



An Examination of Package Color of a Local Product in Indonesia on Consumer Response

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Abstract

Color influences consumer perception and preference, purchasing, and consumption behavior and helps companies position and differentiate themselves from the competition. Color is an integral aspect of product packaging and influencing purchasing behavior. It is one of the visual cues of packaging that has been neglected in scholarly research, and there is little research that has been examined colors as a main focused of a package and its impact. This study examined the relationship between consumer responses and package colors of a local food product in Indonesia. In Indonesia, marketing of these local food products is limited, and the research on color's impact on food products is virtually none. This study applied three stages of quantitative method approach and multivariate analysis of variance. The result indicated that different package colors of local food product in Indonesia significantly had a different degree of impact on consumer responses. Yellow achieved the highest positive response all the attitudinal and behavioral variables examined, followed by green, red, and blue. This research enhanced the body of knowledge with respect to the impact of color on choice. It provided insights to a practitioner by confirming the impact of color on consumer response. It also highlights which colors is a most significant element in a package and which one is the least, which has wide marketing implications.

Keywords: Color; Package Color; Color Preferences; Consumer Responses; Decision Making; Multivariate Analysis of Variance

1. Introduction

Color plays an important role in affecting human perceptions (Elliot et al., 2007; Piqueras-Fiszman and Spence, 2011). They are part of individual's everyday lives and influencing people's interactions, perceptions, and actions. Color consideration emerges regularly in human decision making and conversation (Elliot and Maier, 2014). Across cultures, people's responses of color association can be consistent (Adams and Osgood, 1973; D'Andrade and Egan, 1974; Gao et al., 2007; Ou et al., 2012). This means that a certain color, for example, green would have the same association in different cultures and regions, which is "healthy." This healthy meaning could impact people's decision making to a great extent. On the other hand, there are studies which propose that the responses or association of a color could be different across culture (Aslam, 2006; Choungourian, 1968; Crozier, 1996; Garth, 1922; Hupka et al., 1997; Madden et al., 2000; Ou et al., 2012; Shoyama et al., 2003). That is, the response of particular color in various places could be opposite or different. For example, red is not only associated to happiness but also the danger that has more negative meaning compare to happiness.

Colors are the key features in product packaging, especially in the food industry (Deliza et al., 2003; Hine, 1995; Hutchings, 2003; Piqueras-Fiszman and Spence, 2011). Packaging acts as a major part in attracting consumer attention, influence their product perception, and purchase decision. It provides food companies a chance to persuade consumers to buy the product before final brand selection (Ares and Deliza, 2010; McDaniel and Baker, 1977). Color (and color schemes) in food

packaging is used to identify product attributes such as flavors, likely price, and even target consumer groups (Kauppinen-Räsänen and Luomala, 2010; Piqueras-Fiszman et al., 2012).

Colors are an integral part of the package (Marshall et al., 2006). A study of how package color influenced consumers' choice was investigated by Garber et al. (2000). The results indicated that the likelihood of picking up and purchasing product depends on the package's novelty, which is influenced by package color. The idea that package color attracts attention, especially when consumers seek variety in their brand choices was also evident (Garber et al., 2000; Schoormans and Robben, 1997). Gollety and Guichard (2011) noted that package with a strong color is better in attracting consumers' attention compare to a package covered by light color. Unfortunately, color was claimed as one of packaging visual cues that has been neglected in scholarly research (Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2014; Orth et al., 2010), and there is a little research that has examined colors as a main focused of a package (Garber et al., 2000; Gordon et al., 1994; Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2011; 2014; Kauppinen-Räsänen and Luomala, 2010; Schoormans and Robben, 1997).

This study aims at examining the relationship between consumer responses and package colors of a particular local food product in Indonesia. The paper follows the following structure; first, we give an overview of literature on color, package color, and consumer response; second, we explain the research approach; third, we present the result of the analysis in the findings section; finally, we discuss the outcomes, implications, and contribution.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Color

Literature on color has been well developed and is focused on certain aspects (Elliot and Maier, 2014); first, how that color is defined and modeled; second, the way color terms are represented in language; third, issues such as color reproduction, color deficiency, and color appearance phenomena; finally on how the humans' eye and brain process color stimuli. In the last aspect, color is considered as a role in our decision making and conversation. Our research falls in the last category.

