

Research Dissertation

It's not just a colour, it has a meaning too; A qualitative study analysing the associations with colours used in organisational branding.

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Research Dissertation

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Glossary

Organisational branding- Visuals, symbols, message, tone and words (Matrix; 2014).

Corporate colours- Corporate colours are part of an organisations corporate identity; it is the visual elements of an organisation, such as the logo, text and colours used (Stellenbosch University; 2013).

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Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my two lecturers, Alec Bozas and Naretha Pretorius. Thank you for guiding me with my research study and helping me in coming as far as I have.

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Declaration

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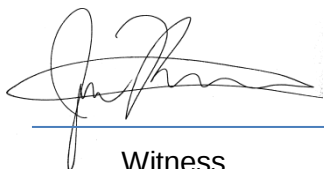
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Abstract

This research study deals with the topic of how consumers associate with different colours used in organisational branding. To determine this I have looked at many theories and researchers to gain an understanding behind the theory of colour. The research study is a qualitative study as it looks at people and their opinions rather than facts and figures. I conducted an activation to determine if consumers are able to identify a brand based on only their colours, as well as had a discussion to understand how much of an impact colour has when it comes to consumers making purchase decisions.

Introduction

Corporate colours are specific colours that organisations use for their logo and symbol. All organisations and especially those who have been established over a long period of time don't move away from their specific chosen colours. Colours convey a certain emotional and physical reaction from consumers towards organisational branding. It is because of this, that it is important for an organisation to use the right corporate colours to attract the desired message, tone and results about their product. Cool colours, such as blue, green, white and silver, attract consumers to a product as it has a calming and nurturing effect on them. Warm colours such as, pink, orange, yellow and red attract consumers to a product as they feel excitement (Bear; 2010). Corporate colours are the first thing that a consumer recognizes and identifies the organisation with. If an organisation understands the consumer's connection to certain colours, it could increase the effectiveness of their branding methods. In just 90 seconds consumers are able to make a subconscious judgement about a product after viewing it. Majority are able to make these decisions based on the colours of the product alone (Gillett; 2014). Brand marketers need to decide carefully about what emotions they want their consumers to feel towards the brand, when designing the brand logo. The corporate colours used in organisational branding need to be associated with the brand personality. Brand managers need to stay in touch with colour trends and how each colour is viewed differently by consumers as this results in consumers associating their own meanings of the colours used with the brand (Ridgeway; 2014). Consumers also identify with perceived appropriateness of the brand. This means that the colours used must fit the brand and the overall impression must look right (Ciotti; 2013).

Proposed journal

Consumer based brand equity, according to Kevin Lane Keller, can be defined as the different effect that consumers have about brand knowledge. Based on the element of the marketing mix, a brand has a positive or negative effect on the consumer. Consumer-based brand equity occurs when the consumer can identify with the brand and will hold a likeable, strong and unique thought in association with the brand (Park; 1991). This applies to the colour theory, according to Mario De Bortoli and Jes'us Maroto, because they believe that every single colour has different meaning to different people. This then has a positive or negative effect on the brand depending on how the consumer relates to the colours that have been used in the organisational branding and whether the consumer likes those colours used or not (De Bortoli and Maroto; 2001).

A brand is linked to its identity; therefor the organisational branding colours that are chosen represent the brand itself. These associations will then lead to secondary links which has an impact on the consumer's attitude or credibility towards the brand. The attractiveness of whether the consumer likes the look of the organisational branding is an example of a secondary link. The colours are used to persuade the

consumer to have a positive attitude about the brand itself (Erikson, Johansson, Chao; 1984).

In the colour theory, Jes'us Maroto and Maroto De Bortoli suggest that organisational branding can be manipulated as they know what colour consumers identify most with and the colours they identify the least with. This information can then be used to choose certain colours in an organisations branding that will attract a specific target audience that will increase the success rate of the brand (De Bortoli and Maroto; 2001). How an organisation presents their brand through communication elements, in this case colour, is important because before the consumer has even thought about the brand and who they are, they need to be attracted to the product or organisation first. Colour is what will attract the consumer and if it looks right this will then lead to success of the brand. Colours are highly vivid stimuli which improve access to a consumers consciousness compare to reading text. A well thought through and produced organisational brand will lead to a positive and memorable association with the brand (Underwood; 2001). When consumers compare organisations to their competitors they are going to look for the organisation that stands out most to them and catches their attention first (De Bortoli and Maroto; 2001).

Problem statement

The research topic of how consumers associate different meanings of colours in organisational branding needs to be investigated by organisations to understand what impact, whether positive or negative, their branding will have on the consumer. It also needs to be explored whether or not the consumers are receiving the correct message and tone of the product based on organisational colours used in the branding. It should be investigated if consumers make purchase decisions based on the different colours that they are attracted to in the organisational branding.

Organisations need to understand the meaning of colours and use this to attract consumers.

Proposed Literature review

Mario De Bortoli and Jes'us Maroto developed the colour theory. They believe that there are building blocks that consist of primary, secondary and tertiary colours which then combined to build up many different colours. To different individuals a single colour can have many different meanings. Colours can trigger different emotions in individuals and distinguish between young and old, fun and serious, male or female and a premium brand or a discount brand. Mario De Bortoli and Jes'us Maroto state that in the colour theory it is evident that consumers are attracted to different colours used in organisational branding based on how they identify with any specific colours used (De Bortoli and Maroto; 2001).

A clash of colours could portray many different meanings and messages to the consumer that is not intentional by the organisation. Using specific colours can manipulate what target audience the organisation wishes to attract, for example yellow and red are colours that attract younger children because yellow is associated with the sun and is seen as a happy colour and red is seen as desire and destruction. However older people are attracted more to subdued colours such as blue and green. It is found that different generations associate different meanings to colours (De Bortoli and Maroto; 2001).

Colours evoke brands which mean that different consumers have different values associated to certain colours. By simply seeing a colour they are reminded of a specific brand. It is important when choosing colours because organisations want to evoke the right emotions about the brand. The colour theory relates to this research study as it aims at identifying the meanings of colours to different individuals and how they then use this to identify with organisational branding. Colour theory also explains how colours evoke different emotions from individuals and how they then associate the emotions with organisational branding. An investigation needs to be conducted by organisations to find out what colours mean to different consumers and how these colours are interpreted in order to send across the right message about the brand (De Bortoli and Maroto; 2001). An example is Cell C, the organisation went under a corporate colour change from red and white to white and black. The reason behind this was to show consumers that they understand their way of life better than any other cellular network company. The six different colours that are used in the colour-bar which is under the logo are the colours of the South African flag to show that Cell C cares about South Africa (Anon; 2015).

Consumers have different tendencies when they identify with colour in organisational branding. They will either like the look of an organisation that has matching colours that they like equally or they will identify with an organisation branding more if they have used colours that the consumer shares similar meaning with (De Bortoli and Maroto; 2001). When consumers are able to identify with the brand, they are then associating themselves with the organisational branding and the colours that are used in it. Consumers decide whether they can identify with the organisational brand or not based on whether they can identify with the colours that are used in the branding (De Bortoli and Maroto; 2001). According to Thomas Madden organisations tend to create the brand image on how they would like consumers to see them rather than base it on the organisations actual performance of their products. He also believes that now days consumers don't have time to read what is written on a product, the true communication tool is the colours used in organisational branding which contributes towards the appearance of the brand and thus determines the interest rate from consumers (Spreitzer; 2011). In the colour theory it states that approximately eighty percent of information that consumers are able to take in is visual with colour being 40 percent out of the eighty percent (De Bortoli and Maroto; 2001). It is important what colours are used to attract consumer's attention because

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according to Elisman, emotion and colour are strongly related to each other. Colour makes consumers feel a certain way when associated with organisational branding (Sabrina; 2001).

Objectives

- To describe how consumers identify with the different meanings of colour.
- To explore whether consumers make purchase decisions based on different colours used in organisational branding.
- To evaluate the impact and associations of how the choice of colours can be manipulated to increase an organisation or products success rate.

Research questions

1. How does colour in organisational branding influence consumer behaviour such as in making purchase decisions?
2. What does this tell us about an organisational branding design?
3. What do consumers associate with, when looking at different colours used in organisational brands?

Assumptions

1. Consumers will be attracted to certain organisations based on the different colours that are used in organisational branding.
2. Consumers are able to recognise brands based on their colours.
3. Consumers are aware that colours are used for a specific reason in organisational branding.

Limitations of study

The limitations of the research could be that the researcher is in a small community and they are unable to have access to many individuals. This is a limitation as a comparative study needs to be done between a large numbers of individuals to get a thorough understanding of how different meanings of colours could be interpreted. If only a limited amount of individuals can be accessed then there will be a biased approach to only a few opinions to conduct a research study on. Another limitation is time. My research activation will take place during brand challenges which pushes for time as many students are busy with work and aren't available to partake in my activation and focus groups.

Relevance

The significance of the meanings of the different colours used in organisational branding is that thought needs to be put into what colours are chosen and how these colours represent the brand. This is relevant to the marketing and branding environment as it is important to understand what consumers the organisation is attracting and what message the organisation is relaying based on corporate

colours. An organisation may benefit from this research study as once they have the findings on what different colours mean to consumers, they are able to manipulate their corporate colours to attract a certain target market. The organisation may also be enlightened as to ensure that it doesn't just look good from the outside, but that the right values and message is being portrayed.

