

Dissertation

Colour is a visual language **that is all around us**, is what we visually see and emotionally respond to and from a theoretical point of view, colour comes from light. As described by Johnson (2017), light travels in waves and each colour has a different wavelength which strike our eyes in different ways and are transferred through our eyes as electrical impulses which go to the hypothalamus, located in our brain. Thus, colour is created when our brain interprets these impulses and, we can see the colour black because it traps light whilst we see other colours because light is reflected off a surface or an object. Furthermore, hypothalamus affects different functions in our body “sleep and behavioural patterns, appetite and metabolism, and body temperature” (Johnson, 2017). This suggests that there’s much more to colour than just the aesthetical aspect conveying, that colour is a visual language that is both physical and an emotional tool of communication which our body corresponds to.

VISUAL LANGUAGE OF COLOUR

In interior design, colour carries out an important role by having the power of connecting people emotionally and physically to a space, affecting our own aesthetic consciousness because, “colour invariably conveys moods that attach themselves to human feelings or reactions” (Eiseman, 2017, p. 26) due to different wavelengths of light triggering different emotions. Thus, colour is a powerful tool used in interior design to create an emotional connection to our environments. As, a person will hold an emotional response to colours that they are drawn to and repelled by, indicating that colour is a visual language. These emotional responses can depend on the different colour tones used as softer colours are more calming whilst brighter colours are more energetic by, “changing the exact hue or saturation of a colour can evoke a completely different feeling” (Champan, 2021). However, each person will have a different reaction to the same colour depending on how they perceive it and what memory they associate it with as stated by Albers, “the associations and reactions which are experienced in connection with the colour and the name, probably everyone will diverge again in many different directions” (Albers, 1963, p.3). This portrays that our brain can interpret colour in many ways depending on our previous experiences, affecting our visuals and perception. Thus, colour communicates through the use of our memories which are associated with colour, changing our behaviour by, having the power to express our own emotions or impact the feelings of others by the use of colour in an interior space.

However, people have been consumed with the ideas of interior designs that we see in a magazine or on social media by seeing “the results of someone else’s design journey we see a picture” (Olderey, 2017). This means that people have been visualising their own interior space through the eyes of others instead of taking their own design journey to reflect upon their own identity and thinking emotionally about their own comfort when considering the colour choice. This is important because the energy aesthetic of colour is the dynamic that makes our surroundings more lively, allowing us to flourish. As stated by Fettel Lee, “Colour is an indication of the richness of our surroundings. It is an unconscious signal not only of immediate substance but of an environs that is capable of sustaining us over time” (Lee, 2018, n/a). Thus, we make sense of the world around us by using colour as an expression

which generates thoughts and feelings in our mind, acting as a tool of expression in our surroundings.

Chapter 1 - Psychological effect of colours /Case study 600 MORE WORDS TALK ABOUT COLOUR AS A CURE OR WELLBEING

“Colours you choose for your physical surroundings can help to shape your moods... make you feel happier, calmer, more nurtured, romantic and connected” (Eiseman, 2005, p.87).

“Colours are forces, radiant energies that affect us positively or negatively” (Birren, 1970, p.12)

“Visual, mental and spiritual phenomena are multiply, interrelated in the realm of colour and the colour arts” (Birren, 1970, p.12)

Colour can evoke our senses through the way in which colour affects our behaviour, mood, emotions and most importantly our well being. Thus, in Interior Design it is essential to choose a suitable colour palette that will suit the clients needs and deliver an emotional experience. The choice of colour is important especially for people who are experiencing mental health problems because “colour has specific effects that influence us on all levels- emotional, mental and physical” (Haller, 2019, p.26). This suggests that colour is a therapeutic tool that can either improve our mood or can impact our emotions negatively by making us feel overwhelmed, uncomfortable and melancholy.

In facilities such as the mental health facility for children and young people in Edinburgh design features such as colour, pattern, shape and space play an important role into making the interior space feel non-institutional in order to “ make patients feel at ease, but to also look distinctly different than a domestic environment” (Frearson, 2021, n/a). Thus, the interior design of this facility has resulted in creating a space with its own identity that feels different from a home or a hospital.



