

# Research of Influence of Blue on Appetite

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**Abstract.** This essay will analyze the effect of using the color blue to influence appetite and address the rising obesity epidemic. By researching the psychological impacts of color on eating behaviors, it highlights how blue environments can suppress appetite and encourage mindful eating. Historical context shows colors have long influenced moods, with blue promoting relaxation and red stimulating hunger. Research, including studies by Charles Spence and Brian Wansink, indicates that blue, being rare in natural foods, can reduce food consumption. This could be due to evolutionary conditioning and its calming effects. Practical applications in schools, cafeterias, and homes can leverage blue decor to discourage overeating and support healthier eating habits. Although cultural perceptions of color may vary, the current evidence positions blue as a viable, cost-effective tool in public health strategies to combat obesity. Future research should focus on longitudinal studies to better understand the long-term effects of blue environments on eating habits and their potential role in comprehensive weight management programs.

**Keywords:** Blue; Appetite; Obesity; Psychological.

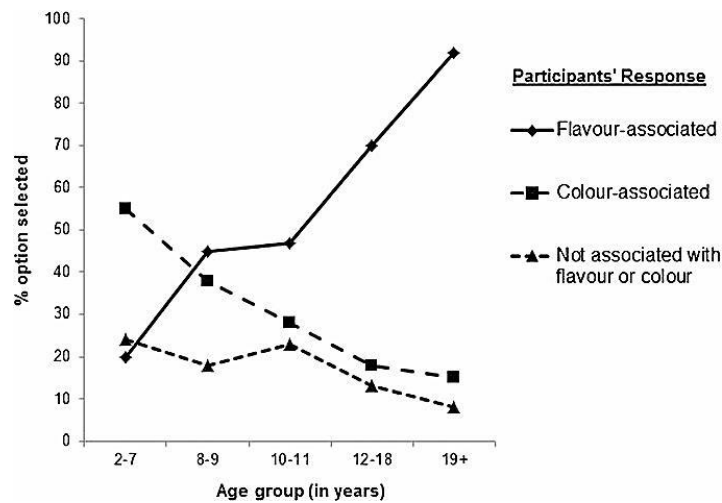
## 1. Introduction

Stepping into a restaurant where every element, from the walls to the plates and the food itself, is bathed in varying shades of blue, presents a striking visual spectacle. One might pause to consider the remarkable impact such an immersive azure environment could have on appetite and dining experiences. This vivid scenario not only sparks curiosity but also delves into the intriguing realm of human psychology. It sheds light on how colors, particularly the serene hue of blue, possess the potential to shape our culinary desires. In a world grappling with the pervasive challenges of escalating obesity rates and a myriad of weight-related issues, the quest for innovative solutions becomes increasingly urgent. Among the myriad approaches under scrutiny, exploring the profound influence of colors on our eating behaviors emerges as a fascinating avenue with promising implications for public health and individual well-being alike.

Color has long been acknowledged for its profound ability to influence and modulate human emotions and behaviors. From the tranquil blues adorning bedroom walls to the vibrant reds enlivening entertainment spaces, hues play a significant role in shaping the ambiance of our surroundings. This age-old understanding of color psychology extends its reach to the realm of food consumption, wherein particular colors can wield a compelling sway over our appetites. Consider the appetite-stimulating prowess of red, a color commonly associated with triggering feelings of hunger and excitement—attributes that render it a ubiquitous presence in food marketing and culinary environments. Conversely, the enigmatic color blue, seldom found in abundance among natural food varieties beyond select berries, intrigues researchers and health enthusiasts alike due to its contrasting effects on our eating habits.

