

The Essential of Color: Discovering The Divergent Toward Color Implementation Inside Children's Product Packaging Based on Gender

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*Abstract : Gender is divided into masculine and feminine categories. There are color inclinations between masculine and feminine. This phenomenon is especially evident in advertising—the distinction between boys and girls. This research addresses kids' color preferences that affect children's products, especially Kinder Joy, Johnson, My Baby, and MamyPoko, based on gender type. The research question is: "How does gender influence the implementation of color in children's product packaging?". To address the research question, the theory of color implementation influences gender, as stated by Frassanito & Pettorini (2008) in *Pink and Blue: The Color of Gender*, which is pink for femininity and blue for masculinity. According to Mora (2021) in *Shades in Gender: Visualizing gender diversity through Color Palettes*, purple for androgyny, yellow for neutral gender, and white for gender-less, un-gender, or a-gender. The findings in this research indicated that children's product packaging colors are based on gender. In Kinder Joy, Johnson, and MamyPoko packaging, the blue color is more intended for boys, while the pink color is more designed for girls. In My Baby's powder packaging, the yellow color is for neutral gender, and the purple color is for androgyny. In children's products, the use of color based on gender stereotypes has two purposes. The first is to attract the target market, boys and girls, where boys tend to choose dark-tone colors, and girls tend to select light-tone colors. Second, the target market should be positioned according to their preferred products.*

Keywords: *Gender, Color Implementation, Children's Product*

Abstrak: Gender dibagi menjadi kategori maskulin dan feminin. Ada kecenderungan warna antara maskulin dan feminin. Fenomena ini terutama terlihat jelas dalam iklan perbedaan antara anak laki-laki dan perempuan. Penelitian ini membahas preferensi warna yang mempengaruhi produk anak-anak, terutama *Kinder Joy*, *Johnson*, *My Baby*, dan *MamyPoko*, berdasarkan jenis kelamin. Pertanyaan gender, seperti yang dikemukakan oleh Frassanito & Pettorini (2008) dalam *Pink and Blue: The Color of Gender*, yaitu warna merah muda untuk feminitas dan biru untuk maskulinitas. Menurut Mora (2021) dalam *Shades in Gender: Visualizing gender diversity through Color Palettes*, ungu untuk androgini, kuning untuk gender netral, dan putih untuk *gender-less*, *un-gender*, atau *a-gender*. Temuan dalam penelitian ini mengindikasikan bahwa warna kemasan anak berdasarkan gender. Pada kemasan *Kinder Joy*, *Johnson*, dan *MamyPoko*, warna biru lebih ditujukan untuk anak laki-laki, sedangkan warna merah muda lebih ditujukan untuk anak perempuan. Pada kemasan bedak *My Baby*, warna kuning untuk jenis kelamin netral, dan warna ungu untuk jenis

kelamin androgini. Pada produk anak-anak, penggunaan warna berdasarkan stereotip gender memiliki dua tujuan. Yang pertama adalah untuk menarik target pasar yaitu anak laki-laki dan perempuan, di mana anak laki-laki cenderung memilih warna-warna bernuansa gelap, dan anak perempuan cenderung memilih warna-warna bernuansa terang. Kedua, target pasar harus diposisikan sesuai dengan produk yang mereka sukai.

Kata kunci: *Gender, Penerapan Warna, Produk Anak-Anak*

1. INTRODUCTION

Gender is separated into two categories: masculine and feminine. The qualities of men's and women's attitudes reveal gender disparities. Men and women play distinct roles. It is impossible to separate and have the same masculine and feminine items, even the color itself. According to Frassanito & Pettorini (2008), there are color inclinations in masculine and feminine, with blue becoming linked with masculinity and pink being promoted as a feminine hue. This is especially evident in baby-themed advertising, which uses distinct hues for items geared at infant boys and girls.

In the context of protective parenting for children, some phenomena challenge gender stereotypes that have been ingrained in society. According to research by Özcan and Tunçeli (2023), children from 48 to 84 years old have different gender preferences. A child of an adult is gradually more likely to choose bright colors like pink, red, and blue, while a child of a young adult is slowly more likely to prefer blue. This illustrates the strong relationship between gender and warning, even in younger generations.

Color preferences in each person have a significant impact on the sales of a product. This has been approved and researched by Ishii et al. (2019) and Atkinson et al. (2024), which found that fashion and lifestyle products depend highly on color selection. Through their research, children's toys are not excluded, as Wong et al. (2015) and Auster et al. (2012) found that most toddlers choose toys based on their color preferences. In addition, Özcan et al. (2023) revealed that 48 – 84 month-old toddlers have a color liking and object color preference according to gender.