Methodology

The research methodology is interpretivism which is defined as people being fundamentally different from objects. This means that human beings cannot be studied the same way as objects can because humans change all the time and the environment in which they are in constantly influences them (du-Plooy Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout; 2014). The nature of the research design is qualitative because it deals with the core qualities of subjective experiences and the meanings associated with certain occurrences. Here, the researcher attempts to collect all details of a social setting in a description and express a feeling of the individuals in it. Qualitative research allows the researcher to understand subjective experiences and allows them to see through the individuals eyes. This type of research allows the researcher to ask the questions 'why', 'what', and how of phenomena of subjective experiences. Such as 'how' consumers identify with different meanings of colours, 'why' they identify with different meanings of colours and 'what' are the associations made to the different colours that are all used in organisational branding (du-Plooy Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout; 2014). This qualitative research will then allow the researcher to understand what different colours mean to different people and obtain an understanding on how this is through subjective experiences.

The time dimension of the research is cross-sectional which means that it is a descriptive study of a particular situation at a specific point in time and is an observational study. Researchers are able to record information about their subjects without influencing the study environment which means that researchers are able to record the information gained from individuals and what different colours mean to them. Researchers will do this in a way to not persuade any individuals about certain meanings of colour. Cross-sectional research is also able to study different population groups at a single point in time and allows them to compare many variables at the same time. However, cross-sectional research will not provide definite information about cause-and-effect relationships because research often looks at a single point in time and does not look at what happened before or after the study is conducted (Institute for work and health; 2009). This means that many groups of people can be compared at once about the difference or similarity of their answers pertaining to how they identify with colours in organisational branding.

Target and accessible population

Any individual between the ages of twenty to fifty years old would be the target population. They would be considered participants of the research because they

would apply different meaning to different colours. People between these ages are aware of branding and the colours that organisations use in their branding. The accessible population would be these individuals who reside in Durban.

Sampling method

A focus group would be used to obtain what colours mean to different individuals. Purposive sampling would be used here as this is where the researcher is able to choose certain people who obtain specific characteristics needed to participate in the research study (du-Plooy Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout; 2014).. The researcher is therefor able to choose what people are needed to be able to participate in the focus group; these people would be those who are aware of organisational branding and corporate colours of organisations.

Sample size

A manageable amount of individuals will need to participate in the research, which would be fifty people. This is because every answer about what colours mean to each individual will vary and it will be time consuming for the researcher to go through each individual answers.

Ethical considerations

Ethics can be defined as an individual's moral or professional code of conduct that sets a standard for a person's attitude and behaviour. In research, ethics are important as it affects all stakeholders (du-Plooy Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout; 2014). The participants who take part in the research study need to feel as though they can trust the researcher and that they researcher will not exploit them. While undertaking the study, the researcher needs to explain to the participants exactly what they study is about and ensures that the individual understands and knows what is expected of them and will not feel misled. The researcher will explain the value and credibility of the results of the study and will be able to show them the results once the study has been completed. This will help the participant see the legitimacy of the study. The findings from the research study may be relayed to organisations in the community who may benefit from it; in this case the findings need to be correct. Therefor no unethical approaches can be taken which may skew the findings. The researcher's personal and professional status and future employment is linked to their reputation. It is because of this that that conducting the research study in an ethical manner is important as a credible reputation needs to be upheld and used as a standard when comparing the study to the way in which the researcher conducts themselves and their work.

Conclusion

In conclusion an organisation needs to be aware of the meaning of different colours to ensure that their organisational branding is attracting the right target market and

relaying the right message and tone about them. The way colours are interpreted can be obtained from a questionnaire that consumers participated in.

Literature review

Mario De Bortoli and Jes'us Maroto developed the colour theory. They believe that there are building blocks that consist of primary, secondary and tertiary colours which then combined to build up many different colours. To different individuals a single colour can have many different meanings. Colours can trigger different emotions in individuals and distinguish between young and old, fun and serious, male or female and a premium brand or a discount brand. Mario De Bortoli and Jes'us Maroto state that in the colour theory it is evident that consumers are attracted to different colours used in organisational branding based on how they identify with any specific colours used (De Bortoli and Maroto; 2001).

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or not based on whether they can identify with the colours that are used in the branding (De Bortoli and Maroto; 2001). According to Thomas Madden organisations tend to create the brand image on how they would like consumers to see them rather than base it on the organisations actual performance of their products. He also believes that now days consumers don't have time to read what is written on a product, the true communication tool is the colours used in organisational branding which contributes towards the appearance of the brand and thus determines the interest rate from consumers (Spreitzer; 2011). In the colour theory it states that approximately eighty percent of information that consumers are able to take in is visual with colour being 40 percent out of the eighty percent (De Bortoli and Maroto; 2001). It is important what colours are used to attract consumer's attention because according to Elisman, emotion and colour are strongly related to each other. Colour makes consumers feel a certain way when associated with organisational branding (Sabrina; 2001).

The colour theory is divided into three sections. The first section explains what different colours mean to different people. The second section is about how a tone, hue, tint or shade can change the way people perceive a colour. And the third part is how effective colours can be created into a design (Cameron Chapman; 2010).

Red, orange and yellow as well as any other variations of these colours are classified as warm colours. They are often seen as energizing, passionate and positive and remind people of sunsets, fall leaves and fire. In design red is a very powerful colour to use especially when trying to convey the feelings of passion or power. Orange is used when a design wants to command attention but without being as over powering as the colour red. It is often considered more friendly and inviting without being too much in the persons face. In design, a lighter shade of yellow gives a more calm feeling of happiness where as a dark or gold-hued yellow can give a sense of stability (Cameron Chapman; 2010).

Blue, green and purple are classified as cool colours and are more subdued. They are seen as colours of night, nature and water and are usually more calming, relaxing and reserved. Cool colours are used in design to create a sense of calm and professionalism. In design, the colour green can have a balancing and harmonizing effect and is mainly used when referring to wealth, renewal, stability and nature. Blue is the most important colour to get the hue correct. In design a lighter blue is perceived as relaxed and calming, bright blues are energizing and refreshing and dark blues represent strength and reliability for corporate sites. In design, light purple is seen as softer and is associated with romance and spring whereas dark purple is associated with wealth and luxury (Cameron Chapman; 2010).

In design, neutral colours serve as a backdrop and are often combined with brighter colours. The meanings and impressions of neutral colours are affected by the colours that surround them. Black, grey, brown, white, beige and ivory are all neutral colours (Cameron Chapman; 2010).

Part two of the colour theory relates to the different hues such as light blue or dark blue and how these different colour convey different meanings in a designs message (Cameron Chapman; 2010).

By an organisation understanding the different meanings of colours and how consumers can interpret them, it will then provide beneficial as certain colours can be used in organisational branding to attract certain people. In other words an organisation can attract a desired target market. When using colours in organisational branding, an organisation must be aware of the messages and tone that consumers will receive (Cameron Chapman; 2010).

The use of colour in organisational branding can stimulate the brain to either promote excitement or tranquillity. By an organisation choosing brighter colours it leads to a more energetic feeling and can evoke a better response or reaction from the consumer. When an organisation is displaying a lot of heavy reading be it on a web page or on a product, it is found to be better to use neutral colours to ease the eye and as to not distract the consumer. With this in mind organisations are easily able to design by using colour to make the product or website more attractive and easier to engage with. When buying a product it is found that one percent of consumers are attracted to the product based on the smell or sound of the product, 3% look at the look and texture of the product and 93% of consumers base their purchase decision based on the visual appearance of the product. 84.7% of consumers claim that colour is the main draw card for them, 52% of consumers won't return to a store if they dislike the visual appeal of it and 80% of consumers believe that colour is responsible for brand recognition (Fimiani; 2015). When an organisation determines how individuals respond to different colours, they are able to use this to their advantage (Smith: 2015).

Colour harmony can be defined as visual experiences that are pleasing to the eye. It attracts the viewer and creates an inner sense of order. If something is not harmonious, it is either boring or chaotic to the viewer and does not stimulate the brain. However, the opposite of an over harmonious product can be so chaotic that the viewer can't stand to look at it. The human brain rejects what it cannot understand or organise (Morton; 2015).

In design, colour is very subjective; emotions that are evoked in one person may not be evoked in another. A simple thing such as changing the exact hue or saturation of colour may evoke a completely different meaning in an individual (Chapman; 2010).

When dealing with the colour theory, Kevin Lane Keller's model on brand resonance could be integrated. Brand resonance is defined as focussing on various stages of

consumer brand relationship through which the consumer is connected with the brand (Brito: 2014). There are many elements that influence an organisations success. According to Keller in order to build a strong brand, an organisation must shape the way consumers feel. The right experiences need to be built around the brand, in order for consumers to have specific and positive thoughts, feelings, beliefs and perceptions. When an organisation has a strong brand resonance consumers will want to buy more and will recommend the brand to friends. Consumers are also then more loyal and the organisations are less likely to lose them to competitors (Manktelow; 2015).

Keller's brand resonance model can be integrated with colour theory as stated above, 93% of consumers base their purchase decision based on visual appearance which includes the colours that are used (Fimiani; 2015). Keller's brand resonance model states that in order for a consumer to associate themselves with a brand and an organisation, they need to connect with them to build a relationship. A consumer needs to be attracted to the organisation itself to build this relationship which is where colour would attract certain consumers if they are able to associate and identify themselves with the colours used (Manktelow: 2015).

There are four steps in Kevin Lane Keller's brand resonance model that help an organisation build a strong brand which allows consumers to connect and build a relationship with them (Manktelow; 2015). Brand identity is the first step in Keller's model, the goal is brand awareness. Here, the organisation needs to make themselves stand out and become recognizable (Manktelow; 2015). This would be evident in an organisation using colour to make their brand stand out and catch the consumers eye (Fimiani; 2015).