Impact of colors has been attributed to a wide range of color associations (Dorcus, 1926; Ou et al., 2012), in which color is seen as either a symbol or a sign both positive and negative (Ou et al., 2012). For example, black is associated with negative concepts such as evil and death and prompts people to behave more aggressively toward others (Elliot et al., 2007; Frank and Gilovich, 1988). While red is associated with happiness (Bellizzi and Hite, 1992; Elliot et al., 2007; Soldat et al., 1997; Valdez and Mehrabian, 1994); blue is associated with sadness (Elliot et al., 2007; Soldat et al., 1997), and these colors lead to information processing and behavior consistent with those emotions (Elliot et al., 2007). In performance, red is associated negatively with failure (Elliot et al., 2007; Moller et al., 2009) and danger (Elliot et al., 2007; Pryke et al., 2002). Meanwhile, blue and green have positive links in natural realm (e.g., blue sky [NAz and Epps, 2004] and water; green foliage and vegetation). Blue also represent openness and peace (Mehta and Zhu, 2009; NAz and Epps, 2004); green is thought as calmness and success (Clarke and Costall, 2008; Moller et al., 2009); yellow is commonly used to indicate caution in signage and brake lights (Elliot et al., 2007). In addition, it is worth pointing out that these associations vary with culture, nation, age, gender, etc. These studies demonstrated that the same color possibly has different meanings in different contexts, leading to different implications.

Studies about effects of color been stated with regard to marketing implications are limited. Some of the previous studies addressed issues such as the influence of building, store, and website color on drawing consumers in, keeping them engaged, and enhancing their shopping experience. For example, it has been argued that blue stores and websites are rated as more relaxing, less crowded, and even more trustworthy (Alberts and van der Geest, 2011; Elliot and Maier, 2014; Gorn et al., 2004; Lee and Rao, 2010; Yüksel, 2009). Others focused on the role that color plays in the company and brand identify and recognition (Elliot and Maier, 2014). Beside those attention of studies, color is viewed as integral aspect of logos and product packaging (e.g., Coca Cola red, IBM blue, Cadbury purple) and is presumed to be used in shaping image/personality and facilitating reflexive purchasing behavior (Hynes, 2009). It

is widely agreed upon by marketers, advertisers, and graphic artist that the involvement of color on consumers behavior (Elliot and Maier, 2014; Sable and Akcay, 2011), influences their buying intention (Grossman and Wisenblit, 1999).

Color plays a significant role in global marketing communication (Ou et al., 2012). Color translates intended visual impressions into product (Hsiao et al., 2008; Ou et al., 2012; Tsai and Chou, 2007) and influence consumers' behavior. Consumers desire that the color of a product match its intended use or purpose. For example, they prefer blue for products that are functional or associated with water, while red match for luxury products or are associated with status such as sports car (Bottomley and Doyle, 2006; Elliot and Maier, 2014; Hanss et al., 2012; Ngo et al., 2012). Several researchers emphasized against making global statements about color in the area of consumer behavior because consumer attitudes and behaviors are presumed to be influenced by context-free color preferences that vary by country, region, race, sex, and age (Aslam, 2006; Chebat and Morrin, 2007; Funk and Ndubisi, 2006).

2.2. Package color and consumer response

A package is a critical factor in the consumer decision-making process because it acts as a strong cue at the time of purchase (Silayoi and Speece, 2007). Package influences consumer in decision making through its symbolic or esthetic qualities (Creusen and Schoormans, 2005; Singh et al., 2012; Van Rompay et al., 2009). It signifies the activities associated with the packing of goods/product, handling, unpacking, and display of primary package. It means that a package has a two-fold meaning; package itself and the process associated with the actual use of the package (Bramklev, 2009; Goddard, 1991; Jönson and Johnsson, 2006; Paine, 1990). A package protects and identifies the product physically, benefits in warehousing and distribution of goods, ensures safe delivery of product to the end consumer in good condition.

There are some elements of a package: Design, material, label, shape, size, and color. According to several authors, color is a significant feature in a package (Ampuero and Vila, 2006; Ares and Deliza, 2010; Hutchings, 2003; Marshall et al., 2006), and among packages' features, it triggers the fastest response (Swientek, 2001). Color can be associated with main attributes of packaging: "containments," "protection," "utility-filling and dispensing," and "communication" (Singh et al., 2012; Soroka, 2009).

