

The background of the slide is a collage of overlapping human profiles in various colors, including shades of gray, green, blue, purple, pink, yellow, and red. The profiles are facing right and are layered on top of each other, creating a sense of depth and diversity.

Bias and Prejudice Associated with

COLORS

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T SOC 165

Perceptions of **Nude** Skin Tones

The term "nude" is widely used in fashion and art to describe a light-skinned tone, perpetuating the idea that this specific shade represents the "default" or "universal" human skin color. This definition disregards the rich diversity of skin tones and often leaves people of color feeling excluded. Products labeled as "nude" — from makeup to clothing to bandages — tend to cater exclusively to lighter skin tones, reinforcing the notion that lighter skin is the standard. This bias has deep societal implications, as it prioritizes lighter skin tones over others and perpetuates a lack of representation.

Language plays a significant role in shaping these biases. As Wade notes, there are "a series of examples of the words 'nude,' 'skin-toned,' and 'flesh-colored' being used to describe light-tan. In other words, a linguistic erasure of people who don't have light skin." This use of language not only normalizes lighter tones but also dismisses the experiences and identities of those with darker skin. The frequent association of "nude" with a single, narrow shade illustrates how systemic exclusion can be subtly embedded in everyday language and consumer products.



Nude

#F7D9BC

By moving away from a singular, exclusionary definition of "nude," we can break down assumptions of superiority and normalcy associated with lighter skin tones. Representation matters, and redefining "nude" is a step toward fostering inclusivity and celebrating the beauty of all skin tones. Embracing this diversity sends a powerful message: that everyone, regardless of complexion, deserves to feel seen and valued.

Color that divides job groups

Blue-Collar vs. White-Collar vs. Pink-Collar Jobs

Blue

#0db9d5



White

#ffffff



Pink

#da7e92



The terms "blue collar" and "white collar" are deeply rooted in the history of labor, distinguishing between manual and intellectual work. "Traditionally, blue collar jobs have involved manual labor, often in manufacturing or construction, and hourly or piecework pay. White collar jobs, on the other hand, are performed in offices, with work that is managerial, administrative, or clerical in nature. White collar workers are usually salaried" (Parietti). These distinctions, while once useful, are now outdated and reflect how colors have been used to categorize occupations based on perceived social status and gender roles.

Blue-collar jobs, historically associated with physical labor and hands-on tasks, were often viewed as less prestigious than white-collar jobs, which were seen as more intellectual and office-based. This division reinforced social hierarchies and created stereotypes about the value of different kinds of work. Over time, the emergence of the term "pink collar" added another layer to this classification. Pink-collar jobs, typically found in sectors like healthcare, education, and customer service, have traditionally been dominated by women. These roles have often been undervalued, reinforcing the gendered nature of labor and perpetuating the idea that "women's work" is less significant or lower in status.

These color-based job classifications highlight the need for a more inclusive and equitable approach to labor. Instead of associating certain colors with specific types of work, it is important to recognize the value of all jobs, regardless of whether they are manual, clerical, or service-based. Breaking free from these outdated stereotypes can lead to a more fair society, where professions are judged based on skill, effort, and impact rather than outdated notions of prestige or gender. Moving beyond color-coded job categories would allow workers to pursue careers based on passion and ability, rather than societal expectations.

Gender Stereotypes

Blue for
BOYS



Pink for
GIRLS

Blue

#0db9d5

Pink

#da7e92

The association of blue with boys and pink with girls is a relatively modern construct, shaped more by marketing and societal expectations than any inherent connection between gender and color. Interestingly, in the early 20th century, the roles were reversed: pink was seen as a stronger, more masculine color, while blue was considered delicate and feminine. This shift was largely influenced by evolving marketing strategies and cultural norms, which reinforced traditional gender roles.

As Wolchover notes, “the pink-for-a-girl, blue-for-a-boy social norms only set in during the 20th century in the United States; they cannot possibly stem from any evolved differences between boys' and girls' favorite colors, Paoletti has argued.” This historical context highlights how arbitrary these associations are, showing that they have no biological basis but are instead a product of societal conditioning.

