"Beyond The Palette: Exploring Color Psychology In Indian Advertising And Youth Perception In Mumbai"

BY:

Asst. Prof. Atharva Mukund[1]

Patil Kalpesh Rajendra[2]

Salvi Bhoomi Prashant[3]

Sayed Saad Abdulnista[4]

Rane Atharva Milind[5]

Department of Multimedia and Mass Communication

Pillai College of Arts, Commerce and Science

(Empowered Autonomous), New Panvel.

ABSTRACT

This study looks at how Color Psychology Theories affect advertising and how young people in Mumbai perceive. Color Psychology Theories is very important in advertising because it gets people's attention and makes them feel emotions. It also increases the brand's recall value. Nowadays people see a lot of pictures and videos on media and other online platforms, so using Color Psychology Theories in the right way is crucial for people who make advertisements. Different colors means different things to people and that affects how they understand advertisements. For example the color red usually means something exciting is happening or that someone needs to act. The color blue means something that is trustworthy. Green means something fresh and good for the environment. In India colors are also connected to traditions and festivals. For instance, colors like saffron and yellow are important in culture. Advertisers use colors to make people feel something and make their brands stand out. Young people who are between 18 and 25 years old are a deal for advertisers because they use the internet a lot and go through a lot of advertisements. What they think about colors is shaped by what's popular on social media and by the way people live in cities. This study looks at how Color Psychology Theories in advertising affect what young people in

Mumbai think and feel. It also looks at how Color Psychology Theories make them engage with advertisements.

KEYWORDS: - Color Perception, Color Symbolism, Color Psychology, Advertising Trends in India, Youth Perception, Consumer Behavior, Brand Recall, Emotional Response, Mumbai Youth

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Evolution of Color Psychology

Color is an ancient and effective mode of expression and communication. In the ancient civilizations, color was used to designate identity, social status, spirituality and cultural values. In this case people used color as a way to show rank, spirituality and other important symbols. Over time experts started to study colors. How they affect how people think and act.

Nowadays understanding color psychology is really important for fields, like psychology, design and marketing. This branch of psychology looks into the effect that certain colors have on emotional, cognitive and behavioral traits. The study also indicates that colors have the ability to influence the mood, attention and retention, thus making them a very effective means of communication. The business and advertising sector has increasingly acknowledged the psychological impacts of color and integrated it into marketing strategies to establish better emotional links with customers.

In modern-day branding and advertising, the use of color plays an integral part in conveying brand images and recognition. Some colors are highly identified and associated with particular brands and can instantly be identified by consumers without having to read texts. Color is therefore a psychological and visual communication device. Hence advertisements are more visual now. There is competition too. Knowing what colors mean to people is key, to marketing.

1.2 The Language of Colors: Strategic Use of Color in Advertising

Color is a visual language in the meaning of advertisements. It is a quick and guaranteed mode of communication, successful in attracting the consumer before the textual content is received. In advertising is Strategic use of color has always been an essential element of visual communication

Warm colors like red, orange, and yellow are mostly used to show excitement, energy, and urgency and cool colors like blue and green are associated with calmness, trust, and reliability. And many financial institutions and technology companies use cool colors to create a sense of stability and credibility. Apart from emotional influence, color also has a role in product differentiation. Use of unique or consistent color schemes is used for differentiating product with rivals in saturated markets. Use of color plays a crucial role in creating brand recognition and recall.

In addition, color plays a role in creating consumer expectations about the product quality and value. Evidence suggests that consumers form impressions of products within a few seconds of viewing them and color is a major influencing attribute for such brief judgements. Advertisers therefore are very keen on ensuring that color schemes are chosen to suit the message conveyed by the brand.

1.3 The Changing Landscape: Advertising Trends in India

Over the last decade, there has been a lot of change in the advertising industry of India. New technology, internet penetration, and new digital media channels have revolutionized how Indian advertising industry works. Traditional advertising mediums like television, print, and outdoor advertising coexist with digital platforms such as social media, video streaming platforms, and mobile apps.

By 2025–26, Indian advertising has become visual, interactive, and youth focused. Their major focus is on capturing consumer attention through visually appealing content in a digital environment where the volume of information is very high. Color helps attract attention in today's overflowing social media feeds and digital platforms. In addition Indian advertising shows a mix of design trends and local cultural practices. Global design trends often feature designs, soft colors and modern looks. On the hand Indian advertising uses bright colors and focuses on cultural symbols and festival traditions.

Urban cities like Mumbai have their special way of advertising. They have a lot of ways to show advertisements, such as big billboards, advertisements on buses and trains displays in stores ads in movie theaters and ads on the internet. This is because Mumbai is a city for money and media in India. So the use of colors in advertising are very important for getting people to notice the advertisements.