Numerous studies have been published over the years documenting the role of package color in driving consumers' expectations (Ares and Deliza, 2010; Deliza et al., 2003; Marshall et al., 2006; Piqueras-Fiszman and Spence, 2011). Packagers used color to influence consumers' perception of package weight (Bellizzi and Hite, 1992; Warden and Flynn, 1926) as well as to create psychological meaning (Bellizzi and Hite, 1992; Margulies, 1970; McNeal, 1973). For example, on the psychological studies, blue has been found to be more positive and calm. A more positive, pleasant, and calm store environment would make shoppers more comfortable and more likely to do purchasing (Bellizzi and Hite, 1992). Consumers perceive packaging color at three different, and, in practice, interrelated levels: The physiological, the cultural, and the associational (Hine, 1995; Piqueras-Fiszman and Spence, 2011). The associational level refers to those packaging color expectations that have become associated with a brand image or even a product category, through consumers having interacted with it over some extended period (Garber et al., 2008; Piqueras-Fiszman and Spence, 2012; Spence and Piqueras-Fiszman, 2011).

Using color as a cue on packaging can be a strong association. Consumers learn color associations, which lead them to prefer certain colors for various product categories (Grossman and Wisenblit, 1999). Regarding food package, consumers' association of color was mainly related to flavor (Hutchings, 2003; Marshall et al., 2006). Food package may also create consumers' expectation (Ares and Deliza, 2010; Deliza et al., 2003; Lange et al., 2000). Differences of expectation might be related to consumers' hedonic reaction toward the expected flavor of food. However, in the case of food products, consumers used to taste the food itself, and it is commonplace that food taste can influence product expectations and perceptions (Ares and Deliza, 2010; Deliza and MacFie, 1996; Garber et al., 2000; Koch and Koch, 2003). Therefore, manufacturers should use food package to attract consumers' attention to increase their interest in buying a product and to generate the sensory and hedonic expectation that match the products' real characteristics (Ares and Deliza, 2010).

In spite of the evidence concerning the effect of the color of the cups or containers on people's perception on foods and beverages, there is only limited research to date (Piqueras-Fiszman and Spence, 2012), most of which has been conducted in the domain of wine (Piqueras-Fiszman and Spence, 2012; Spence, 2011). In Indonesia, there has been no such research conducted before, even though as one of marketing tool, a package for locally food product has been weaknesses (Wuryaningrat, 2013). This local food product; a kind of bean-filled pastry called *bakpia*; produced by many local small companies. Although marketed poorly, they contribute much on economic growth (Saroso and Fauzi, 2013). This study aims examined the relationship between some consumer responses and package color of local food product in Indonesia. Researcher focused on a particular region in Indonesia and involved some consumer responses such as consumers' association of color, word of mouth among consumers, consumers' perception of quality, and their intention to purchase.

3. Research Method

3.1. Stage 1

This study was undertaken in three stages. The first stage consisted of questions regarding consumers' preference and likeability of color. The purpose of this stage of the study was to identify colors that were most prominent and perceived as local food package color in Indonesia. Participants filled out the first part about what colors they like the most. Participants responded about the colors that come in their mind related to food package. Table 1 provided an overview of the questions and responses.

A total of 34 different colors were emerged in the study. From these 34 different colors, Table 1 shows each item with four main colors emerged. These four colors were the most relatable and were mentioned most often; blue (43.55%), red (16.23%), yellow (46.77% recalled; 34.56% related to food), and green (38.57%). Similarly, using modus formula, resulted those four colors as the most picked local food packaged colors by consumers. This stage helped in identity these four colors for the main study in stage two and three.

3.2. Stage 2

Stage 2 was the pilot study to examine and finalize the instruments and length of the questionnaire. This study performed multiple Likert-type scale questions and purposed to analyze the validity and reliability of the questionnaire. With sample of respondents 48, the colors that most mentioned in the previous stage were examined in this pilot study. The questionnaire in this study contained several variables; such as preferences and likeability of colors, consumers' association of color, word of mouth, perception of quality, and intention to purchase. Even though result excluded one item of word of mouth among consumers that stated, "I will speak unflatteringly of this product to others," overall the questionnaire is reliable. With the acceptable values of Cronbach's alpha 0.7 to 0.8 (Cortina, 1993; Field, 2013), the questionnaire was found to be very reliable. Values substantially <0.7 indicate an unreliable scale.