Those five previous studies, which are the references of this study, have thoroughly discussed the impact of color inside a product. Some of them conveyed that gender types and gender stereotypes influence color preferences. Yet, leaving a topic for this study about the investigation of the kids' color preferences that affect children's products, especially: *Kinder Joy*, *Johnson, My Baby*, and *MamyPoko* based on gender type. Hence, through the research gap, the researcher formulated a research question: "How does gender influence the implementation of color in children's product packaging?". The findings will be answered by conducting The Color of Gender theory by Frassanito & Pettorini, 2008.

To address the research question, the theory of color implementation influences gender, as stated by Frassanito & Pettorini (2008). In their theory, Pink and blue: The color of gender, based on gender, is more often linked to female femininity, even in the marketing slogan "think pink." Meanwhile, blue is usually considered a more masculine

color, and even men's uniforms after World War II were widely blue. Furthermore, according to Mora (2021), in *Shades in Gender: Visualizing gender diversity through color palettes*, some other colors represent certain genders. Purple, the result of combining pink and blue, tends to symbolize androgyny. Yellow is considered a neutral gender color and thus does not tend to be feminine or masculine. Then, white can be used to represent gender-less, un-gender, or a-gender.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a qualitative design to explore how color is used in children's product packaging based on gender. There are several ways of collecting data in qualitative research. In this research documentation. According to Dewi (2022), qualitative research instruments are designed structurally and organizationally. The main instrument is the researcher; supporting instruments are all the tools used during research. This research data consists of textual data and visual data. The textual data on the packaging of children's products is in writing. The visual data is in the form of images from packaging or advertising posters for children's products. Data source means where the textual and visual data are obtained from. The data analysis technique used Spradley's theory (2016), including domain analysis, taxonomy analysis, componential analysis, and cultural themes.

2.1. Literary Review

Gender is different than sex, which is given by god and cannot be changed by anybody. Gender is created and defined by the local cultures and societies. In other words, every region has its concepts of gender. Through numerous concepts of gender, it could be generalized that gender typically refers to masculine or feminine (or androgynous) personality traits (Clarke, V. and Braun, V. 2008). Masculine is identical to men, while feminine is identical to women, but a man can also be feminine, and a female can be manly. According to Moore through Fatimah, S. et al. (2019), femininity was stereotyped to be domestic, warm, pretty, emotional, dependent, physically weak, and passive, while masculinity tends to be unemotional, physically strong, independent, active, and aggressive.

In our language and social cognition, we use pseudo-gender categories for humans and things (Mandal, E. 2012). For example, a gun is masculine, a flower is feminine, a denim jacket is masculine, a crop top shirt is feminine, a beer is masculine, and a liquor is feminine. All the activities we do are influenced by gender, for the notion, shopping is feminine and playing soccer is masculine. This is what we call gender stereotypes. It also influences how we view and choose a color based on gender.

Gender color is the association between a specific color and gender or sex. It is usually formed based on stereotypes in society. Ishii et al (2019) stated that the association between gender and color in memory becomes stronger if gender categorization of color is based on experience. Besides humans, color also has a gender,

inseparable from gender categorization in humans, as to what colors are more suitable for men and what colors are more suitable for women. Since 1868, a stereotype persists today: blue is reserved for boys, while pink is reserved for girls (Frassanito & Pettorini, 2008).

Moreover, Mora (2021) argued that masculine people are near shades of blue, and feminine people are close to shades of pink. The darker shades, the more masculine or feminine that person is. For instance, the lightest pink shade expresses gender potential for a peasant woman, a darker pink shade for a lady, a darker pink shade for a duchess, and then for a princess and queen. Meanwhile, the purple shade, which combines pink and blue, symbolizes androgyny. Androgyny means both masculine and feminine. The yellow shade is considered a neutral gender color and thus does not tend to be feminine or masculine. Then, white shade can represent gender-less, un- gender, or a-gender.

Marketing involves persuading customers to buy products or services and promoting specific brands. The increasing variety of goods and services has intensified rivalry among manufacturers. Advertising is a crucial tool for marketing and driving sales. As technology advances and new items enter the market regularly, advertising has been increasingly important since industrialization (Jalali Naini et al., 2012). Advertising first emerged in the 1950s and 1960s. In those days, the purpose of this new industry was aggressive selling, but with not-so-subtle techniques. Nowadays, it has evolved into a commercial tool. According to Davidson in Vahid & Esmae'li (2012), advertising is a social language, a persuasive tool, and a universe with its language, conventions, and history. It influences many aspects of our life. Advertising causes and shows societal divides. According to Williamson in Vahid & Esmae'li (2012), advertisements serve as communication systems that organize perceptions and build meaning structures.