The second step is brand meaning. Here, the goal is for the organisation to communicate what their brand means and what they stand for. Imagery is a building block for this second step. Imagery refers to how well the brand and organisation meet their consumers' needs on a psychological and social level (Manktelow; 2015). With regards to colour, elements such as experiences and contexts have an effect on which colours impact individuals (Ciottie; 2013). This is where an organisation will need to understand what colours attract certain consumers to determine their target market (Ciottie; 2013).

The third step in Keller's brand resonance model is the brands response. There are two categories that fall under the brands response which are the consumer's judgements and feelings. Consumers respond to a brand based on how it makes them feel. An organisation can evoke different feelings directly as well as emotionally about how a brand makes them feel about themselves. According to Keller's brand essence model there are six positive brand feelings which are warmth, excitement, fun, security, approval, social and self- respect (Ciottie; 2013). With regards to the colour theory, consumers will respond either positively or negatively based on how attracted they are to the branding (Manktelow; 2015).

The last step in Keller's model is brand resonance. An organisation has achieved brand resonance when a consumer has a deep, psychological bond with the brand (Ciottie; 2013). Consumers associate their feelings towards the different colours used with the brand itself. Therefore if consumers can identify positively with the colours used in the organisational branding it is more likely for them to engage with the brand and develop a psychological bond (Manktelow; 2015).

The effect of colour on a consumer is either conscious or unconscious and is an important part of colour cognition and human perception. Many organisational objectives have been designed to convey a certain message by using colour. As a result of this, achievement motivation theory has been designed by Metha and Zhu (2009). They believe that different colours achieve different achievement motivations which then affect the results on different cognitive types of tasks (Metha and Zhu; 2009). Elliot and Maier (2007) state that there are six premises for colour to affect the performance of cognitive tasks which contributes to the achievement motivation theory. The first step is the need for colour to carry a specific meaning. If colour was simply just for artistic purposes then it would not have an influence over psychological functioning. The second step is that meanings of colours need to be understood that it is based both on learned associations and biological responses. An example of this is in an academic setting a teacher corrects mistakes with a red pen, this would be a learned association as this certain individual may then associate the colour red with mistakes. In the other hand, biologically in society red symbolises danger (Elliot and Maier; 2007). The third step which Maier and Elliot define is that the perception of colour alone will cause evaluative processes, which is defined as determining if a motivation is harmful or friendly (Elliot and Maier; 2007). The fourth step is influenced motivated behaviour. This means that colours with a positive association will result in approach motivation, whereas colours with a negative association will result in avoidance motivation (Elliot and Maier; 2007). The fifth step which Elliot and Maier define is that the influence of colour on psychological functioning is implicit and automatic. This means that the consumer's action of motivation of takes place without awareness (Elliot and Maier; 2007). Lastly the sixth step is that the meaning and effects of colour is based on perspectives, in different situations colour can have different associations (Elliot and Maier; 2007). Different colours evoke different emotions which has an impact on positive motivation behaviour towards an organisation or brand or an avoidance motivation behaviour (Elliot and Maier; 2007).

Colour sends meanings in two primary ways; natural associations and psychological symbolism. People feel comfortable when colour reminds them of familiar things. For example a shade of light blue could symbolise the sky and create a psychological sense of calm for a certain individual (James; 2015). Natural associations are defined as colour that occurs in nature that is universal and timeless. For example the fact that blue is the colour of sky and water and green is the colour of vegetation has been known since the dawn of humanity (James; 2015). Psychological

associations are defined as symbolism that has stemmed from cultural contexts. For example to some individuals the colour green is associated with freshness but to others it is associated with greed. Colours may even have both a positive and a negative association, so for some people the colour blue is associated with the sky but is also associated with sadness (James; 2015). According to James there are five sources of cultural and psychological meanings of colour. The first source is cultural associations which are the consistent colour that is associated with currency, tradition, celebrations and geography. For example in the Muslim tradition, the colour green is associated with heaven but in Ireland it is associated with good luck (James; 2015). The second step is religious and mythical associations. This is where colours are associated with spiritual and magical beliefs. For example in Celtic beliefs the colour green is associated with the green man, the God of fertility. But in contemporary western culture, green is associated with extraterrestrial beings (James; 2015). Political and historical associations are the third source. Colours here represent flags, political parties and royalty. The fourth source according to James (2015) is linguistic association; this is defined as colour terminology within individual languages. For example in Scottish Gaelic the term used for the colour blue is 'gorm' which is also used to describe the colour of the grass. Lastly, the fifth source is contemporary usage and fads. This is the current colour applications to objects, sports and associations created by modern conventions and trends. Since the late 1990's, lime green has been a popular colour used in advertising (James; 2015).

Peterson explains that colour is one of the most powerful non-verbal forms of communication which subconsciously shapes thoughts. As humans, survival is very dependent on colour, for example recognising that the colour green at a robot means 'go' and red means 'stop'. For this reason it is important for designers to understand how consumers recognise and associate with different colours to send across the right message (Peterson; 2009).

According to Hallock, gender plays a role in how consumers associate themselves with colours, men and women see colours differently. Men are less sensitive to the way they perceive colour; for example if they see a shade of orange-red, this will mostly likely just appear to be red. Men also perceive the colour green as more of a yellow colour as opposed to women (Hallock; 2014). Women are less sensitive to colour in the detail of objects and in fast moving things. Eysenck (2012) found that the colour yellow has a higher effect for men than for women and the colour blue stood out more to men than it does to women. It is also found that the colour blue stands out more over red for men however the colour red stands out more over the colour blue for women. The reverse cycle is the same for the colours yellow and orange; women prefer the colour yellow over the colour orange however men prefer the colour orange over the colour yellow (Eysenck; 2012). Eysenck also explains that women are more likely to have a favourite colour than men and also prefer softer colours where as men prefer bright colours (Eysenck; 2012).

In conclusion there are many factors that allow a consumer to identify and associate with different colours used in organisational branding. As discussed above there are many theories and contexts that a consumer bases their own meaning of colour, organisations then need to understand this and analyse a number of these different meanings and contexts before choosing their colours used in organisational branding to attract a certain target market and send across the right message to them.

Research methodology

Research paradigm

Interpretivism is defined as people being fundamentally different to objects. This definition can be applied to the research study as people cannot be studied the same way that objects can be, because people change all the time due to the environment constantly influencing them (du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout; 2014).

Interpretivism is influenced by three dominant traditions which are hermeneutics, phenomenology and symbolic interaction. Hermeneutics is the theory and method of interpretation of human interaction. This applies to the research as it is concerned with how individuals associate themselves with the different meanings of colour in organisational branding. Phenomenology looks at the way individuals make sense of the world around them, such as individuals making sense of different colours used in organisational branding and how they make sense of the meaning that they associate with these different colours. Symbolic interactionists look at reality as highly symbolic and constructed. Individuals will read meaning into other people's actions which creates a shared meaning system. This then allows the individuals to be influenced about how they identify with colour as the shared meaning system will in turn influence them (du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout; 2014).

Research design

Quantitative research is defined as research that collects data that is numerical and is analysed using mathematical methods (Cohen; 2000). Mixed method research is the practise of collecting, analysing and mixing quantitative and qualitative research methods in a single study (Creswell; 2012). The nature of the research design is qualitative. Qualitative research deals with the core qualities of subjective experiences and the meanings associated with phenomena, it is very difficult to measure and quantify these experiences and meanings. The researcher attempts to gather all the details of a social setting in a detailed description and express an intimate feeling for the setting and inner lives of individuals in it. Qualitative allows the researcher to understand subjective experiences which allows them to see through the individual's eyes. This type of research gives the researcher an opportunity to understand the 'why', 'what' and 'how' of phenomena of subjective experiences. Such as 'why' consumers identify with the different meanings of colours used in organisational branding, 'how' they identify with the different meanings of colours used in organisational branding and 'what' are the associations made to the different meanings of colours (du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout; 2014). This applies to the research topic as it allows researchers to understand what different colours mean to different people and how they associate with colours through subjective experiences. The time dimension of this research study is cross-sectional. This means that it is a descriptive study of a particular situation at a specific time; a cross-sectional study is an observational one. Researchers, here,

record information about their subjects without influencing the environment in any way to sway individuals about a meaning of a colour. Another aspect of cross-sectional research is that it can compare different population groups at a single point in time. It also allows researchers to compare many different variables at the same time. Cross-sectional studies may, however, not provide definite information about cause-and-effect relationships. This is because studies often look at a single moment in time and do not look at what happens before or after the study is conducted (institute for work and health; 2009). This applies to the research topic as different groups of people can be compared at once about how their answers may differ or be similar regarding how they identify with the different colours used in organisational branding. This means that when providing individuals with the research study such as making use of focus groups regarding the research topic, researchers are able to provide a few different population groups with the same questions that are posed in each focus group to gain as much feedback as possible about the research topic (institute for work and health; 2009).

The qualities of both qualitative and cross-sectional research are how consumers associate and identify with the different meanings of colours used in organisational branding. It is difficult for the researcher to understand the associations as they need to then understand it from the individuals view and their thinking and understanding about different meanings of colour seen through their eyes.

The time dimension of being a cross-sectional study is because it is a study where researchers focus on a descriptive study at a particular time about a specific topic. Researchers in this study don't focus on any particular time frames before or after this study is being conducted. This means that researchers do not focus on how individuals could have been influenced about their association to colour before or after the study and influencing variables are not being accounted for (institute for work and health; 2009). Researchers do not manipulate the surrounding study environment to achieve a particular outcome; they merely base it on how consumers connote meaning to different colours used in organisational branding (institute for work and health; 2009).