Table 1: Color preferences and likeability

| Items | Color most mentioned | Percentage in each item |
|---|----------------------|-------------------------|
| What color do you like the most? | Blue | 43.55 |
| Any other (up to 3)? | Red | 16.23 |
| Related to local food package color, what first color comes in your mind? | Yellow | 46.77 |
| What are the others? | Green | 38.57 |
| Related to local food package color, which of the following colors do you prefer? | Yellow | 34.56 |

3.3. Stage 3

In this stage, the relationship between consumers' responses and package colors was examined. As mentioned before, consumer responses included consumers' association of color, word of mouth, consumers' perception of quality, and their intention to purchase. Besides that, we aimed to verify the preferences and likeability consumers of colors. We applied multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) with several color treatments (groups); (1) blue, (2) yellow, (3) green, and (4) red. Compared to ANOVA, MANOVA has the greater potential power to detect an effect, whether groups differ along a combination of variables (Field, 2013).

Questionnaires were distributed to 458 participants. The sample was the consumers of locally food product in a particular region in Indonesia. Each participant gave response to four treatments with and the questions were shuffled. Table 2 shows that there is similar sample size in each group. Implemented all treatments to each sample means they were embroiled in all four groups (blue, yellow, green, and red). Each of 458 participants was committed to be involved in blue, yellow, green, and red groups.

4. Findings

The selection on MANOVA was based on the aim to analyze a dependence relationship represented as the differences in a set of dependent measures across a series of groups formed by one or more categorical independent measures (Hair et al., 2014). It was designed to look at several dependent variables (outcomes) simultaneously and so was a multivariate test (many variables) (Field, 2013).

Used a general linear model approach in MANOVA, outcome shows in Table 3 reveals results of descriptive analysis. This analysis displays each group and total means in every single dependent variable. Table 3 performs 17 dependent variables, which are subscales of preferences of color, quality, intention to purchase, consumers' association of colors, and word of mouth among consumers. It indicates that yellow has the highest mean (5.13) in quality, follows by green (4.83) and red (4.16) with higher values, and blue with the lowest (3.65). In the same sequence of means values, yellow also reaches the highest in 16 other dependent variables (color preference, color likeability, safety, appearance, value, likely of buying, definitely of buying, consider of buying, frequent of speaking, recommendation, encouragement, fitting, compatibility, positiveness, palatability, highly preferences). This performance defines that consumers preferred yellow package color in general. Yellow received the highest positive response of all variables by consumers, followed by green, then red and blue as the most unlikely to be selected. Standard deviation reveals almost similar values in all group and each dependent variables that explain homogeneity of the samples.

The pattern is same across all variables. That is, yellow reached the highest positive response and blue got the least positive response across all variables. This shows that result of this study stated that consumer has a positive perception and preference toward yellow packaging and least toward blue. For example, they perceived the quality, safety, appearance, and value of the food better in yellow package with the mean of 5.13, 5.11, 5.10, and 5.09. Consumers had high intention to purchase the food in the yellow package. It shows in Table 3 with the mean of 5.04 (likely of buying), 4.96 (definitely of buying), and 4.74 consider of buying). The yellow package more positively motivated consumers to speak frequently (4.79), to recommend it to others (4.93), and to encourage people (4.78). Finally,

Table 2: Sample size

| Groups (based on colors) | Number of sample size (each sample experienced all treatments) |
|--------------------------|--|
| Blue | 458 |
| Yellow | 458 |
| Green | 458 |
| Red | 458 |
| Total | 1832 |

