Original Article

Factors Responsible for Influencing Colour Preference in Garment Selection among Undergraduates

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ABSTRACT

Most people have favourite colour which has a significant influence on what makes or ruins their fit in the choice of garment. This study assessed the factors responsible for colour preference among undergraduates at the Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Nigeria. Multi-stage sampling technique was used in the selection of 186 respondents. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data on respondents' socio-demographic characteristics, types of colours commonly worn, the colour preference among undergraduates and factors responsible for colour preference in garment selection. Data were analysed using frequency counts, percentages, mean and Rank. Results showed that the mean age, gender, marital status, and ethnicity of the respondents were 24 years, male (56.8%), female (43.2%), single (86.9%) and (70.5%) from the Yoruba tribe in Nigeria, respectively. The respondents indicated that the garment colours commonly worn were black (25%), blue (22.2%), red (14%), green, pink, and burgundy (6.8%) each, yellow (5.7%), brown (4.5%), purple (3.4%), navy blue (2.3%), lemon (1.1%), and only 0.6% often wear orange and white. Furthermore, the perception of respondents on which sex is likely to select these colours during garment selection reveals that blue colour had the highest percentage for males (81.3%) while pink (1.7%) was the least. On the other hand, for females, pink (92.6%) is selected the most and blue (10.7%) the least, while black and white are perceived to be generally selected by both genders with percentages of 69.3% and 76.1%, respectively. The factors considered in the selection of garments revealed that respondents agreed to all statements with mean scores above 2.50 of the decision rules. Complexion (x=3.85) ranked first when making the choice of garment colour, respondents considered the occasion or daily activity (x=3.75) as second, while emotions and climatic conditions/weather (x=3.49) ranked third. Religion (x=3.46), garment design (x=3.44), physique/body shape (x=3.41) ranked 5th, 6th, and 7th respectively. Sex/gender was the least ranking factor, although the mean value was also significant (x=3.35). In conclusion, black, blue, and red were commonly worn colours selected by the respondents. Black and white colour is generally selected by

both genders; males prefer blue while pink for females showing that gender consideration is also important in the choice of colour in garment selection. It is therefore recommended that individuals should give a thought to the careful selection of their garment colours which trigger their excitement, cheerfulness, and inspiration. Colours that complement the wearer's physique, height, shape, complexion as well as gender should be considered.

INTRODUCTION

Colours are seen everywhere and in everything in our day-to-day lives, from the comforting upshot of blue skies, green vegetation, and the mouth-watering indigenous food with every colour creating meaning with excitement. The science and art of colours has various meanings to different individual right from birth; the gender of the child to be born is important because the baby will be named, a baby room will be decorated with toys, and baby clothing will be bought in colours that depict the gender of the baby to be born. Thus, individual meets the concept of gender for the first time with the birth and swaddle of the baby with pink or blue clothes in patriarchal societies.

However, even though the colours of objects are the same, they may not always be perceived equally by individuals since there are factors which can affect the perception of the viewer. Hence, colour perception is a complex thing which depends not only on the wavelength of the light that the sensors in the eye receive but also on the circumstances or environments in which we perceive, such as background lighting, familiarity, and lighting in the surroundings (Janetius et al., 2015). Daylight delivers all colour wavelengths. When human eyes decipher the wavelengths of light reflected from an article, they see shading. Wright (2008) characterises shading as "light, which goes to humans in waves from the sun, on the equivalent electro-attractive range as radio and TV waves, small scale waves, x-beams and so on." The human eye is fit to see more than 7 million colour hues that affect male and female colour perception and garment selection.

Colour exist continually in individuals' day-by-day lives and energises various feelings, and on the grounds that they are specialised devices utilised for communicating individuals' feelings, they have a

few distinct consequences for the human brain (Buyurgan & Buyurgan, 2012). Colour has been found to evoke various emotions in an individual, such as excitement, calmness, passion, and energy; they have an underground influence on how individuals feel both mentally and truly. Psychologists down through the centuries maintain that colour preference is related to human personality and colours have an impact on our moods, feelings, and behaviour (Janetius et al., 2015). Some people believe that blue is a colour associated with comfort and security, red communicates excitement, passion, or anger, yellow is cheerful, representing prosperity and a bright sunny disposition, and purple can be used to showcase loyalty, power or even mysteriousness.

Regardless of whether people are deliberately mindful of how colour impacts individuals' feelings, self-assurance or impression of others, it is seen that various individuals have their own particular inclination and discernment of each and every colour. Kwallek et al. (2007) indicated that colour is commonly linked to feelings and as a result, people talk of strong likes and dislikes for certain colours. Colours in the environment are held to influence mood and well-being; these feelings, evoked by either colours or colour combinations, are called colour emotions (Ou et al., 2003). In the quest to apply colour psychology to everyday life, experts have found that colours in the surrounding may influence an individual's emotions and state of mind. For example, some places are especially relaxing and calming while others can be irritating; there is a good chance that the colours in those spaces have a part in that (Art Therapy, 2022). The use of colour has become an important expression of who we are, how we feel, and what we believe.

