A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty
of
Xavier University
in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts
by
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May 24, 2016

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The Effect of Color on Organizational Attraction
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Acknowledgements

I would like to thank those who helped make the completion of this project a reality.

First, to my thesis chair, Dr. Dalia Diab, I thank you for all your support and advice during this process. The contribution of your expertise and attention to detail contributed to the betterment of this thesis. Your thorough revisions greatly raised the quality of this paper.

I would also like to thank my thesis committee, Dr. Morrie Mullins and Dr. Mark Nagy, for their support and advice throughout the development of this project. Your insights allowed me to more closely reach the goal of being all-inclusive. I appreciate the time you both took in revising my drafts and giving me thoughtful and constructive feedback. Thank you.
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Abstract

The current study aimed to examine the effect of office color on organizational attraction, focusing on general company attractiveness, job pursuit intentions, and company prestige. A total of 210 participants were asked to imagine they were applying to a company and were asked to gauge their organizational attraction using a scale. Participants were randomly assigned to one of three stimulus images (Kwallek et al., 1996). The images were a plain office space with one of three colors: blue, red, or white. It was hypothesized that the color blue would result in the highest ratings of organizational attraction, followed by the color white, with red resulting in the lowest ratings. Results showed that there was no significant effect of the color of an office space on organizational attraction. Although research suggests that the color blue tends to be a liked color, whereas the color red tends to be a disliked color that can provoke anxiety and arousal, the current findings suggest that color may not influence organizational attraction. However, future research should investigate other colors as well as more shades of colors to determine if differences may exist among variations in colors. Future research should also examine the effects of subtle color differences, use actual applicants, and utilize real organizations.
Chapter I

Review of the Literature

Color seems to be the easiest element to change in an environment; therefore, it has been a topic of interest by researchers for many years (Jalil, Yunus, & Said, 2012). We experience the effects of color on a daily basis. For example, individuals perceive pink to represent girls and blue to represent boys. Researchers have conducted experiments to determine the meaning of colors and if differences exist in color preferences across groups (e.g., Kwallek, Soon, Woodson, & Alexander, 2005; Palmer & Schloss, 2010). Since then, researchers have continued to investigate the effects of color on many things, such as emotions, memory, mood, and mental states (e.g., Jalil et al., 2012; Kuller, Mikellides, & Janssens, 2009; Kwallek, Lewis, Lin-Hsiao & Woodson, 1996; Valdez & Mehrabian, 1994). It is now accepted that color has the potential to influence human behavior and decision making (Jalil et al., 2012). Warm colors are thought to stimulate behavior and decrease efficiency of work performance and accuracy; however, research is inconclusive (Kwallek et al., 1996). In regards to the workplace, there has been an abundance of research conducted to understand the relationship between color and job performance (Kuller et al., 2009; Kwallek et al., 2005; Kwallek, Woodson, Lewis & Sales, 1997), job satisfaction (Kwallek et al., 2005), and emotions (Valdez & Mehrabian, 1994), but there is a lack of research that investigates the relationship between color and organizational attraction. The purpose of this study,
therefore, was to examine the effect of color of an office space in a job ad on organizational attraction.

In the following sections, both color and organizational attraction will be reviewed. The first domain that will be explored is color. Within this domain, psychophysiological characteristics of color, associations with and reactions to colors, and research on color in the workplace will be discussed. Next, the construct of organizational attraction will be discussed.

**Color**

**Psychophysiological characteristics of color.** The psychophysiology of color and its characteristics are rather complex and important when trying to understand the effects color might have on organizational attraction. To provide a better understanding, key visual perceptual elements such as hue, value, and saturation will be explained.

Color is divided into cool and warm colors and is determined by its wavelengths, which is also sometimes described as hue (Valdez & Mehrabian, 1994). According to Gorn, Chattopadhyay, Yi, and Dahl (1997), “hue is the pigment of the color, what we normally understand as blue, red, yellow, etc.” (p. 1387). The shorter wavelength colors, which are blue, green, and purple, are considered cool colors. In comparison to cool colors, warm colors such as red, orange, and yellow have longer wavelengths. Of all the colors, red has the longest wavelength (Jalil et al., 2012).

Colors can also be expressed in terms of value, which describes the degree of darkness or lightness (Gorn et al., 1997). Low-value colors seem to have a black quality to them appearing as if black had been mixed into the color. High-value colors seem to have a white quality to them, as if white had been mixed into the color, so that high-value
colors tend to look more pastel-like. According to Valdez and Mehrabian (1994), saturation deals with the vividness or purity of a color, and a color is considered to have a low saturation level if it contains more gray and therefore looks like a “washed-out” version of the true color. When trying to understand the effect color may have on organizational attraction, it is important to understand the psychophysiological characteristics of color, which will be taken into consideration in the current study.

