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# The Influence of Color Logos: Audience Support for Non-Profits

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The Influence of Color Logos:  
Audience Support for Non-Profits  
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### Abstract

This study examined a person's affinity to donate to a nonprofit brand based on whether the logo was in black and white or color. It was hypothesized that a person would be more likely to donate to a nonprofit if the logo was in color. The findings largely supported the hypotheses, suggesting that color logos were more effective for nonprofit organizations' donations.

### The Influence of Color Logos: Audience Support for Non-Profits

“Thousands of years ago, humans realized that using pigments to communicate was more effective than scratching images into tress or stonewalls.” During the prehistoric times, humans created their own version of paint with charcoal or earth pigments and mixing that with spit, urine or animal fat. After mixing this paint, they would apply it with twigs, animal hair, or feathers (Mollica, 2013, p. 6).

As time progressed, Greeks and Romans began using wax, resin, and eggs as a binding material for paint; while Egyptians used malachite, azurite, realgar madder and carmine for their materials. Ultramarine was discovered during the Middle Ages. Oil paint was created during the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Egg was replaced by century, walnut and linseed oil. This replacement facilitated the creation of oil paint. By the beginning of the Modern Age, watercolor and collapsible tin paint tube was invented. Acrylic and synthetic pigments were invented in 1900. These paints became famous for their hues, light fastness and translucency (Mollica, 2013, p. 6).

Sir Isaac Newton discovered color in the late 1600s, by managing a group of experiments. The experiments involved prisms light and color. He conducted the experiments by refracting a white light through a prism. Newton discovered that light can fragmented into seven colors: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet (Mollica, 2013, p. 8). Throughout time, color has changed the way we perceive objects, especially logos. According to Opara and Cantwell (2014), “When it comes to choosing colors for a project, the deciding factors are the place, the subject, and what I’m trying to evoke” (p. 18).

## **Method**

### **Participants**

This research was completed to understand how color influences a potential donor to contribute to a nonprofit brand. Twenty-two people participated in the survey. It was developed to test whether an individual thought color or black and white logos were more aesthetically pleasing. The participants were also questioned about the impact of color on their decisions. They were asked how likely they were to donate to a nonprofit organization. The participants were asked these questions to assess if they were interested in nonprofit organizations in general.

### **Materials and Procedures**

The participants completed a 13-question survey using SurveyMonkey. During the survey, they were questioned about the general effect of color on individuals. It was hypothesized that a person will feel more affinity to donate to a nonprofit organization with a color logo rather than a black and white logo. To further explore this hypothesis, the researcher also questioned participants with real logos. The participants were given nonprofit logos in color and those same logos in black and white. They were asked to choose which logo made them feel more compassion to donate.

## **Results**

The overall result of this study is that color does have an effect on someone's affinity or willingness to donate to a nonprofit organization. The survey showed that 68% of the participants value color with a high impact. The results also showed that the participants viewed color as more aesthetically pleasing compared to black and white.

In the logo comparison portion, Face-to-Face, NPR, and Susan G. Komen are preferred in color. WWF is preferred in black and white. It is hypothesized that this could be due to the fact that the logo has a panda in it which people tend to associate with black and white.

Although most participants chose color in this specific situation, the likelihood of them choosing color can be different in other situations. According to Opara and Cantwell (2014), “not only is the reaction to color highly personal and subject to innumerable cultural and biological variables, but color itself is relational...” (p. 50). This further explains that a person’s feeling on color in logos is susceptible to change and that they may feel differently in other situations.

### **Discussion**

As expected, the analysis on color in nonprofit brands revealed that color does indeed have an impact on someone’s affinity to donate. Cost is a factor for organizations when choosing to use color over black and white. It is more costly to choose color for branding purposes, which is especially relevant for a nonprofit company that operates with finite resources. Adding more colors makes some print work more expensive to produce, which may not be feasible with a limited budget (Opara and Cantwell, 2014, p. 14).

It was a challenge to recruit participants to take the survey. Although the survey was short, most people did not show interest in completing it. There were mistakes in the experiment design. For example, there should have been more participants for the survey. It is difficult to take results from a small participant pool. Another flaw was that there should have been more of a selection in answers for participants to choose from. For

example, “never, often, and always” were not enough for participants to choose from. This may have limited the results, however, the findings seemed to correlate with the initial assertion.

References

Mollica, P. (2013). *Color Theory*. Irvine, California: Walter Foster.

Opara, E., & Cantwell, J. (2013). *Best practices for graphic designers: Color works : An essential guide to understanding and applying color design principles*. Beverly, Massachusetts: Rockport.