Asking what purpose colour serves in the most fundamental behavioural tasks humans carry out, such as the selection of garments, leads us to an understanding of why colour vision evolved in the way it did, and this in turn enables us to understand how colour vision might be exploited in more complex and advanced behavioural tasks, such as choosing wallpaper for a dining room and garments of male and female individuals. According to Adebisi and Abdulsalam (2017), colour provides individuals with the opportunity to express feelings, create illusions in appearance, and can bring excitement to a personal wardrobe. Colour is critical to creating attractiveness and unattractiveness, especially in relation to clothing.

Clothing provides people with ways of expressing individuality, conformity, beliefs, and religion. It is a means of social identification of every normal individual (Gloede, 2011). Clothing includes accessories which are small items that can add polish to an outfit. Accessories include items like shoes, hats, belts, stockings, jewellery, sunglasses, ties, and handbags; these secondary items add beauty to the clothes one wears (Forster, 2014; Anikweze, 2011). One way of enhancing one's appearance is a careful selection of clothes to suit personality, figure, and the life that one leads, and this should be in relation to the individual's colour preference (Adebisi, 2015). Hence, good planning, intelligent selection and wise purchasing of clothing can add to the attractiveness of an individual.

In the selection of clothing, some individuals consider the colour of the garment or accessories as one of the criteria for their selection. At other times, people pick group clothing or pick colours for a group of people to wear for an event. It is believed that the garment colours may have been selected based on the way the individual(s) have perceived or their liking of such colours. Adebisi and Abdulsalam (2017) posited that factors like demographic characteristics, peer groups, parents, religion, and social media play a very important role in the clothing selection of adolescents and young adults. In addition, mass media is considered to be the backboard of democracy that influences colour in the clothing selection of female adolescents (Nbhvreddi, 2010). This study therefore intended to investigate what colours mean to different people,

especially in clothing selection and how selected factors influence their colour preferences.

The objectives of the study are to:

- Identify the clothing colours commonly worn by respondents

- Determine respondents' perception of garment colour selection in relation to gender

- Determine factors responsible for respondents' colour preference in garment selection.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study employed a descriptive research design to explain the colour preferences of male and female final-year students at the Federal University of Agriculture Abeokuta (FUNAAB), Ogun State, Nigeria. The population of the study consisted of only the final year students in the five departments selected for the study, which was estimated at 634 from the total of 2,822 final year students consisting of male and female (Information and Communication Technology Resource Centre - ICTREC FUNAAB, 2021). The multi-stage sampling procedure was adopted and used to select the participating respondents in the study area. Simple random sampling was used to select five colleges from the ten colleges; one department was randomly selected from each of the colleges. One hundred eighty-six (186) respondents were selected using a convenient sampling technique based on their willingness and availability out of the minimum sample size n = 245 for the study (Taro Yamane 1967 sample size method: n= N/ (1+N (e)^2) Where: n = sample size, N = 634, the population under study and e = the margin error = 0.05). Data was collected using a validated self-administered questionnaire which was organised into four sections; section A was on the demographic characteristics of the respondents, section B was on colour commonly worn by respondents, section C was on the colour preference of respondents in garment selection and section D measured factors responsible for respondents' colour preference in garment selection. A four-point scale was used to assess the responses in section D. The questionnaire was subjected to face validity and a pilot study was conducted using 10% of the sample size to assess the reliability of the questionnaire. The questionnaire was regarded as reliable with a minimum Cronbach Alpha coefficient of 0.70. One hundred seventy-six (176) questionnaires were filled out and returned by the respondents. Descriptive statistical methods (numbers, percentages, average, standard deviation) were used during the evaluation of the data.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographics

The mean age of the respondents in this study was 24 years. 56.8% were male and 43.2% were female. The majority (86.9%) were single and they were mostly (70.5%) from the Yoruba tribe of Nigeria.

