



The Visual Grammar of Fragrance: A Multimodal Semiotic Analysis of Color in Perfume Packaging in Pakistan

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Abstract

Multimodality is making and decoding meaning using a range of semiotic resources – including color, typography, images, space – not just language. Multimodal semiotic analysis is adopted in this qualitative study to discuss the elements of the visual image used in perfume packaging which construct the brand, evoke emotions and resonate with cultural beliefs in Pakistan. It draws on David Machin's research on multimodality, the relationship between the various components and aspects of graphic design and color and the production of believable marketing narratives. The research offers useful insights into the visual strategies the fragrance brands use in their packaging, and how they adjust and individualize them to accommodate local taste and meaning, while still complying with global rules of advertising. The results demonstrate how critical it is for a multimodal design to impact consumers' perception and strengthen brand storytelling. Furthermore, culturally immersive designs' choice of color is a crucial form of communication that reinforces the values of the ideology and resonates with a brand identity.

Keywords: Multimodality, Color, Branding, Semiotics, Meaning-making, and Cultural Association.



INTRODUCTION

Packaging is one of the most effective communication media and is the first step towards establishing and developing a consumer's first impression. Particularly in the case of lifestyle products like perfumes, the perfume is not the most important part; packaging is. The modern perfume packaging in Pakistan carefully combines the tradition and beauty of the culture with the international level of the modern packaging, which is adopted. The use of visual forms like typography and color becomes an important semiotic means at this crossing. The present study is carried out with an extensive semiotic approach of color and typography in Perfume packaging in Pakistan in the light of the theory of David Machin (2007). Look at elements of the visual that are also incorporated into commercial design, and think of them not just as beautifiers, but as marketing tools that communicate a lot more to create a true brand identity, Machin says. Colors have culturally coded meanings and can evoke certain emotional reactions; typefaces can convey an attitude, a specific level of formality, and even the brand ethos, says Machin. Therefore, this investigation will not focus solely on color but will examine the elements of color through multimodal semiotics, which is the study of the synergy of various communicative modes to achieve cohesive communication. Nørgaard (2019) claims that multimodal semiotics requires that a text be 'more than the mere sum of the different modes' because the interaction of the modes creates new meaning not present in any single mode. Hence, color and typography are given a strong focus in this analysis as they are interdependent in both aspects, whether individually or in relation to the other design elements in the surrounding space.

This work builds on the social semiotics put forward in the works of Kress and van Leeuwen (1996; 2006), van Leeuwen (2005; 2006), and Nørgaard (2019) and gives a critical analysis of the particular case of perfume packaging of Pakistan. Every mode of a communicative artifact "functions in a field of a cultural semiotic resource of a community," as Kress (2010) put it. Thus, it is not the question of choosing a sign or assigning a sign individually and in isolation. These signs rather, only make sense within a larger, more comprehensive message, which is crafted to be culturally relevant and marketable to its intended audience.

It's a study of detailed inspection of the existing trends of the local market in Pakistan in design. This study will explore the use of specific visuals to demonstrate how designers strategically use nuances of culture, gender and other sensory elements to weave with particular styling into the visual text for a carefully defined audience. The results are aimed at proving that in packaging design, attention is given to the semiotic choices made to make the packaging not only beautiful on the surface, but to consolidate complicated cultural and market structures.

Research Objectives

- To explore color in meaningful aspect as a significant part of perfume packaging in Pakistan.
- To examine how particular color combinations work strategically in the visual branding of J. Fragrances and Scents N Stories, to gain the understanding of the various layers of emotional and cultural meanings they evoke.
- To overcome the current lack of literature in the academic field by exploring the use of color in product packaging of the South Asian region from a local and culturally-based semiotic lens.



LITERATURE REVIEW

The study is aimed at analyzing the products from the semiotic perspective and multimodal analysis which will be applied to branding, perfume packaging. The multimodal framework developed by Machin, D. (2007) is used to demonstrate how color can be a communicative resource that organizes meaning not only in the experience of color itself but also in the associations, emotional value, and cultural background of color. The aim is to formulate a theoretical model to be analyzed in the perfume bottles of J. Fragrances and Scents & Stories.

Semiotics of Color

Saussurean and Barthesian semiotics can be used to view color as signifier and meaning in a particular cultural context (Barthes, 1977). Semiotics suggests that colors themselves have no inherent significance, but they acquire meaning through codes and conventions. There, for instance, would be a meaning to the red color. It may be love, or it may be danger; it may be. As Chandler (2007) points out, cultural literacy is important for reading these types of signs, and meaning is always socially produced. This is very powerful in perfume branding, as people can use color to convey sophistication, sensuality, or cleanliness depending on their target audience.

Identify the meaning of multimodal discourse and color it in.

