

## The Potential Link Between The Colour of Rooms and The Emotions of Hotel Users In Nigeria.

Eyigege Emmanuel<sup>1</sup>

Makun Charles Yakubu<sup>2</sup>

Department of Architecture, Federal University of Technology Minna, Nigeria<sup>1</sup>  
Email: eyigegee@gmail.com

Department of Architecture, Federal University of Technology Minna, Nigeria<sup>2</sup>.  
Email: ycmakun@yahoo.com and [charles.makun@futminna.edu.ng](mailto:charles.makun@futminna.edu.ng)

### ABSTRACT

*Literature review carried out in this study suggest that there are no emperical research on the link between colour and the emotions of Hotel users in Nigeria. In view of this, we examined the link between room colour and the emotions of hotels users. The study involved: (1) literature review in to related studies (2) field survey with 40 participants. Analysis and results from the field survey suggest that there is a pential link between colour of rooms and the emotions of hotel users. The present study contributes to the finding concerning the link between colour and the emotions of persons. Practically, the results from this study could assist designers in specifying colours of rooms in hotel designs in Nigeria. The key limitation of this study is that a small sample was used to conduct this study, thus there are possibilities that the results of this study may not be applicable to other geographic context within Nigeria.*

**Key words: Colour; Link; Emotions; Hotel ; Room.**

### 3. 1.0 Introduction

Research concerning the effect of colour on the emotions of persons has a long history dating back to the sixties (Lawler & Lawler III, 1965). A review of literature shows that colour can affect emotion, performance physiology of humans (Hemphill, 1996; Jalil, Yunus, & Said, 2012; Terwogt & Hoeksma, 1995). However, of interest in this study the link between colour and the emotions of hotel users. This is primarily based on the idea the colour of a room can affect the emotion of users and in turn the patronage. The key concern of this study is that presently via literature search there seems to be no study linking the colour of walls in hotels and the emotion of users in Nigerian context.

Thus, in view of the concern mentioned in the past paragraph, this study seeks to examine the link between colour of walls in rooms of hotels and the emotions users. The findings from this study could assist hotel designers in specifying colours that can be applied to the walls of rooms in hotels of Nigeria. This is for the sake of promoting the emotional wellbeing of guests in hotels.

### 4. 2.0 Literature review

An early study linking colour and emotions was conducted by Lawler & Lawler III (1965). The study was conducted with 48 children of ages 3 and 4 years. The



findings from the study suggests that children can show positive emotional feelings when exposed to yellow colours. In contrast, dark colour (brown) has the potential of provoking feeling of sadness when it comes to children. Also, the association between colour and mood was investigated by Cimbalo, Beck & Sendziak (1978). Their results suggest that Bright (orange, yellow blue and green) colours can evoke feelings of happiness .Inversely, dark colours (black, red and brown) can promote feelings of sadness.

Another study by Buckalew and Bell (1985), they investigated the association between colour and emotions of preschool children. Interestingly, their findings suggest that colour may not play any role on the mood of children.

Hemphill (1996) carried out an investigation to determine the association between colour and the mood adults. The findings from the work of this author seems to be consistent with the findings from the study of Lawler &Lawler III (1965).Specifically, the results from the study by Hemphill (1996) shows that adults can also show positive emotional responses to bright colours and negative emotional feelings to dark colours.

Again, an investigation linking colour and mood was carried out by Tergwogt & Hoeksma (1995), their conclusion shows that colour can affect the emotions of children. Furthermore, a research by Kaya and Epps (2004), they investigated the relationship between colour and the emotions of 98 college students. The results show that positive emotional feelings can be associated with colours such as red, yellow, green, blue, and purple) in comparison with colours such as black ,grey and white.

Also, Kwallek (1996) conducted a study to determine colour preferences in office buildings, the results shows that white colour was the most the appropriate colour preferred for office building. In the same light, it has been shown that children prefer red colours for interior environment and purple colour was most preferred by girls, as reported from the results of Read and Upington (2009). By extension, their result(Read and Upington) suggest that colour can be associated with the mood of children.

Overall, the review of literature carried out in this study suggest that there is a link between colour and the emotions of persons, however most of the studies were conducted with children in the developed world .The key question arising from the literature in this study is that are the findings of children applicable to hotel users in Nigeria?