The pioneering work of experts like Charles Spence underscores the intricate interplay between colors and our dining experiences, illuminating the multifaceted ways in which our perceptions of taste, food temperature, and satiety can be subtly shaped by the visual cues surrounding us (Spence, 2015) [1]. Drawing from Spence's research findings, which demonstrate the profound impact of colors on our culinary encounters, it is evident that the color blue could hold the key to revolutionizing how this paper approach food consumption. Its scarcity in the realm of natural foods enhances this potential. By unraveling the complexities of how color influences our appetites and consumption patterns,

Spence's studies signal a transformative shift in our understanding of the sensory nuances that underpin our relationship with food (Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** Graph highlighting the percentage of trials in which the participants' flavour discrimination response matched the colour of the drink [1]

In today's environment characterized by a growing emphasis on holistic well-being and the imperative to combat prevalent health challenges, the exploration of color psychology in the sphere of food and nutrition assumes paramount significance. As this paper delve deeper into the intricate dynamics of how colors modulate our eating behaviors, the potential of leveraging hues such as blue to cultivate mindful eating practices emerges. This approach could mitigate overconsumption and foster healthier dietary habits. Through blending the insights gleaned from historical color associations with contemporary scientific research, a compelling narrative unfolds-one that advocates for the incorporation of strategic color interventions in diverse settings to promote healthier eating choices and combat the pervasive trends of obesity and unhealthy dietary patterns.

## 2. Influence of Blue on Appetite

### 2.1. The Idea that Colors Influence Our Eating Habits

The concept that colors impact our eating habits has been widely explored and documented, offering fascinating insights into human psychology and behavior. Among the various colors studied, blue stands out as particularly significant due to its unique ability to suppress appetite. This phenomenon offers intriguing possibilities for addressing contemporary issues such as obesity and unhealthy eating patterns.

The psychological impact of color on appetite is rooted in both evolutionary and cultural factors. From an evolutionary standpoint, blue foods are rare in nature, with the exceptions being certain berries and root vegetables. This rarity may have led our brains to develop an aversion to blue-hued foods as a survival mechanism, helping early humans avoid potentially toxic substances. The hypothesis is that our ancestors learned to associate certain colors with safety and nourishment, whereas uncommon colors like blue triggered caution (Spence, 2015) [1]. This intrinsic wariness of blue foods likely persists today, influencing our eating behaviors on a subconscious level.

Research by Charles Spence supports this evolutionary perspective, demonstrating that our environment's color can significantly alter our food consumption patterns. In several experiments, Spence observed that participants ate less when meals were served on blue plates or in rooms illuminated with blue lighting (Spence, 2015) [1]. This reduction in food intake is not limited to an initial hesitation but extends to the overall amount of food consumed. These findings suggest that blue settings could be strategically used to create atmospheres less conducive to overeating. The calming psychological effects of the color blue further explain its ability to suppress appetite. Blue is

often associated with tranquility and calm, which can counteract the emotional triggers that lead to overeating, such as stress or excitement. When individuals are in a relaxed state, they are more likely to eat mindfully, paying closer attention to their hunger and fullness cues. This mindful eating reduces the likelihood of consuming food out of boredom or emotion rather than genuine hunger. Spence notes that blue's calming effect can slow down the pace of eating, giving the body more time to register satiety before overconsumption occurs (Spence, 2015) [1].

Supporting research by Piqueras-Fiszman and Spence reinforces these findings, demonstrating that participants consumed fewer snacks in environments dominated by the color blue compared to other colors [2]. Their study involved a series of experiments where participants were placed in different colored rooms and offered snacks. The results consistently showed a reduction in snack consumption in blue environments, emphasizing the potential of blue decor in promoting healthier eating habits. This research suggests practical applications for home, school, and public dining settings, where blue elements could be incorporated to discourage overeating and support weight management efforts.

The underlying mechanism through which blue suppresses appetite likely involves a combination of sensory and psychological factors. Sensory cues such as sight play a crucial role in our perception of food. Visual appeal significantly impacts our desire to eat, and foods in blue settings may appear less appetizing or exciting. Additionally, the context in which food is consumed—calm versus stimulating environments—can influence how much and how quickly this paper eat. By leveraging the sensory and psychological effects of blue, this paper can design environments that support healthier eating behaviors. This approach has the potential to reduce obesity rates.