Machin, D. (2007) claim that color functions as a mode in visual communication, just as typography and layout do. It is a shift from lexical to more grammatical terms, such as those of Kress and van Leeuwen (2002). To them, 'meaning' is not built from individual colors, but from combinations of these colors; like in language, grammar is built from words. This theoretical knowledge can be applied to the analysis of the various colors used to package perfumes and how they are used to evoke a certain brand image or feeling.

Emotions and Cultural Associations of Color

Goethe (1970) and Kandinsky (1977) began the discussion of the effect of color on human emotions. Traditionally, blue is associated with tranquility and modesty, while black is associated with luxury and/or mystery. Gage (1999) traces the evolution of a black color system and relates black colors to emotion from the Middle Ages to modern design theory, showing that emotion-to-color is a predominantly cultural phenomenon. Although there has been much research on color, the studies have been less systematic in measuring emotional effects, and many have reported that color improves coherence, mood, and perceived informational value (Poynter Institute, 1991).

Branding & Packaging Design: Coloring Activity.

Color is one of the core elements of a semiotic system that can attract some audiences and emotionally engage them in a brand. Some brand personality traits that consumers associate with certain colors include trustworthiness (teal), sophistication (purple), and excitement (red) (Labrecque & Milne, 2012). The associations, in the field of luxurious perfumes, are carefully selected. Color decisions in packaging products could be a part of the purchase decision; this highlights the worth of the brand, Aslam (2006) said.

A localized Semiotic Analysis is required for this. However, there is not much research on this aspect, such as the use of color strategies by indigenous brands like "J." and "Scents N Stories" as part of their brand strategy, especially in perfumery. However, there have been few studies on the extent to which indigenous brands such as J. Fragrance and Scents N Stories use color to convey their brand identity, particularly in perfume packaging.



Some Information is Missing in the Current Literature

Although much work has been done on color in marketing and design, very few studies have examined the semiotic aspects of color using a multimodal approach. There is a dearth of studies that provide context on the use of product packaging color in Pakistan or even in the regional context of South Asia. The studies to date have focused on Western brands or on general psychology, omitting cultural differences. With 5 bottles per company, this research will examine the different combinations and cultural associations that the colors on the perfume bottles of the two companies, namely J. Fragrances and Scents N Stories, bear in Machin's Multimodal approach.

Significance of Research

This study is significant due to its elaborate explanation of the role of color as a meaning-making tool in Perfume Packaging in the Pakistani context. Utilizing the multimodal and semiotic theory, it brings the narration closer to the body of work already developed in the realm of understanding (mis)understanding non-Western branding approaches and the fine emotional and cultural messages of color. The present study makes a significant contribution to the field of visual design analysis, particularly for those interested in culturally informed brand practices, such as marketers, designers, and researchers.

METHODOLOGY AND FRAMEWORK

In this research, a qualitative method is applied within the context of Multimodal Discourse Analysis, as proposed by Machin, D. (2007) focusing on the potential of the semiotic aspects of color in visual design. This study aims to explore the role of color as an active communication mode by examining the packaging of 10 perfume bottles from two leading Pakistani brands, J. Fragrances and Scents N Stories. Particularly examines the association of color and its multiple layers of meanings, with emotional and cultural values. This methodological approach enables critical assessment of the role of color in a product's brand identity and positioning in retail packaging.

Data Collection and purposive sampling were the techniques used.

In the present study, data were collected from the packaging of selected perfume bottles from two leading perfume brands in Pakistan, namely J. Fragrances and Scents N Stories. The total number of perfume packages sampled was 10 (5 samples for each brand), and purposive sampling was used. The parameters used to select the products were based on product popularity, determined by cross-checking the top-selling products on the brands' official online stores and the product's prominent presence across major offline stores. The specific products have been chosen to illustrate a wide variety of aesthetic approaches. Variations in color saturation from aggressive to subdued, shifts in color palette from light to dark, and a wide range of culturally symbolic colors make up this diversity.

All analysis was conducted only on the front-facing images of the packaging, since these are the first images consumers would see when considering the product. Thus, the study will focus only on visual design elements and will exclude very descriptive text on the back of the packaging, which would be too cumbersome to examine. This delimitation enables a semiotic and multimodal analysis with a strong focus on visual assemblages, whereby the concrete use of color for each product's brand is isolated.

Analytical Procedure

The packaging chosen was analyzed in 3 progressive steps to systematically dissect its visual language. Each bottle and box was broken down into the primary and secondary colors used in the product, accent colors and typography. This was followed by a semiotic



mapping which involved a literature search of the field of cultural semiotics and the field of color theory to find the emotional and cultural values that were traditionally attributed to these isolated colors in the context of South Asia. Lastly, a multimodal synthesis was carried out in line with Machin's (2007) model, and the interplay of the isolated colors and other design elements (material texture and typographical style) was critically evaluated. This final step analyzed the interaction of these elements and how they combine to form a full visual sentence and convey a specific brand image.