## 5. 3.0 Method

### 3.1 Samples and geographic context of study

40 samples were randomly selected from a public institution in Abuja, the samples were post graduate students, they include 20 males and 20 females, they were paid a token for participating. The study was undertaken at hotel in Abuja following a permission from the management team of the hotel. Abuja is the federal capital city of Nigeria. The rationale of carrying out this study in Abuja is based on the fact that the samples in this study may be a representation of the variety of people that are living in Nigeria, this is in terms of cultural and religious background. The ages of the samples was 24-30.

### 3.2 Procedure



Prior to the the start of the field survey in this study, the samples were invited for a meeting. The meeting provided the samples with the aim and protocols involved in the study. Furthermore, at the meeting, they were requested to indicate if anyone of them has any medical challenge related to eye sight.

In other not to interrupt activities of guests in the hotel, one field survey was conducted in a day with each of the 40 samples. This means 40 days was used to conduct the field survey in this study. On the day of each field survey that was conducted between 11am and 12pm, a sample was requested to spend 10 minutes in six rooms of the hotel used for this study in a random order. The six rooms have similar sizes and furniture, however they have different wall colours (i.e, white, light green, sky blue, brown, red and, black). The wall colour black and red in the hotel room was purposely painted for the sake of this study, this is following a permission from the Management of the hotel.

During the 10 minutes spent in each of the six rooms, a sample was requested to fill a short questionnaire. The questionnaire asked the sample to select one emotional response that can be associated with the colour of the wall in each of the six rooms (one emotional response for the colour of each room). The emotional responses are ; happy, unhappy, fear, and no response. The emotional responses mentioned here were adopted from previous research (Boyatzis & Varghese, 1994; Kaya & Epps, 2004).

In addition, the samples were requested to vote whether they prefer lightly coloured rooms over the dark coloured rooms in the hotel. This was done on a three point likert scale shown in Table 1 below.

*"Which room will you prefer to stay when you visit this hotel as a guest" ? Please vote by ticking one box below*

Light coloured rooms (white, light green, sky blue). The response (vote) is weighed as 1 point	I dont know. This response is weighed as 0 point	Dark coloured rooms (brown, red and, black) The response (vote) is weighed as 1 point

**Table 1: Colour preference vote questionnaire utilised for this study. Source (survey questionnaire developed for this study)**

#### 4.0 Data analysis and results

Descriptive and inferential statistics was used to analyse the data that was collected from the field surveys using statistical package for social science version 24. Descriptive statistics was used to report the percentages of emotional responses that may be linked to a particular colour of a room. Inferential statistics (independent sample t-test) was used to determine if hotel users would significantly prefer brightly coloured walls in comparison to dark walls in hotel rooms of Nigeria.

#### 4.1 Results (Descriptive statistics)

##### *White*

It was found that; 78 % of the samples indicated that they can be happy with the colour of a room that the wall is painted white. None (0%) of the samples expressed



sign of unhappiness and fear. 22% of the samples indicated that they have no emotional response towards white coloured rooms in hotel.

#### **Light green**

With regards the room that the wall was painted light green, 73 % of the samples indicated that they can be happy, however 6% indicated they can be unhappy and 12% indicated sign of fear, lastly, 9% of the samples showed no emotional response.

#### **Sky blue**

In respect of the room that the wall was painted with sky blue; 89 % of the samples showed that they were happy, none (0%) of the samples expressed sign of unhappiness and fear, 11% of the samples showed no emotional response.

#### **Brown**

9 % of the samples indicated that they can be happy with the colour of a hotel room that the wall is painted with brown, 71% of the samples expressed sign of unhappiness and 14% sign of fear. Lastly 6% of the samples showed no emotional response.

#### **Red**

17 % of the samples showed that they can be happy with the colour of a hotel room that the wall is painted with red colour while 49 % of the samples expressed sign of unhappiness, 24% showed sign of fear, 1% of the samples showed no emotional.

#### **Black**

As regards the room that the wall was painted with black, 2 % of the samples showed that they can be happy, 41 % of the samples expressed sign of unhappiness and 43 % sign of fear, 1% had no emotional response.