1.4 Understanding the Modern Audience

The youth between the ages of 18 to 25 are one of the most significant segments in modern India in terms of consumers. The youths are regular users of digital technologies, and they consume all kinds of visual material on social networks, as well as watch videos online, play various games, and listen to streams. Young consumers care about colors, design, and aesthetics than to traditional advertising messages. Factors like appeal, lifestyle and visual identity greatly influence their buying decisions.

Young people in cities, like Mumbai are exposed to cultures and global influences. Fashion shows, film culture, social media and the aesthetics connected to branding strategy at an international level constantly bombard their perceptions. Hence, the decoding of colors in advertisements will be different for the youth as against the elders of the same city in the case of media exposure.

Therefore, an understanding of the youth's perception of color in advertisements is necessary for assessing the success of the modern marketing strategies. These, in turn, influence the efficacy of the modern marketing strategies, adopted by various brands based on color related psychological perceptions.

1.5 Advertising in artificial intelligence Era

The development of intelligence is happening fast. It has changed the advertising industry a lot. Artificial intelligence is also used to guess what consumers like. This allows for a high level of customization and focus in creating advertising campaigns.

In the AI era, advertisers choose colors based on data. Algorithms help analyze how consumers engage with advertisements to find out which colors grab attention or make people feel something. Artificial intelligence allows for advertising, where the advertiser can change colors based on user preferences. For example digital advertisements on media platforms can change their color schemes based on demographics or browsing history or location.

1.6 Using Color Psychology in Advertising

Color psychology helps us understand how colors affect what people think and do when they see advertisements like the colors used in advertising. Colors are like triggers that make people feel and think things.

The Stimulus–Organism–Response model shows that colors can change how people feel inside which can make them pay attention get interested or even buy something. People also think that colors have meanings. For example blue color is often linked with trust. The color red is usually associated with excitement or danger.

1.7 Uses and Gratifications Theory

This theory says that people choose what media they want to see to get what they need or want. They don't just passively watch advertisements, they think about them based on what they want and what they've experienced.

In advertising colors can make ads more fun and interesting. For people in Mumbai, colors that look good can grab their attention and keep them engaged. This theory helps us understand how people think about colors, in ads based on what they like to do and what they prefer.

1.8 Purpose of the Study

This exploratory study is to analyze the application of color psychology theories in Indian advertising trends in 2025–26, and how these color strategies are perceived by the youth in Mumbai. By conceptually analyzing the application of theories of color psychology in Indian advertising trends for the year 2025–26 and examining the color perceptions of Mumbai city youths, the study intends to bridge the gap between practice and theory in advertising by psychological and cultural dimensions of color in contemporary advertising.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF LITEREATURE

Color psychology plays a role in advertising. It affects how people feel and think about a product. Colors are like visual cues. They help create a brands image and grab people's attention. This helps build a connection with the audience.

In advertising communication Studies by Swarnakar (2024) and Gupta, Rao, and Rakhi (2025) highlight on the strong relationship between color choices and consumer behaviour. Their research shows that colors influence emotions, cognition, brand recognition and purchase intentions. Culture, gender, and product category are also critical variables in audience interpretation of colors, according to these studies. They show through case studies and mixed methods of research that psychological and cultural associations of colors have a great impact on the perception of advertising messages by the targeted consumers.

Arora and Warsi (2024) and Gupta and Dingliwal (2023) emphasize on have a theoretical and perceptual basis of color psychology. Color signals have biological, emotional, and cultural connotations that help to shape the perceptual processing of visual signals from an advertisement (Arora and Warsi, 2024; Gupta and Dingliwal, 2023). They also emphasize that color is a significant perceptual marketing stimulus that shapes consumer moods and helps to create a differentiated image. Brand identity and color psychology can also be used for brand differentiation in competitive environments.

Singh and Chowdhury did some research in 2023. They found out that colors are really important in advertising, branding and design. Colors are like a way to communicate with people. The thing about colors is that they do not just make people feel something. They also have special meanings in different cultures. These meanings can affect how people think about a product and what they think the brand is about. On a holistic level, the findings explored in this section notionally inform the interpretation and responses that youth audience have towards advertising using colors, thus making colors an understanding point of consumer perception in Indian advertising.

CHAPTER III: RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1 Hypothesis

H1: Different colors used in advertisements significantly influence the emotional responses of youth in Mumbai.

H0: Different colors used in advertisements do not significantly influence the emotional responses of youth in Mumbai.

3.2 Aim & Objectives of the Study

3.2.1 Aim of the Study

The primary purpose of this study is to perform an analysis of the use of color psychology in Indian advertising and to gather perceptions of such color schemes from youths in Mumbai.

3.2.2 Objectives of the Study

1.   Understanding key color psychology theories in advertising and their application in current Indian advertising trends.
2.   Examine youth's perception towards the use of colors in advertisement.
3.   Examine how youth perceive colors in advertisement

3.3 Limitations of the Study

1.   The study is limited to youth between 18–25 years and cannot be generalized for any other age group.
2.   Convenience sampling probably does not represent the population fully.
3.   The data is based on self-response, and factors such as personal bias cannot be ruled out.