Reliability and Objectivity

The qualitative semiotic analysis is an interpretative process and therefore the interpretation was strongly supported by the theories of Kress (1997), van Leeuwen (1995) and Machin (2007) in order to have an objective interpretation. The emotional and ideological interpretation of the color combinations, however, have been evaluated and supported by relevant research and studies on the cultural norms and historical aesthetics of South Asia, and consumer psychology. This methodological precision allows to guarantee the accuracy and reliability of the results, which will be representative of the codes of vision in society, and not individual vision.

Analysis of Data and Results

A multimodal and semiotic analysis of ten perfume packaging designs, five from the brands J. Fragrances and Scents N Stories, was then performed. David Machin's multimodal theory is used to analyze each product, with color as the dominant mode for meaning-making. So there are emotional and cultural references to certain colors in the central categories. Each perfume is placed on the display with its packaging, and its packaging color is then explained in relation to the perfume's brand message.



Figure 1: J. Fragrance "JANAN Oud"

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The combination of dark maroon with shiny gold is very well planned and functional in JANAN Oud by J. Fragrances. It is one of the most well-thought-out examples of Gage's (1999) conceptualization of color development in visual design. Gage explains that this is a move away from a strictly lexical/symbolic use of color toward something much more complex: a grammatical system in which no single color is used to express semiotic meaning, but rather a complex network of color relationships established through oppositional use. This is an intentional move in the design and builds on the work Kress and van Leeuwen (2002) carried out in visual grammar, which is similar to the way structure and syntax operate in verbal language.

As a multimodal phenomenon, saturation of maroon carries many cultural connotations to tradition, emotional strength, sophistication, and mature female energy. The gold typography and accentuation are more aligned with the concepts of extreme



luxury, oversaturated materials and increased status. Together, as in Gage's case, with the promise of other color systems, which would create layers of meaningfulness that link together, these colors also provide a visual and emotional depth of field. A harmony, in the sense that the heart – the smell – of the product is mediated and circulated; that is a strong element in the mediation of this product's heart and this smell is carefully designed for a status-oriented female customer base. Furthermore, the interpersonal and psychological factors of this palette are congruent with the basic theories of Goethe (1970) and Kandinsky (1977) who held that there are innate emotional associations between certain colors. Also, the warm maroon background is very saturated, creating a strong feeling of "nostalgia, cultural pride and exclusivity," and this will enable the gold typography to be "felt" more strongly. This is intentional because it breaks the visual harmony of the brand name "JANAN Oud" and creates it in a wider "culture" that is more strongly enmeshed in these colors and ideology. Finally, it could be suggested that the historical, emotional and multimodal theories of visual communication are successfully blended within the packaging of JANAN Oud, where it is clear that color can be used as a mode of communication on its own.



Figure 2. J. Fragrance "Black Musk"

J. Fragrances' visual packaging of "Black Musk" is a bold and well-thought-out use of black and gold with a high level of visual communication to go beyond aestheticism. Advanced color theory is not just about the names of colors, it is an understanding of how colors can help each other, enhance each other, and complement each other to add meaning, emotional value, and symbolism (Gage, 1999). In this particular design matrix, black is the most preferred color, it gives a sensuality, classy elegance and a certain gender neutrality to the design; the smell of musk is an inherently sensual smell and has a deep earthy quality. But the gold, which is a powerful semiotic accent, a symbol of absolute wealth, prestige and sexual sophistication, will systematically raise the material value of the product. These synergistic interpretations are very much in line with the theoretical shift from lexical to grammatical approaches to color undertaken by Kress and van Leeuwen (2002) and demonstrate that the deep semiotic meaning can be achieved by structured and patterned combinations of the visual, and not by pointing to the 'symbolic words' in an isolated, static fashion. The use of color in the inter-personal sense which has been calculated is an effective operationalisation of the work of Goethe (1970) and Kandinsky (1977) both of whom have worked on the innate power of color to provoke and appeal to complex emotional states. This high contrast visual salience won't only capture the consumers attention, but it is also psychologically representative of the fragrance profile – it's the dominant and the extravagant of the two. The black and gold look is a cultural symbol of



luxury that is promoted today through the abundance of empirical research in consumer design and through targeted advertisements. The use of this palette here is a well considered move which aims at a market segment that is high quality, cosmopolitan and where the perfume is marketed as a niche, high-quality product full of universal references to the ideas of elegance and sensuality. Finally, the packaging itself is so clear that it is all about a visual code that is in keeping with the communicative purpose of the entire package, which is no longer simply a perfume, but a call to a lifestyle of mystery, exclusivity and modern consumerism.