Despite this, the colors blue and pink have become deeply ingrained in our subconscious, shaping how we perceive gender from a very young age. Gender reveal parties, clothing, toys, and even marketing campaigns often use these colors to signify gender, reinforcing stereotypes that can limit how children view themselves and their options. These restrictions go beyond mere aesthetics, influencing behaviors, preferences, and expectations placed on individuals based solely on gendered color codes.

Challenging these norms is essential. Encouraging gender-neutral approaches to color choices can help break down the rigid stereotypes tied to pink and blue. By allowing children to explore a broader range of colors without associating them with gender, we promote individuality and creativity. Moving away from these arbitrary norms fosters a more inclusive society where identity is not limited by traditional roles. Embracing this change can help dismantle outdated stereotypes and encourage self-expression free from societal constraints.



Unlucky Colors in Different Cultures

White

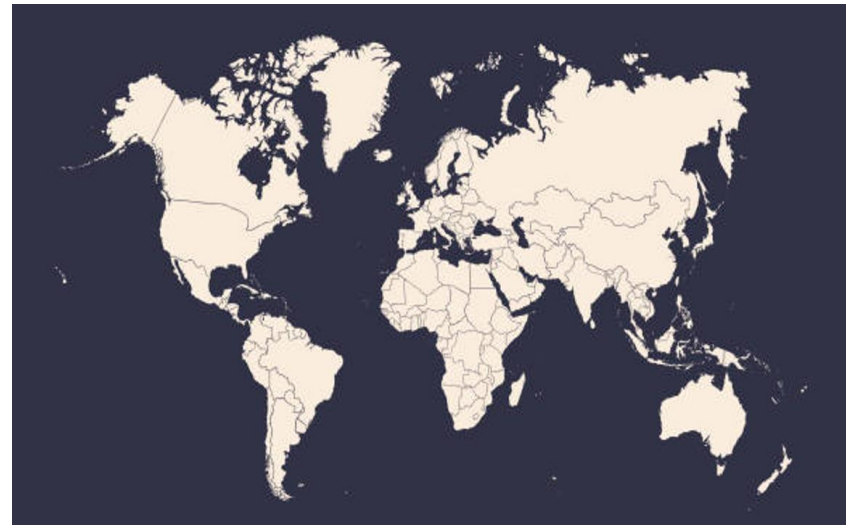
#ffffff

Black

#000000

Color symbolism and superstition vary significantly across cultures, and understanding these differences is essential to avoid unintentional offense. In Korea, for example, red is considered an unlucky color because it is associated with mourning and death. This contrasts with many Western cultures, where red is a symbol of celebration, good fortune, or love. Similarly, in the Philippines, white, typically linked with purity and peace in many Western societies, is considered a symbol of death and mourning. This highlights how cultural context can dramatically alter the meaning of colors.

Other cultures also have unique associations with certain colors. In India, black is often linked to negativity, bad luck, and evil, making it an unlucky color in many contexts. On the other hand, in Japan, yellow is seen as a symbol of betrayal and infidelity, which contrasts with its association with happiness and optimism in many Western cultures. These cultural differences emphasize the need to be mindful of the meanings attached to colors in different societies.



COLOR AND ITS CULTURAL INFLUENCES

Cultural influences that affect color's meaning can shift the context of your message and brand perception. It's important to be aware, and account for these differences – especially if your brand targets a world-wide/international audience.

KINSHIP VS. HALLOWEEN
In Native American cultures, orange is a color associated with learning and kinship. White in the USA and other countries, orange is often linked to Halloween.

DEATH VS. HAPPINESS
In Africa, dark red symbolizes death. In most of Asia, red is a color of prosperity, and commonly used in weddings. In fact, most Indian brides dress solely in red (on their wedding day).

FUNERALS
In both Japan and China, white is used during funerals and mourning – a sharp contrast to the black, which represents mourning in the western world.

DID YOU KNOW

TRADITIONS



White dresses were used in weddings only after Queen Victoria used it in hers. Back then not everyone could afford to keep a white dress clean, so at first this tradition was only carried on by the wealthy. Over the years it became common in many cultures.

