COLOR PERCEPTION IN MARKETING

Abstract: This article research discusses the science of color to consumer perception and the value of color research to consumer-brand relationships. Specifically, it examines how color influences consumers’ perception and how brands strategically utilize color. Color perception influences the purchase decision, namely, using color in product identifiers creates brand uniqueness, differentiates the product, enhances competitive advantage, strengthens loyalty, stimulates sales and increases the intention of repeat visits.

Keywords: brand strategy, color perception, color, marketing information.
идентификаторах товара создает уникальность бренда, дифференцирует продукт, усиливает конкурентное преимущество, усиливает лояльность, стимулирует продажи и увеличивает намерение повторных посещений.

Ключевые слова: стратегия бренда, восприятие цвета, цвет, маркетинговая информация.

The modern society is society of consumers. To some consumers, color is merely a decorative trait. However, in marketing strategies, color is used by brands to reach consumers on a deeper level and stand out in the market amongst competitors. People make up their minds within 90 seconds of their initial interactions with either people or products. About 62-90 percent of the assessment is based on colors alone. The color has a powerful impact on all the life aspects in the subconscious level. So, prudent use of colors can 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 majority of researches conducted by the scientists regarding the color and its influence on people were done in the areas of medicine, psychology and others. There is lack of generalized material, where the information about color usage in marketing decisions would be stated systematically, and this allows formulating the research problem in question – how does the consumers’ color perception influence the marketing decisions?

The object of the research – to investigate the color perception in marketing decisions and to analyze brands that have benefited from color strategy. The aim of the research is to investigate the color perception in marketing decisions. The tasks of the research:

- To research the color perception and its dependence on three demographic factors: gender, age and education;
- To learn how can use colors to increase or decrease appetite, enhance mood, calm down customers, and, reduce perception of waiting time;
• To study the color perception of logos of various brands by consumers.

The main purpose of the research was to investigate the color perception in marketing decisions. We collected information using questionnaire that had to be filled in by a respondent. We gathered consumers' answers via sixteen open-ended and closed questions survey using a random sample of 429 respondents (N=260 men and N=169 women). In order to verify the theoretical insights there were developed and tested two hypotheses:

• H1 The color perception depends on the demographic factors because people of different gender, age and education perceive color differently.

• H2 The expression of color in marketing decisions influences the consumer’s decision making to buy a product.

According to the research results, the favorable color of the consumers does not depend on their age or education. However, it was learnt that the favorite colors are predetermined by gender. For example, the female respondents indicated white, blue and green as their favorite color much more statistically significantly frequently, while the men preferred red more often than women. Thus to generalize these results, it is possible to state that H1 was supported only partially.

The assessment of the respondents of the factors important to them and determining choice of the products was analyzed in the research next. Although the color was not predominant among the answers, but its evaluation was always above the average, which means that the color affects advertisements, package and shopping place. So H2 was fully supported, because the research results revealed that the usage of color in marketing decisions forms the differentiation of the brand and the products, it increases the competitive advantage, strengthens consumer loyalty and increases sales.

Following are some of the applications in marketing.

• Colors and restaurants

The red color stimulates appetite because of its effect on our metabolism, making red a popular color choice among fast-food restaurants. The yellow color is also
employed by fast-food moguls to hijack customers’ interests – they gain customers’ attention, increase their appetite, and encourage them to eat. This is the best way for fast-food companies to generate sales. By contrast, formal restaurants use blue color to calm and relax their customers. This comforting state is expected to increase the likelihood of the customers lingering longer. Longer stays may correspond to larger meals, more wine, coffee, or desserts, and; therefore, more sales. This is an important strategy for formal restaurants to increase their sales.

- Colors and waiting time

Colors influence the perception of the passage of time. Time seems to pass slowly and objects seem larger and heavier under a red light. On the contrary, time seems to pass quite quickly and objects seem smaller and lighter under blue light. Casinos take advantage of this principle – they use red color lighting to get their customers excited while making them feel that they are not wasting a lot of time in the casino.

- Colors and brands

Colors evoke brands. Whether it is Heineken’s distinct green label, Coca-cola’s red, Shell’s yellow, or Cadbury’s purple, all have different color values to different consumers. The high importance placed on color is an acknowledgment of manufacturers’ understanding that color has strong emotional loading, able to prompt a swifter response to packaging than either the written work or imagery.

- Colors and trend

With the passage of time, people change preferences for colors. Like fashion pundits predict fashion trends, color consultants predict and set color trends by taking into account the idiosyncrasies of various segments of the population. They develop short and long-term color forecasts so marketing managers could match the trend and adjust color of their products’ packaging, maximizing the likelihood that their products will be preferred based on the color of the product, everything being equal.
Some research shown that color affects up to 90% of snap judgements made about products. Other research shows that this relationship between a brand and the color it chooses to use, all depends on the perceived appropriateness of the color and whether or not it «fits» the product or service the brand is representing. Below is an example of brands that have mastered their branding strategy by perfectly tying it together with the psychology behind the color they’ve used (Figure 1).

Figure 1 - Example of brands

Our brains tend to prefer brands that we can immediately recognize, which is why choosing the right color when creating a brand identity is so important. It is necessary to predict how your consumers will react to color appropriateness. For instance, consumers want to purchase a product that will make them feel healthy, colors that fit that need, like green, would work best. Around 80% of clients believe that color
is responsible for brand recognition and therefore the feeling and image that your brand or product creates is very closely tied to color.

McDonald’s colors, red and yellow, are both very high energy. This has several results, including appealing to kids, creating an appetite, and a sense of urgency. If McDonald’s decided to go with a completely different color like green, it may not have been so successful (Figure 2).

Figure 2 - The Colors of Big Corporations: McDonald’s

On the other hand, a company for whom the color green has been successful, is the ever-popular coffee chain, Starbucks. In the diagram below, you can see how the color scheme of the logo has greatly contributed to the brand’s success (Figure 3).
The review of literature shows that color is vital to the communication and relationship building process to both consumers and brands. Thus it is considered that if the marketing specialists want to be one step ahead, they should analyze the schemes of colors and to determine the accurate demographic characteristics of the consumer, to whom they are oriented. This information may determine what color/colors will be used for brand/product. The results of the research showed that the consumers’ color perception in marketing decisions may affect their buying decisions, thus it is considered that it is meaningful and even necessary to differentiate the product, to increase the competitive advantage, to strengthen loyalty, and to increase sales in order to form the distinctiveness of the trademark.

REFERENCES