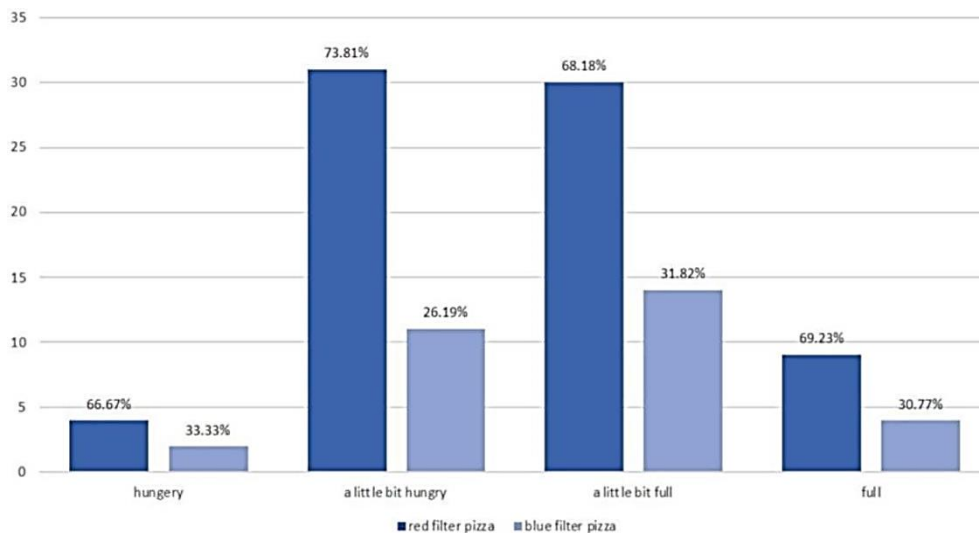
Cultural perceptions also play a role in how colors influence appetite. Across various cultures, colors are imbued with different meanings and associations, which can affect their impact on eating behaviors. However, blue's generally calming and appetite-suppressing effects seem to transcend cultural differences to a considerable extent. This universality makes blue a particularly promising tool for global public health strategies aimed at combating overeating and promoting mindful eating practices.

In summary, the influence of colors on eating habits, particularly the color blue, offers a valuable approach to addressing contemporary health challenges. By integrating blue decor in dining settings, this paper can potentially reduce calorie intake and improve eating behaviors. The research by Charles Spence and others provides a strong foundation for further exploration and implementation of this simple yet effective intervention. As this paper continue to understand and harness the psychological effects of color, this paper open new avenues for promoting public health and well-being.

## **2.2. The Power of Blue in Food Environments**

Do not number your paper: These findings provide a compelling rationale for strategically incorporating blue hues into food environments to promote healthier eating behaviors. The potential applications are manifold, spanning various settings such as schools, cafeterias, and even homes. By leveraging the subtle yet impactful influence of color psychology, stakeholders can create environments that subtly encourage better dietary choices among individuals.

In educational settings, such as schools and universities, integrating blue decor into dining areas could play a significant role in fostering healthier eating habits among students. Adolescents and young adults are often exposed to various unhealthy food choices, which can lead to poor long-term dietary habits. Implementing blue tones in cafeterias might be a cost-effective and passive strategy to mitigate these issues. For instance, blue walls, tablecloths, or even trays could create an ambiance that subconsciously encourages students to consume fewer high-calorie, low-nutrient foods. The study by Wansink (2006), which demonstrated a reduction in calorie intake in blue dining environments, provides empirical support for this intervention (Figure 2) [3].