BOYS VS. GIRLS



In some areas of the UK, boys wore pink (a watered down version of the masculine red), while girls wore blue in homage to Virgin Mary. In 1927, Macy's positioned pink as a fashionable color for boys – and it stuck. But it wasn't until after WWII that pink became associated to females as brighter colored fabrics were being produced.

Red

#8f0101

Yellow

#ffd200

"Traditionally, colors are stereotyped in each culture. Yellow in America, for instance, is associated with happiness, joy, and hope, while in Japan it means courage and aristocracy, and in Greece, sadness" (Alexander). This quote illustrates the contrasting symbolism of colors across cultures. A color that may evoke positive emotions in one society can carry negative associations in another, underscoring the importance of cultural sensitivity when using colors in communication or design.

Understanding the cultural significance of colors is crucial in today's globalized world. It helps to avoid misunderstandings, fosters respect for diverse traditions, and ensures more effective communication. As color meanings vary widely, it is important to consider the cultural context to prevent inadvertent offense and promote better cross-cultural interactions.

White vs. Black in **Western** and **Eastern** Societies

Color symbolism varies significantly across cultures, with contrasting meanings attached to the same colors. In Western societies, white and black carry distinct and often opposing connotations. "White is associated with weddings, purity, and cleanliness in Western society. However, the color represents death, mourning, and humility in many Asian cultures" ("How Translating Colors Across Cultures Can Help You Make a Positive Impact"). In Western culture, white is traditionally linked to purity, innocence, and new beginnings, often worn during weddings and other celebratory occasions. On the other hand, black is associated with death, evil, and negativity, commonly seen in mourning rituals or as a symbol of darkness and the unknown.



However, these color associations are not universal and can be reversed in many Eastern cultures. In Chinese culture, for example, black is a symbol of power, wisdom, and sophistication. It represents strength and authority rather than negativity. In contrast, white in many Asian cultures is tied to mourning and death. This stark contrast in symbolism emphasizes how color perception is deeply influenced by cultural context. In some Asian traditions, white is worn during funerals to honor the deceased, highlighting the different meanings associated with the color compared to Western cultures.



White

#ffffff

Black

#000000



These cultural differences illustrate the importance of understanding color symbolism when interacting with diverse cultures. As global communication and interaction become more common, recognizing and respecting these color associations can help avoid misunderstandings and foster positive relationships. By embracing the cultural relativity of color, we can better navigate the complexities of international and intercultural communication, ensuring that our messages and actions are received as intended.

The Benefits of Color Bias

Pink

#da7e92

Yellow

#ffd200

Green

#1d8b00

Blue

#0db9d5



Color symbolism can have a significant positive impact on society, particularly when applied to road safety. In South Korea, for example, the use of pink lane markers on highways has proven effective in reducing accidents. "Over 900 color-coded lane markers have been installed across the nation's highways, with reports of up to 40% fewer accidents at exits utilizing the system" (Korea Bizwire). The color pink, often associated with social vulnerability, such as for seniors, children, and pregnant women, plays a critical role in this safety initiative. By painting certain lanes pink, authorities have created a visual cue for drivers to slow down and be more cautious, especially in areas where more vulnerable individuals might be present. This use of color helps to raise awareness of safety without relying on explicit signage or complicated interventions.

Similarly, the color yellow is commonly used to indicate buses transporting children or students. Yellow buses are widely recognized as a signal for drivers to exercise caution and reduce their speed. In many countries, seeing a yellow bus prompts drivers to slow down, understanding that children may be boarding or disembarking, which increases the potential for accidents. This association is built on years of color-coding, and it helps ensure that drivers remain alert in areas where vulnerable passengers are involved.



These examples show how color-based systems can be used strategically to enhance safety and prevent accidents. While colors often carry cultural or social meanings, in these cases, their impact on road safety and driving behavior demonstrates how such symbolic associations can be used practically and effectively. The thoughtful use of color can therefore help protect individuals in vulnerable situations and reduce the risks associated with traffic.



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