



# New Trends and Issues Proceedings on Humanities and Social Sciences



Volume 5, Issue 6 (2018) 18-23

[www.prosoc.eu](http://www.prosoc.eu)

ISSN 2547-8818

Selected Paper of 7th World Conference on Design and Arts (WCDA 2018), 28-30 June 2018, BAU International Berlin  
University of Applied Sciences, Berlin – Germany

## An interior design studio: Colour

**Nilay Ozsavas Ulucay\***, Mugla Sitki Kocman University, 48000 Mugla, Turkey

### Suggested Citation:

Ulucay, N. O. (2018). An interior design studio: Colour. *New Trends and Issues Proceedings on Humanities and Social Sciences*. [Online]. 5(6), pp 18–23. Available from: [www.prosoc.eu](http://www.prosoc.eu)

Selection and peer review under responsibility of Prof. Dr. Ayse Cakir Ilhan, Ankara University, Turkey  
©2018 SciencePark Research, Organization & Counseling. All rights reserved.

---

### Abstract

A workshop conducted with students about colour in interior design and methods of colour selection emphasises the importance of colour knowledge and its place in education. This paper contains studio practice and the evaluation of the works that are organised with the interior architecture students in a studio in Turkey. The studio aims to inform and practice the students about colour knowledge and methods of colour selection that has a significant role in the interior architecture profession. The workshop methodology consists of three phases: a pre-study, a presentation of this topic and finally, the same practice done again by students using the methods in presentations. Space is the same in the first and the last studies in which the students made colour selections, thus students can compare and interpret these two works. It is observed that the workshop made a significant difference in colour perception of the students.

**Keywords:** Interior design, colour selection, workshop, education, method.

---

\* ADDRESS FOR CORRESPONDENCE: **Nilay Ozsavas Ulucay**, Mugla Sitki Kocman University, 48000 Mugla, Turkey.  
E-mail address: [nozsavas@gmail.com](mailto:nozsavas@gmail.com) / Tel.: +90 252 211 10 00

## 1. Introduction

Colour is a significant element for all design professions. Colour requires a detailed study and a designer should consider the meanings, psychological effects and interactions of colours when designing. Colour can create optical illusions such as aftereffects/afterimage arising from colour interaction, and different perception can be in size effects and distance-proximity relationships. Also, different psychological effects of the colours have been proven by experiments. Martel (1995) states that colours affect people's mental and physical state. Each colour has a unique attraction that leads to psychological reactions outside of the person's consciousness. In 1947, the test made by Luscher that revealed the relationship of colour to personality traits (Luscher, 1969), and the experiments made by Frieling (1979) show changes in colour preferences depending on age and gender. Apart from variables such as personality traits and age, different perceptions and effects of colours are also composed according to culture, experience and fashion. Because of these effects, colour is also used as a way of communication in many areas by its effects on humans.

In interior design, some variables determine the colour selection such as the physical structure of the space, function, user requests and likes. When planning colour, it should be a relation to material, furniture and fittings, lighting system, space identity, psychology and personal impressions (Manav, 2011). Differences can also be created in the perception of space with the right colour selection. An interior designer should have a colour knowledge and experience to accurately reflect the identity of the space, to lose or reveal physical features, to influence positively the psychology of the user. As Kanat (2001, p. 95) pointed out, a successfully applied colour is more than just being beautiful by chance. Likewise, successfully applied colour schemes can reduce the adverse effects of the spaces on people, provide different perceptions of the venues and make them suitable for their function. The effect of used colour varies with the interaction of one colour with the other, the size of use, the location of application, contiguity, light and textile factors (Tate, 1987, p. 152). Colours can create volumetric differences in the space where they are used. Hue and value of the colour can create different depth perceptions. For example, warm colours are perceived closer, while cold colours are perceived further away (Ozsavas, 2016). Snowden, Thompson and Troscianko (2012, p. 132) emphasize the importance of the hue, value and saturation of the colours with the surface and its environment. A green armchair placed in front of a neutral coloured wall gives a red effect to the wall because complementary colour of the armchair will have an effect on the wall. It can also create unexpected results and perceptions of different distances in space (Ozsavas, 2015). These effects need to be used correctly and prevent negative effects while choosing colours. The designer determines the correct colour schemes according to these variables and also the designer is in an approach that is foreseen by sociological and psychological research.

