Logo color affects consumer emotion toward brands, study finds

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Jessica Ridgway found that the specific colors used in a company's logo have a significant impact on how that logo, and the brand as a whole, is viewed by consumers.

Many studies have shown that a company's logo is one of the most important aspects of marketing and advertising a brand, or features that distinctly identifies a company's product or service from its competitors. Now, a researcher at the University of Missouri has found that the specific colors used in a company's logo have a significant impact on how that logo, and the brand as a whole, is viewed by consumers.

Jessica Ridgway, a doctoral student in the MU Department of Textile and Apparel Management, surveyed 184 adults using generic logos of different colors for fake companies that she created. She then asked participants to describe the emotions they felt toward the fake companies upon seeing each logo. Ridgway was able to identify key characteristics that each logo invoked, based on which colors were used.

The study revealed that blue logos invoked feelings of confidence, success and reliability; green logos invoked perceptions of environmental friendliness, toughness, durability, masculinity and sustainability; purple logos invoked femininity, glamour and charm; pink logos gave the perception of youth, imagination and fashionable; yellow logos invoked perceptions of fun and modernity; and red logos brought feelings of expertise and self-assurance.

"Of all the feelings associated with logo colors, the feelings associated with red logos were the most surprising," Ridgway said. "Traditional emotions based on red include aggression and romance, but red logos did not invoke those emotions in study participants. This can probably be attributed to the fact that red is used in logos of many well-established brands such as State Farm, McDonalds and ESPN, so consumers have pre-existing emotions associated with brands using that color."

Ridgway suggests that before designing logos, brand marketers think critically and strategically about what kind of emotions they want their consumers to feel toward their brands.

"The results of this study demonstrate that brands should use logo colors that are associated with the personality traits they want their brand to have in the eyes of consumers," Ridgway said. "If a feeling of reliability is desired, blue might be the best choice, while a purple logo may be preferred for a feminine, glamorous brand. Simultaneously, the results also remind brand managers that they cannot rely on traditional color associations alone. They must stay attuned to how colors are viewed and applied in popular culture such as in entertainment, as this tends to influence consumers' color associations."

More information: Ridgway's study, "A study on brand personality: consumers' perception of colours used in fashion brand logos" was published in the *International Journal of Fashion Design, Technology and Education*.

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