

## SIGNIFICANCE OF COLOUR IN PROFESSIONAL UNIFORMS WITH REFERENCE TO AIR LINES

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### ABSTRACT

Colours are visually stimulating and are a very powerful communication tool, especially in the context of the workplace. Distinctive colours are used for uniforms in various professions like military, airlines, tourism, police, industrial sector etc. This paper tried to analyse the use of colours for uniforms of different airlines and their significance. Each colour symbolises a particular meaning in the minds of people, so that one can relate quickly to that, particular profession, for ex: white for nurses, blue for navy officers, and khaki for police and military. Uniforms in the work place would speak silently about the duties that will be performed by the employees, for eg: black coat for lawyers, white coat for doctors, moss green for armed forces and khaki for police.

**KEYWORDS:** Colour, Effects, Uniform, Airlines & Brand Image

### INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

Colours are visually stimulating and create strong psychological effects, especially in the context of the workplace in the form of uniform for the employees. Uniform is a distinctive set of clothing intended to identify the members of a specific group.

Uniform is nothing but distinctive clothing with a particular tint or shade of a colour, pattern, style, texture, etc. worn by the employees of an organization to be identified by the society quickly. All of us had worn uniforms when we were in school. When we grow up we find certain organizations/professions have specific clothing. For eg., any attorney in the country wears a black coat to represent that, they fight against the evil/bad things happen in the society, doctors wear white coat to represent sanitation, tranquillity and hygiene in curing people's diseases, firemen, policemen wear khakhi dress, to represent that, they rescue the lives of people etc. workers sometimes wear uniforms or corporate clothing of one nature or another. Organizations try to create corporate image, among common people through the colour and pattern of uniform. Few professions like army, navy, air force, police, etc. provides uniforms for their employees as soon as they join in the job. While few organizations in the corporate sector, state the dress code and employees have to purchase and wear accordingly.

Scientific studies show that colours selected to represent the brand in business and colour of the uniforms of the staff can be among the most effective ways to attract and keep customers.

Colours have a significant impact on people's emotional state. In fact, the effects are physiological, psychological, and sociological. There was only one colour for nursing uniforms in the early 20th century. That colour was white, representing cleanliness and purity.

Reasons to opt for choosing a specific colour for the uniform are to create an attractive business image, to promote a brand, for free advertising, to protect workers, to improve security, to prevent product cross-contamination, to create team spirit, for employees benefit to save money on clothing, to improve customer relationships and to promote company pride.

## UNIFORM COLOUR CODES FOR AIRLINES

Airlines is one sector which carries its brand image through the uniform worn by their flight attendants like captains, air hostesses and air hosts, stewards etc. By looking at their dress code we can say that they belong to particular airlines and particular cadre.

### Crew Uniforms

The first flight attendant uniforms were designed to be durable, practical, and inspire confidence in passengers. In the 1930s, the first female flight attendants dressed in uniforms resembling nurses' outfits.

They had even different coloured uniforms for different seasons like summer and winter. Dark colour like navy blue is for winter and light colour like khaki is for summer seasons. Navy blue, almost looks like black and is associated with sophistication, formality, stability and authority. While khaki is a color, a light shade of yellow-brown. Khaki was devised to protect soldiers against the dangers of the industrialized battlefield, where the traditional bright colors and elaborate costumes made them vulnerable to attack.

Flight attendant uniforms convey the airline brand identity, cultural attitudes, and passenger psychology. The cabin crew uniforms of the top airlines in the world are discussed here:

**Etihad:** It mainly operates from Abu Dhabi. Its uniform is of warm chocolate-brown, deep and purple colour. Here, the color purple is often associated with royalty, nobility, luxury, power, and ambition. Cabin Managers wear a bright Magenta hat, which promotes compassion, kindness and cooperation and encourages a sense of self respect and contentment.

A smart and elegantly fitted gray three-piece suit is worn by male flight attendants. Gray is a cool, neutral, and balanced. It is also the color of intellect, knowledge, and wisdom.



Figure 1

**Flybe:** Europe's largest regional airline, Flybe has a stunning new purple uniform. Through the ages, purple has always been associated with royalty, nobility and prestige.