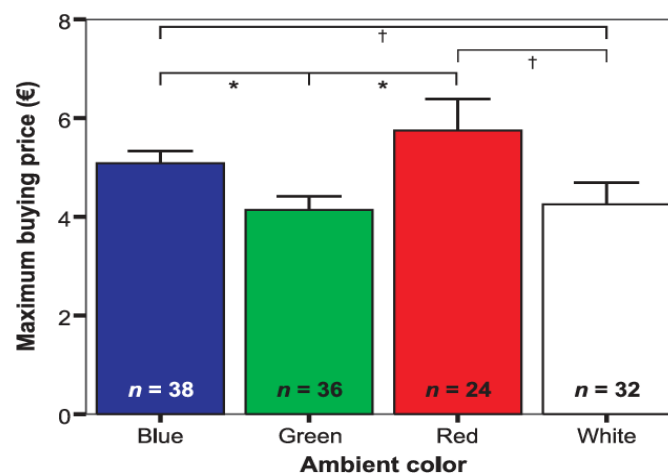


**Figure 2.** Participants' Choices of pizzas under different levels of hunger [3]

Additionally, this approach could extend beyond educational institutions to commercial cafeterias and workplace dining areas. Employees often resort to convenience over nutrition, opting for quick, unhealthy snacks during work hours. By redesigning these spaces with blue elements, employers could help promote a culture of mindful eating and wellness. This not only benefits the employees' health but could also enhance overall productivity and reduce healthcare-related costs associated with poor dietary habits.

Residential settings are another prime area where these findings can be practically applied. Families striving for healthier eating habits could consider incorporating blue décor into their dining areas. Blue plates, napkins, or table runners might help reduce the inclination to overeat by making food appear less appetizing and portions more noticeable. The principle here is rooted in the idea that the color blue is less commonly associated with food in nature, except for rare instances like blueberries or certain types of fish. This rarity can psychologically diminish appetite and curb overeating.

The meta-analysis by Oberfeld et al. (2010) further substantiates the impact of environmental colors on taste perception and consumption behaviors [4]. Their findings suggest that color cues can significantly alter how this paper perceive the flavor and palatability of food. In a blue setting, this could mean that foods might not only look less appealing but might also be perceived as less flavorful, thus reducing the likelihood of overeating. This could be particularly useful in combating specific dietary issues such as excessive sugar or fat consumption (Figure 3).



**Figure 3.** Maximum buying price for a 0.75-l bottle of the wine as a function of ambient color [4]

Moreover, the implications of these findings extend into the realm of public health initiatives. Policy makers and public health advocates could leverage this knowledge to design public spaces such as community centers or food courts that subtly encourage healthier eating habits. For instance, public

campaigns promoting healthy eating could include guidelines for incorporating blue hues into dining environments. This could become a part of broader strategies aimed at combating obesity and related health issues.

To truly maximize the benefits of these findings, further research and practical experiments could be conducted to refine and expand upon the initial studies. For example, exploring which specific shades of blue are most effective, or combining blue decor with other sensory modifications, such as lighting and music, could yield even more powerful results. Additionally, longitudinal studies could help determine the long-term effectiveness of blue environments in changing eating habits over time [5].

### **3. Conclusion**

In conclusion, the nuanced relationship between color and appetite offers a beacon of hope in the battle against the global obesity crisis. Extensive research underscores the unique potential of the color blue. This hue is uncommonly found in the natural spectrum of foods, and it can serve as a formidable ally in curbing excessive eating tendencies and fostering more conscious consumption habits. Extensive research underscores the unique potential of the color blue. This hue is uncommonly found in the natural spectrum of foods, and it can serve as a formidable ally in curbing excessive eating tendencies and fostering more conscious consumption habits. These findings not only shed light on the immediate benefits of utilizing blue-infused surroundings but also hint at the larger societal implications of combatting obesity-related health challenges.

The repercussions of failing to address the obesity epidemic extend far beyond individual well-being, encompassing soaring healthcare expenditures and the deterioration of public health on a global scale. However, by strategically incorporating blue aesthetics in various settings, this paper can instigate a paradigm shift.

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