

“BLUE FOR BOYS AND PINK FOR GIRLS – MYTH OR TRUTH?” – AN EXPLORATORY RESEARCH ON COLOR PREFERENCE OF PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN

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Abstract

A study was carried out to understand what color do the preschool children choose to wear and what is offered to them in the ready to wear stores, including some top notch brands, which strictly follow certain thumb rule of Fashion like – “ blue for boys and pink for girls”. Pre-schoolers of 3 to 5 years of age were selected as subjects and the experimental planned to be carried out in two different locations. The experiment made use of various objects in repeated colors to explore if the color preference changes with the change in form. Most of the children preferred bright and primary hues. The experiment was video shot using hidden cameras to obtain unbiased results. The same was recorded and tabulated. The data was analyzed in consultation with pediatricians, child development and child psychologist and ophthalmologist. The experts shared valuable and lucrative information contributing to the results. This study enabled to explore the deep association of color and its role in child's life. The information deducted from the experimentation can be a subject of interest to those in the supply chain of children apparel sector. Further to these works, this study was carried out to know, if a child is given freedom to choose a color for itself in its clothes, what will be the choice and how it may help the child according to its activity and responsiveness to the environment. Children relate to color first and at later stages of maturity they identify things by their shape, form and texture. This can be tapped to promote kids clothing to a greater extent by developing an apt color mix for overall development of children.

Key Words: *Pre-School Children, Kids Clothing, Brands, Ophthalmologist, Apparel Sector.*

1. Introduction

Colors' are inseparable part of our lives. Nature is the best palette of color gifted by God to the mankind. They are the main constituent of our world. The human mind associates with everything in the surrounding environment by its color. Color therefore has a direct impact on the thought process of the mind. The very virtue of color makes it crucial. There are millions of colors and each one is different from the other in its composition, value or the intensity. Color is perceived by different people in different ways. It is perceived in an artistic manner, scientific manner, and physiological manner and also in a psychological manner. Each arena has its own approach developed towards color. Colors can also be used to reduce the stress level in a person. Colors have been understood and explained by people from different domains in different ways, like – a fashion designer gives importance to its identity and quality, a psychologist considers the psychology of each color, an artist is never biased about any schemes, as he just believes in experimentation, a gemologist applies his astro-planetary knowledge with colors and a scientist explains color based on its reflective property and wavelengths. There has always been a big deal of confusion when it comes to the selection of approach to study colors. The vivacious nature of color has attracted people from all spheres to consider it as one of the important part of their lives.

This project was aimed to study the color preferred by pre-school children of age group 3 to 5 years. It was to know whether the colors selected by the parents are what even the kid prefers to wear. A comparative study was carried out to understand what color do the children of this age group choose to wear and what is offered to them in the ready to wear stores, including some top notch brands, which strictly follow certain thumb rules of Fashion like “Blue for boys and Pink for girls”. Also to revolutionize Fashion promotion through color in the children sector, this is still unexplored.

2. Aim and Objective of the Study

- Investigation of the color preferences by the pre-schoolers (3-5 years) and the reasons for their preference based on physiological, psychological aspects of color.
- Exploring the suitability of the theory “blue for boys and pink for girls” as a practical concept. (Through experimentation).

3. Limitations of the Study

- The subjects considered for the study were between the age group 3 to 5 years.
- The experiment was conducted In two places in Bangalore.

4. Review of Literature

This study by Marilyn A. Read and Deborah Upington focuses on children's color preferences in the interior environment. Previous studies highlight young children's preferences for the colors red and blue. The methods of this study used a rank ordering technique and a semi-structured interview process with 3-, 4-, and 5-year-old children. Findings reveal that children prefer the color red in the interior environment. The color purple was preferred by girls. Cool colors were favored over warm colors. Recommendations are made for application of color in the child development environment. Oregon State University, Corvallis, OR, USA Marilyn A. Read and Deborah Upington 16 March 2009 Published **online:** 7 April 2009.

In this study Chris J. Boyatzis, Reenu Varghese children's emotional associations with colors were investigated. Sixty children (30 girls, 30 boys), equally divided into groups of 5-year-olds and 6 ½-year-olds, were asked their favorite color and were then shown nine different colors, one at a time and in a random order. For each color, children were asked, "How does (the color) make you feel?" All children were able to verbally express an emotional response to each color, and 69% of children's emotional responses were positive (e.g., happiness, excitement). Responses also demonstrated distinct color-emotion associations. Children had positive reactions to bright colors (e.g., pink, blue, red) and negative emotions for dark colors (e.g., brown, black, gray). Children's emotional reactions to bright colors became increasingly positive with age, and girls in particular showed a preference for brighter colors and a dislike for darker colors. Boys were more likely than girls were to have positive emotional associations with dark colors. Potential sources for children's color-emotion concepts, such as gender-related and idiosyncratic experiences, are discussed. Department of Child Development California State University, Fullerton Journal article by Chris J. Boyatzis, Reenu Varghese; Journal of Genetic Psychology, Vol. 155, 1994.