For the girls a skirt or trouser suit is available, all in the new Flybe brand purple. For the boys, a three-piece suit in a special Flybe dark navy, set off with touches of Aubergine and a purple waistcoat. Aubergine is the deep, dark purple color of eggplant fruit which represents extravagance, dignity and devotion.

**JetBlue:** The JetBlue of America designed new uniform, crafted for men and women, features a slimmer dark blue silhouette, trimmed with bright orange. Dark blue is a color that symbolizes loyalty, strength, wisdom and trust.



**Figure 2**

The men's uniforms have a subtle but eye-catching grid of orange dots on the back, as orange is associated with meanings of joy, warmth, heat, sunshine, enthusiasm, creativity, success, encouragement, change, determination, health, stimulation, happiness, enjoyment, balance, freedom, expression, and fascination.



**Figure 3**

**Emirates:** Emirates is one of the world's leading airlines. The Female crew wears a classy mushroom coloured suit with subtle chocolate and red pinstripe. Mushroom colour is beige colour. The color beige is neutral, calm, and relaxing. It is dependable, conservative, and flexible. Male crew wears a rich chocolate suit consisting of a cream colour shirt which conveys the reliability, stability and security feelings to the passengers.



**Figure 4**

**Finnair:** Finnair's uniform is supposed to be one of the most stylish ones. The dark navy colours are contrasted with stripes of cherry blossom white for Finnair employees. The exquisite beauty and volatility of cherry blossom white has been associated with mortality and graceful and readily acceptance of destiny and karma. Navy blue represents confidence, compassionate and communicative.



**Figure 5**

**Air Malta:** It is the world's smallest airline, however their dress code is very stylish and well appreciated. They wear bright grey colour suit with colourful scarves and ties which looks more glamorous. Gray colour is associated with wisdom, intelligence and stability.



**Figure 6**

**S7 Airlines:** Russian carrier S7 Airlines, member of one world alliance, had a bold crimson suit for winter, which is very refreshing to the eyes of the passengers. Crimson is a strong, red color, inclining to purple. It is a bright color, which stands out prominently and associated with warmth, energy, and excitement. Cyan blue colour was chosen for summer seasons, which conveys the meaning of trust and peace.

**Thai Airways:** Their unique purple uniforms are often praised as one of the best in the world. Since the monarchical system exists in Thailand, they tried to represent royalty, power and luxury through purple colour.



**Figure 7**

**Fiji Airways:** The Fijian attire of Sulu Jaba (*traditional Fijian attire*) and Bula wear for men. They wear earthy tones with vibrant aqua blue colours with specific motifs which convey the meaning of friendly service, lovely scenic beauty and pleasant seascape of Fiji islands and dignity. Aqua colours represent refreshing atmosphere, coolness, calming, contentment and tranquillity.



**Figure 8**

**Air New Zealand:** Twilight pink is chosen for cabin crew, which signifies tenderness, gentleness and kindness in taking care of passengers' needs.



**Figure 9**

**Air India:** The uniform colour of Air India airlines is more traditional to represent the Indian culture and hospitality. Yellow is our traditional colour of haldi (turmeric) which signifies the auspiciousness and joyfulness.

The colour chosen was yellow with red border, where yellow stands for freshness, happiness, positivity, clarity, energy, optimism, enlightenment, remembrance, intellect, honor, loyalty, and joy.

Pilots also typically wear a winged badge indicating their qualification to fly and their seniority. Wings are either gold or silver with airline logo in the middle. eg: Air Canada, Air France, American airlines, British airways, Delta airlines, Malaysian airlines etc.

The above details clearly explains, that all international airlines, especially flag carrier airlines follow traditional dress and colour codes resembling not only their brand, but also the tradition and cultural beliefs of their country. This helps in easy identification of the crew from very busy airports, and also helpful in making brand image.

## CONCLUSIONS

From the above studies, it is clear that the human mind has its own way of identifying colour that it perceives. Surroundings on which a colour perceived also vary; hence its effect enhances the brand image and liability of a corporate company in geographical locations. Therefore, airlines are particular in choosing colour to reflect brand image, loyalty, faith, the service oriented nature of the passengers. Ultimately, all the airlines are trying to convey to their passengers that

they would treat their passenger with care, kindness and make them feel that they are their royal guests despite travelling in any class i.e. economy, first or business class.

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