

## **BRAND STRATEGY IN THE HIGH-END SEGMENT: THE INFLUENCE OF COLOR PSYCHOLOGY ON CONSUMER WILLINGNESS TO PAY**

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### **Abstract**

This article comprehensively analyzes the impact of color perception on consumer willingness to pay in the high-end segment. The research is based on theories from consumer psychology, neuromarketing, and brand management that suggest that color contributes to price-related decisions through emotional reactions, quality perception, and symbolic capital formation. The cognitive and affective effects of colors, their dependence on the cultural context, as well as their role in the visual strategy of luxury brands are considered.

In the High-end segment, color acts as a price signal and status indicator, rather than just an aesthetic element. Black, gold, dark blue and metallic shades increase the consumer's psychological willingness to pay higher prices, determining the exclusivity, quality and reputation of the product. The article will analyze the theory of symbolic capital, sensory marketing and brand identity, as well as show the strategic importance of color management.

The results of the study prove that the color policy for high-end brands is closely related to the pricing strategy. In future research, it is recommended to pay special attention to cross-cultural features and the role of visual perception in the digital environment.

**Keywords:** color perception, high-end segment, willingness to pay, luxury brand, price perception, symbolic capital, neuromarketing.

### **Introduction**

In today's competitive market, premium products differ not only in their functional properties, but also in their visual language. The consumer's willingness to overpay for a certain product is directly related to the "status marks" of the brand. Color is the fastest of these status symptoms and a source of information that directly affects the brain. In the premium product segment, colors are not just an aesthetic choice, they are codes that convey the brand's philosophy.

Color perception is one of the most powerful visual factors influencing consumer behavior. Especially in the high-end segment (luxury and premium goods and services), color is not

only an aesthetic element, but also a symbolic indicator of brand value, the promise of quality and status. Colors directly contribute to human emotions, cognitive assessments, and decision-making. Therefore, the study of the influence of color perception on the consumer's willingness to pay is becoming an urgent problem in the field of marketing, neuromarketing and consumer psychology.

In the High-end segment, the price is based not only on functional quality, but also on symbolic value, rarity, and image. In such a market, color is one of the main tools that determine the brand's position, forming associations of "expensive", "exclusive", and "prestigious" in the consumer's mind.

One of the studies that systematically examined the psychological effects of color perception for the first time is the work Interaction of Color. It proves that color is a relative and context-dependent phenomenon in human perception. That is, the perception of a single color varies depending on the colors, light, and cultural context around it.

### **Results and Discussion**

Studies of the emotional impact of colors have shown that blue symbolizes confidence and stability, black-status and strength, gold and silver-wealth and exclusivity. Many brands in the High-end segment strategically use black and gold colors. Chanel, for example, embodies elegance and classic luxury in its minimalist black and white palette. And Rolex emphasizes status and traditional quality by using gold and green colors.

Black is the highest level of visibility. Because it physically has the property of "absorbing all light," it psychologically means "privacy," "self-confidence," and "limited access." The use of black in bags and cars indicates that the product is an "eternal classic." It stands for power, authority, privacy and elegance. The brain perceives this as "excessively high quality."

The white color stands for purity, simplicity and elegance on an "inaccessible" level.

The golden color is an archetype of wealth and the sun (energy). A manifestation of stability and wealth. This color increases the "investment" value of the product. The presence of gold color in watches and jewelry increases the "investment" value of the product in the consumer's mind.

Cultural features related to flowers also play an important role. In Western culture, white means purity and minimalism, while in some Asian countries it is perceived as a mourning color. That's why it's so important to localize color in the global strategy of High-end brands.

Neuromarketing studies have shown that color determines the emotional response of the consumer before the "purchase decision" by 60-90%.

The contrast of gold overlays on Premium black or silver dials is perceived by the brain as "precision" and "high-tech quality."

When a consumer compares the color of a product with the brand's status level, their sensitivity to price decreases. In other words, the color serves as a protective shield against

the "value" of the brand. For example: a watch—a combination of minimalist, black and gold colors — reflects the infinity of time. Bags — natural black or dark skin colors—prove its "authenticity". Cars—the deep black or matte gray color in premium cars emphasizes the volume and aggressive power of the car.

Price perception is often shaped by visual stimuli. Research shows that dark, saturated colors contribute to a higher assessment of product quality. Black, dark blue, or dark purple colors increase the weight and value of the product.

In the High-end segment, the color effect is particularly evident in the packaging design. For example, the minimalistic white and gray palette of Apple products embodies technological purity and premium quality. This visual strategy contributes to the consumer's willingness to pay a high price for the product.