5. Research Methodology

Research method	:	Scientific method.
Research design:		
Study:		Empirical study.
Sampling:		100
Data collection method:		Primary data – through observation, questionnaire (50 from structured & 50 from unstructured)
Secondary data:		Articles, Journals and Books.

Research Process

The research was carried in the following observation process in the following phases:

PHASE I	Consultation with an Ophthalmologist
PHASE II	Consultation with a Pediatrician and a Child Development expert
PHASE III	Consultation with Child Psychologists
PHASE IV	Consultation with a Holistic expert
PHASE V	Designing the experiment based on the inputs obtained from Phase I to phase V

6. Findings

More than 12 schools were visited to check the suitability of the place for the experiment, regarding their environment and approach for child development and training. Two different locations were selected for the experiment of contrast standards. Both structured and unstructured places were selected for the experiment. The experiment was carried out at both the selected schools on different days, as per the experimental plan and the findings were documented and video recorded. Experiments were conducted repeatedly and randomly to explore any repetition in the frequency of color preference. The data generated was tabulated for further analysis.

DATA OF THE EXPERIMENT CONDUCTED AT LOCATION -1, MAKKALA MANDIRA

Total entries: 270

Color wise breakup of etries		:
		%
1) RED =	78	29%
2) BLUE =	34	12.50%
3) YELLOW =	44	16.20%
4) GREEN =	49	18%
5) ORANGE =	44	16.20%
6) WHITE =	09	3.30%
7) PINK =	12	4.40%
8) CRÈME =	00	0.00%
9) VIOLET =	00	0.00%

DATA OF THE EXPERIMENT CONDUCTED AT LOCATION -2, LOVELY KIDS PLAY HOME

Total entries: 270

Color wise breakup of entries

		%
1) RED =	78	24
2) BLUE =	34	12.9
3) YELLOW =	44	20
4) GREEN =	49	14
5) ORANGE =	44	17
6) WHITE =	09	5
7) PINK =	12	5
8) CRÈME =	00	0.3
9) VIOLET =	00	0

7. Analysis

OPHTHALMOLOGIST - He also expressed that there is not gender bias in color perception by eyes. May be at later stages during development, due to various reasons, the child may develop its preferences, which is again governed by various factors. Otherwise, "Blue for boys and pink for girls" can as well be a myth. He strongly recommended contrast colors and all bright colors for children of this age group.

PEDIATRICIAN - Pediatrician recommended bright and strong hues which will accent their energy level and children environment can be filled with bright colors.

CHILD PSYCHOLOGIST - is of the opinion that children of this age group should not be restricted to any particular color, and they match their energy level and activity levels with their color selection. Their emotions and moods are deeply associated with colors and a good color choice can keep them cheerful and active.

HOLISTIC EXPERT - is of the opinion that it is very essential to give them these colors which will boost their hormonal activity thereby increasing their energy levels.

8. Conclusion

Association of color with children to the selected age group was not just psychological, rather it was also physiological. In spite of many variables, a unanimous preference of color was seen among the subjects. Many facts like children choosing more red, blue, yellow and other brighter colors instead of pinks, crèmes, whites was quite surprising. It is also important for people who do things such as advertisement and fashion design to know what colors create strong responses. There was no study conducted to know the preference of color by children, whereas enormous research has been done related to emotions and mood association of color and not the preference by children as such.

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Books

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2. Colour Vision: A Study in Cognitive Science and the Philosophy of Perception
Evan Thompson, Routledge 1995.
3. Theories of Visual Perception, Ian E. Gordon, Psychology press 2004 (3 edition).
4. Fashion and Color Paperback – March 1, 1996 by Mary Garthe

Annexures

DATA OF THE EXPERIMENT CONDUCTED AT LOCATION -1, MAKKALA MANDIRA

An exploratory study on color preference amongst preschoolers aged 3-5.									
NAME OF THE CHILD	OBJECTS USED DURING THE EXPERIMENT								
	1) SCOOP	2) SCRUB	3) FAN	4) BALL	5) MUG	6) COMB	7) THREAD	8) FALLS	9) DRESS
1) Lekhan	yellow	Pink	yellow	white	Red	yellow	green	red	green
2) Soujanya	white	red	red	pink	green	green	orange	yellow	orange
3) Aishyarwya	white	blue	green	blue	red	yellow	orange	orange	orange
4) Yeshwanth	red	red	blue	orange	green	green	green	red	green
5) Bhushan	yellow	Orange	red	red	orange	green	orange	red	green
6) Ananya	red	Green	green	pink	Red	blue	green	yellow	yellow
7) Bhumik	yellow	blue	blue	pink	green	blue	blue	yellow	red
8) Ria	white	Orange	red	green	red	green	orange	red	red
9) Lakshmi	red	red	blue	red	Pink	red	red	yellow	yellow
10) Manjunath	yellow	Green	red	white	orange	blue	green	blue	orange