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics (continue)

| Items | Group | Mean±SD | Number of sample |
|----------------------|--------|------------|------------------|
| Frequent of speaking | Yellow | 4.79±1.558 | 458 |
| | Green | 4.52±1.627 | 458 |
| | Red | 3.71±1.728 | 458 |
| | Blue | 3.49±1.705 | 458 |
| | Total | 4.13±1.742 | 1832 |
| Recommendation | Yellow | 4.93±1.594 | 458 |
| | Green | 4.65±1.586 | 458 |
| | Red | 3.79±1.631 | 458 |
| | Blue | 3.44±1.717 | 458 |
| | Total | 4.20±1.742 | 1832 |
| Encouragement | Yellow | 4.78±1.592 | 458 |
| | Green | 4.55±1.664 | 458 |
| | Red | 3.89±1.684 | 458 |
| | Blue | 3.46±1.711 | 458 |
| | Total | 4.17±1.743 | 1832 |
| Fitting | Yellow | 5.30±1.588 | 458 |
| | Green | 4.85±1.655 | 458 |
| | Red | 3.94±1.787 | 458 |
| | Blue | 3.32±1.746 | 458 |
| | Total | 4.35±1.862 | 1832 |
| Compatibility | Yellow | 5.29±1.563 | 458 |
| | Green | 4.85±1.655 | 458 |
| | Red | 3.95±1.716 | 458 |
| | Blue | 3.39±1.708 | 458 |
| | Total | 4.37±1.819 | 1832 |
| Positiveness | Yellow | 5.24±1.550 | 458 |
| | Green | 4.95±1.614 | 458 |
| | Red | 4.15±1.835 | 458 |
| | Blue | 3.56±1.766 | 458 |
| | Total | 4.48±1.819 | 1832 |
| Palatability | Yellow | 4.96±1.737 | 458 |
| | Green | 4.66±1.772 | 458 |
| | Red | 3.73±1.820 | 458 |
| | Blue | 3.22±1.684 | 458 |
| | Total | 4.14±1.886 | 1832 |
| Highly preferences | Yellow | 5.29±1.638 | 458 |
| | Green | 4.88±1.724 | 458 |
| | Red | 3.76±1.850 | 458 |
| | Blue | 3.25±1.824 | 458 |
| | Total | 4.29±1.944 | 1832 |

SD: Standard deviation

consumers associated yellow is the fittest for package (5.30), compatible (5.24), very positive package (5.24), palatable (4.96), and they preferred highest in yellow (5.29).

Calculated at alpha level 0.05, multivariate test (Table 4) results are significant for all four tests (Pillai's Trace, Wilks's Lambda, Hotelling's Trace, and Roy's Largest Root). It explains P values less than a given alpha level 0.05 and test rejects null hypothesis that assumed responses to the colors (groups) were the same in all dependent variables that were included. In other words, consumers' responses quality, intention to purchase, consumers' association of colors and word of mouth among consumers vary among the package colors. This means that some colors have greater impact than others.

Multivariate test statistics informs nothing about which groups differed from which, or whether the effect of package colors on consumers' quality perception, or consumers' likely of buying, or consumers' frequent of speaking, or other variables, or combination of them. The difference is determined by univariate test statistics presented in Table 5. Here, we focused on the source of group (color) and excluded the other sources on the tests. Last column of tests of between-subjects effects (Table 5) shows us that there was a significant difference between groups (colors) in any dependent variables (0.000).

Table 4: Multivariate test

| Effect | Value | F | Hypothesis df | Error df | Significant |
|--------------------|--------|----------|---------------|----------|-------------|
| Intercept | | | | | |
| Pillai's trace | 0.928 | 1303.686 | 18.000 | 1811.000 | 0.000 |
| Wilks' lambda | 0.072 | 1303.686 | 18.000 | 1811.000 | 0.000 |
| Hotelling's trace | 12.958 | 1303.686 | 18.000 | 1811.000 | 0.000 |
| Roy's largest root | 12.958 | 1303.686 | 18.000 | 1811.000 | 0.000 |
| Group (Color) | | | | | |
| Pillai's trace | 0.238 | 8.689 | 54.000 | 5439.000 | 0.000 |
| Wilks' lambda | 0.767 | 9.296 | 54.000 | 5396.882 | 0.000 |
| Hotelling's trace | 0.296 | 9.933 | 54.000 | 5429.000 | 0.000 |
| Roy's largest root | 0.271 | 27.305 | 18.000 | 1813.000 | 0.000 |