Garments Colour Commonly Worn by Respondents

Figure 1 shows the percentages of garment colours commonly worn by the respondents; 25% (45) of the respondents usually wear black, 22.2% (39) of the respondents often wear blue, 14% (24) commonly wear red, 6.8% (12) usually wear green, pink and burgundy otherwise known as wine, 5.7% (10) wear yellow, 4.5% (8) brown, 3.4% (6) purple, 2.3% (4) navy blue, 1.1% (2) lemon, and only 0.6% (1) often wear orange and white. In summary, black, blue, and red were the colours selected by the respondents as their commonly worn colours

**Figure 1: Presentation of garment colours commonly worn by respondents**
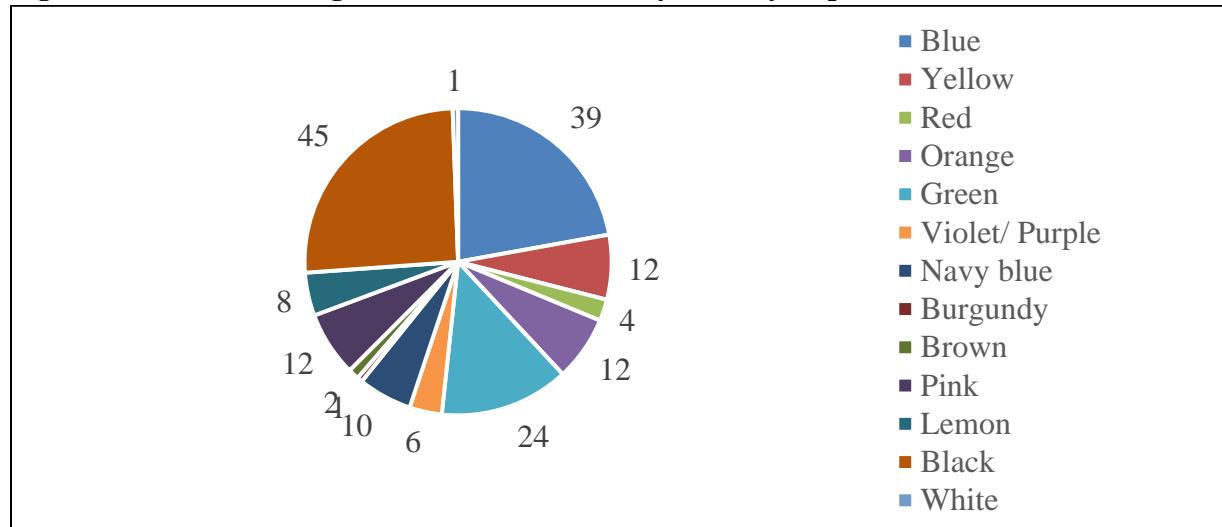
Male and Female Garment Colour Selection

Figure 2 reveals the perception of the respondents on which sex is likely to select these colours during garment selection. The majority of the respondents perceive that blue garments are for males (81.3%), and yellow is mostly selected by females (76.1%). Some think red is for females (47.2%), while others believe it can be selected by both (39.8%) sex. Orange is perceived to be selected more by females (52.8%), green by females (43.8%) and both (38.1%) sex, violet by females (39.8%) and both

gender (42.0%), burgundy by females (42.0%) and both (38.1%) gender. Based on the view of the respondents, more people (42.6%) believe brown is for both sex and some (39.8%) think it is usually selected by females. Also, almost all the respondents perceived that pink is commonly selected by females (92.6%); lemon garments are likely to be selected by females (68.2%), black by both sex (69.3%) and white by both sex (76.1%).

Figure 2: Respondents' perception of garment colour selection in relation to gender
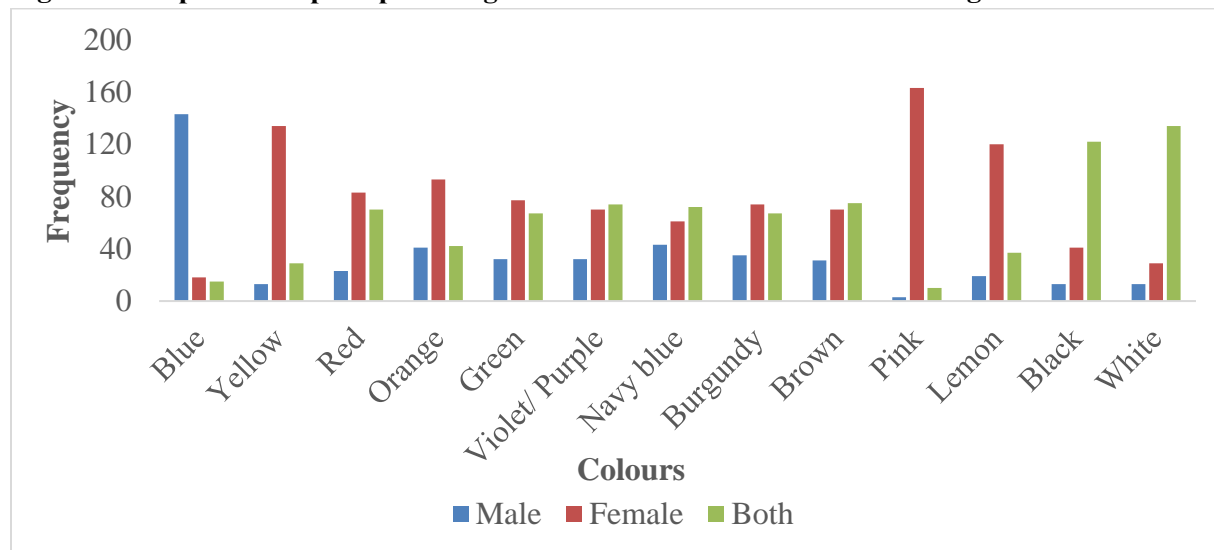
Summarily, blue colour had the highest percentage for males (81.3%) while pink (1.7%) was the least. On the other hand, for females, pink (92.6%) is believed to be selected the most and blue (10.7%) the least, while black and white are perceived to be generally selected by both genders, with 69.3% and 76.1%, respectively.