The research topic is inductive reasoning which is where the researcher works with specific observations and moves towards broader generalisations and theories (Crossman; 2014). The researcher then works with the information obtained from the research groups regarding the research topic (Crossman; 2014). From working with this specific feedback, researchers are then able to move towards broader generalisations about why they think consumers identify and associate with certain colours used in organisational branding.

Population and sample

The units of analysis for the research topic would be any individual who base their organisational preferences on the organisations colour branding (IIE Module guide; research practice; p28).

The target population would be any individual between the ages of twenty-one to fifty years old. By anyone of these individuals applying a different meaning associating with different colours that is used in organisational branding and are able to identify with it, they are then participants in the research study. The accessible population would be these applicable individuals who reside in the Durban area, KZN (IIE Module guide; research practice; p29).

Population parameters

- Individuals between the ages of twenty-one to fifty years old who are aware of organisational branding.
- Individuals between the ages of twenty-one to fifty years old who associate with different meanings to different colours.
- Individuals between twenty-one to fifty years old who identify with certain organisational branding based on the colours used.
- Individuals between the ages of twenty-one to fifty years old who live in Durban, KZN.

Probability or non-probability sampling

The research topic is non-probability sampling. This is because not every individual has an equal chance of participating in the focus group. Only a certain amount of people will be selected to participate in the research study as not every single individual who identifies and associates with the different meanings of colours used in organisational branding can be reached to allow them to participate in the focus group and not everyone will be willing to participate in it (du Plooy-Cilliars, Davis and Bezuidenhout; 2014).

Sampling method

The sampling method that would be used for the research study is purposive sampling. This sampling is when the researcher purposefully chooses the elements that they wish to include in their sample based on a set list of characteristics. Researchers look at the population and research question and decide what characteristics from the population are important for the research. Researchers will then choose a sample from the population that have these characteristics and would neglect those that do not (du Plooy-Cilliars, Davis and Bezuidenhout; 2014). This means that researchers would identify which individuals identify with colour and use specifically those individuals in the focus group.

Sample size

A manageable number of individuals to participate in this research study would be 18 individuals. This would be made up of 3 focus groups, each with 6 people in it. Each individual will have varying answers as it depends on their own associated meaning to colour. With many different varying answers and meanings, the researcher can't take too large of a focus group as their will be lengthy explanations about what colour meanings and associations are to different individuals, so the researcher needs to work with a manageable amount of individuals to get through all the information collected and to try break it down and understand it from their point of view.

Data collection

The data collection method that I will be using is a focus group. A focus group can be seen as a group interview that is used to determine the behaviour, attitudes, dislikes and preferences of participants who are interviewed by a facilitator. Focus groups are used to determine participant's experiences with regards to products and services, television programmes and advertisements for example. There are usually six to twelve people in a focus group and a facilitator who is often also the researcher. Participants are brought together for the purpose of expressing their views and opinions regarding predetermined, open-ended questions related to a specific topic (du Plooy-Cilliars, Davis and Bezuidenhout; 2014). This means that individuals would be selected to participate in a focus group to discuss the topic of and express their views and opinions regarding what colour means to them and how they associate different colours with organisational branding. Broad questions and themes are identified in advanced and are used to guide the discussion among participants which is in a natural and unstructured way. Therefor there is a free exchange of ideas between the participants (du Plooy-Cilliars, Davis and Bezuidenhout; 2014).

Before the focus group is selected I will establish the type of participants that will be needed. These participants need to fulfil the population parameters requirement. Two focus groups will be held with six people in each. These individuals will be family, friends and people who work in advertising agencies. Once I have selected the twelve individuals that are willing to participate I will allocate them which group they belong to and will give them a time, date and place to meet. Before the focus group takes place I will write down my topic which is what colours mean to individuals and how they associate this with organisational branding and will then need to write down certain questions that I will need to ask. When the focus group takes place I will state the research topic and will ask the participants the predetermined questions allowing them to explain their views and opinions and allowing for discussion to take place surrounding each question, but facilitating it in such a way that I will be able to determine the themes and answers that emerge

from this. During the focus group discussion I will write down the information that I need.

Conducting a focus group is also relatively inexpensive. It also allows me to gain a deeper understanding of the participant's views and opinions and will allow me to collect data at a faster pace than using other data methods which can take days to wait for the participants responses such as in a questionnaire. The use of a focus group can help with an opportunity for participants to answer detailed questions as well as build onto other participant's answers (du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout; 2014).

Data analysis

Qualitative research involves transforming data into findings (du-plooy Cilliers, Davis and Buzuidenhout; p204). Here, the researcher is absorbed in the data and identifying and describing the obvious and hidden patterns of meaning emerging from the data. This can be a long and tedious process. The term used to describe the data analysis method for results is hermeneutic which means 'to interpret'. It focuses on a subjective understanding and behaviour rather than the explanation of behaviour. Hermeneutics refers to written words or a conversation in which meaning can be understood about a specific topic. It implies an interpretation from general to specific and from specific to general of information (du-plooy Cilliers, Davis and Buzuidenhout; p204). There are eight steps in the process of qualitative content analysis. The first step is to prepare the data. Raw data needs to be converted into written text (du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis, Buzuidenhout; p204). The researcher needs to decide if they are going to use a summarised version of the focus group or if they are going to use all the data collected from it. Step two is defining the coding unit to be analysed. In this step the researcher examines the data carefully and decides how to break the data down into chunks or parts. These chunks of data will be compared for similarities, dissimilarities or relations (du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis, Buzuidenhout; p204). Step 3 is developing categories and a coding scheme or conceptual framework. This step involves grouping related coding units together to form categories of codes. This step is where the researcher develops a conceptual frame or framework which could assist them in coding the data (du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis, Buzuidenhout; p204). Step four involves testing the clarity and consistency of the focus group discussion; any problems need to be resolved in this step. Step five is coding all text. This refers to careful scrutiny of the data and taking note of all the relevant and meaningful sections and items. All the relevant sections can be highlighted with symbols, descriptive words or codes that the researcher would order the information into areas that can be referred to when analysing the data. Open or substantive coding and axial coding is used for the data (du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis, Buzuidenhout; p204). Open and substantive coding is where the researcher will read through the entire discussion recorded during the focus group to gain an overall impression and understanding of it. Concepts that are related to the research study are identified and are either written down in a separate document. The researcher will then group

these concepts into bigger categories. The process therefore involves breaking down, examining, conceptualising, comparing and categorising data gained from the focus group. Axial coding is a set of procedures whereby data is put back together in new ways after open coding, by making connections between categories (du Plooy-Cilliars, Davis, Buzuidenhout; p205). Here, the researcher compares categories of concepts and identifies the relationships across categories. Similar answers that are found from different participants from the focus group that relate to each other will therefore have a relationship. The researcher must also take into account the context in which the events occurred. This means that for the focus group, the researcher must take into account the environment in which the individual participated in the focus group and if the individual may have had a particular experience that day that will make them see one certain colour or organisation differently. Step six is assessing your coding consistency. It is important to re-check the consistency with which organising the coding for the focus groups was conducted. Step 7 is drawing conclusions from the coded data (du Plooy-Cilliars, Davis, Buzuidenhout; p205). This step involves interpreting the answers from the focus group and identifying the themes or categories. Step eight is reporting the methods and findings (du Plooy-Cilliars, Davis, Buzuidenhout; p205). This would be reporting what can be found in the answers from the focus group and how it can be interpreted and the meanings that are found.

Research tools

The research tools that I will be using for the focus group will be a pen and paper to write down the themes, views and opinions of the participants that occur when the focus group is taking place. While participants are talking, I will write down key notes about what they are saying.

Pilot Study

I conducted a pilot study to find a result of how I need to structure questions and decide if I was asking the right questions. For the pilot study I asked four people between the ages of 21-25 and asked them five questions regarding colour which lead to a discussion. I sat with a pen and paper and observed the discussion take place while writing down what I believe was important data to capture, not word for word but key notes.

- 1) With regards to the colour dark blue, what organisation or product does it remind you of and what do you think of it?
 - Nivea- Doesn't really stand out and make a statement. Would much rather choose Dove over them.
 - Standard Bank- Boring, no advertisements that stand out and easy to remember such as the FNB 'Steve' advertisement.
- 2) Many organisations are using the colours red and white, what is the first brand you think of and what do you think about their colours used?

- KFC-the food is always good and they keep to the same standard, can't think of much advertising they have done lately. Their colours look appealing with the red and white stripes but also classier with the thin black stripes incorporated into it. The black adds a sense of it being more expensive and upmarket compared to the other colours such as plain yellow and red of McDonalds which looks cheap.
 - Colgate-"Whiter teeth for longer". The colours of the box is very boring just plain red and white, it is not that exciting and appealing. Consumers would rather buy something that makes more of a statement and like it will actually do something for you.
- 3) With regards to the colours red and yellow, what brand do you first think of?
- McDonalds.
- 4) What do you think of the plain black and white tick for Nike, is it too simple and not eye-catching enough?
- No, it is simple, engaging and easy to identify with. It is easy to recognize and be comfortable with and trust.
- 5) Choose between the colours red and white or blue, red and white
- Those who chose red and white chose the colours of coca-cola over the competitor's colours of Pepsi and visa-versa.
- When asked why they chose those certain colours those who chose red and white said:
- It's simple, eye-catching and easy to associate with whereas blue red and white seem too chaotic and all over the place, the colours just seem too much for one product.
- Those who chose blue, red and white explained:
- It's more interesting, eye-catching and engaging. They want to see what the product is all about.