**Materials and methods.** Apple's color strategy is based on the principle of "minimization". The white and silver colors in Apple's product design are a symbol of technological purity, high precision, and intelligence. The white color evokes the idea of "emptiness" in the consumer's mind, which strengthens faith in innovation and innovation. Even the plain white packaging boxes prove that the brand is "premium": when a customer opens a box, they perceive it as a work of art, and not just as a technical tool. Apple associates its white color with a "quality guarantee." The consumer believes in the cognitive formula "Apple White = a perfectly functioning device," which encourages them to pay a higher price.

Hermes is a brand that combines historical heritage and elite status with the use of color. The main color of the brand is bright orange. Although historically this color was chosen randomly during the shortage of packaging materials after World War II, today it has become the most popular code for "exclusivity". The black color in bags and accessories indicates that the brand is an "eternal classic." Here, black is not just a fashion, it is an indicator of seriousness and success in life. Even viewing the orange box makes the customer feel "rewarded." The brain automatically associates this color with Hermes products, which is a "status signal." The willingness of consumers to spend huge amounts of money on Hermes bags (for example, Birkin or Kelly) is due to the fact that the brand creates the image of a "lifetime investment" through color.

The Apple and Hermes brands use color as a "visual cipher." While Apple makes consumers feel like they "belong to the future" through color, Hermes convinces consumers through color that they "are part of an elite heritage." As the strategy of these two brands shows, color creates a "psychological value" in the consumer's mind that far exceeds the material value of the product. The consumer does not pay the price of the product, but the cost of the emotional experience it provides.

Neuromarketing studies show that color perception activates parts of the cerebral cortex responsible for emotional processing. As emotional activity increases, consumers attach more importance to symbolic and image values than to rational analysis. This increases the willingness to pay in the high-end segment.

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In the High-end market, a product represents not only a functional need, but also a social status. According to the theory of symbolic capital proposed by Pierre Bourdieu, the consumption of a certain brand is an expression of social stratification. Color acts as a visual marker of this symbolic capital.

For example, black luxury cars are perceived as a status symbol. Mercedes-Benz and BMW high-end models often use black and dark metallic shades. These colors form an association of power and prestige.

Similarly, Louis Vuitton's brown and gold signature palette embodies exclusivity and historical heritage. Color not only increases brand awareness, but also enhances the consumer's psychological willingness to pay high prices.

In the High-end segment, color serves as a price signal, not just a visual attraction. If a product's design is represented by a cheap color palette, the consumer will underestimate its value, even if the quality is high.

Factors influencing the consumer's willingness to pay in the High-end segment: if the color of the product matches its price and the "promise of value" of the brand, the consumer does not object to the price increase. For example, the rich black color combined with heavy packaging makes you feel that the product is "weighty" (valuable).

The contrast created by color awakens the consumer's sense of "uniqueness". Those in the elite segment avoid "mass" colors (bright yellow, red) because they are associated with cheapness.

High-end brands use the principle of "less is more". Fewer colors or a monochrome palette can reduce the cognitive load in the consumer's brain and increase confidence in the product. Trust is the main catalyst for willingness to pay.

Practice proves that color is not just a visual decoration, but an economic tool that regulates the consumer's ability to pay. "These results are completely consistent with the "color context effect" in neuromarketing. When a buyer evaluates a product, he primarily relies on its aesthetic shell (packaging). Black packaging passes through the consumer's cognitive filter with the code "safe, high-quality, elite," which, in turn, removes the psychological barrier justifying the premium price."

The color strategy for High-end brands is an integral part of the pricing strategy. Choosing the right color will increase consumer confidence in quality and strengthen their psychological willingness to pay high prices.

Color perception is a complex mechanism that affects the consumer's cognitive processes. Consumers in the High-end segment buy through color not only the material value of the product, but also its social status. The consistency of brands in color selection creates psychological consumer confidence and reinforces the willingness to pay a high price for the product. The right choice of color forms the "value architecture" of the brand, as a result of which the consumer acquires the product not only as an object, but also as a means of self-expression.

Thus, color perception is an important factor of willingness to pay in the high—end segment and requires deeper study in future research in terms of neuromarketing, cross-cultural analysis, and visual perception in the digital environment.

### Conclusion

Color perception significantly affects the consumer's willingness to pay in the high-end segment. Color forms an emotional reaction, changes price perception and enhances symbolic capital. Black, gold, navy blue and metallic shades are the main elements representing luxury and opulence.

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