CHAPTER IV: DATA ANALYSIS

The study has a sample size of 103 respondents primarily youth aged 18–25 years which is suitable for a quantitative study. A convenience sampling technique was used. The sample consisted of male and female respondents from urban and semi-urban areas of Mumbai who were active users of smartphones and social media, ensuring regular exposure to advertising content.


11. Does vibrant colour usage increase your engagement on social media ads?
108 responses
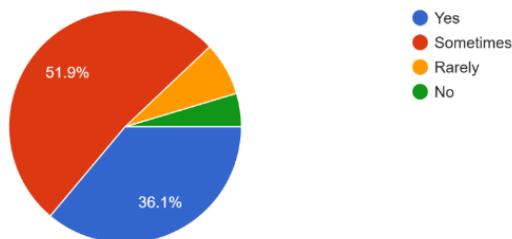
The data shows that the majority of respondents engage with the brand Yes (36.1%), indicating regular interaction or usage. Sometimes (51.9%) reflects occasional engagement, while Rarely (7.4%) and No (4.6%) are minimal, suggesting that very few respondents have little to no interaction with the brand.

14. Does saffron/orange in Indian advertising make you feel:

108 responses
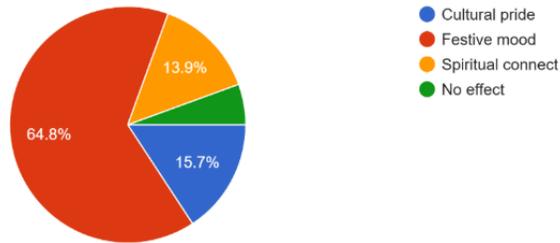
Most respondents felt the ad created a festive mood (15.7%), while cultural pride (64.8%) and spiritual connect (13.9%) were recognized by fewer participants. Only (6.4%) reported no effect, showing that the colors largely evoked emotional or cultural responses.

CHAPTER V: FINDINGS

1.   "Blue" was the most remembered color in the 80% of recollections which show an increased "ad recall" raised, as compared to "green" and others.

2.   Blue is the most reliable logo selected by 80%, followed by green color by 15%.

3.   65% of the views on pink in advertising are primarily oriented toward the feminine audience, with gender-specific color stereotypes.

4.   Green was preferred for healthcare safety by 80% associating it strongly with health and trust.

5.   60% strongly agreed that green boosts trust in eco-friendly claims, highlighting its role in sustainability messaging.

6.   Excitement was the dominant emotion evoked by ads across nearly all emotion with a conjunction of aggression and trust emotions baiting only a small (5%) responses.

7.   Saffron/orange created a festive mood (75%), which tied Indian cultural pride with localized campaigns.

8.   Fifty percent said "yes," whilst another 50% said' maybe", indicating that certain colors do trigger impulsive purchases.

9.   Vibrant colors were considered to be "classy" or "creative" in 85% of ad feel allotted to colors, with a boosted engagement perception.

CHAPTER VI: DISCUSSION

These results are of practical as well as theoretical importance. Marketers can use green for environmentally friendly campaigns, red for sales, and blue for corporate trust. Posting a vibrant and multi-colored visual garners higher engagement on social media, while garnishing saffron and Orange hues that possess cultural significance in India generate more emotional impact.

Theoretically, the research backup color psychology, media dependency and social comparison theories with the third theory being a firm proof that perception is a resultant effect of repeated exposure and comparison.

Thus, the study may be limited to youths between 18 and 25 years, the youths of Mumbai city, the use of convenience sampling and most respondents being urban. Future research can be carried out on other age groups, on people living in rural areas, in cross-cultural settings and on color's effectiveness in different product categories.

To sum up, color psychology understanding and its application enables Indian marketers to create emotionally engaging, culturally relevant and visually effective campaigns that resonates with youth audiences and influences consumer behavior.

CHAPTER VII: CONCLUSION

The research indicates that colors can be used as a major deterrent for emotional responses, brand interpretation, and consumer behavior. The findings establish that there is a statistically relevant correlation between color and consumer behavior. That is to say, the use of red as a color will have a greater chance of motivating consumers to purchase an item because of urgency compared to the use of blue and green, which indicates faithfulness and dependability. In a deeper analysis, we have found that utilizing color in competitive Indian marketplaces for increased brand memory and consumer engagement is critical. Cultural differences are impactful on individuals through their psychological triggers, thus local color preferences will play a large role in the outcome of a business's success. Furthermore, the findings demonstrate that changing color shades slightly through alterations in lighting and/or contrast can dramatically alter the consumer's view of an item's message. Essentially, what an effective advertisement does, is apply the principles of visual psychology beyond merely making something visually appealing; therefore, through the understanding that different color tones have different functional properties, brands can develop campaigns that have significant impact. Finally, these points reinforce that there are value in developing color palettes with data as a basis in order to be successful both within professionals and students interested in future marketing opportunities.

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