower blood pressure, improve sleep and to reduce pain perception.

CONCLUSION

The aim of the research was to find the most suitable colour that can be used for the walls of the guest room so that the guest can feel comfortable and cosy. Also, our aim was to direct the emotions and mood of the guest into the design and style of the guest room. Thus, we conducted a survey to find appropriate results for the same.

As we learned from the data above that around 71% of the people visit hotels at least once a year. Whenever any of the responder visited the hotel, around 79% preferred to stay in either Star classified or Budget Hotels. Remaining percentage chose to stay at resorts, Inns or B and Bs.

On the lines of our objectives for the survey, we tried to assess the emotions of the responders by asking them about their views on the mood they associate with the given colour. We used the three primary colours, i.e., red, blue and yellow. As a result, we found that almost 62% responders associate red colour with negative emotions like sadness, discomfort and anger. For yellow, we see mixed responses in different proportions of all the emotions ranging from calm and relaxed to uncomfortable, happy to sad and anger to excitement. While for the blue colour, we see that a majority of responders, i.e., 78.5% associate it with positive emotions like calm and relaxed, happy and excited. Thus, we can say that the most preferred range of colours can be cool colours according to the compiled data of the responders.

Talking about the colour of the room, 64% responders prefer neutral or cool colours in their room. We also see that around 45% responders prefer their rooms to be of modern style and design. When we club the two results together, we see that most of the people prefer their rooms to look very minimalistic and spacious with the preference of light and neutral colours which not only gives a modern aesthetic to the room but also not many want various pops of colours and settle for something more subtle. Thus we can say that the preferred colour scheme could be accented, minimalistic and subtle.

Also, one of the objectives for our survey includes the way the responders would most likely want to feel when they enter the space for the first time. We found out that around 64% of the people either want to feel cosy or warm when they enter the space for the very first time.

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