Fig.

This photograph of a room (fig.) shows a playful design that consists of a balanced colour scheme featuring the bright orange accent colour and muted tones, harmonising the space and creating an uplifting atmosphere and a fun environment that's achieved through the use of geometric shapes.

“Colored lightning, colour therapy, and colour health-care setting are all critical areas for exploration and enlightenment” (Eiseman, 2005, p.80).

“Colour of the pigment on walls or the fabrics on furnishings can affect and change our moods, lift our spirits and bring a sense of joy or serenity to us” (Eiseman, 2005, p.82).

“Green is perceived as cool, naturally restorative and healing colour” (Eiseman, 2005, p.97).

The chosen colours in this design (fig.) each have their own psychological meaning. As, (Quote)

from a scientific point of view orange colour is made up of red and yellow meaning that “it combines two of the psychological primaries, one that relates to the physical (red) and the other to the emotions (yellow) (Haller, 2019, p.26). This is because, yellow is a cheerful colour that positively communicates happiness and optimism which is important in order to be hopeful about the future and, have the confidence to be able to improve our wellbeing. Whereas, red is an expression of strength, passion and excitement. Therefore, orange is a warm and an upbeat colour which lifts the space up due to being an expression of energy

that invites innovation, enthusiasm and socialisation, allowing people to express themselves more freely. I feel that this may increase social interaction which plays a tremendous role towards the fulfilment of wellbeing, empowering young people to communicate, opening up about their problems.



HeywoodFloyd • a month ago

This sort of interior design would be garrish no matter what the program, but for a mental health facility?

^ | v • 1 • Reply • Share >

thepixinator • a month ago • edited

JEE-zus the last thing I could have handled when I was treated for severe anxiety caused by Bipolar II was a wall-to-wall orange room and a bunch of giant spiraling orange and yellow stripes. None of the seating looks remotely comfortable and I would stay curled up in bed with sunglasses on to escape that interior. No, no, no, no, no. No!

^ | v • Reply • Share >

Dennis Hanshew • a month ago • edited

I worked for four years in a psychiatric facility, albeit many years ago (1970s), and it had been designed to minimize stimuli by using soft pastel colors throughout and rounding edges rather than having right angles. It was also carpeted throughout and had various noise mitigation factors built in. This Edinburgh design does just the opposite. The color scheme is jarring as are all the awkward angles. Anyone with anxiety disorder, schizophrenia or any number of other mental illnesses would be traumatized simply being in such an environment. What were they thinking?

8 ^ | v • Reply • Share >



Jane Simpson → **Dennis Hanshew** • a month ago • edited

Couldn't agree more, what were they thinking?

^ | v • Reply • Share >



don_bronkema • 2 months ago • edited

Chroma that mismatched guarantee relapse. Choose unsaturated blue, green, yellow. Red/orange trigger emesis in many, syncope in some.

Fig.

Although, some people may argue against this space design (fig), feeling less positive about the colour palette and pattern used, associating it with a more negative experience and reflecting upon the design features as overwhelming, overpowering and even triggering mental problems even more.

However, a person can have their own opinion on colour depending on their own personal association as mentioned by Dawn "People who love orange are often drawn to it because they have a positive association with it such as a beautiful sunrise.. warm summer days" (YouTube video

Erika Dawn Interiors 2018) Meaning that personal colour association can be negative due to a bad experience for example, a person can want to avoid orange because they were in a car crash involving an orange colour car. Furthermore, the intensity of colour is vital because people will experience a different feeling when looking at an intense orange in comparison to a softer, more pastel orange which is more comforting and less overpowering. This is because the "intensity or value of a colour can alter both the perception of temperature and psychological message of a hue" (Eiseman, 2017, p.17). Thus, there is more to colour than just the aesthetics aspect.

Also, I feel that the more in-depth research people carry out on colours the more understanding of their own and other peoples choices they will become, enabling them to

improve their mental health with their personal colour choice not just of their interior space but also, their fashion choice.