Table 1: Factors responsible for colour preference of garments worn by respondents

Factors	Items	Mean	Rank
Complexion/Skin colour	I consider my complexion before choosing my colour of cloth.	3.85	1st
Occasion/ Daily activity	I consider the occasion before choosing the colour of the garment.	3.75	2nd
Emotion	I consider my emotion before choosing my colour garment	3.49	3rd
	My favourite choice of colour is based on the feeling the colour gives me		
Religion	My religious connection affects my choice of colour in garment selection	3.46	5th
Climatic conditions	I consider weather conditions before choosing my colour garment	3.49	3rd
	Environmental awareness stimulates my choice of colour		
Physique	I consider my height when choosing the colour of the garment	3.41	7th
	My body shape affects the colour of the garment		
Garment design	I consider the design of the garment before choosing the colour	3.44	6th
	I consider the style of the garment before selecting the colour		
Sex	My gender specification stimulates my choice of colour	3.35	8th

Table 1 shows the mean and ranking of factors that influence respondents' choice of colour in garment selection. The data revealed that the respondents agreed with all the statements that were stated, as the mean scores were above 2.50 of the decision rules. Complexion (x = 3.85) ranked first when making a choice of garment colour, respondents considered the occasion or daily activity (x = 3.75) as second, while emotions and climatic conditions/weather (x = 3.49) ranked third. Religion (x = 3.46), garment design (x = 3.44), Physique/body shape (x = 3.41) ranked 5th, 6th, and 7th respectively. Sex/gender was the least ranking factor, although the mean value was also significant (x = 3.35), showing that gender consideration is also important in their choice of colour in garment selection.

Preference for a particular colour or dress is a deeply rooted emotional response which may not offer any apparent rational answer. Upadhayay (2014) posited that colour gives individuals the opportunity to express feelings, create illusions in appearance and can bring excitement to a personal wardrobe. Findings from this study had been able to highlight colours commonly worn by young adults are black and blue then, followed by orange. Although, these colours may have emerged topmost on their favourite colour list because the study had more male respondents than females. This result is in line with Janetius et al. (2015), who reported that college boys favoured colours like black, orange, and white the most. Similarly, Kurt and Osueke (2014) found that blue colour was mostly favoured among the respondents of their study who were majorly college students and males.

The study also identified colours that are perceived to be ideal in the garment selection of both genders. In the respondents' view, blue colour garments should be selected by males (81.3%) and pink by females (92.6%), while white (76.1%) and black (69.3%) are perceived to be generally selected by both genders. This is supported by Janetius et al.

(2015), who suggested that white is the colour favoured by both genders to impress people and to look nice.

Several factors such as sex, religion, occasion, weather, and social media play very important roles in colour choices for different individuals and especially in clothing selection. Findings revealed that respondents of this study agreed that all the measured factors have an impact on their garment colour choices. Gbadamosi (2012) also indicated that several factors such as social media, parental factors etc., have an influence on colours in clothing selection. Similarly, Mordy and Sinha (2010) indicated that today, adolescents are also influenced by taped shows, videos, movies, music videos, the internet, and digital cable in addition to old media.

CONCLUSION

It was concluded that black, blue, and orange are commonly worn by the respondents; the participants of this study perceived that blue-coloured garments should be mostly selected by males and on the other hand, garment colours like pink, yellow, lemon, orange and red are basically for females, while white and black clothing are worn by both genders. It was also discovered that some factors might be influencing the choice of colours worn by the students; these are mood, complexion, weather conditions, garment design, style, body shape, and gender specification. Since colour is an important and quite exciting element of design, it is important to select clothing colours that emphasise the wearer's skin tone and figure beautifully to achieve the desired psychological effect.

Recommendations

The study recommends that individuals should give thought to the careful selection of their garment colours, choosing colours that trigger their excitement, cheerfulness, and stimulation.

Colours of clothing items should also be used in a way that complements the wearer's physique; one must consider height, shape, complexion as well as gender. Finally, fashion merchandisers should make use of colour perception studies in deciding on what colour of garments to stock the most to achieve a high turnover in their businesses.

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