Figure 3: J. Fragrance "MIKA"

Based on the extensive multimodal perspective on discourse suggested by Machin, D. (2007), the visual analysis of the MIKA POUR HOMME product packaging is not simply about decorating with color and making it look good, but about color as an independent form of communication and a highly structured mode. The assumption made in this analysis is that the semiotic meaning is not only tied to one tone but is in line with the thoughts of Gage (1999), who did a historical analysis of color systems, and Kress and van Leeuwen (2002) who did the first grammatical analysis of visual design. Rather, it is through the intentional relationship between syntax and extreme contrast of colors that meaning is dynamically produced. The muscular, refined masculine look is embodied by a very masculine hyper-dominant achromatic hue which predominates in the packaging, with the majority of color being dark black and featuring stark, silver and white. Here, black is so present that it creates an impression of indubitably strong power, a sense of timeless elegance and great mystery, which trigger in the mind the associations of social power, formal wear and the urban chic. In addition, the matte finish helps to add depth and weight to the packaging, making it more memorable and impactful. On the other hand, silver and white in typography and linear accents suggest a sleek, hyper-modern and technologically precise minimalist luxury. The accents are deliberately dissonant, achromatic, and provoke a playful challenge and/or rejection of traditional male-centric semiotic clichés, such as the ubiquitous aqua-blue in men's perfume. Clichés are rejected in the design and are widely understood by one of the most style conscious and modern day audience of men, who like avant-garde subtle and careful innovations and understated elegance.

The use of black as a systematic tool automatically implies what one might call 'masculine physics' – the physics of dominant power, of elite consumer taste, and of architectural minimalism – as a culture. At the same time, silver is a potent emblem of unrelenting modernity, cold efficiency and a very cold, detached and psychologically controlled masculinity. This particular semiotic blend works very well to create a high-end, strikingly contemporary brand image, the very kind of person targeted and appropriate, namely the young, working male looking for designs which are subtle, but intensely strong. The message of this pure achromatic color at the end of the day is clear: the visual



minimalism of this color style is associated with the perception of self-assurance and commanding control – the key elements of modern manhood and modern luxury. These high-contrast elements also cause some interruption in the visual field and actively stimulate the consumer to think harder. This brilliant execution is in line with the core argument of the book by Machin, D. (2007) product packaging is not only a commercial container but also a multimodal text that is designed strategically and with intent and meaning by the packaging designer, and that carries profound social, cultural, and ideological messages.



Figure 4: J. Fragrance "Marjan"

Moreover the packaging of the product "Marjan" is full of semiotic content, as a result of the careful and considered combination of deep maroon and gold, building upon Kress and van Leeuwen's (2002) transition from a lexical to a more grammatical approach to visual design and on the conceptualization of color by Gage (1999) as a profound meaning-making system. The base color of maroon is solid for expressing emotional depth, the woman's adulthood and strong cultural authenticity. This color in particular has strong connotations in the aesthetics of brides in the South Asian region and ideologies of traditional idealized femininity in the region. The typography and visual accents are in gold, and this introduces luxury, celebration of the divine and a clear separation between socioeconomic classes in complementary opposition. As a symbol of spiritual value in Islamic culture and as an undeniable sign of the loftiest value of material, gold plays a role in this particular context. It is a multimodal mix that doesn't just hover on the surface of luxury, but is a very high level visual code for 'halal luxury' which plays on the culturally defined notion of 'femininity' at a rather superficial level. The cultural associations of maroon are important, such as the roles women have in South Asian communities and for the South Asian diaspora more generally, such as in bridal fashion, and in highly ritualised events. At the same time, the use of gold is strongly reminiscent of religious connotations and historical expressions of material wealth, both of which are direct references to the Quranic reverence and Mughal art. This means that the packaging has a clever idea to resonate with a diaspora that craves cultural continuity and belonging, while also engaging religiously conservative customers in a culture of quiet sophistication. In addition, the complexity of the maroon and gold colors and their combinations give rise to what is called a "jewel-box effect" which enhances the commercial perfume, and makes it a prized cultural object. It is very much a postcolonial semiotic game, and it plays with color contrast, space and all conscious and deliberate deviations from orthography, and with a sure sense of non-Western beauty standards in the intense global luxury game. The visual elements of product packaging are also ideologically charged and structurally complex, like verbal language, (Machin, D.). (2007) strongly argue. In this strict theoretical frame, Marjan is a very sophisticated multimodal text which successfully communicates ethnicity,



modesty of women, high cultural pride and meets the commercial demands of the fast-expanding halal cosmetics market.



Figure 5: Imperial Oud by J.