Validity, reliability and trustworthiness

The terms 'validity' and 'reliability' are not useful terms in a qualitative study because the aim is not to generalise the results. Qualitative researchers tend to use the terms 'trustworthiness' to measure reliability (du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout; 2014). Validity is defined as whether the research was measured and what it was supposed to measure. Validity can be applied to the focus group as it serves to gain research from participants that can be measured. Reliability is linked to the findings of the research, it is the fact that different participants are being tested by the same instrument (du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout; 2014). Reliability is seen in the focus group as the same questions and research topic are asked and posed to be discussed. It needs to show reliability in order to compare the different answers to the same questions. Trustworthiness is divided into credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability (du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout; 2014).

Credibility refers to the accuracy with which the researcher interpreted the data collected from the focus group. Dependability refers to the quality of the process of the research group that takes place from the data collection method and the results generated from the findings of the focus group. Conformability refers to how well the data collected from the focus groups supports the findings and interpretations that the researcher gathered (du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout; 2014).

Ethical considerations

Ethics can be defined as an individual's moral or professional code of conduct that sets a standard for a person's attitude and behaviour. In research, ethics are important as it affects all stakeholders (du-Plooy Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout; 2014). The participants who take part in the focus group need to feel as though they can trust the researcher and that the researcher will not exploit them. While undertaking the focus group, the researcher needs to explain to the participants exactly what they study is about and ensure that the individual understands and knows what is expected of them and will not feel misled. The researcher will explain the value and credibility of the results of the focus group and will be able to show them the results once the research study has been completed. This will help the participant see the legitimacy of it. The findings from the research study may be relayed to organisations in the community who may benefit from it; in this case the findings need to be correct. Therefore no unethical approaches can be taken which may skew the findings. The researcher's personal and professional status and future employment is linked to their reputation. It is because of this that conducting the focus group in an ethical manner is important as a credible reputation needs to be upheld and used as a standard when comparing the study to the way in which the researcher conducts themselves and their work (du-Plooy Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout; 2014).

In conclusion, a focus group will be used to collect the research findings of the meaning of colours to different individuals and how they associate this with organisational branding. A qualitative study will be done which is interpretivism in nature and is cross-sectional. The research topic is non-probability sampling as well as purposive sampling.

Findings

In this chapter it will purely be a discussion on findings made. No conclusions or recommendations are made here; they will be made in the following chapter.

The findings that I have gathered have derived from students in Durban, Kwa-Zulu Natal.

I conducted a pilot study where I held 3 focus groups with 6 people in each. The questions I asked were a test to see if I was on the right path with regards to my research study. Based on the answers I gathered during my pilot study I then devised my activation, by having an understanding of how consumers relate to brands and held 6 focus groups with a total of 85 students.

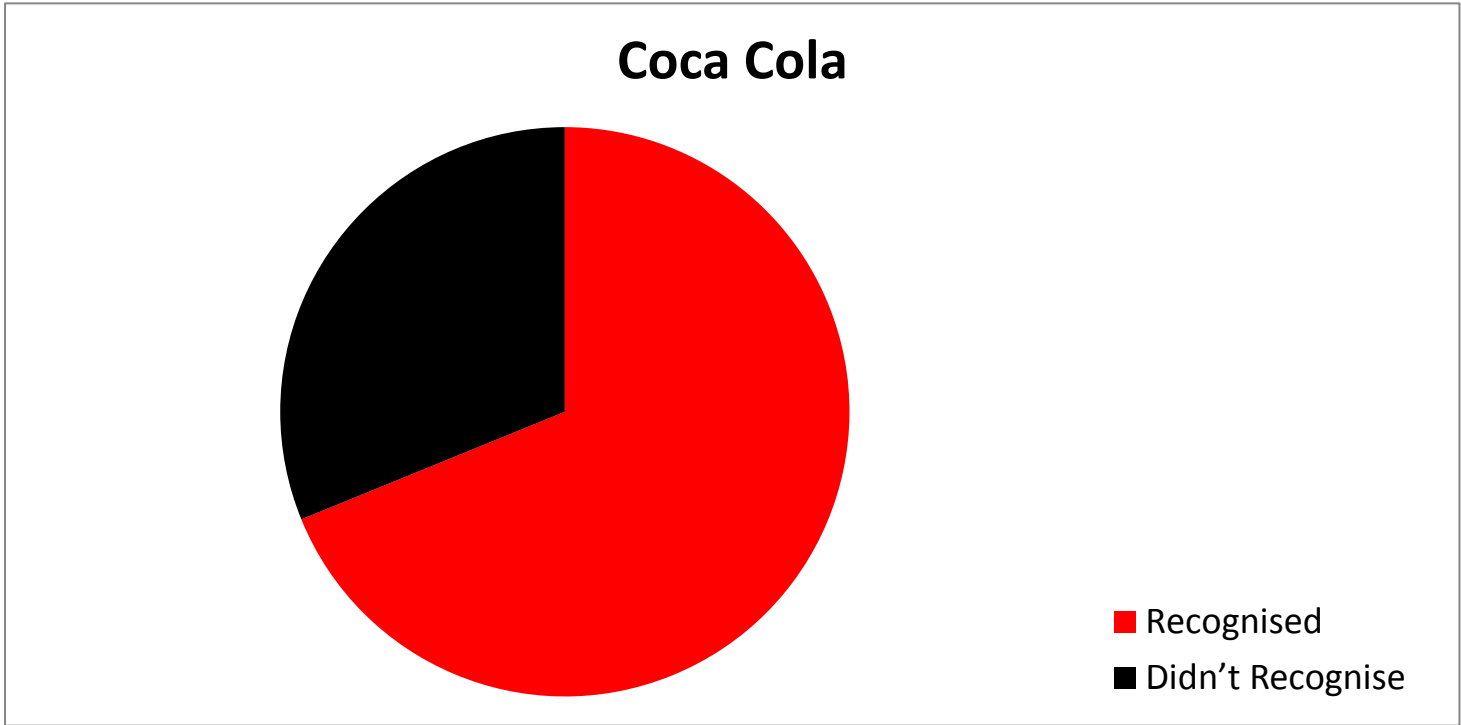
During my focus groups I took eleven brands relating to four colours but with three different shades for each colour. Each shade represented a different brand, for example there were three different shades of blue and only one shade represented Nivea, the other 2 shades of blue belonged to 2 other different brands. The colours and brands that I chose were; blue; Nivea, Standard Bank and Vaseline, green; Nedbank, Landrover and BP, red; Absa, Coca-Cola and McDonalds and yellow; Lays and Burger King.

I then held 6 focus groups at Vega and asked a total of 85 students if they could recognise the brand based just on its colour. Majority of students were able to recognise the brand and even surprised themselves by doing so. I have developed a colour guideline pamphlet which I then handed out to the students and had a discussion with them while going through each point in the colour guideline pamphlet and answering any questions they had or listened to their input and opinions about it.

Red

Absa	McDonalds	Coca-Cola
20	0	45
24%	0%	53%

A table representing how many students were able to recognise which shade of red belonged to Coco-Cola out of the three different shades of red that were shown.



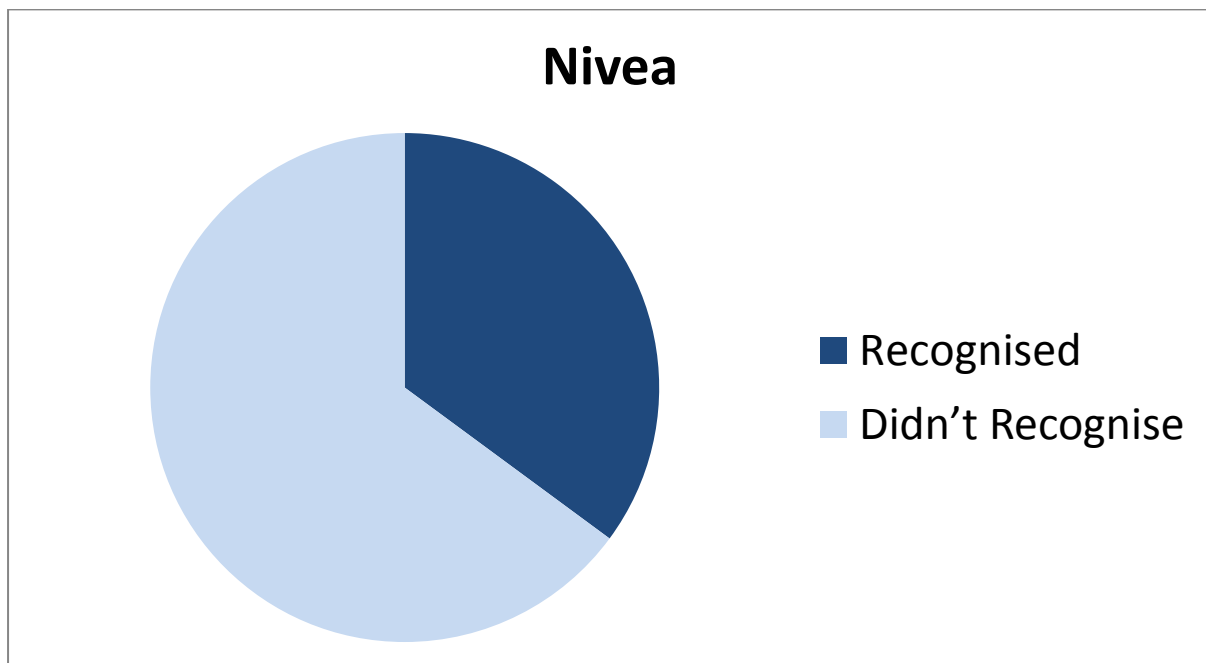
A pie chart representing how many students recognised the shade of red belonging to Coca-Cola and those who could not identify with it being the Coca-Cola red.