## 2. Colour selection methods

In the design process, colour selections are made according to specific methods. Pile (1997) indicates that the designers use a hybrid approach because existing systems are not suitable for interior design. An experienced interior designer can create a new colour scheme instead of selecting a specific colour scheme, and this new one is usually in accordance with a recognised scheme (Pile, 1997, p. 78). Except for the user and space factors, the colour selection is based on a defined system that considering the form of the object, the colour amount in surface and interaction of colour with each other (analogous/complementary, warm/cool). A colour wheel is a tool for selecting harmonious combinations; colours were chosen from a different point on the wheel that provides variations like complementary, analogous or mutual complements (Ambrose & Harris, 2006, p. 24).

### **2.1. Analogous colour scheme**

This is a colour harmony consisting of colours in a quarter of the colour wheel. In this scheme, generally, a selected colour creates a harmony of its similar colours with different types, tones and saturation. Pile (1997) states that an analogous scheme uses at least two colours, which does not contain more than one-quarter of the wheel. A dominant colour and its adjacent colours on the wheel are chosen, and designers usually use this scheme as a methodology, which is called the analogous scheme. This is a simple and risk-free method (Kaptan, 2011).

### **2.2. Complementary colour scheme**

This is a colour harmony consisting of two mutually opposed colours in the colour wheel. Besides, these contrasting colours can create a harmony not only mutual but also double-split, triadic and tetrad.

### **2.3. Double-split complementary colour scheme**

This is a colour harmony consisting of colour with two sides of the opposite colour. Double complementary colour schemes are softer than complementary colour schemes, and the intensity can be reduced by neutralising colours and adding other tones of colour (Pile, 1997). Double complementary colours push each other when used together, and colours transform towards the colour behind them (Ozsavas, 2015).

### **2.4. Triadic complementary colour scheme**

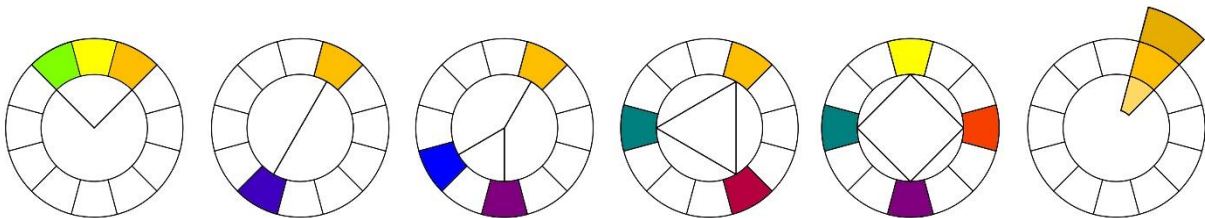
This is a colour harmony consisting of selected colours to be equally placed in the colour wheel. Kaptan (2011) states that this colour scheme can be determined with an equilateral triangle in the colour wheel. Dynamism is at the forefront of the space created by this colour selection method.

### **2.5. Tetrad complementary colour scheme**

This is a colour harmony selecting with four mutual colours. Harsh and garish results can be managed by using very light or very dark of the colours (Pile, 1997).

### **2.6. Monochromatic colour scheme**

This is a colour harmony selecting same shades of a colour. Pile (1997) states that this is a safe scheme because there can be no clashing colour selections. This method can have a monotonous effect if the colour is not carefully selected (Kaptan, 2011).



**Figure 1. Analogous, complementary, double, triadic, tetrad and monochromatic colours**

### 3. Methodology

This article focuses on teaching colours in interior spaces by an interior design studio workshop with students. The workshop aims to give information about the methods of selecting colours and to do practice with the students. The method applied in an earlier study (Ozsavas, 2015) was improved. The new method consists of three parts. There are a pre-practice, a presentation and a final practice at the workshop. The content of the workshop is as follow.

- Students colourise the given colourless visual (Figure 2) to quantify pre-education levels.
- A presentation is made about colour and colour selection methods in interior design with examples.
- After the presentation, students recolour the same space.
- Then, a general evaluation of the practice is done, and the workshop is terminated.