The distribution of product information has evolved significantly with advancements in science and technology. Product performance has been substituted by inventive information marketing, while product diffusion has developed into product information diffusion. Enterprises need to produce new products and update existing ones to be competitive. Advertising and promotion tactics are crucial for this. Increasing the impact of new goods through efficient advertising and marketing tactics is a crucial challenge for modern businesses (Huo et al., 2021). Because of the high reliance, purchasing a product might influence friends and improve sales opportunities. The initial proportion of customers triggers a cascade of word-of-mouth impact, potentially leading to many purchases (Li et al., 2012).

According to Reijmersdal et al. (2017), in K€oster et al. (2015); Villiard et al. (2012), On their profile pages, many users of social networking sites provide a great deal of personal information. Their ages, favorite brands, pastimes, literature, and music are all the same. With the help of technology advancements, marketers are increasingly using this personal data to tailor their ads to specific customers' preferences. Sellers prefer children as their target market because children tend to consider products based on packaging. When children look at the packaging product, they'll be convinced by its

color, entertainment value, and character. Children can also enjoy visually engaging and creative product designs from interactive games that combine printed characters, colors, textures, tastes, and scents (Ogba & Johnson in Fabiola Sumampouw et al., 2020).

Mothers can determine that their children can be attracted to good packaging and attract attention (Gelperowic & Beharrell in Fabiola Sumampouw et al., 2020). Mothers can decide that what they buy must have an appearance that attracts children so they can be sure their children will. According to Ogba & Johnson in Fabiola Sumampouw et al. (2020), children are less capable of absorbing or digesting information and tend to evaluate a product based on its appearance rather than its design. This leads sellers to ensure their items attract children's attention by using creative images, familiar characters, color colors, and attractive designs. Children's attention can also be stimulated more by visual enhancements on the packaging they see, such as colors, characters, and entertainment. Currently, sellers are aware, responsive, and responsible for the goods presented to consumers, including product packaging and detailed information about their goods, especially those promoted to children or vulnerable populations (Pettersson & Fjellstrom, in Fabiola Sumampouw et al., 2020).

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Findings

3.1.1. *Kinder Joy*

Kinder Joy is a kid's product that sells chocolate snacks with delicious milk cream and a surprise toy inside. Two *Kinder Joy* variants are available in Indonesia: *Chocolate Crispy Girl* and *Chocolate Crispy Boys*. The top of the packaging has a significant color difference. The girl variant uses pink, while the boy variant uses blue. This relates to color preferences based on gender, in which boys tend to favor blue, and girls tend to favor pink.



Figure 1. Kinder Joy Children's Product Packaging

The product emphasizes the difference by adding “boys” and “girls” as a distinction. If viewed inside, there is a difference between the “boys” variant and the “girl” variant, which is on the surprise toys. Surprise toys in the “boys” variant tend to be male toys such as yo-yos, toy cars, and toy robots, using dark colors like dark blue, dark red, black, and gray. On the other hand, surprise toys in the “girl” variant tend to be female toys such as princesses, butterflies, and bracelets, using light-tone colors such as pink, light blue, light green, and yellow.

3.1.2. Johnson's

Johnson's Baby products are simple and convenient. Still, in some cases, they may use color elements to attract consumer attention with gender color references such as pink and blue: Pink is often associated with female babies, while blue is usually linked to male babies. Johnson's Baby combines these colors on the packaging or promotion to meet consumer wishes with a clear gender distinction.



Figure 2. Johnson's Children's Product Packaging

White is often associated with hygiene and purity, which are the core values of the *Johnson's Baby* brand. White on *Johnson's Baby* products can be as effective as the softness and safety of products for all babies, regardless of gender. Then, on the yellow and green, the bright colors can also give an impression of

freshness and excitement. The use of these colors in *Johnson's Baby* products can be meant to attract the attention of parents who want a sensation of freshness and cheerfulness in baby care products.

3.1.3. *My Baby*

My Baby products, especially the powder type, have several packaging variations based on color. As seen in Figure 3, there are four different colors: yellow, blue, pink, and purple. The yellow packaging has an orange icon with the words "Fresh & Moist." This means it does not tend towards masculinity or femininity, so this yellow color represents a neutral gender meaning. The blue packaging has a war shield icon with the words "Healthy & Protect." The war shield icon refers to masculinity because fighting is more identical to males. There is also a stereotype that men are protectors.