It can be seen in the findings above that more than half of the students which were 53% were able to positively identify the correct colour red with Coca-Cola and the other 24% matching the Absa red to the Coca-Cola brand.

Blue

Nivea	Standard Bank	Vaseline
28	22	30
33%	26%	35%

A table representing how many students recognised the shade of blue belonging to Nivea out of the 3 different shades of blue shown and those who couldn't recognise the shade of blue belonging to Nivea and thought it belonged to either Standard Bank or Vaseline.



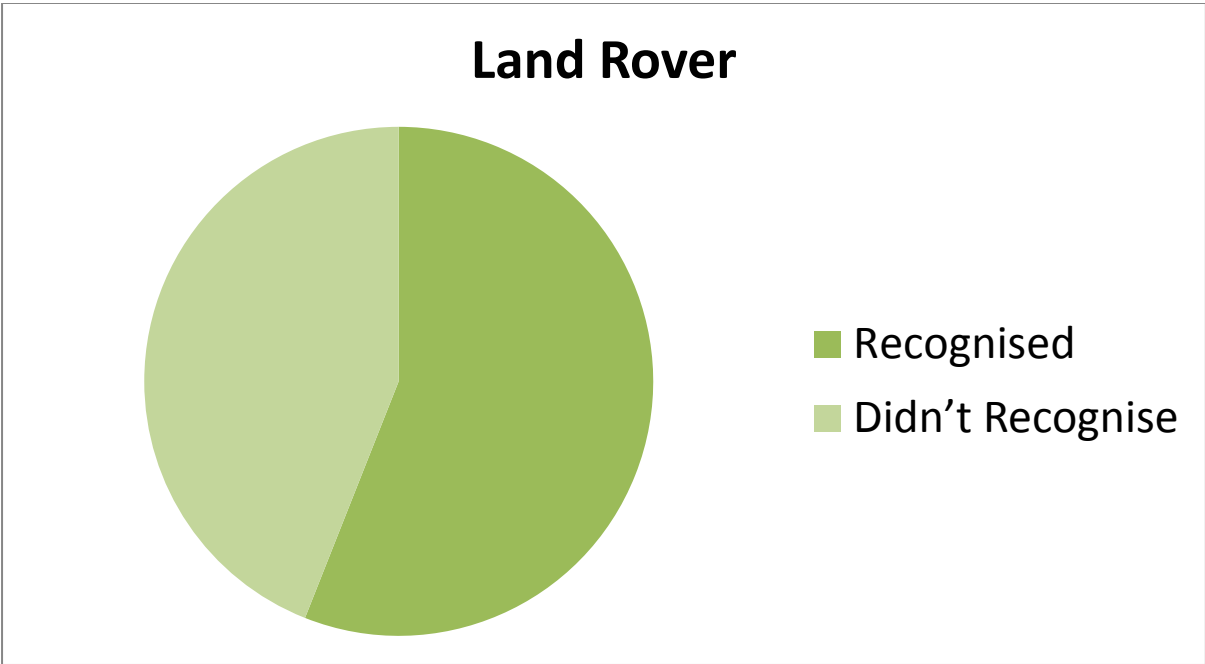
A pie chart representing those students who did recognise the shade of blue belonging to Nivea and those who were unable to recognise the blue belonging to Nivea.

It can be seen in the findings above that less than half the students, being 33% were unable to recognise the shade of blue belonging to Nivea out of the 3 different shades of blue shown. And 61% of students unable to identify Nivea’s blue by recognising Standard Bank’s blue and Vaseline’s blue as the Nivea blue.

Green

BP	Land Rover	Nedbank
20	48	17
24%	56%	20%

A table representing that more than half of the students were able to recognise which shade of green belonged to Landrover out of the three shades of green that were shown.



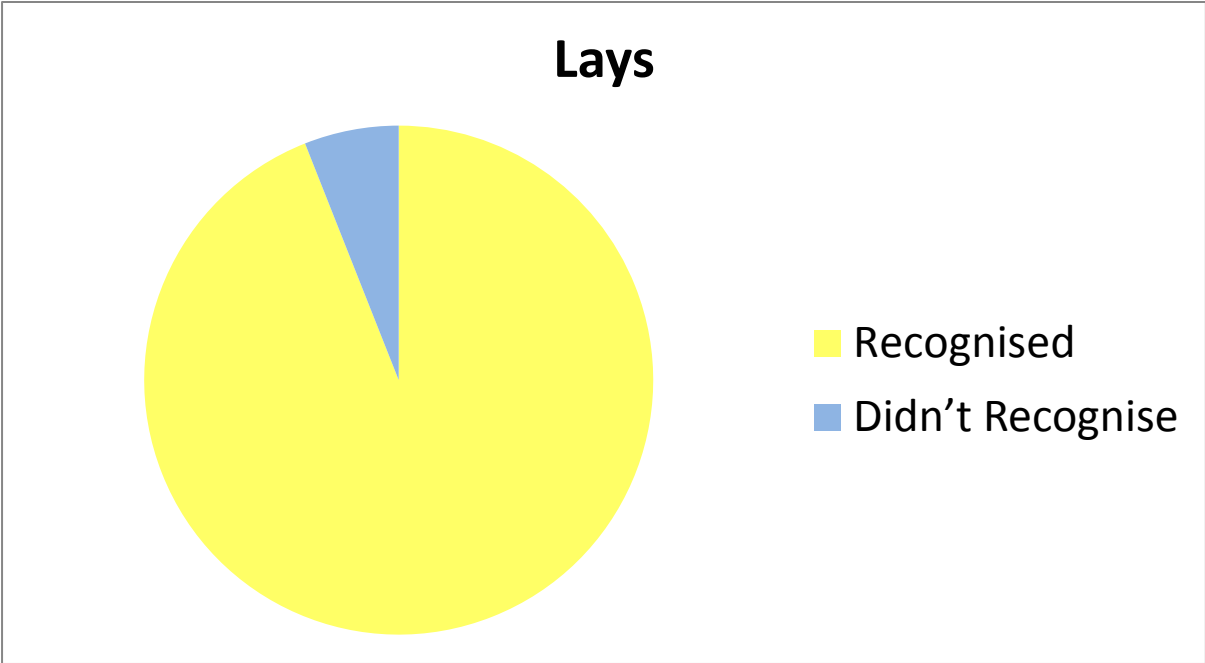
A pie chart representing that more than half of the students were able to recognise the shade of green belonging to Landrover.

It can be seen from the findings above that 56% of students are able to positively identify the Landrover shade of green out of the three different shades of green shown. 44% of students were unable to recognise the Landrover green and identified the BP and Nedbank shade of green as the Landrover colour green.

Yellow

Burger King	Lays
5	80
6%	94%

A table representing that 94% of students were able to positively identify the Lays shade of yellow with only 5% of students matching the Burger King yellow to the Lays yellow.



A pie chart representing that more than half of the students were able to match the correct shade of yellow to Lays and 5% of students unable to recognise Lays shade of yellow and matched the Burger King yellow to Lays.

As seen from the findings above, 94% of students were positively able to identify Lays shade of yellow with 5% being unable to recognise it.

Discussion of findings

As seen from the findings above, more than half of the students that took part in the focus groups that I held were able to recognise the brand based on just its colour.

Once the above brand recognition exercise had been completed during my activation, I then handed out a colour guideline pamphlet to each student. I designed the colour guideline based on my literature review; this guideline is merely just a suggestion as to how designers can design according to the use of colour. This guideline helps the designer know what certain colours mean and how or why they wish to use them when sending a certain message across to their consumers. I then went through the colour guideline pamphlet and had a discussion with the students about it.

The main themes that were brought up within these conversations were that majority of these students didn't know any facts about colour and that there was so much to learn about the use of colour. Many students said that they have never really thought or looked into what colours really mean and how to even use them when designing, they just choose what looks pretty. The conversations then lead to how often do consumers notice colour consciously or subconsciously when looking at any organisational branding. A lot of students then made comments about if it is a well-known brand they are more likely to know and recognise the colours of the branding but are less likely to trust not so well-known brands if their colours used in their organisational branding isn't eye-catching or appealing. I asked a question, if there was a new brand on the market with colours in their branding that you didn't find eye-catching or appealing, would you still pick up the product and try it out? Majority of the answers were no, because as consumers, if they don't like the look of the product then they will rather choose their usual trusted product. They will only give a product a chance if it looks good first, and if it's beneficial to them second.

Analysis of Findings

Out of the 4 colours that I chose which were red, blue, green and yellow and the 11 brands that I allocated to these colours, a dominant theme and conclusion has emerged. This is that more than half of the students that participated in my activation were able to recognise a brand just based on their colours.

From the brand recognition exercise that I conducted I found that with the colour red, it was quick and easy for students to recognise which shade of red belonged to Coca-Cola. 56% of these students didn't hesitate when it came to matching the correct shade of red to the brand.

With the colour blue it became more difficult for students to recognise which shade of blue belongs to Nivea. More than half of the students weren't able to correctly identify which shade of blue belongs to Nivea as they matched the Standard Bank and Vaseline shade of blue to the Nivea brand. Since this was the majority of students that answered the question incorrectly I asked them why they struggled with it. Their response was that all 3 shades of blue were too similar to distinctly tell them apart and match it to the brand. They also said that they had to really think harder and recall what the Nivea organisational branding actually looks like.

Majority students were able to easily identify Landrovers colour green. To their surprise they didn't realise that Landrover had a cream colour in their organisational colours that is mixed with the green colour but were still able to know without hesitation which shade of green, out of the three, belonged to Landrover.