QUOTE ON IMPROVEMENT ON MENTAL HEALTH AND COLOUR.

Colour has a vital impact on how we go about our lives.....

Prison case study Hilary Dalke OF COLOUR RELATE TO MENTAL HEALTH

Pink colour is associated with love, femininity and kindness and it symbolises health and romance. Pink can influence our mood by having the power to be physically soothing, tranquilizing the feeling of anger by producing calming effects on the nerves. As, “the colour pink has been found to calm violent prisoners” (Johnson, 2017) meaning that, it can have a soothing effect on a persons mind influencing their physical response.



[Photo: Bryngelzon/Getty Images]

<https://www.fastcompany.com/90243505/the-surprisingly-dark-history-of-the-color-pink>

The experiment by Dr. Alexander Schaus (fig.) who “studied the impact of colour on blood pressure and pulse rate” (Fraser, 2017, n/a) by painting prisoners cells in the specific ‘Baker-Miller pink’ colour, has proven to have a calming effect on prisoners by reducing aggressive behaviour. This was shown through the prisoners response which were positive to this nurturing colour as, “aggressive outbursts and violent behaviour reportedly declined” (Fraser, 201, n/a), proving that a specific shade of pink can control aggressive male behaviour by having a soothing effect.

However, these results were gained by prisoners having to “squeeze a dynamometer” (Eiseman, 2005, p.79) were different in comparison to females, as “men responded by, in fact, becoming weaker, while the women became stronger” (Eiseman, 2005, p.79). Thus, the same colour can have a different effect depending on the gender due to seeing the same

colour from a slightly different perspective. This is “ because males need a longer light wavelength than females to see and perceive the same shade of colour” (Braam, 2020) and longer wavelengths are connected with warmer tones such as red or yellow thus, males are more likely to see warm colours more warmer. In this case the colour pink will be more warmer to males than females which, results in males feeling more calm whilst women more empowered.

Burton and Ahernds example

one of the coping mechanisms can be through design and colour choice

Colour in public spaces 2 case studies - Laeeque and Akmal & Ruth Lande Shuman of Publicolor

In public interior spaces such as schools, there is a lack of colour as mostly the classrooms will have white or cream walls with a few posters on the wall and every door will be the same and, this can have a negative impact on the students work process and their motivation. As proven by Laeeque and Akmal in their study of ‘Colour on Motivation toward Learning’ conducted in the two public schools in a village named Rao Khan Wala, “colour helped children in learning better by becoming a positive stimulus and ... had a lasting impact on memory of children helping them in learning effectively” (Laeque & Akmal, 2017, p.15). Therefore, the research and the attendance of the students (fig.) proved that colour can have profound effects on students and their learning experiences. It is an element used to strengthen educational experiences.

