Chapter 8
Colour Theory in Healthcare Corporate Identity

Inês Veiga Pereira

 https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7906-612X
ISCAP, Polytechnic Institute of Porto, Portugal

José Duarte Santos

 https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5815-4983
Polytechnic Institute of Gaya, Portugal

Inês Nunes de Carvalho
ISCAP, Polytechnic Institute of Porto, Portugal

ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyse the colours associated with Portuguese healthcare units and medical centres—namely the colour of their logo, through environmental colour mapping—and understand if the colour management choices match the desired perception of a healthcare unit and identify new colour combinations that can serve as a differentiation factor and simultaneously get the desired interpretation of the brand. The logos of 24 healthcare centres were randomly selected. The images were collected through the SNS web page dedicated to each facility and were later processed in Adobe Photoshop CC. The colours of each logo were catalogued and sorted according to their hue. It was observed that the majority of the colours used corresponded to blues and greens, which was to be expected considering their symbolism: stability, calm, relaxation, and serenity. Lastly, four new colour schemes were created, which, in addition to being differentiated from the previously identified schemes, are evocative of desirable characteristics for a brand associated with a healthcare unit.

iNTRODUCTION

Over the past decade marketing has been paying greater attention to research into the use of colors by brands (Labrecque, 2020).

Human beings interact constantly with the surrounding environment, absorbing sensory stimuli, especially visual stimuli. In some of those interactions, they assume the role of consumers.

Brand interactions are no different than any others – they rely on a complex process of perception and interpretation in which various factors come into play. During these interactions, consumers draw conclusions and create conceptions of what the brand is according to the stimuli it provokes.

In addition to being a core part of the brand's visual identity, color is also a powerful stimulator and information source, that has the capacity to incite emotional and physical responses (Singh, 2006). Throughout history, different meanings have been attributed to different colors, whether by cultural influence or instinct. In turn, these meanings, even if subconsciously, have an influence in the image consumers create about the brand: its values, beliefs, characteristics and personality. Thus, the adequate use of color can positively distinguish a brand in comparison to its competitors, while it contributes to the creation of a relationship between the consumer and the brand (Labrecque, 2010).

The evaluation of color perception is not easy, its measurement depends on the reaction to stimuli. One of the ways researchers go through the three dimensions of color analysis (hue saturation and value) (Labrecque, 2020).

The present study aims to analyse the colors associated with Portuguese healthcare units and hospital centres' logos through the environmental color mapping method and evaluate if the colors used evoke the desired perception of a healthcare service. In addition, this study intends to identify and suggest new color schemes that can serve as a differentiation factor, as well as convey the desired message.

COLOR IN CORPORATE IDENTITY

Brands work as guarantee for consumers – if the consumer associates a brand with an attribute considered relevant in the product category, that brand will be chosen over its competitors (Christodoulides & Chernatony, 2010). For a brand to be successful, it must identify the needs of its target market and come up with a value proposition with the aim of satisfying them. A brand's value proposition is "the set of benefits or values it promises to deliver to consumers to satisfy their needs" (Kotker & Armstrong, 2018). Those values define brand's identity.

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