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# Relations of Gender and Color

I would like to thank my teacher Ms. Machado for providing the planning guides and paper template for my project. I would also like to thank the 50 human test subjects for participating in this research.

## Testable Question

What are the relations of gender and color preference?

## Purpose

The purpose for this project is to test if the red for females and blue for males is a social norm or biologically related.

## Hypothesis

There isn't a relationship between gender and color preference and all the gender norms are socially constructed by people. None of the color preferences are biological because the color is perceptive.

Review of Literature Clever marketing may be behind the modern rules that red is for girls and blue is for boys. Blue is for boys and red for girls as we're told, but do these gender norms reflect some of the inherent biological differences between the sexes, or are they culturally constructed through social norms put in place by businesses to promote sales?

There's a much quoted article in the US trade publication Earnshaw's Infants' Department from 1918 that said "pink, being a more decided and stronger color, is more suitable for the boy, while blue, which is more delicate and dainty, is prettier for the girl." Such a practice was also common in Belgium in the 70s. In elementary school in the 80s the gym class dress code was red shorts for boys and blue shorts for girls. But they flipped that in high school which contributed even more to the gender confusion. In the year 1927, Time magazine published a chart that reveals gender appropriate colors for the two different genders. In the chart it basically set up a gender specific colors but it was a little unusual than what we consider normal now in the 21st century. It told parents to dress boys in pink.

Also According to Life Magazine, 1955 marked the "Peak Year for Pink" for men and women

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alike. “Across the US,” the article tells us, “a pink peak in male clothing has been reached as manufacturers have saturated more and more of their output with the pretty pastel...pink is shown here in almost everything short of a trench coat — even in a golf jacket and a dinner jacket. Now more of a staple than a luxury, the color is even acceptable to teen-age boys.”.

In a review of color studies done by Eysenck in early 1940's, he notes the following results to the relationship between gender and color. Dorcus (1926) found yellow had a higher affective value for the men than women and St. George (1938) maintained that blue for men stands out far more than for women. An even earlier study by Jastrow (1897) found men preferred blue to red and women red to blue. Eysenck's study, however, found only one gender difference with yellow being preferred to orange by women and orange to yellow by men. This finding was reinforced later by Birren (1952) who found men preferred orange to yellow; while women placed orange at the bottom of the list.

Guilford and Smith (1959) found men were generally more tolerant toward achromatic colors than women. Thus, Guilford and Smith proposed that women might be more color-conscious and their color tastes more flexible and diverse. Likewise, McInnis and Shearer (1964) found that blue green was more favored among women than men, and women preferred tints more than shades. They also found 56% of men and 76% of women preferred cool colors, and 51% men and 45% women chose bright colors. In a similar study, Plater (1967) found men had a tendency to prefer stronger chromas than women. In a study done by Newcastle University in the UK in 2007 concluded that women, on average, rated the reddish shades more highly than the men did. The authors speculated that this was because hunter-gatherer women traditionally had the job of collecting fruit, so they might be more attuned to reddish shades of berries.

## Results

The results in the survey proved the hypothesis to be correct. The results show that the males preferred the color blue over red and the women also preferred blue over red. The gender norms of color isn't biological but instead a social norm. Also to be noted, the men had a greater percentage of people that choose blue over red.

## Conclusion, Reflection, and Application

From the results in this test, it is now known that gender doesn't relate to color preference. The “preferences of color” is socially constructed and doesn't have any ties with human biologically. The results in the survey proved the hypothesis to be correct. The results show that the males preferred the color blue over red and the women also preferred blue over red. The gender norms of color isn't biological but instead a social norm. Marketing may be behind the modern rules that pink is for girls and blue is for boys. Blue is for boys and pink is for girls, we're

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told. But the question is if gender norms reflect some inherent biological difference between the sexes, or if they are culturally constructed.

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