11) Chintu	white	blue	green	green	orange	green	green	green	blue
12) Reshma	red	red	red	yellow	Red	red	green	orange	red
13) Hitesh	yellow	red	yellow	red	green	green	orange	orange	green
14) Dithishree	blue	Orange	blue	pink	orange	red	green	yellow	orange
15) Prajna	yellow	Green	blue	yellow	pink	red	yellow	red	orange
16) Harsha	red	red	yellow	blue	Red	green	green	red	orange
17) Preksha	white	red	green	red	Red	red	blue	white	pink
18) Vikas	yellow	blue	red	orange	Red	green	orange	red	yellow
19) Deepthi	yellow	Orange	yellow	pink	Red	red	red	yellow	blue
20) Shobith	red	Orange	orange	red	Blue	red	blue	red	orange
21) Prajwal	yellow	red	red	red	orange	red	green	yellow	blue
22) Jayanth	red	Orange	green	green	orange	orange	green	yellow	orange
23) Seema	red	Orange	red	yellow	orange	red	red	orange	orange
24) rehka	green	Yellow	green	yellow	orange	red	blue	yellow	orange
25) Mrudula	red	red	green	pink	Yellow	blue	blue	green	green
26) megha	red	red	orange	white	Red	white	green	red	yellow
27) swetha	blue	blue	blue	pink	Blue	red	yellow	blue	red
28) anika	green	Green	blue	red	green	green	yellow	blue	yellow
29) rupa	orange	Yellow	orange	green	green	orange	red	red	red
30) Monish	red	Pink	red	red	orange	green	blue	red	orange

Total entries = 207								270	
Colorwise breakup of entries									:
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7) PINK = 12									4.40%
8) CRÈME = 00									0.00%
9) VIOLET = 00									0.00%
TOTAL = 270									
DATA OF THE EXPERIMENT CONDUCTED AT LOCATION -2, LOVELY KIDS PLAY HOME									
An exploratory study on color preference amongst preschoolers aged 3-5.									
NAME OF THE CHILD	OBJECTS USED DURING THE EXPERIMENT								
	1) SCOOP	2) SCRUB	3) FAN	4) BALL	5) MUG	6) COMB	7) THREAD	8) FALLS	9) DRESS
1) Varsha	Green	green	yellow	white	green	Green	green	red	green
2) archana	white	orange	red	pink	orange	white	orange	yellow	orange
3) aditi	white	orange	green	blue	orange	white	orange	orange	orange
4) ananya	red	green	blue	orange	green	red	green	red	green
5) dhruthi	yellow	green	red	red	green	yellow	orange	red	green

6) amogh	red	Yellow	green	pink	Yellow	red	green	yellow	yellow
7) chaitanya	Yellow	Red	blue	pink	Red	Yellow	blue	yellow	red
8) chitra	white	Red	red	green	Red	white	orange	red	red
9) lekha	red	Yellow	blue	red	Yellow	red	red	yellow	yellow
10) naveen	Yellow	orange	red	white	orange	Yellow	green	blue	orange
11) smrithi	white	Blue	green	green	Blue	white	green	green	blue
12)bhavana	red	Red	red	yellow	Red	red	green	orange	red
13) rupali	Yellow	green	yellow	red	green	Yellow	orange	orange	green
14)chetan	blue	orange	blue	pink	Green	blue	green	yellow	orange
15) supriya	Yellow	orange	blue	yellow	orange	Yellow	yellow	red	orange
16) vinith	red	orange	yellow	blue	orange	red	green	red	orange
17) tejaswini	white	Pink	green	red	Pink	white	blue	white	pink
18) swaroop	Yellow	Yellow	red	orange	Yellow	Yellow	orange	red	yellow
19) kruti	Yellow	Blue	yellow	pink	Blue	Yellow	red	yellow	blue
20) carol	red	orange	orange	red	orange	red	blue	red	orange
21) kushal	Yellow	Blue	red	red	Blue	Yellow	green	yellow	blue
22) rohan	red	Orange	green	green	orange	Orange	green	yellow	orange
23) kavita	red	Orange	red	yellow	orange	Red	red	orange	orange
24) hemasri	Green	Yellow	green	yellow	orange	Red	blue	yellow	orange
25) aditya	red	red	green	pink	Yellow	Blue	blue	green	green
26) vinith	red	red	orange	white	Red	White	green	red	yellow
27) divya	blue	blue	blue	pink	Blue	Red	yellow	blue	red
28) garima	Green	Green	blue	red	green	green	yellow	blue	yellow
29) vivek	orange	Yellow	orange	green	green	Orange	red	red	red
30) malini	red	Pink	red	red	orange	green	blue	red	orange

Colorwise breakup of entries		:
		%
1) RED = 78	66	24
2) BLUE = 34	35	12.9
3) YELLOW = 44	54	20
4) GREEN = 49	40	14
5) ORANGE = 44	46	17
6) WHITE = 09	14	5
7) PINK = 12	14	5
8) CRÈME = 00	1	0.3
9) VIOLET = 00	0	0
	270	
TOTAL = 270		