

## A Study on Color Preference According to Personality Type - Focusing on People in their 20s and 30s

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### ABSTRACT

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**KEYWORDS:** :Color Marketing, Color preference, DiSC Behavioral Pattern, Korea Standard Color Analysis

### INTRODUCTION

Colors are a stimuli that subconsciously cause various psychological reactions in humans and have a considerable influence on human emotion. As a result, colors are now used according to the different preferences of consumers and more research on colors and human psychological reaction to colors is being emphasized. Generally, different individuals show a variety of reactions to different colors, but common tendencies are found according to the time, region, personality, and other various conditions. Therefore, limiting the time scope to the “contemporary society”, this study investigated the color preference of subjects in their 20s and 30s in terms of their personality type. Although much research has explored “color preference” as a main topic of discussion, most of it excluded tone but focused on hue. Furthermore, the research rarely examined the correlation between personality types and color preference.

Today’s society consists of various images and colors. Especially, colors are one of expressive elements that play an essential role in design and an industrial resource or medium that connects products and consumers. From the psychological and sociological perspective, colors, as a major factor that influences purchase behavior, cause people to choose a product more emotionally than rationally and effective color design not only increases sales but it also causes various effects such as improved productivity and emotional response in human psyche (Lee M.R, Lee J.H, 2009). For those reasons, this study conducted a survey on the preference of colors including tone among subjects in their 20s and 30s who show the most emotional purchase pattern in color marketing, by using the Korean Standard (KS) Colors, to propose a theoretical basis for effective color marketing and basic data for color psychology marketing.

### THEORY

**Color marketing:** Color marketing is a marketing method that induces purchase by consumers by using colors (Kim, 2005) and colors became an indispensable part of marketing growth in South Korea and elsewhere. Colors are of a more persuasive power than shapes. Therefore, color experts are required to possess rich knowledge of colors, emotional sensitivity, and analytical skills related to consumer preferences and trends. According to Lee (2006), the American colorist Louis Cheskin (1976) argued 90% of purchase behavior is determined by intuition and emotion and only 10% of it is caused by rational thinking. Faber Birren (1978) suggested shape response requires an intellectual process but color response is impulsive and sensory. Also, when used correctly, colors induce satisfaction in consumers, which, in turn, enhances the

functions of production and distribution. Therefore, colors became important as added-value to new products and spaces, and a crucial element in image development including the psychological and physiological effects and communication.

**Behavioral trait (DiSC) analysis:** The DiSC assessment is a unique behavior assessment model based on a theory that suggests people have four types of behavioral traits according to how they recognize their environment and their power within the environment, and was developed in 1928 by the Columbia University psychology professor William Mouston Marston. He divided human behaviors into four types, i.e., dominance, influence, steadiness, and conscientiousness, which, according to him, are core elements that form one's behavior and personality type. The four major personality type according to the DiSC theory are as follows:

- Dominance Type: Strong ego; goal-oriented; motivated by challenges; strong sense of responsibility and self-confidence; impatient; lack of concern for others; strong-willed and authoritative
- Influence Type: Optimistic; people-oriented; motivated by social recognition; expressive; highly convincing; difficulty with rejecting requests; lack of follow-through; enthusiastic
- Steadiness Type: Stably deals with tasks; steady; loyal; apt to develop specialized skills; team-oriented; motivated by stability; fears change; excessive sacrifice for others
- Conscientiousness Type: Analytical and task-oriented; systematic and organized; rational and self-controlled; fast to calculate and efficient in negotiation; motivated by ensuring accuracy and high quality; prone to criticize others; can be overly critical

### EXPERIMENTAL

The survey in this study was based on two types of questionnaire, which were answered by 86 subjects who are in their 20s and 30s. The DiSC test consists of 28 questions related to behavioral tendency and the subjects were asked to choose one of the four words suggested in each question that they believe describe themselves most accurately. The following shows general characteristics surveyed prior to the personality type test and distribution of DiSC behavioral traits of the subjects:

Gender	Person (Percentage)
Male	34(40%)
Female	52(60%)
Residential District	Person (Percentage)
Seoul	52(60%)
Gyung-gi	22(26%)
The others	12(14%)
Ages	Person (Percentage)
20s	46(53%)
30s	40(47%)

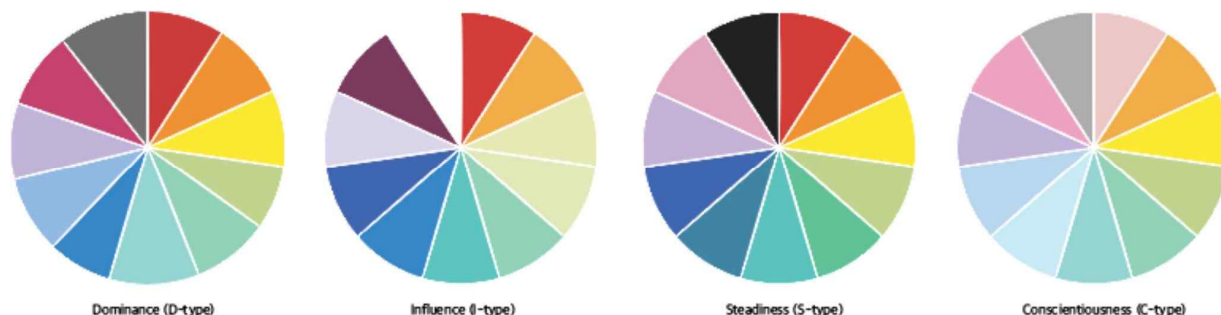
Academic Background (gradugte)	Person (Percentage)
High school	36(42%)
2 Year course College	14(16%)
University	30(42%)
Occupation	Person (Percentage)
Student	42(49%)
Office Worker	32(37%)
Housewife	0(0%)
Self-employed	8(9%)
The others	4(5%)