Figure 3. My Baby Children's Product Packaging

The pink packaging is symbolized by a flower icon and the words "Nourish & Smooth." Flowers are identical to women with femininity. The words nourish and smooth also refer to baby girl skin. The purple packaging is symbolized by a plant icon and the words "Calm & Relax." This can refer to masculinity and femininity because calm and relaxation can both be used for boys and girls. The findings revealed that *My Baby Powder's* product packaging uses symbols and colors that reflect different gender associations. Yellow with neutral symbols, blue with masculine symbols, pink with feminine symbols, and purple with androgynous symbols. The selection of colors on the product packaging contributes to consumers' thoughts regarding gender perceptions.

3.1.4. *MamyPoko*

MamyPoko Pants are diaper pants for babies, as seen in Figure 4 regarding the advertisement for diaper pants by *MamyPoko* Pants, which uses two photos of male and female babies. In the picture, there are differences in the colors of the two genders, both from the packaging and the product of the baby diaper pants.



Figure 4. MamyPoko Children's Product Packaging

For the packaging of the baby boy's diaper pants, a photo of a baby boy with blue clothes, and the color of the decoration on the side is also blue. For the packaging of baby girl diaper pants, use a photo of a baby girl in pink clothes and with the color of the decoration beside it in pink, too. The advertisement also features two baby models, namely baby boys and girls. For the products in the ad, baby boys use blue diaper pants, and baby girls use pink diaper pants.

3.2. Discussion

Kinder Joy's color packaging indicates gender stereotyping towards kids' color preferences. Boys like blue and dark tone color products, while girls like pink and light tones. However, using color packaging based on gender stereotypes aims to target the product. A girl who buys *Chocolate Crispy Girl* will get a toy according to her taste, and vice versa, hoping they will repurchase the product. Therefore, it can be interpreted that a product needs to use color preferences based on gender according to its target market, especially if the product itself contains gender stereotypes, such as the surprise toy in *Kinder Joy*.

Research has found that *Johnson's Baby* products have associations with gender preferences involving colors. Although many parents reject traditional gender stereotypes, there are still those who have a strong preference for a particular color in the gender of babies by indicating that pink is often associated with a girl baby and blue with a boy baby. Despite the change in people's perspectives of color, many children's parents have more open insights into neutral colors and do not bother with gender

differentiation in the choice of color baby care products, but also a lot of parents from cultural backgrounds who have different color preferences for baby care products.

The research results from the findings section reveal how *My Baby Powder's* product packaging uses colors to reflect different gender associations. Packaging with a yellow color reflects gender neutrality and can be accepted by all consumers without reinforcing certain gender stereotypes, as it tends to avoid gender bias. Packaging with a blue color indicates that the product is designed to appeal to consumers who perceive blue products as more suitable for boys. Packaging with a pink color indicates that the product is aimed at consumers who associate the color pink and feminine symbols with girls. Packaging with a purple color is designed to attract consumers who aim for products with the perception that someone is allowed to have both masculine and feminine sides.

The research findings in the findings section show how the ads and packaging for *MamyPoko* Pants infant diapers employ color to express diverse gender connections. *MamyPoko* Pants items in blue are intended to appeal to consumers who believe that blue products are more appropriate for guys; this is further backed by the package, which has a portrait of a baby boy dressed in blue and a blue design. Pink *MamyPoko* pants products indicate that the product is intended for consumers who associate the color pink and feminine symbols with girls; this is also reinforced by the packaging of baby girl diaper pants, which includes a photo of a baby girl dressed in pink clothes as well as a decorative color in pink next to it.

4. Conclusion

Color is inseparable from gender stereotypes. The use of color in a product significantly contributes to its sustainability. In children's products, the use of color based on gender stereotypes has two purposes. The first is to attract the target market, boys and girls, where boys tend to choose dark-tone colors, and girls tend to select light-tone colors. Second, the target market should be positioned according to their preferred products. As in *Kinder Joy*, the *Chocolate Crispy Boys* variant contains toys according to boys' liking, and the *Chocolate Crispy Girl* variant contains toys according to girls' liking. This study emphasizes how color stereotypes of gender greatly influence children's products. By analyzing how color affects the child's views and consumer preferences, sellers can strategically, innovatively, and creatively design their products to attract different gender identities. In this study, it is important to encourage inclusivity and also challenge gender norms through the color choices that have been provided in marketing and product development.

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