The packaging for J. Fragrances' "Imperial Oud" is playful and designed to be held, with a glass cube in a textured wooden case, hinting at a masculine, upscale, luxurious style. As described by Machin, D in the context of a carefully selected color palette. (2007) through the challenging multimodal perspective, the color of this product is more than just a decorative element; it is a very intentional communicative mode, a 'situated process' in the sense of Machin, D. (2007) as it is not an isolated but a complex and interdependent one. A well-worked, intense, and creative progression of color from amber to deep dark brown all the way through the glass results in a remarkable aromatic punch and layered scent. These amber hues are auspiciously marking the gutsy, earthy, historically exotic roots of traditional Eastern perfumery in this particular semiotic system. The anchoring dark brown elements, however, indicate great stability, powerful-masculine core, and historic tradition. Most importantly, they are charged as very ideology-laden signifiers. The aim of this specially designed color palette is to highlight the sacred, historically appreciated and intrinsic luxury of authentic oud, within the wider cultural context of the Middle East and South Asia. Thus, colors serve as another powerful emblem of cultural authenticity, heritage and craftsmanship. Besides, the tactile nature of a brown wood effect is used to emphasize the clichés of cultural identity that feel so much more a part of a man's world and regional pride; the golden glint of the amber glass carries strong double connotations of spiritual enlightenment and material wealth. The wood is dark brown and opaque with a nice smooth and translucent amber glass which is very clear and evokes a very sophisticated visual dialectic. This fusion of structural and chromatic dichotomies is an easy and natural blend between the old and the new, and sensual. In addition, the intelligent application of precise geometric gold accents provide a fresh contemporary touch and grace that harmoniously enhance the organic and natural grain of the wood tone, setting an interesting counterpoint between the two. Overall, the picture is a good mix of a plausible story about the growth of manhood, traditional culture and contemporary entertainment suitably presented. These subtle multimodal semiotic selections help to create a highly symbolic object that embodies travel to the world, high status and good taste, and transform the commercial perfume bottle.



Figure 6: Scents N Stories "SMASH MY HEAD"

Enhance your sensory awareness and skills with Scents N Stories "SMASH MY HEAD" The green color scheme is saturated, giving 'SMASH MY HEAD' a fresh, bold and intensely energetic look both in carton and flacon. The color is fitting for all of this and matches with the theory of Machin (2007) which suggests that color is a semiotic tool that is specially created to communicate more complex moods, psychological states, and an assertive brand identity. It is a radical rejuvenation, a wild organic energy, a clear semiotic shift with respect to the more "innocent" and much more "conventional" themes of the other perfumes: tender love, passive femininity or whatever they are. The aggressive and provocative name "SMASH MY HEAD" and the visual difference in the tight and thick black bottle cap that is also one of the most powerful, aggressive and kinetic of all the bottles adds to the vibe of high intensity power, rebelliousness, and kinetic energy. Whether you are planning to use this shade of green for relaxation and calmness, or you want something that is visually stimulating and gives the product a really young look, it is important to note that this shade is not designed for relaxation and calmness, but rather, it gives it an edgy, really youthful look. Green is a polysemic color as there are many complex and entrenched layers of meaning to the cultural context of South Asia. It's historically and inevitably associated with material wealth, grace of God, highest spiritual development (or fulfillment, as it's called in language today), and yet its use in a highly modern, consumerist environment can spark intense eco-consciousness, physical power and dynamism. If there is a first "no compromise" high-end quality, it is that of explosive green with overpowering typography of yellow-gold, and that's the intentional blending of modalities, leaving the scent unmistakably masculine, dynamically energetic, and unabashedly "offbeat". The very "value" of this color is that it is color that is deliberately subverting the historically and socially coded color palette, something that is intentional and conscious and working in opposition to the conventions and protocols of the industry, and taking a more daring, and far riskier, color position. But as far as sight is concerned, it's amazing how the contrasting bright green and stark black give a lot of tension. The deep black elements provide a good foundation, laced with the sense of authority, sophistication and true exclusivity; and the green gives it a wild touch of vibrancy and energy. This mathematised mixture works well for passing along a commercial message made possible by rebellious youths and refined by the upper class. The overall effect is a truly striking contrast between the vibrant and illuminated green front and the dark black background, creating a retail shelf that really stands out and signifies strength and mental discipline – a trait that is appreciated by a younger and more assertive consumer group.



Steps: scents N stories – TIPPING POINT

Figure 7: Scents N Stories "TIPPING POINT"