Personality Type	Person (Percentage)
D-type	18(21%)
I-type	22(26%)
S-type	26(30%)
Ctype	20(23%)

Table 3. General characteristics of subjects 3

Table 1. General characteristics of subjects 1 Table 2. General characteristics of subjects 2

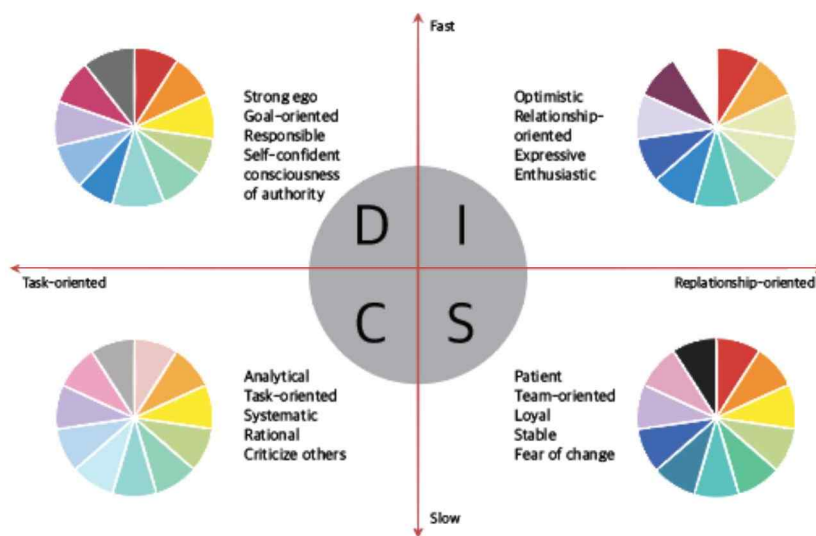
Among the subjects, about 53% were in their 20s and, as a result, the majority, 58%, of the subjects had high school or higher education, and 49% were students. Also, 34 subjects were male and 52 female, and, as a result, the findings in this study showed a higher ratio of female personality types and color preferences. For distribution of DiSC behavioral traits, 26 subjects (30%) were classified as the steadiness (S) type; 22 (26%) influence (I) type, 20 (23%) conscientiousness (C) type, and 18 (21%) dominance (D) type. In the color preference test according to the personality type, the subjects were asked to choose three colors they prefer out of the 140 KS colors, which, excluding 15 standard colors, consisted of 130 colors divided into 13 tones - key colors, vivid, deep, dark, dull, soft, light, pale, whitish, light grayish, grayish, dark grayish, blackish - 10 neutral colors. In this study, the survey result regarding color preference according to the personality type was as follows:



Subjects of the dominance (D) type showed preference for key colors of long wavelength, high saturation, and vivid tone, such as red - key color (26%), YR-vivid (22%), and Y-vivid (22%), but, for colors of short wavelength, they preferred the opposite tones such as G-pale (23%), BG-pale (26%), PB-pale(23%), and P-soft (22%).

Among neutral colors, the mid-tone N.4 was preferred by the highest percentage, 24%, in this group. The influence (I) type preferred, with the exception of R-vivid (19%), whitish or light tones for colors of long wave length, such as YR-light (25%), Y-whitish (25%), GY-whitish (19%), BG-soft (16%), B-vivid (25%), and PB-vivid (25%), and vivid and other stronger tones for colors of short wave length. Among neutral colors, N.9.5 was preferred by the highest percentage, 23%, in this group. The steadiness (S) type showed preference for stronger tones with high saturation and brightness - i.e., vivid, light, and dull - such as R-vivid (21%), YR-vivid (26%), Y- vivid (21%), GY-pale (15%), G-soft (21%), BG-light (16%), B-dull (20%), PB-Md (17%), P-light (22%), RP-soft (19%), and neutral-N.1.5 (28%). The conscientiousness (C) type, overall, preferred tones with low saturation and brightness -i.e., pale, light, and whitish - such as R-pale (21%), YR-Hght (30%), Y-^vivid (31%), GY-pale (23%), BG-pale (23%), B-whitish (23%), PB-pale (19%), P-soft (27%), RP-light (20%), neutral-^6 (17%), with the exception of yellow, showing the opposite result of the steadiness (S) typ

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION



In this study, the following result was found in the survey on color preference according to personality type: the dominance (D) type preferred strong tones for colors of long wavelength and weak tones for colors of short wavelengths, whereas the influence (I) type, which has opposite traits to those of D type, preferred weak tones for colors of long wavelengths, except for red, and strong tones for colors of short wavelength. The subjects of the steadiness (S) type preferred strong tones, overall, while the conscientiousness (C) type, which sits on the opposite end of the personality classification, showed preference for weaker tones. When interpreting these findings based on personality types, people with a strong ego who are goal-oriented, responsible, and self-confident preferred colors of long wavelength in strong tones; those who are optimistic,

expressive, and enthusiastic preferred colors of a short wavelength in strong tones; those who are steady, stable, and loyal preferred colors in strong tones, overall; and, those who are analytical, systematic, and rational preferred colors in weak tones, overall.

### CONCLUSION

This study was conducted as basic research to provide a theoretical basis for color marketing, which is directly related to consumers' choices and basic data for planning products and spaces targeting consumers in their 20s and 30s. The young generation today especially relies on emotion and senses for making choices and, therefore, products and services targeting the consumer base can be more effective when focusing on stimulating their emotion rather than proposing rational and practical design. Therefore, in-depth research on color preference is essential. Based on the findings in this study, color products that emphasize emotional values can be developed more actively and, also, further research will need to be conducted from different perspectives in order to help create scientific and efficient color application by establishing and using color-related infrastructure and database.

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