

True Colors

FROM THE DAY that babies are brought home and cradled in their pink or blue blankets, implications have been made about gender and color. While there are no concrete rules about what colors are exclusively feminine or masculine, there have been studies conducted over the past seven decades that draw some generalizations. Let's take a look at what they say about colors and gender.

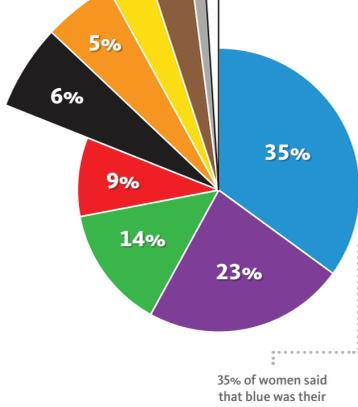
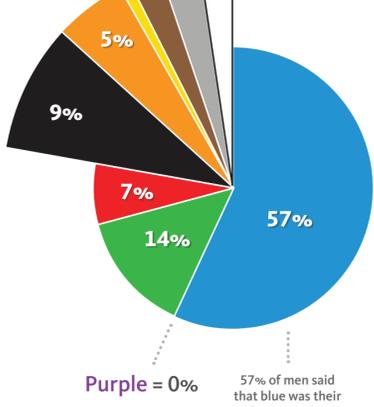
COLORS BY GENDER

The following was taken from a study done in 2003 by Joe Hallock, which compared color preferences among various demographics. Hallock polled 232 people from 22 countries around the world.

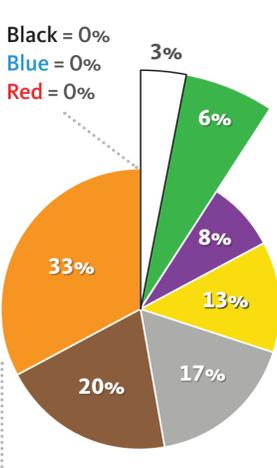
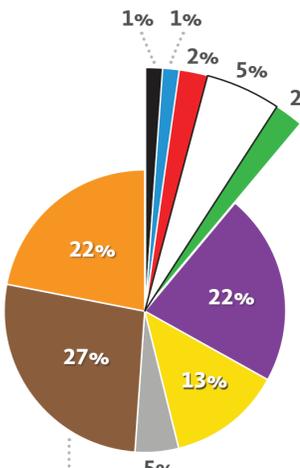
MALE PARTICIPANTS

FEMALE PARTICIPANTS

Favorite Color



Least Favorite Color



Blue Reigns Supreme

Both males and females like the color blue, which receives favor with 35% of female respondents and more than HALF of the male respondents.

Why is blue so popular?

Tomes could be written about the color blue and why people like it so much. Blue is universally associated with clean water, clear skies, authority, truth, tranquility, etc—making it a perennial favorite among all age groups and genders.

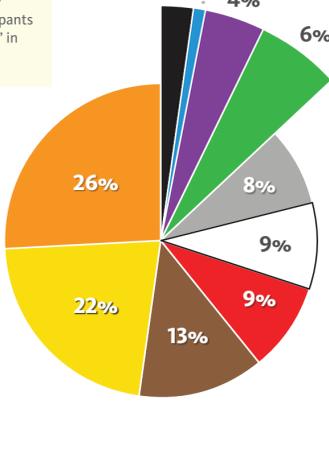
The Color Purple

The most notable gender difference can be seen in the color purple. The study reported that 23% of female participants chose purple as their favorite. No males chose purple as their favorite.

"CHEAP" OR "INEXPRESIVE" COLORS

In the study done by Hallock, male and female participants disliked many of the same colors. Interestingly, the "least favorite color" charts are very similar to the colors that the participants considered "cheap" or "inexpensive" in another experiment.

26% of all participants said that they considered orange to be a "cheap" color

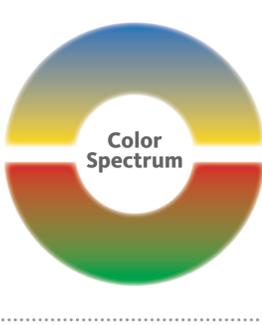


A CLOSER LOOK

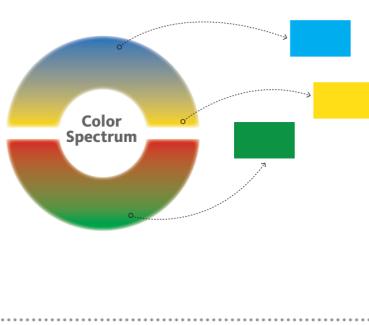
In 2007, Doctors Anya Hurlbert and Yazhu Ling created an experiment to explore how men and women differ in their perception of color.

HOW THE EXPERIMENT WORKED

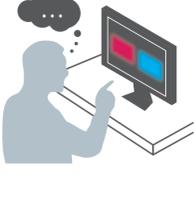
1 The color spectrum was divided into two groups. The first group contained red-green colors and second group contained blue-yellow colors.



2 Various colors were taken out of each group and were used to color a number of rectangles.



3 Participants saw two rectangles of different colors flash on a computer screen.



4 They were then asked to select which rectangle they preferred, and another set of rectangles would be shown.

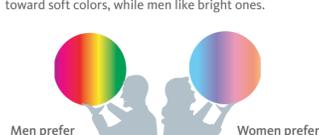


RESULTS OF THE EXPERIMENT

The experiment showed that men and women both preferred blue out of the sets of colors. When asked to choose from mixed colors, women liked colors that are closer to the red end of the spectrum, where shades of pink are found.

Bright vs. Soft Colors

In the experiment, both men and women had the same general preference when it came to light and dark colors. However, the experiment showed that women gravitate toward soft colors, while men like bright ones.



Men prefer bright colors

Women prefer soft colors

Achromatic

As a general rule, men tolerate achromatic colors more than women. Achromatic colors are those which have no hue—like black, white and shades of gray.



Tints vs. Shades

A McCluskey and Shearer experiment found that women preferred tints more than men. It's often proposed that the reason is due to their higher consciousness of specific colors. A "tint" is simply any color with white added. A color scheme using tints is soft, youthful and soothing. A "shade" is simply any color with black added. Shades are deep, powerful and mysterious.



COLOR NAMING: MEN KEEP IT SIMPLE

What may be simply "purple" to a man, could be grape, plum or any other fruit-like variant to a woman.