### **4.2 Results (Inferential statistics)**

With respect to the data collected from the field surveys using the questionnaire in Table1, an independent sample t-test was conducted. The test compared the preference votes of brightly coloured wall to that of dark coloured wall. The result of the independent sample t-test shows that users of hotels in Nigeria will significantly prefer brightly coloured (white, light green, sky blue) rooms in comparison to dark (brown, red and, black) coloured rooms ( $M=0.8$ ,  $M=0.27$ ,  $p>0.00$ ).

### **5.0 Discussion**

The present study investigated the link between the colour of walls and the emotions of hotel users. The study was conducted in Abuja, the federal capital city of Nigeria. The results from the present study shows that there is a potential link between colour and emotions of hotel users in Nigeria. Another key result obtained in the present study is that, the link between colour and emotion is not only applicable to persons that are living in the developed worlds. Also, the findings

from this study suggest that the relationship between colour and emotions is not only applicable to children alone, this relationship can still be found in adults.

In sum, the results from this study suggest that the preference for bright colours (white, light green and skyblue) in rooms of hotel in Nigeria can be significantly higher in comparison to dark colours. (brown, red and black). Furthermore, our results show that bright (white, light green and skyblue) colours can promote positive emotional outcomes in comparison to dark colours.

Specifically, findings from this study show that sky blue is the most preferred colour for hotel rooms in Nigeria, this is in comparison to white, green, red, black and brown. Also, results from this study suggest that users of hotel in Nigeria can link dark colours with fear. This result noted here is not surprising, this is because people living in Nigeria often link dark colours with evil and fear.

Overall, the findings from this study complement and strengthen the results of most of the previous research documented in the literature review section of this study. This is because most of the previous research documented in this study has shown that colour can have positive and negative influence on the emotions of persons (Boyatzis & Varghese, 1994; Kaya & Epps, 2004; Kwallek, 1996; Lawler & Lawler III, 1965).

By extension, the findings reported in this study have the potential of influencing the patronage of hotel rooms in Nigeria. Thus there is the need for hotel designers and investors to consider applying the findings from this study during the construction and renovation of hotels in Nigeria.

Sadly, the findings of this study may not be applicable to all the geographic context in Nigeria, this is due to the vast cultural heritage practiced by the inhabitants of the country. Future studies in the area of colour and emotions should be focused on using larger samples in different geographical locations in Nigeria. Lastly, our study did not show gender difference in link between colour and the emotion of hotel users, this area could be a topic to be explored in future studies.

The conclusion that can be reached from the findings of this study is as follows :

- There is a potential link between colour and emotion of hotel users
- Bright colours of walls can be associated with positive emotional feelings in hotel rooms
- Dark colours of walls can be associated with negative emotional feelings in hotel rooms
- The relationship between colour and emotion is not limited to children



**References**

- Boyatzis, C. J., & Varghese, R. (1994). Children's emotional associations with colors. *The Journal of genetic psychology, 155*(1), 77-85.
- Buckalew, L., & Bell, A. (1985). Effects of colors on mood in the drawings of young children. *Perceptual and motor skills, 61*(3), 689-690.
- Hemphill, M. (1996). A note on adults' color-emotion associations. *The Journal of genetic psychology, 157*(3), 275-280.
- Jalil, N. A., Yunus, R. M., & Said, N. S. (2012). Environmental colour impact upon human behaviour: A review. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences, 35*, 54-62.
- Kaya, N., & Epps, H. H. (2004). Relationship between color and emotion: A study of college students. *College student journal, 38*(3), 396-405.
- Kwallek, N. (1996). Office wall color: An assessment of spaciousness and preference. *Perceptual and motor skills, 83*(1), 49-50.
- Lawler, C. O., & Lawler III, E. E. (1965). Color-mood associations in young children. *The Journal of genetic psychology, 107*(1), 29-32.
- Read, M. A., & Upington, D. (2009). Young children's color preferences in the interior environment. *Early Childhood Education Journal, 36*(6), 491-496.
- Terwogt, M. M., & Hoeksma, J. B. (1995). Colors and emotions: Preferences and combinations. *The Journal of general psychology, 122*(1), 5-17.