

A Study on Emotional Design in Visual Advertisements: How Colour and Layout Influence Buying Behaviour?

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Abstract: Emotional design has become a potent tool in today's cutthroat market for influencing consumer perception and purchasing decisions. The psychological effects of emotional design components, specifically, colour and layout, used in visual advertisements are investigated in this conceptual study. The paper explores how visual stimuli can elicit emotional responses that result in cognitive processing, brand recall, and ultimately purchase decisions, drawing on theories of visual communication, colour psychology, and consumer behaviour. As an emotional cue, colour elicits associations and affective reactions, and layout establishes the message's clarity and ease of visual navigation—both of which have a major impact on persuasion and customer engagement. In order to give a thorough grasp of how visual design affects consumer behaviour on a psychological and emotional level, the study synthesises findings from earlier empirical research and theoretical frameworks. In addition to providing useful insights for marketers and advertisers to create visually compelling and impactful content, this paper seeks to lay the groundwork for future empirical studies.

Keywords: Emotional Design, Visual Advertisements, Colour Psychology, Layout, Consumer Behaviour, Buying Behaviour, Visual Communication, Advertising Strategy.

INTRODUCTION

Emotional design has become more popular in marketing and advertising in recent years because it can change how people think and act (Norman, 2004). Visual ads are now carefully designed to get people to feel something, which affects how interested they are in the product and whether or not they buy it (Lewinski, Fransen, & Tan, 2014). Colour and layout are two of the many parts of emotional design that have been shown to have a big effect on how people see and respond to ads. Colour psychology is a well-studied field of consumer research that shows how colours can make people feel and have meanings. For example, Labrecque and Milne (2012) found that red and orange make people feel excited and urgent, while blue and green make people feel calm and trustworthy. Colour is an important part of visual communication strategies because it helps people form preferences and remember brands (Bottomley & Doyle, 2006). Layout, on the other hand, affects how people see and understand visual elements. Pieters, Wedel, and Batra (2010) say that a well-organised layout can draw the viewer's attention, make the text easier to read, and make the message clearer. Studies show that clear hierarchies and symmetrical layouts make things look better and help people think more clearly, both of which affect how well ads work (Palmer, Schloss, & Sammartino, 2013). Also, the arrangement and complexity of visuals have been linked to emotional arousal, which affects how interested and loyal customers are (Reber, Schwarz, & Winkielman, 2004). Emotional design frameworks use

colour and layout to help people remember a brand, change their behaviour, and get more excited. As more and more advertisers try to make experiences that have an emotional impact, it's important to know how these design elements affect people's minds. This study's goal is to look at how layout and colour can trigger emotions in visual ads and how this affects people's decisions to buy something.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Design psychology has looked at the emotional appeal of visual ads in great detail, and it has shown that it plays a big role in changing how people think and act. According to Schmitt (1999), experiential marketing is very important because visual elements can create sensory and emotional experiences that make people more loyal to a brand. Desmet and Hekkert (2007) also came up with a framework for product experience that includes how visual design elements make people feel. Bruce and Young (2011) found that people often make quick judgements about things based on visual cues, like colours and layout, before they even read the message. Beattie and Sale (2009) did a similar study and found that the layout of an ad affects how long and where people look at it, which in turn affects their attention and memory. Mohebbi (2014) says that colour affects not only how people feel but also how likely they are to buy something, with age and gender acting as mediating factors. Aslam (2006) built on this by looking at how colour meanings that are defined by culture change how people see global advertising campaigns. These results

show that choosing colours that are appropriate for the culture and demographics of the target market is an important part of influencing consumer behaviour. Lichtlé (2007) found that warm colours make people feel more emotional and more urgent, especially in point-of-sale ads. This supports the idea that colour is important for impulse buying. On the other hand, Zhang, Feick, and Price (2006) said that advertisements with subtle and neutral colour schemes make people think the products are of higher quality, especially when it comes to luxury brands. Arnheim (1974) went on to say that balance and tension in visual compositions affect how pleasing they are to the eye and how well they get their point across. Lankow, Ritchie, and Crooks (2012) connected infographic design principles to visual hierarchy and engagement. They said that clean, well-structured layouts help users understand and remember the message better. Pieters and Wedel (2004) said that design features like white space and alignment are very important for getting people's attention at first and keeping it, which makes things easier to remember and persuade. Calvo and Lang (2004) also found that emotionally charged visual stimuli, when arranged correctly, lead to higher levels of message processing and memory encoding. Djamasbi, Siegel, and Tullis (2010) found that younger users prefer bright colours and symmetrical layouts in digital settings. This is in line with emotional engagement patterns that lead to a positive user experience. At the same time, Orth and Wirtz (2014) showed that the way a brand looks—mostly through visual design—can tell you a lot about how people see the brand and how they feel about it. Lastly, Wang, Minor, and Wei (2011) found that ads with emotionally congruent visuals, where the colour and layout match the tone of the message, are more persuasive and trustworthy. These results show how emotional design can affect not only what people buy but also how they feel about a brand over time.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To conceptually analyse how the interplay of colour and layout in visual advertisements influences consumers' emotional responses and buying behaviour.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Visual ads need to do more than just provide information in an increasingly crowded media landscape; they also need to emotionally engage viewers in order to grab their attention and influence their purchasing decisions. There is little conceptual understanding of how particular visual elements—especially colour and layout—interact to affect consumers' emotional reactions and decision-making processes, despite the growing interest in emotional design. Although the psychological effects of colour and layout have been the subject of numerous studies conducted separately, there is a clear lack of integration of these elements into a cohesive framework of emotional design in advertising. Advertisers are unable to create visually striking and emotionally impactful messages because of this lack of comprehensive understanding. Thus, it is necessary to investigate conceptually how the combination of colour and layout in visual ads elicits emotional responses and shapes consumer purchasing decisions. The