For the man Scents N Stories' "TIPPING POINT" is a very modern, conceptually edgy and very refined perfume. The connotation of "EXTRAIT DE PARFUM" is strong and instantly suggests a product that is meant to be strong, long, all around and uncompromising in quality. The primary visual packaging is a complex, sophisticated navy blue carton, with the design of the topographic map finely cut in navy blue, decoratively printed in elegant golden lettering, and a dark-toned flacon with minimal black and white lettering are synchronously combined. Color is not simply a 'visual afterthought' in this highly constructed visual text, but the central, driving medium of the profound semiotic expression. The prevalent navy blue color signifies seriousness, psychological depth and stability in the deployment. The placement of the chromatic elements is an excellent fit for a fully-grown, polished and well-educated man. Navy is a universalize color code, and cannot be detached from the product, which is a high socioeconomic class and high reliability marker in multicultural societies and corporations. In addition, the bottle's dark label gives a feeling of exclusivity and focused strength. Further, the dark label on the bottle lends a feeling of exclusivity and concentrated strength. The gold lettering adds to the overall design, adding a touch of elegance and luxury, as well as a sense of great wealth and prestige. Taken together, such musical fragments paint an intricate picture of more developed aspirations, mixed with concepts of psychological strength, potential change, and the harmonious relationship between tradition and innovation. The colors of these objects, therefore, are given a semiotic significance that is appropriate to the theoretical approach proposed by Machin (2007) and related to the semantics and roles of these colors in other sociocultural contexts. This is a visual short-cut and "TIPPING POINT" is designed so that when a person wears it, it tells the world that they are definitely in the "VIP" social level, and that they are a part of a very successful and respected group. Furthermore, using the golden text cleverly to link the product to the terms 'excellence' and 'grace' further raises the brand's level of aspiration in the market. In the cultural traditions of South Asia and the Middle East, gold is a symbol of material wealth and joy, and it is used to add to the sense of luxury in this product. Black and white, when employed as a "supplementary" color, are high-level, sophisticated, recurring visual ingredients and culturally neutral. Minimalism also conveys a timeless feel and a deliberate neutrality with regards to gender, which is a sound strategy for any audience these days as Gen Z have welcomed the use of non-binary and inclusive design themes. Color combinations are not just used as a device to show language and sentence structure. However, they are also deliberately related to language and sentence structure, as these are 'active' and produce the visual meaning (Machin, 2007). The packaging design's masterful, grammatical use of deep blue and gold is a strong premise for luxury, given by the gold, and the deep blue provides context for intellectual depth and emotional control. The contrasting label on the bottle, however, makes a strong contrast to the bottle structure. The contrast is stark, the chromaticity of



both components highlights the conceptual clarity and boldness of the product, a turning point in an interesting and significant way, literally and metaphorically, in the sense that it expresses in its name. Finally, this package design is a story of evolution of the modern man. This man is more or less balanced and grounded, but always ready to make a sudden transformation. The designers have been ingenious in avoiding any frivolous embellishment and have instead created deep elegance, rooted in strong chromatic shifts and an all-the-same visual language of modern luxury..



Figure 8: Scents N Stories "CATCH 22"

Incidentally, the title of the show is Scents N Stories "CATCH 22". The "CATCH 22" is the name given to Figure 8. Figure 8 is called "CATCH 22". In its meticulously considered packaging and brand strategy, "CATCH 22 EXTRAIT DE PARFUM" by Scents N Stories pretty much exudes a rather unique visual identity that is semantically fancy and complex. It is fitting that the paradoxical paradox of this title, "CATCH 22", is perfectly captured here with this bold, dark and highly enigmatic color palette of the bottle, where a very strong black and deep red dominates. This type of semiotic coupling is present here, with the selected colors with a lot of saturation, which leave a very clear impression in the viewer, according to the basic chromatic theory of Kandinsky (1977) and of Gage (1999). Black, in this particular visual language, is a symbol of absolute authority, the unknown, and deepest mystery; deep red, on the other hand, is an aggressive, high energy symbol that embodies intense passion, primal allure and kinetic danger. These two powerful hues are juxtaposed in a way that is theatrical, raw, challenging and kind of with a mode of sophistication that is not quite normal. It is a deliberate visual strategy, thoughtfully applied and designed to draw visitors to a particular area - the consumers who are conscious of psychological complexity and driven by the self-denial of the orthodox commercial trends and aesthetics in conventional design. Furthermore the low-key, minimalist lines of the packaging architecture, juxtaposed with these strong chromatic contrasts, supported by sleek metallic accents, systematically contribute to an overall impression of cutting-edge modern luxury and uncompromising exclusivity. The French denotation "EXTRAIT DE PARFUM" is a language that accompanies the visual language and helps to add prestige to the product and connect it to the classical tradition of perfumes. But the avant-garde visual element doesn't need to be introduced here, and with a bit of aggression, it goes off into the heavens challenging the typical consumer notion of how a high-priced perfume ought to be "delivered" into the home, traditionally anyway. The final mix is excellent, and seems to be a commercial film of worldliness, psychological adventure, and understated duality. The perfume's paradoxical name is balanced with a very emotional and intellectually engaging color palette, which helps rebrand this perfume from a mere cosmetic product to an emotionally engaging and intellectually stimulating one.



