

Frederick Solleder

Professor Ehrhart

ENGL 1301.010

2/21/2024

### Colors & You

Our mind is an incredibly complex evolutionary marvel, allowing us to taste, hear, smell, touch, and importantly for this essay: see. Sight itself has many interesting components to it, but our focus is color. All around us, color is utilized to influence our thinking in a scenario, such as red commonly being used in traffic signals to indicate a driver to stop, lest they put themselves in danger.

There is evidence that the utilization of certain colors does affect how humans perceive their surroundings, such as in the 2004 Olympics: “Research conducted during the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens showed that competitors... who wore red clothing or body protection had a higher chance of winning...” (Stafford, BBC). This effect that red has on humans can be seen elsewhere; such as the Target chain of supermarkets.

The primary colors that Target utilizes in their stores are red & white, although I’m led to believe that the white serves more as a neutral point in the general sea of red that Target stores are flooded with. This doesn’t answer the question though: why does Target use red in their stores?

This excerpt from Target’s Guest Experience forum provides a very upfront answer: “... classic Target red is used throughout the store to guide guests to key areas of the store.” (Target, target.com) This is only half of the truth, however, as red is also associated with feelings of

passion & desire: invoking these emotions in a customer could cause them to shop for more stuff than they came for in the first place.



One of Target's main competitors in the United States, Walmart, takes a different approach to this, however. In Walmart stores, you'll notice the predominant utilization of colors such as blue & yellow, both colors are associated with feelings like calmness & trust in the case of blue, perhaps to invoke customer to spend more time in the store, with more time spent in the store, a

customer would be more likely to purchase more items.



Both chains utilize different strategies involving colors to keep their customers engaged/inside their stores, but gauging which method is more effective is a tall task, and just looking at sales figures doesn't tell the full story. So, I ask you to ask yourself, look at the top two images provided, and ask yourself how they make you feel, what response do you feel they evoke in you? Do you feel calmer looking at one image, and more energized by the other?

## Works Cited

N/A, N/A. "This New Target Shows How We're Thinking Differently about Store Design." *Target. Expect More. Pay Less.*, 18 Oct. 2019, corporate.target.com/news-features/article/2019/10/store-design#:~:text=And%20touches%20of%20that%20classic,that%20are%20easy%20to%20navigate.

Stafford, Tom. "Olympics: Why Wearing Red Could Help to Win Gold." *BBC News*, BBC, 24 Feb. 2022, [www.bbc.com/future/article/20120731-wear-red-to-win-gold](http://www.bbc.com/future/article/20120731-wear-red-to-win-gold).

Kendra Cherry, MEd. "How Does the Color Red Impact Your Mood and Behavior?" *Verywell Mind*, Verywell Mind, 28 June 2023, [www.verywellmind.com/the-color-psychology-of-red-2795821#toc-red-color-psychology-and-aggression](http://www.verywellmind.com/the-color-psychology-of-red-2795821#toc-red-color-psychology-and-aggression).

Bailey, Regina. "Color Psychology: How Colors Affect Human Behavior." *ThoughtCo*, ThoughtCo, 6 May 2019, [www.thoughtco.com/color-psychology-and-human-behavior-4151666](http://www.thoughtco.com/color-psychology-and-human-behavior-4151666).