purpose of this study is to close this gap and offer a theoretical framework for creating emotionally charged advertising campaigns.

RESEARCH GAP

The literature currently in publication recognises the distinct impact that visual components like colour and arrangement have on customer perception and emotional involvement. Research has examined how certain colours elicit feelings and how organised layouts improve readability and aesthetic appeal. The majority of research, however, tends to look at these components separately, lacking a comprehensive understanding of how colour and layout work together as emotional design elements to affect consumer purchasing decisions. Furthermore, although previous studies have examined layout aesthetics, colour preferences, and cultural connotations, there hasn't been much conceptual synthesis that integrates these visual components within the larger context of emotional design in advertising. Especially in light of the quickly changing visual media landscapes, little is known about how colour and layout interact to shape emotional reactions, improve advertising effectiveness, and influence purchase intentions. Additionally, fewer studies have provided a theoretical basis that generalises the emotional design concept across various advertising contexts, with the majority of empirical studies concentrating on product-specific or demographic-specific outcomes. The ability of marketers and designers to fully utilise visual strategies that link emotional engagement with consumer decision-making is hampered by this conceptual gap. Therefore, this study covers the need for a thorough conceptual analysis of how emotional design influences consumer purchasing behaviour in visual ads through the combined effects of colour and layout.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- The results of this study are limited in their generalisability because they are based on a conceptual framework rather than primary data collection or empirical testing.
- Different product categories, cultural contexts, and demographic groups may have different effects from colour and layout, all of which are not particularly covered in this theoretical investigation.
- The study may not adequately represent the intricacies of dynamic or interactive digital media formats, such as videos or augmented reality ads, because it primarily focusses on traditional and static visual advertisements.

FUTURE SCOPE OF THE STUDY

- The conceptual framework can be empirically tested in future studies by measuring the real effects of colour and layout on customer sentiment and purchase decisions through survey-based or experimental approaches.
- Additional research can examine how cultural variations affect how colours and layouts in ads are emotionally interpreted, offering guidance for international advertising tactics.

- The framework can be expanded to investigate the application of emotional design principles to interactive platforms like AR/VR environments and dynamic formats like social media advertisements and video commercials.

RESEARCH DISCUSSION

Advertising research is particularly interested in emotional design since it is well known that the emotional reactions elicited by visual components in commercials affect the attitudes and behaviours of consumers. These emotional experiences are greatly influenced by the way layout and colour interact. According to academics like Schmitt (1999) and Desmet & Hekkert (2007), visual aesthetics enhance emotional attachment and brand recall by adding to the sensory and affective experience of commercials. Colour elicits instantaneous psychological and emotional responses, making it a crucial component of emotional design. According to Mohebbi (2014), consumers' perceptions of trust, urgency, and excitement are influenced by the colours they associate with particular emotions. Lichtlé (2007) added that cool colours like blue and green encourage feelings of security and tranquilly, while warm colours like orange and red tend to elicit impulse reactions. Depending on the product category and context, these emotional reactions frequently influence impulsive or deliberate purchasing decisions. In the meantime, layout dictates how visual information is organised and flows. According to Beattie and Sale (2009), the way text and images are arranged in space influences how the eye moves

and how effective a message is. According to Pieters and Wedel (2004), attention and message retention can be improved through the strategic use of white space and visual hierarchy. Harmonious layout makes it easier to process information, which raises the possibility of favourable emotional responses (Arnheim, 1974). An advertisement's overall emotional impact is increased when colour and layout are integrated. According to Wang, Minor, and Wei (2011), emotional congruence—when the layout and colour scheme complement the advertisement's emotional tone—increases consumer persuasion and trust. According to Orth and Wirtz (2014), visually appealing designs that blend well-balanced layouts with emotionally charged colours produce a positive perception of the character and calibre of a brand. This relationship has been further expanded by digital advertising. According to Djamasbi, Siegel, and Tullis (2010), symmetrical layouts and vivid colours in online ads evoke stronger emotional responses in younger audiences. Zhang, Feick, and Price (2006) also noted that perceived luxury and value are influenced by shape and structure in conjunction with particular colour cues. Despite this evidence, there is still little research on integrating layout and colour into a single emotional design framework. The goal is supported by this discussion, which shows how colour and layout work together to greatly affect emotional engagement in visual ads, influencing consumer perceptions and purchasing decisions. Therefore, a comprehensive grasp of these components is essential for developing ads that emotionally engage the target audience in addition to drawing attention.