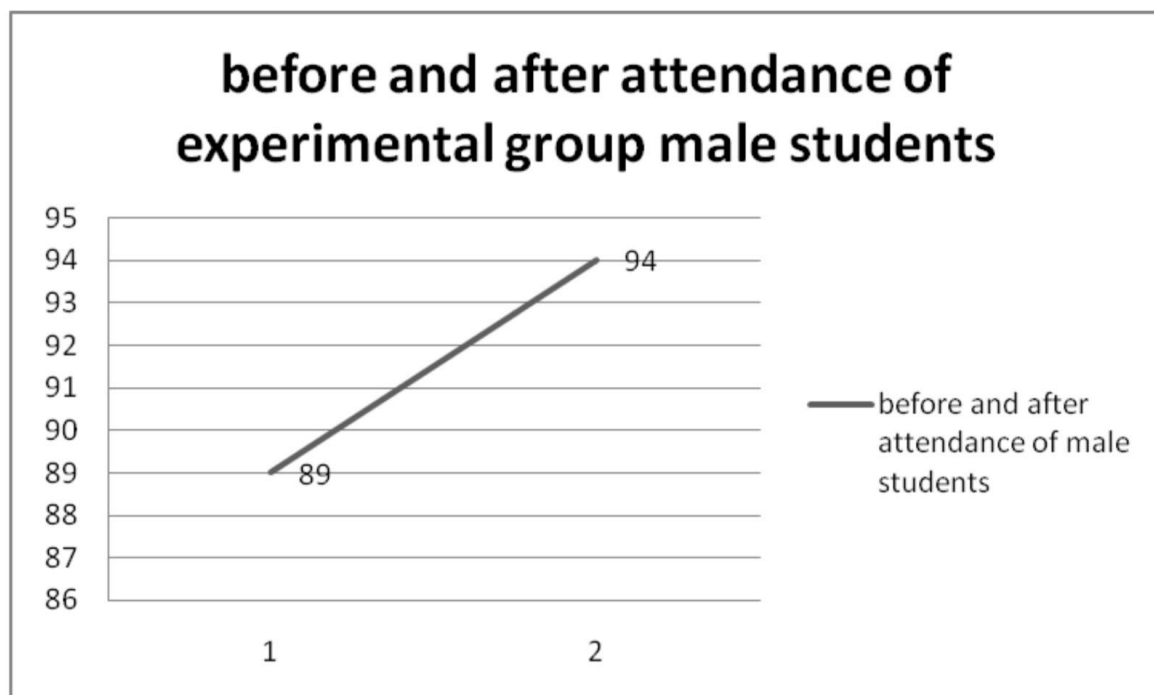


Fig.

Green calmness and tranquility to a space
Can reduce tiredness
Blue evokes calmness

“65% of the students agreed that blue calms them down”

Warm colours inculcate motivation

Color is linked with cognitive development of students and unconsciously plays a role in a child's development to an adult. (Torrice and Logrippo 1989).

This case study proved that the role of colour in school spaces is to motivate students towards learning by capturing their attention, enabling them to be more creative and to create different emotional reactions which will impact their behaviour and wellbeing.

Ruth Lande Shuman of 'Publicolor' uses color as a tool to impact the environment of a school by influencing the behaviour of people. Shuman states, “I feel very strongly that by introducing design and color you can change attitudes and behavior as well as create visual order in environments where chaos reigns supreme” (Shuman,



Fig.

Filling public interior spaces with colour in schools will make students feel more energised by reducing sensory deprivation. As Schumans work has proven that “both student and teacher attendance improves...difference in test scores.. and students consistently say they feel safer in a school that has been painted by Publicolor” (Lee, 2018, n/a). Thus, colour can shape our behaviour by motivating and enchanting a persons energy, making them more active.

Can produce relaxing sensation having a soothing psychological impact

Colour within my practice

In Surface Pattern Design colour is a big part of the design process because it reflects upon the pattern and motif design, adding character and creating a mood or a feeling that will evoke an emotional encounter, between the targeted clientele and the design.

Include example maybe of my work

Summaries chapter

As, wellbeing can be achieved in life through the suitable choice of colour “ QUOTE

Much more subconscious understanding of colour

“Colour is fundamental to our experience of the world around us” (The secret of colour by Kassia St Clair)

Colour is a visual stimulus & shape our behaviour

“Colour consists in a power or disposition of something to produce sensory experiences of colour in a perceiver” (Thompson, 1995, n/a). It is a mental perception that delivers an emotional experience.

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Figures

Figure. 1: Photography is by French + Tye.

Available at:
<https://www.dezeen.com/2021/08/22/projects-office-camhs-edinburgh-mental-health-facility-interior/> (Accessed: 7 October 2021).

Figure. 2: Screenshot

Available at:
<https://www.dezeen.com/2021/08/22/projects-office-camhs-edinburgh-mental-health-facility-interior/> (Accessed: 7 October 2021).

Figure. 3:
Available at: <https://www.macrothink.org/journal/index.php/ijld/article/download/11044/8885>

Figure. 4:
Available at:
<https://www.catalystreview.net/from-a-can-of-paint-publicolor's-use-of-design-in-transforming-schools-and-students/> (Accessed: 13 October 2021).