**Associations with and reactions to colors.** There are some commonly accepted, but culturally defined meanings for most colors (Color Wheel Pro, n.d). For example, red often signifies danger, strength, passion, and love. Yellow signifies happiness and energy. Green symbolizes growth, harmony, and fertility. Blue symbolizes trust, wisdom, faith, and truth. Purple signifies power and ambition. White signifies light, innocence, and purity (Color Wheel Pro, n.d.). In regards to the workplace, Kwallek et al. (1997) suggested that a warmer environment, such as a red office, provokes high levels of arousal and anxiety, whereas offices in cooler colors, such as blue, stimulate lower levels of arousal and anxiety.

Palmer and Schloss (2010) proposed a theory of color preferences called the ecological valence theory (EVT), in which preferences come from individuals’ emotional responses to color-associated objects. According to EVT, people are more likely to be attracted to colors associated with objects they like, and are more likely to avoid colors associated with objects they do not like. EVT also assumes that individuals’ color preferences are adaptive. Through their research, Palmer and Schloss found empirical support for their theory. Participants were attracted to objects that were colored blue, which was associated with the sky and water. A color of an object participants avoided
was brown, which was associated with feces and rotten food (Palmer & Schloss, 2010). Valdez and Mehrabian (1994) investigated emotional reactions to hue, saturation, and brightness and found evidence that blue evoked more pleasurable feelings, whereas yellow appeared to be less pleasurable. Although research has shown that some colors provoke certain reactions (Palmer & Scholss, 2010; Valdez & Mehrabian, 1994), findings are inconclusive; therefore, more research is needed.

**Research on color in the workplace.** Kwallek et al. (2005) investigated the effect of color on job satisfaction and perceived performance. The researchers suggested that, in studying the effects of color, it might be important to control for individual differences, such as the ability to ignore irrelevant environmental stimuli. Therefore, participants were divided into three groups according to their ability to ignore irrelevant stimuli based on their scores on a screening ability questionnaire. Participants worked four days in the same office for their regular work hours. There were three simulated office spaces that differed only on color scheme. Office 1 was painted white. Office 2 was painted red on the top of the wall area and blue-green on the bottom area with trim and accessories painted very light red. Office 3 was painted light blue-green on the top of the wall area and medium red on the bottom area with trim and accessories painted blue-green (Kwallek et al., 2005).

Kwallek et al. (2005) hypothesized that participants in the primarily blue-green office would report greater job satisfaction and performance compared to the participants in the primarily red office. Researchers also explored the color white. Participants deemed to have low screening ability were expected to experience greater job satisfaction in the mostly blue-green office than participants deemed to have high screening ability.
Regardless of screening ability, there were significant differences between the white and red room, such that participants in the white office reported higher perceived job performance and satisfaction than those in the primarily red office. Although differences between the blue-green color and the red color were in the predicted direction, they were not significant (Kwallek et al., 2005).

Kwallek et al. (1996) investigated the effects of office color on task performance, mood, and color preference. They examined “the effects of high- or low-value colors, high- or low-saturated colors, ‘warm’ or ‘cool’ colors, and gender on performance and mood” (Kwallek et al., 1996, p. 448). Participants completed a mood questionnaire and were tested on various clerical tasks. After completing the mood questionnaire and the clerical tasks, participants were given a questionnaire, which evaluated their feelings toward the office to which they were assigned. There were nine offices and each was painted one of the following colors: red, white, green, orange, yellow, blue, beige, gray, and purple. Results indicated that participants performed worse in the white office than the blue and red offices, as they made significantly more proofreading errors in the white office. Lastly, participants indicated they preferred to work in the white and beige rooms significantly more than in the red, yellow, blue, purple, or orange rooms (Kwallek et al., 1996).

Kuller, Mikellides, and Janssens (2009) conducted three experiments to investigate the impact of color on arousal or stress reactions. The first experiment dealt with the use of color patches or the use of actual colored rooms. The researchers chose to compare a colorful room with a gray room. The researchers hypothesized that the participants in the colorful room would experience more arousal than participants in the
gray room. To begin the procedure, participants were first taken to a yellow room before experiencing the gray or colorful room, where they were only introduced to the process. Participants in Experiment 1 spent almost half a workday in a colorful office and almost half a workday in a gray room on two different occasions. Participants had to spend a total of 3 hours performing various tasks in each room. During that time, several measures were taken, such as self-reported mood, physiological recordings, and an EKG. Results indicated that participants perceived both rooms as somewhat unpleasant (Kuller et al., 2009).

The purpose of Experiment 2 was to compare the effect of room color with different hues on arousal, measured by an EEG (Kuller et al., 2009). Kuller and colleagues (2009) chose to utilize a red room and a blue room and hypothesized that participants would become more aroused in the red room than in the blue room. Participants spent 2 hours and 30 minutes in a red room and 2 hours and 30 minutes in a blue room on different occasions. Results showed that participants experienced a sleepy or drowsy state more often in the blue room than in the red room (Kuller et al., 2009).