FRAMEWORK ANALYSIS

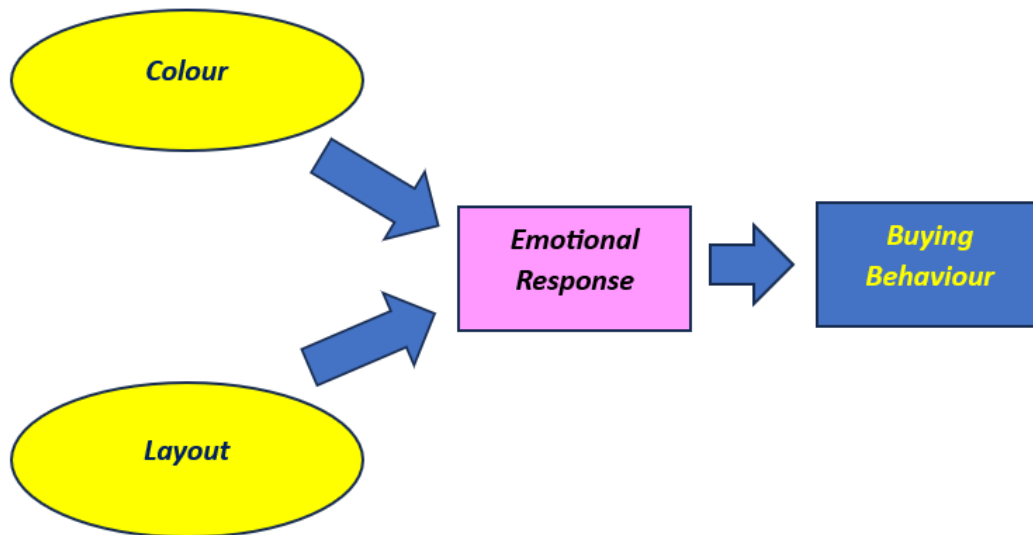


Fig 1 – Conceptual Framework

The study's conceptual framework is based on the idea that emotional design, as expressed through the visual elements of colour and layout, significantly influences consumers' emotional reactions, which in turn impact their purchasing decisions. The framework, which has its roots in consumer psychology and visual communication principles, identifies colour and layout as the primary independent variables. It is well known that certain psychological and emotional responses, such as calmness, excitement, or trust, can be evoked by colour, which includes hue, brightness, and saturation. The structural arrangement of visual content, such as alignment, spacing, and hierarchy, is referred to as layout. This arrangement affects user engagement, attention flow, and message clarity. These design components work together to influence the viewer's emotional response rather than acting alone. The mediating variable—emotional response—is at the core of the framework. Affective responses like

pleasure, arousal, or interest are evoked by the visual stimuli produced by colour and layout. These emotional reactions improve brand perception and memory retention by influencing the cognitive and affective processing of commercials by consumers. Consumer purchasing behaviour, which can include heightened purchase intention, impulsive purchases, or favourable brand attitudes, is the end result, or dependent variable. According to the framework, ads' emotional appeal can be increased and more positive consumer behaviours can result from a harmonious and emotionally resonant combination of colour and layout. In addition to offering a theoretical framework for comprehending the emotional processes underlying the efficacy of advertising, this integrated model also gives marketers useful advice on how to create ads that are both aesthetically pleasing and emotionally captivating.

CONCLUSION

With an emphasis on how colour and layout interact to affect consumers' emotional reactions and purchasing decisions, this conceptual study emphasises the critical role that emotional design plays in visual advertisements. The ability to elicit emotions through carefully considered colour schemes and well-planned layouts becomes a potent tool for marketers as consumers are increasingly influenced by visual cues in a cluttered advertising landscape. According to a review of the literature, layout influences how viewers navigate and interpret visual content, influencing their cognitive engagement and message retention, while colour elicits psychological and emotional reactions like excitement, calmness, or trust. By combining these components into a cohesive whole, this study offers a theoretical basis for comprehending how visual beauty can elicit feelings, affect perception, and inspire buying behaviour in addition to being aesthetically pleasing. The results also point to a research gap in the combined analysis of layout and colour as interrelated, rather than separate, elements of emotional design. The study fills this gap by providing a thorough viewpoint that can direct further empirical research and assist practitioners in creating emotionally engaging ads. The study's final conclusion is that a well-planned visual ad can greatly improve consumer engagement, fortify brand connection, and raise the likelihood of purchase by balancing colour and layout to appeal to emotional goals.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

There was no Conflicts of Interest among authors

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