Table 5: Tests of between-subjects effects

| Source | Dependent variable | Type III sum of squares | df | Mean square | F | Significant |
|---------------|----------------------|-------------------------|----|-------------|---------|-------------|
| Group (Color) | Color preferences | 919.183 | 3 | 306.394 | 116.098 | 0.000 |
| | Color likeability | 874.683 | 3 | 291.561 | 112.523 | 0.000 |
| | Quality | 605.897 | 3 | 201.966 | 82.707 | 0.000 |
| | Safety | 444.221 | 3 | 148.074 | 58.390 | 0.000 |
| | Appearance | 552.133 | 3 | 184.044 | 75.084 | 0.000 |
| | Value | 501.945 | 3 | 167.315 | 66.810 | 0.000 |
| | Likely of buying | 779.530 | 3 | 259.843 | 98.351 | 0.000 |
| | Definitely of buying | 650.369 | 3 | 216.790 | 82.199 | 0.000 |
| | Consider of buying | 216.048 | 3 | 72.016 | 24.781 | 0.000 |
| | Frequent of speaking | 542.526 | 3 | 180.842 | 65.953 | 0.000 |
| | Recommendation | 680.939 | 3 | 226.980 | 85.137 | 0.000 |
| | Encouragement | 502.727 | 3 | 167.576 | 60.570 | 0.000 |
| | Fitting | 1091.159 | 3 | 363.720 | 126.467 | 0.000 |
| | Compatibility | 1014.172 | 3 | 338.057 | 122.439 | 0.000 |
| | Positiveness | 806.090 | 3 | 268.697 | 93.505 | 0.000 |
| | Palatability | 888.528 | 3 | 296.176 | 96.258 | 0.000 |
| | Highly preferences | 1246.939 | 3 | 415.646 | 134.006 | 0.000 |

It means that not only colors influenced different on perceived quality but also affected different on perceived safety. Moreover, there was various impact of colors on color preferences, color likeability, perceived appearance, perceived value, likely of buying, definitely of buying, consider of buying, consumer's frequent of speaking, consumer's recommendation, consumer's encouragement, fitting association, compatibility association, positiveness association, palatability, and highly preferences of consumers. Based on this result, we can conclude that the variety of color had a significant effect on types of consumer response.

5. Discussion and Implications

This study shows that in a particular region of Indonesia that remains largely unexamined, package color of local food product proved its effect on several types of consumer responses. Despite marketing weaknesses of local industry, consumers had their own consideration of package color, especially for local food product. There was an argument that food is treated as low involvement products (Grossman and Wisenblit, 1999; Kuvykaite et al., 2015). On the other hand, there are authors who argue that some consumers may view food shopping not as a low involvement action (Kuvykaite et al., 2015; Silayoi and Speece, 2004). Whether the consumers here were involved or not, package color of local food product in Indonesia significantly had different effects on consumer responses.

Among four package colors as treatments, yellow was the most influential. It was dominant in the influences than other colors. Consumers were likely associated yellow package colors to local food product more (Table 3) than other (green, red, and blue). It seems that once they linked the product with its preferences of color, quality perception, their willingness to purchase, or even their daily conversation dealing with the product, yellow came as the first package color in their minds. If the products with yellow package color were not available in the store, they would look for the same products with green package color. In this case, consumers might use their memory of this local food package color to recall. Some authors concerned about this color function on consumers for recall (Garber et al., 2000; Kahneman, 1973; Kauppinen-Räsänen and Luomala, 2010) and defined it as voluntary attention (Kahneman, 1973). The other two colors in the treatments, red and blue had the least possibility to be related to local food product in Indonesia. Based on the results in the tests of between-subjects effects, package color of local food had effects on all responses; color preferences, color likeability, quality, safety, appearance, value, likely of buying, definitely of buying, consider of buying, frequent of speaking, recommendation, encouragement, fitting, compatibility, positiveness, and highly preferences of the package.

This research enhanced the body of knowledge with respect to the impact of color on choice. It provided insights to a practitioner by confirming that the current understanding of the extent of the impact of color on consumer response. For local food product with small brands in particular region that not internationally renowned, package color was associated properly to a certain local product. In Indonesia, a region where many small brands grow with their local products, there has been no study before about examination of package color on consumers' decision-making. For this region, this study contributed the information about color in marketing that could lead to company performance in market competition. This research also had a methodological contribution. The methodological approach to address key research object is MANOVA with general linear approach, which hardly been used in previous studies. Previous studies mostly used only a univariate analysis of variance, conjoint analysis, structural equation modeling, or even qualitative approach.

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