**Figure 2. Colourless visual**

The aim of the practice of the colourisation before the presentation is to measure the impact of the workshop on students and to compare with the final practice. Space, which previously tried, containing different levels, forms and surfaces is used. The presentation includes colour knowledge, psychological effects of colours, colour selections according to the function and colour selection methods. Students are grouped, and each group has homework about one colour selection method. Final practice and evaluations are made on the second day of the workshop. At the end of the workshop, the practice was interpreted, and the students themselves made evaluations. Therefore, the students realised their mistakes by self-criticism.

### 4. Findings

In the workshop, there is a pre-practice on the colour selection in the space. The presentation was made to form a theoretical overview, and the students were given one colour scheme as homework in groups. They have worked on these schemes for the second day of the workshop. The second day, they select the colour and colourise the final practice according to these schemes. The first and last practices belonging to each student are listed below as a group.





**Figure 3. First practices of the students**



**Figure 4. Final practice of the students**

**(Analogous, complementary, double (2), triadic, tetrad, monochromatic (2) colour scheme)**

The works were evaluated with the workshop coordinator and students. According to the knowledge they acquired, the students assessed their first practice and commented on them. As understood from the works, the colour selection methods of the students showed a good development with this workshop.

## 5. Conclusion

One of the essential elements of the design process is colour knowledge. Within the scope of this study, a theoretical overview is created about the methods of colour and colour selection in the interior design. A workshop was organised with the interior design students to evaluate the colour in interior design. The first and final practices of the students show that even the workshop with a short-term education contributed to the knowledge. In pre-practice, it is evident that colour selections are not made consciously by the students. In light of the information given in the workshop, the student reaches a more accurate conclusion. However, only the studio does not provide adequate experience. This issue should be processed in all directions and detail in the education process.

In this study, the practice of colour selection methods is due to the lack of education on the subject of colour in interior design education. When studying the curriculum of the departments giving interior design education in Turkey, there are only a few departments which have a course on the colour. In other courses, basic colour information is given, but the methods of selecting colours for space are only in the project studios. Besides, there is no course about the function of the space, the

methods of selecting colours for physical properties and psychology. It results incorrect applications in the profession. Individuals try to fix this deficiency themselves or repeat some specified colour schemes. The lack of education on the importance of the colour knowledge in the design process and the human–space relationship can produce negative results regarding the profession. The fact that no professional qualification has been achieved can also lead to deformation in the professional culture. As a result of the evaluation of all studies, the necessity of a course on colour in education is emphasised.

According to the results of the general evaluation, colour can create significant differences in lighting, material, function, physical structure and psychology in the space; it should not be selected randomly. It is necessary to eliminate the deficiencies in colour for qualified interior design education. It is thought that the results obtained from the study will be a source of research planned to be done in the future, supporting both education and professional development.

## References

- Ambrose, G. & Harris, P. (2006). *Basic Design 05: Colour*. Switzerland: AVA Publishing.
- Frieling, H. (1979). *Farbe im Raum*. Germany: Callwey Puplication.
- Kanat, A. (2001). *Renk ve Duyu Psikolojisi*. Izmir, Turkey: Ilya Yayınevi.
- Kaptan, B. B. (2011). Renk. In *Bilgisayar Destekli Temel Tasarım. Unite 5* (pp. 76–109). Eskisehir, Turkey: Anadolu Üniversitesi Yayınları.
- Luscher, M. (1969). *The Luscher Colour Test* (I. Scott, Trans.). Simon & Schuster Inc.
- Manav, B. (2011). Hacimde Bir Tasarım Parametresi Olarak Renk. *Gazi Üniversitesi Güzel Sanatlar Fakültesi, Sanat ve Tasarım Dergisi*, 8, 93–102.
- Martel, C. D. (1995). *Ben Enerjiyim* (A. Unel, Trans.). Istanbul, Turkey: Arion Yayınevi.
- Ozsavas, N. (2015). *Renk: Bir Değerlendirme Olcutu Olarak İç Mekan tasarımındaki Önemi ve Bir Ders İçerigi Önerisi*, Sanatta Yeterlik Tezi, Anadolu Üniversitesi, Güzel Sanatlar Enstitüsü, Eskisehir, Turkey.
- Pile, J. F. (1997). *Colour in Interior Design*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Snowden, R., Thompson, P. & Troscianko, T. (2012). *Basic Vision: An Introduction to Visual Perception*. New York: Oxford University Press.