Yellow was the easiest colour for students to match to the brand. I had only included 2 shades of yellow as they were both very similar shades of yellow and the organisational branding of both brands was almost identical, the only thing separating them was one colour which was blue. Just based on this one colour, students were immediately able to tell the difference between the two brands which was Lays and Burger King.

Based on the brand recognition exercise it is evident that a brand can be recognised just based on their organisational colours as more than half the students I interviewed were able to positively identify this.

A topic of discussion was the colour guideline that I created. None of the students had heard about a colour theory and learnt a lot when I read through my colour guideline with them. After reading through the colour guideline each of them made sure that they had a copy to take away with them as they felt it was very beneficial and something that designers need to work with in order to understand the best way to use colour. I created a discussion around this by asking the students if they would ever be attracted to an organisation, product or even a website if the colours that were used weren't appealing on the eye and they all said no, they wouldn't want to look at a finished piece of artwork if it didn't attract them and didn't look good to

them. A comment that was made was “why would they support a product if it didn’t attract them to even look at it?”

Research questions

- 1) How does colour in organisational branding influence consumer behaviour such as in making purchase decisions?

Based on my literature review and focus groups, colour plays an important role in consumers making a purchase decision. As De Bortoli and Maroto state, approximately 80% of information that consumers are able to take in is visual with colour being 40% (De Bortoli and Maroto; 2001). As found in the focus groups that I held, consumers aren’t willing to purchase products that they aren’t attracted to; they will only purchase products if they feel that it is visually appealing and are able to trust the product based on its general appearance.

- 2) What does this tell us about organisational branding design?

Based on the answers during my focus groups, that consumers do make a purchase decision based on colours and that they are able to recognise a brand based on their colours, organisations need to analyse and be critical about their colours that they use. Organisations need to look into the meaning of colour and understand what the meaning and message is that they are sending across based on the colours they use in their organisational branding.

- 3) What do consumers associate with when looking at different colours used in organisational brands?

According to the various theories that I have used in my literature review each colour has a different meaning for example red is seen as desire and blue is seen as calming. However because each individual is different they then have their own associations with different colours as they will associate their own meaning or memory to a specific colour.

Assumptions

- 1) Consumers will be attracted to certain organisations based on the different colours that are used in organisational branding.

Based on my focus groups, this assumption has been proven correct as many students said that they would purchase or support an organisation based on how visually appealing it is and if it is eye-catching. When there is a product that does not appeal to them as consumers because they don’t like the visual appearance of it, they won’t purchase it. Therefore consumers will only make purchase decisions or support brands that they are attracted to that is visually engaging.

- 2) Consumers are able to recognise brands based on their colours.

This assumption proved to be correct as during my focus groups I conducted an exercise on brand recognition based on colour. More than half of students were able to recognise a brand just by looking at their colours.

- 3) Consumers are aware that colours are used for a specific reason in organisational branding.

This assumption didn't prove to be correct as during my focus groups students said that as consumers they were aware of colours but it was subconscious, it was only after the brand recognition exercise that they were surprised as to how aware they are of colours in branding but haven't paid much attention to it. When I went through the colour guide with the students they also weren't aware of how much meaning colours carried and how as designers they should be more aware of the meaning and use of colour.

Recommendations

I am very happy with my research study and how far it has come. I have learnt more than I thought I could just from colours and organisational branding. If there is one thing that I could do differently it would be a part of my activation. After I had held my focus groups I felt that it was very necessary to then give feedback to lecturers and directors from Vega School, however time was a limitation. The Vega students that I held my focus groups with were extremely enlightened by my research study and found my colour guideline very helpful as they've never known colour to be so important and meaningful in branding. My colour guideline gave them something to work from and understand how to use colour when designing. I feel as though lecturers and directors of any design school, not only Vega need to understand the importance of colour in their branding degree as it is not a subject that is lectured about but carries a big impact of the overall look of a design as well as carrying various messages and meanings.

In conclusion it can be seen that there are three main themes that emerge from this research study which are; colour does impact a consumers purchase decision, consumers are able to associate different meanings with different colours and consumers are able to recognise a brand by just their organisational colours alone. It is therefore important that consumers as well as designers are more aware of the impact that colour has on design and need to be more aware of the meanings and messages that are being sent out from organisations based on the colours used in their organisational branding.

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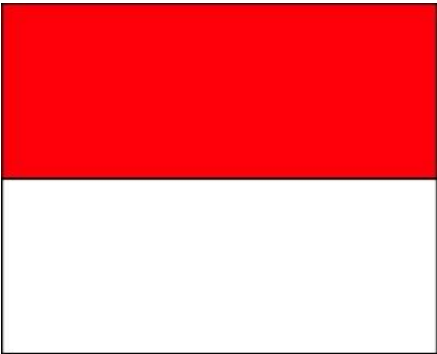
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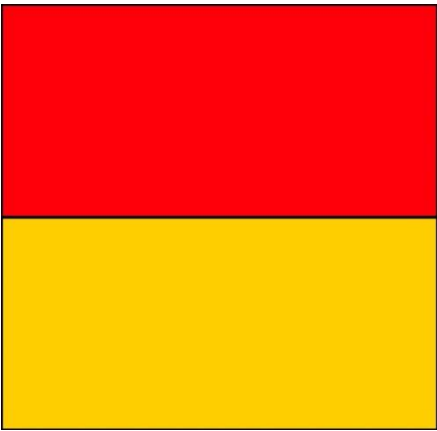
Appendix

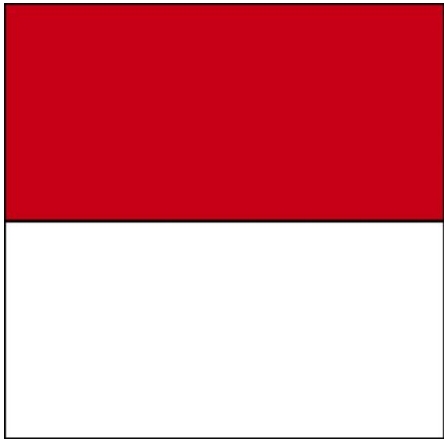
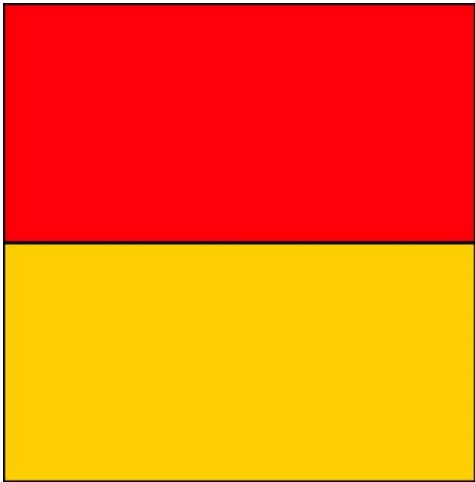
Research Activation

Red



Coca-Cola

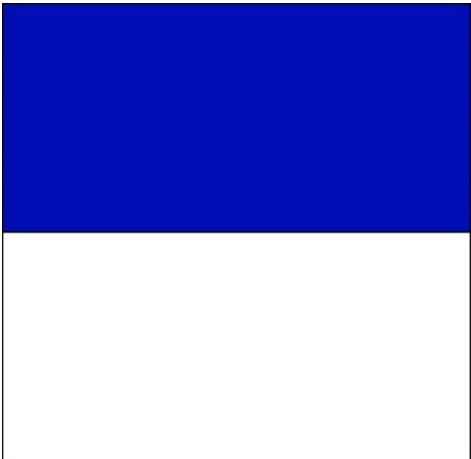


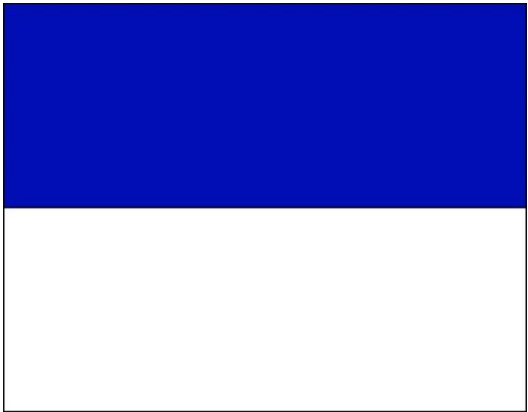
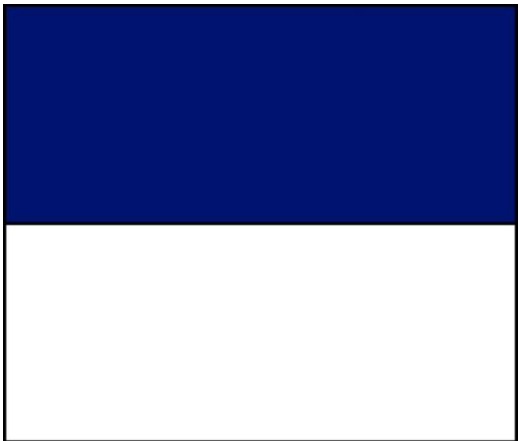


