Ever since there has been a connection between color and mood, it has been a popular area of study among researchers. There are 16.7 million different colors in the universe for people to perceive (Barker, E., 2004). A scientific explanation of how colors affect mood is provided by Dr. Alexander Schauss, director of the American Institute for Biosocial Research in Tacoma, Washington: when color reaches our sensory system it triggers certain hormones, creating different responses (Clifton, D., 2006). Color influences our moods, thoughts and behaviors (Clifton, D., 2006). This is a very interesting topic because different colors can affect how people communicate with one another.

Biologically, the process of perceiving color is the same for everybody; however, how each individual perceives color is different. Studies have shown that each color generally means certain things (Wexner, L., 1954). Elizabeth Barker (2004), National Health Magazine writer, states each hue possesses a unique power to stir the spirit and conjure up feelings.

Red is the color that stimulates us and is known to raise our blood pressure (Clifton, D., 2006). Red is also the color of excitement and self confidence (Clifton, D., 2006). One British study found that when evenly matched, athletes who wear red won significantly more than their blue-wearing opponents (Damjanov, M., 2008). According to Jean Patteson (2009), journalist for the Orlando Sentinel, red symbolizes warmth, love, valor, glamour and celebration. This is why Valentine’s Day is associated with the color red; it brings excitement into our relationships (Clifton, D., 2006). On the other hand, red is sometimes seen as threatening and dangerous (Thompson, S., 2009a). In addition, red is a power color which is why it is associated with kings (Murray, D., & Deabler, H., 1957; Thompson, S., 2009a).
Pink is connected with sweetness and romance (Thompson, S., 2009b). It is also known to diffuse tension and prevent arguments (Thompson, S., 2009b). Since more men wear pink in today’s society, they are perceived as more gentle and well rounded compared to their previous stereotype as aggressive and rough (Thompson, S., 2009b).

Orange is not specifically associated with only one thing (Murray, D., & Deabler, H., 1957). Orange is a highly universal color that is linked with warmth, exoticism, sociability and change (Patteson, J., 2009). In a study conducted by psychologist Lois Wexner, she reports orange was only fairly connected with distress (Wexner, L., 1954).

Yellow is a vibrant color used to lift the spirits and encourage a positive outlook (Thompson, S., 2009b). People who favor yellow are known to be sociable, confident and rational thinkers (Thompson, S., 2009b). In two separate studies yellow was seen as cheerful (Murray, D., & Deabler, H., 1957; Wexner, L., 1954). In the careers of public relations and marketing, yellow is prominent due to its link with friendliness and openness (Thompson, S., 2009b). Those who love to fly often prefer the color yellow (Clifton, D., 2006).

Green is a refreshing and rejuvenating color (Thompson, S., 2009b). It restores stability and is often prominent in therapeutic environments and medical centers (Thompson, S., 2009b). Being surrounded by the green earth, such as gardening or farming, witnessing accomplished results due to hard work produces pride and will power (Clifton, D., 2006). Yellowish green gives a feeling of hope and growth (Clifton, D., 2006). In nature, young plants are yellowish, eventually developing and growing into something standing tall and protecting (Clifton, D., 2006). To add, Elizabeth Barker (2007) explains how daffodils and other yellow and greens give individuals a great spark of hope.
Blue is a very enticing color due to the fact that it is all around us, for example the sky and the ocean (Barker, E., 2004). Blue is the most comfortable color because of its tranquility (Patteson, J., 2009). Prison cells are often found to be blue to put down stimulation (Clifton, D., 2006). Within the two studies of David Murray and Herdis Deabler (1957) and Lois Wexner (1954), blue was consistently linked to feeling secure, tender, and calm. It is the color most associated with order, peace and trustworthiness (Thompson, S., 2009b). Blue is also a great color to wear in stressful situations, which helps to calm the nerves (Thompson, S., 2009b).

Purple is most associated with royalty and dignity (Murray, D., & Deabler, H., 1957; Patteson, J., 2009; Wexner, L., 1954). In a study by David Murray and Herdis Deabler (1957), purple and orange were found to be the least frequently picked colors from: black, brown, white, blue, purple, green, pink, red, orange and yellow. Purple is a color that has to grow on an individual. The more it is found in one’s life, the more comfortable one is with the color (Patteson, J., 2009). When economic problems occur, purple always seems to cycle in. The different hues of purple are found to stimulate a calming effect and ignite good memories from the past (Patteson, J., 2009).

Brown is often referred to as a high level of comfort. (Murray, D., & Deabler, H., 1957; Thompson, S., 2009b). Those who wear brown are afraid of failure and new challenges (Thompson, S., 2009b). People linked with brown often desire a settled life with strong roots (Thompson, S., 2009b).

Black is a color associated with the extreme ends of the spectrum. It is linked with power but it is also suppressing and distressing (Murray, D., & Deabler, H., 1957; Wexner, L., 1954). In Lois Wexner’s (1954) study, both black and brown were tied to sadness. However, in David
Murray and Herdis Deabler (1957) study, red and black were consistent with each other as being seen as rebellious and powerful. Black is also seen as mysterious and those who wear black are thought to be hiding something from others (Thompson, S., 2009b). Traditionally black has always been the color of mourning (Thompson, S., 2009b).

White is most often associated with purity which is why brides are most likely to wear white (Patteson, J., 2009). It symbolizes light and is linked with peace and spirituality (Thompson, S., 2009b). Since white resembles impartiality and cleanliness, healthcare professionals and people in the food industry sport white attire (Thompson, S., 2009b).

The affect of color on mood is highly influenced in the world of interior design. Each room in a house is designated a certain color depending on the desired feel of the room. Those who work in a red accented room are more accurate in their results (Belluck, P., 2009). Since red is an energizing color, a red rug in a child’s room may cause difficulty in falling asleep (Thompson, S., 2009a). The bedroom and bathroom are a place for relaxing, therefore red and purple are not good color choices for those rooms (Damjanov, M., 2008). Red is suggested, however, for the use in an exercise room because it promotes movement and activity (Breckenridge, M.B., 2007). A room with blue accents can create a sense of calmness and creativity (Belluck, P., 2009). Green and yellow can be used in rooms where a person wants to feel more upbeat (Damjanov, M., 2008).

From these studies, we have acquired a basic knowledge of how different colors affect mood. Yellow, green, blue, black and red are the most developed colors. These colors are the most centralized, for example yellow is cheerful; green is hopefully; blue is calm; black is mysterious and powerful and red is energizing. Purple, pink, orange, brown and white do not
have a fully developed, centralized meaning. They are, however, very diverse in what they mean and how individuals interrupt them. To benefit the community of scholars, a study to pinpoint the exact meanings of purple, pink, orange, brown and white is needed.
References