Scents: N Stories "LADY EVE" (Fig. 9)

Figure 9: Scents N Stories "LADY EVE"

The packaging that Scents N Stories created for "LADY EVE" is able to produce the subtle and complex multimodal semiotic narrative. The name "Lady Eve" is an alluring, biblical, literary reference that immediately conjures up a rich cultural archetype; a woman whose natural, historical magnetism is inextricably bound up with fundamental power. Characteristics of softness and authority appear to clash, but they are skillfully set off against one another in hauntingly balanced ways, presented in chromatic grades and through the intentional use of typographic forms. The light pink soft-blush tone in the flacon makes it a universal, swoony and romantic representation of female. Meanwhile, darker hues of color, more saturated and deeper, like rich rose and deep burgundy, add layers of emotion to the visual story and unequivocal sensuality. Theoretically, from the point of view of using color as a communicative medium on its own (Machin, 2007), it is obvious that the use of this color is not just for decoration. Rather they are potent semiotic tools which 'activate' and represent and communicate complex emotional experiences and enduring cultural meanings of the 'feminine'. The packaging is further enhanced with gorgeous and opulent metallic accents—gold and champagne. This detailing not only improves the material, but also evokes a feeling of the past, and a look at a time of luxury. The typography is also an important structuring element in this multimodal text and used for selection. The product name "Lady Eve" is unique in that the font is elegant, fluid and serif (or script), while the overall brand name "Scents N Stories" is in a rigid sans-serif style. The deliberate typographical contrast is a linguistic feature of the grace of the classics. This grace has always been there, and it is impressive because it brings to the fore the unique positioning of the product, at the intersection between tradition and modernity. The visual language and the interplay of chromatic contrast, typographical hierarchy and tactile material texture that lie beneath it are sophisticated, yet are also a direct, active enunciation for the consumer's focus – with a subtle crossover and bridge between classical antiquity and modern innovation. Last, but not least, the entire concept of LADY EVE is not just about its exterior. However, a story carefully played out, with only the complex multiple levels of modernity of femininity. The perfume bottle is the synthesis of its effective and accomplished use of relaxing, but highly expressive colors, finishes, typography and ideology. It's really a beautiful and powerful "classic".



Figure 10: "MERRY ME"

The packaging design of "MERRY ME" from Scents N Stories is perfect for the celebratory, vibrant and pure joy. From both the phonetic and orthographic perspectives, the playfulness of "MERRY ME" can be explained as a semiotic stimulus to laughter and a suggestive, even romantic pun as well: "MERRY ME" is a literal stimulus for lightheartedness and a pun on its name. This linguistic choice is based on the depth of feeling, spontaneity and enthusiasm that always accompanies merry-makers at social occasions. The packaging uses a chromatic palette, high saturation and abundant radiant color—just as necessary—from the perspective of Machin's (2007) color theory, which establishes the emotional foundation for the package. The vibrant colors, especially the dynamic reds and vibrant greens, are rich in cultural significance and instill a sense of celebration and upliftment. This conscious play with color is perfectly aligned to pictorial traditions and visual codes of holiday aesthetics and highlighted moments of life's experiences and is a significant representation of the physical package as the verbal signifier of interpersonal warmth and festive sociability. Moreover, the pastel and muted gold palette conceptually brings the design and the design story in forms of accessible luxury with a new vibrancy and youthfulness. Important, however, these particular colors go much deeper than their literal, denotative definitions; it is the cultural resonance that really raises and enlivens the emotional impact of the product as a whole. Colors such as red are very energetic and can create intense psychological stimulation and passion in the viewer. Lighter, less saturated colors, however, can trigger deeply-rooted cultural memories of being young and innocent, free and loose, and happy. The metallic gold accents have been added to the packaging, fitting the idea of an overjoyed yet luxurious and elegant-looking package. The specific multimodal mix aims to make them aspirational and luxurious, without ever losing their fun or spontaneity. The typography is definitely in the spirit of this lively idea; the spacing is considered, as well as the strong contrast to the graphics, and the softly rounded, playful form of the typography contributes to the "fun-factor". Last but not least, MERRY ME is not only good, but also a very visual architecture which relies on the basic elements of festive cultural visualization which are classically used, like rhythmical repetition, glittering visual highlight, lavishly shining colors and highly fluid, dynamic compositional rhythm. This design process is so detailed that a visual narrative is formed by the overall structural bond between the typography, color and material components. Overall, this fragrance symbolizes joy and togetherness amongst people, and is designed to provide the wearer with a happy, extra treat, sensory trip. This potent multimodal mix is achieved by MERRY ME which proposes a new kind of joy, intensely pictorial, intensely vivid, emotionally potent, and which is precisely aimed at a contemporary, more materialistic consumer who is making an active effort to experience the tangible emotional content in what he buys.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The detailed multimodal analysis of the selected packaging designs of J. Fragrances and Scents N Stories shows how important visual semiotics is for modern perfume brands in



Pakistan to build their corporate identity, create emotional atmosphere and make the market desirable. From the results it can be seen, packaging is not only an ornamental function but it is also an active and communicative highly structured text. The two companies analyzed revealed a very high level of semiotic meaning in the chromatic palette used to create packages. The two companies investigated were found to have very high 'semiotic value', which is connected to the brand's ethos and the emotional value that the packaging is intended to bring for the target group.