Blue

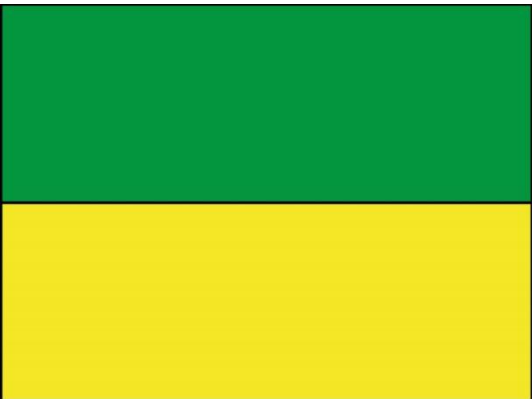


Nivea

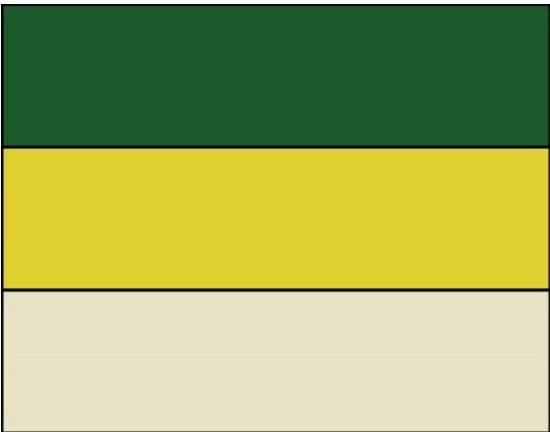


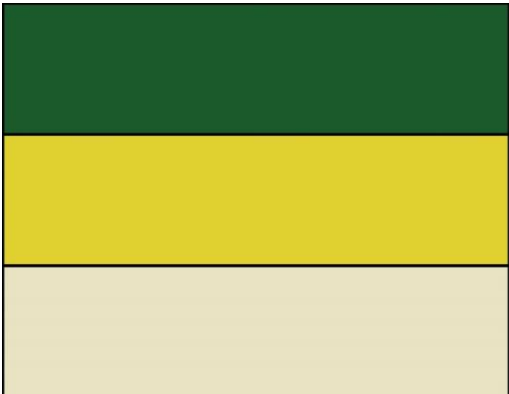
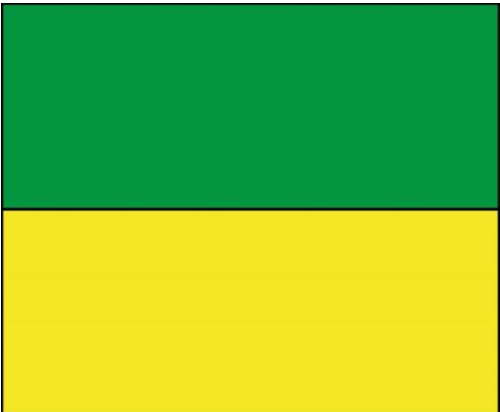


Green

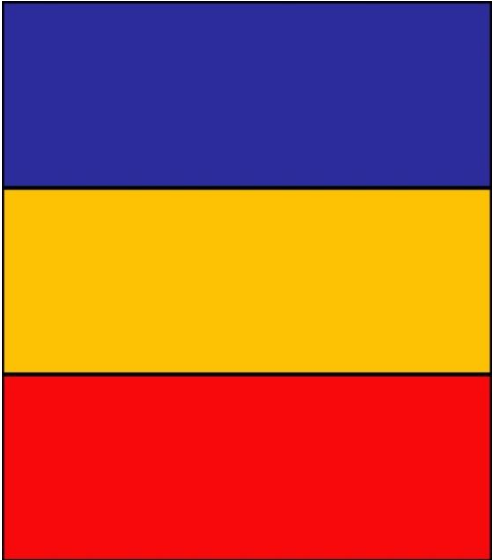


Landrover

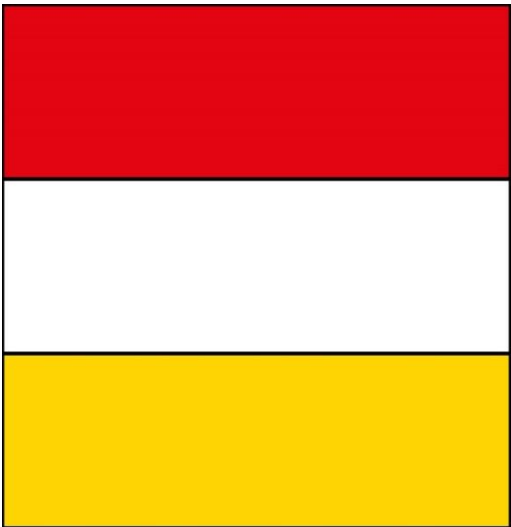


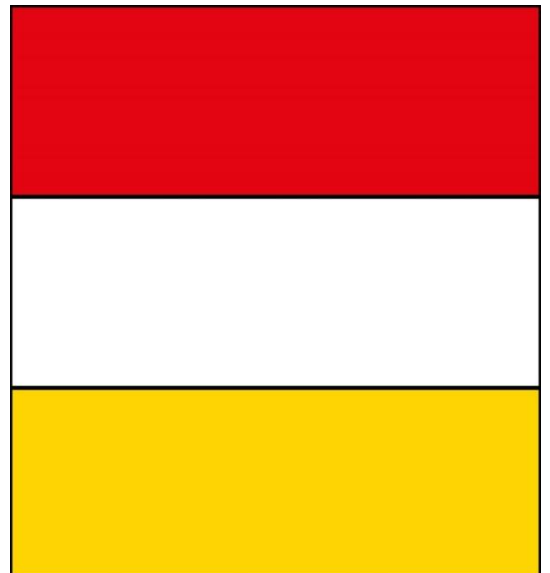
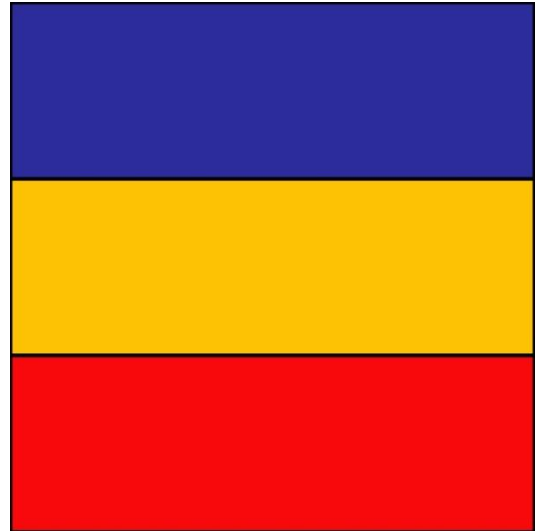


Yellow



Lays





Colour guideline pamphlet

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An example is Cell C, the organisation went under a corporate colour change from red and white to white and black. The reason behind this was to show consumers that they understand their way of life better than any other cellular network company. The six different colours that are used in the colour-bar which is under the logo are the colours of the South African flag to show that Cell C cares about South Africa (Anon; 2015).

Red, orange and yellow

- These colours as well as other variations are seen as warm colours.
- They are often seen as energizing, passionate and positive and remind people of sunsets, fall leaves and fire.
- Red is a very powerful colour to use especially when trying to convey the feelings of passion or power.
- Orange is used when a design wants to command attention but without being as overpowering as the colour red. It is often considered more friendly and inviting without being too much in the person's face.
- A lighter shade of yellow gives a more calm feeling of happiness where as a dark or gold-hued yellow can give a sense of stability (Chapman; 2010).

A Colour Theory Guideline

An organisation may use specific colours to attract a desired target market; for example yellow and red are colours that attract younger children because yellow is associated with the sun and is seen as a happy colour and red is seen as desire and destruction. However older people are attracted more to subdued colours such as blue and green. It is found that different generations associate different meanings to colours. By a consumer simply seeing a colour they are reminded of a specific brand. It is important when choosing colours because organisations want to evoke the right emotions and message about the brand as 93% of consumers base their purchase decision based on the visual appearance of the product (De Bortoli and Maroto; 2001).

Blue, green and purple

- These colours are classified as cool colours and are seen as more subdued. They are seen as colours of night, nature and water and are usually more calming, relaxing and reserved.
- Cool colours are used in design to create a sense of calm and professionalism.
- The colour green can have a balancing and harmonizing effect and is mainly used when referring to wealth, renewal, stability and nature.
- Blue is the most important colour to get the hue correct. A lighter blue is perceived as relaxed and calming, bright blues are energizing and refreshing and dark blues represent strength and reliability for corporate sites.
- Light purple is seen as softer and is associated with romance and spring whereas dark purple is associated with wealth and luxury (Chapman; 2010).



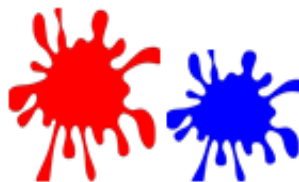
Neutral colours

- Black, grey, white, brown, beige and ivory are neutral colours.
- They serve as a backdrop and are often combined with brighter colours.
- The meanings and impressions of neutral colours are affected by the colours that surround them.
- Neutral colours are easy on the eye when there is a lot of text. (Chapman; 2010).

Colour blindness

1 out of 12 men and 1 out of 20 women are colour blind. This is a result of an absence of colour-sensitive pigment in the cone cells of the retina.

- A colour sensitive person has problems seeing red, green, blue or mixtures of these colours.
- Red-green is the most common type of colour blindness; red and green are seen as the same colour. (Morton; 2015).



Gender roles

Gender plays a role in how consumers associate themselves with colours, men and women see colours differently.

- Men are less sensitive to the way they perceive colour; for example if they see a shade of orange-red, this will mostly likely just appear to be red.
- Men perceive the colour green as more of a yellow colour as opposed to women.
- Women are less sensitive to colour in the detail of objects and in fast moving things.
- The colour yellow has a higher effect for men than for women.
- The colour blue stood out more to men than it does to women.
- It is also found that the colour blue stands out more over red for men however the colour red stands out more over the colour blue for women.
- Women prefer the colour yellow over the colour orange however men prefer the colour orange over the colour yellow.
- Women are more likely to have a favourite colour than men and also prefer softer colours whereas men prefer bright colours. (Eysenck; 2012).