One of the many interesting examples of this strategic difference is the difference in the two brands' visual grammars. As the name implies, J. Fragrances gravitate towards the dramatic, intense, and ideologically rich colors – cavernous blacks, authoritative navies, and rich, traditional burgundies and maroons. Themes of masculine attraction, mental mystery, cultural legacy, and bougie, high-end, sophisticated luxury are consistently conveyed by these chromatic selections. Scents N Stories, on the other hand, tends to have a clever, highly inventive approach to the graphic design, using bright, vibrant colors, animated greens, soft pastels, and bright golds. This alternative chromatic route is an effective way to create a very different sense of sweetness, visual lightness, youthful rebellion, and exuberant festivity – and a very different, very modern consumer.

However, these results strongly indicate that color is a crucial criterion for developing brand identity in Pakistan's highly competitive retail environment, where emotional and cultural influences largely shape design choices. They are not random color selections; rather, they are choices of culturally resonant hues that represent abstract ideas of traditional manliness, socio-economic pride, or the community's elation. Thus, they are promoting the psychological and emotional 'treatment' that consumers will apply when they first smell the fragrance. The theory of color as a full-fledged communicative mode, developed by Machin (2007), was well matched to their suitability. Color should be considered a 'structural communicating factor' like verbal language, with definite emotional and ideological meanings enshrined within it, Machin says.

In the particular socio-cultural context of Pakistan, these indigenous brands make a masterly use of colors – green, black and gold – to capitalize skillfully on the already existing cultural discourses related to religious identity, class stratification and historical tradition. In this sense, the brands combine these already familiar ideological codes into their visual production, transforming the commercial product into a cultural recognition object and making the monetary investment in these luxury products much more positive and acceptable to the local consumer market. It is known that the chosen color is likely to have a significant emotional connection with local ideology. When the product looks somewhat similar, and the consumer's expectation of an emotional connection is high, consumer emotional involvement and brand loyalty will be enhanced.

In the current study, a strong understanding of color as a semiotic tool serves as the basis; however, it is important to recognize the methodological limitations of color. This study was limited to the analysis of 2D visual elements (mainly color and typography). It did not include analysis of other important sensory and morphological elements that undoubtedly play a synergistic role in holistic branding. Further developments of this system for future academic research can be realized by studying the interaction of the semiotic level of color and the physical level of the bottle (morphology), the tactile level of the materials used (haptics), and the linguistic level that assigns the bottle a name and describes the fragrance (lexical). Research into this multimodal,



complex combination of semiotic resources will yield a more comprehensive, holistic understanding of how the brand's meaning developed in the luxury market during the era of globalization.

CONCLUSION

The present Study has extensively explored the visual strategies employed in the design of perfume containers in Pakistan, using a semiotic and multimodal approach, with particular emphasis on color. The study builds on the model of multimodal discourse analysis developed by David Machin (2007) and concludes that packaging is more than just a passive, aesthetic casing of the product; it is a powerful, active medium that communicates and articulates the brand's central identity and emotional value. The study reveals that perfume retail packaging in Pakistan is well designed, and various color combinations create an aura of luxury, a sense of the masculine, traditional femininity, communal celebration, and great mysticism. The results have clearly demonstrated the significance of using multimodal design in shaping consumers' first impressions and the overall tone of the brand message.

In particular, the study demonstrates that color is a dense and culturally laden semiotic tool, one that not only relies on its appearance and appeal but also serves as an effective carrier of socially constructed meanings of historical tradition, socio-economic class, gender identity, and religious ideology. Brands that capitalize on color usage that plays a strong emotional role in their native culture can achieve success in building brand loyalty and emotional relationships between consumers. This commercial success is achieved immediately by aligning the product presented in the material with consumers' local beliefs and expectations.

The findings in this study are of great significance for the scholarly community as they offer a valuable insight into the use of specific semiotic resources, color in particular, to communicate and connect with well-known target audiences in the present competitive global retail market in which visual brand storytelling is of paramount importance to the success of business. Moreover, it highlights the importance of local brand marketing that respects cultural differences while remaining strong and competitive in the modern retail environment. From this basic investigation of the semiotic modes, future academic research can proceed to contribute additional modes that are also significant to the visual grammar: the naming of a scent as a language, the shape of the bottle and its influence on bottle morphology, and the tactile properties of the packaging materials. Furthermore, comparative studies of perfume imagery across brands and countries would provide greater insight into the complex, culturally charged syntax of perfume imagery.

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