The purpose of Experiment 3 was to examine the effect of room color on performance of two types of office work: routine clerical work and creative work (Kuller et al., 2009). Kuller and colleagues (2009) hypothesized that participants would more efficiently proofread in a room with warm red colors. They also hypothesized that participants would be more creative while writing an essay in a room with cool blue colors and predicted that the effects could be influenced by mood or emotions. The red office was perceived to be significantly more pleasant than the blue office, and participants felt significantly happier in the red office than in the blue office. The
researchers divided the participants according to their emotional state, creating a group of participants who were in a more positive mood and a group of participants who were in a more negative mood. Results showed that participants in a more negative mood made significantly more errors in the red room than participants in a more positive mood, but no significant differences were found for participants in the blue room. Participants in a negative mood also wrote longer essays in the red office than participants in a more positive mood.

The series of three experiments that Kuller and colleagues (2009) conducted confirmed that color affects individuals in different ways. For example, individuals in more of a negative mood may become more affected by a stronger color, such as red, leading to different physiological reactions (Kuller et al., 2009). Although the effects of color have been studied in a multitude of settings, no research has examined the potential effect of office color on organizational attraction.

Organizational Attraction

Highhouse, Lievens, and Sinar (2003) stated that the organizational attraction construct consists of three dimensions: general company attractiveness, job pursuit intentions, and company prestige. They defined company attractiveness as an individual’s overall perceptions of a company as a possible place of employment. Job pursuit intentions refer to an individual’s intentions to actively pursue a job at a specific company. Finally, company prestige refers to an individual’s perceptions of how others perceive a company’s social norms. Applicant attraction is a term that is used interchangeably with organizational attraction in the literature; therefore, the two terms will be used interchangeably.
Organizational attraction is an important topic for organizations to understand in order to attract potential applicants and to persuade them to become members of their organization. If organizations understood what made an organization attractive to applicants, they would be able to design more effective tools for attracting and retaining superior applicants who best fit their organization. There are many theories available to aid in the understanding of recruitment. For example, Barber (1998) described the recruitment process in three phases: producing applicants, sustaining applicant interest in the organization, and shaping an applicants’ overall choice of job. These three phases of the recruitment process could all be impacted by variables such as the color of an office space, which further emphasizes the importance of the current research. Despite the theories and abundance of research (e.g., Barber, 1998; Allen et al., 2007; Pfieffelmann et al., 2010), there is a lack of research investigating how the color of an office space within an organization could impact its attractiveness to applicants; therefore, other research examining organizational attraction will be discussed.

Allen, Mahto, and Otondo (2007) focused on the earliest stage of recruitment, which deals with communicating to applicants in an attempt to persuade them to pursue employment opportunities within an organization. Because organizations’ websites are becoming the most popular avenue for applicants to retrieve job information, the researchers utilized actual organization websites to determine how they affected attraction. Findings suggested that organization image, objective job attributes, and recruitment contact could influence applicant attraction. Organization image is important because it has the potential to show applicants what kind of attitudes an organization holds and also a preview of the culture of the organization. Results also indicated it is
important to include an optimal amount of information about job and organization attributes on organizational websites because that is important to applicants. Websites should not only include sufficient information, they should also be professional and well-designed (Allen et al., 2007).

Like Allen et al. (2007), Pfieffelmann, Wagner, and Libkuman (2010) chose to utilize actual organization websites in order to better understand the applicant generation stage of the recruitment process. The researchers also included a potential mediating variable, person-organization (P-O) fit to further understand the relationship between the quality of the website and the attractiveness of an organization. P-O fit was selected because of the number of positive outcomes it has been associated with, such as heightened performance, satisfaction, and job involvement (Pfieffelmann et al., 2010). The researchers believed the easier the website was to navigate, the more attractive the organization would be to applicants. They also hypothesized that P-O fit would mediate the relationship between ease of use of the website and organizational attraction. In regards to demographic differences among participants, they believed that the ease of navigation among the website would be a stronger predictor of P-O fit and organizational attraction when the participants were older, female, and not White than younger, male, and White participants (Pfieffelmann et al., 2010).

Participants first completed a survey, which contained demographic information and descriptions of three organizations (Pfieffelmann et al., 2010). After reading the descriptions of the organizations, participants were asked which of the three organizations appeared to be the most appealing as a potential employer. Based on their selection, participants were assigned a computer workstation and given 15 minutes to
search the organization’s website in order to gather enough information to evaluate the organization as a potential employer. When the 15 minutes were up, participants completed the second survey packet, which included measures such as P-O fit, navigational usability, and organizational attraction. Some support was found in regards to website usability being positively related to organizational attraction and was mediated by P-O fit, but only for female job applicants. Results did not indicate support for the other two hypotheses. Although Pfieffermann and colleagues (2010) did not find significant results for two of the three hypotheses, this study did reveal the importance of web design in relation to attraction and website usability as well as the importance of including information related to organizational culture and work environment. The researchers also found differences among males and females in regards to reactions to the internet. Results showed that website usability was positively related to organizational attraction, but only for female job applicants (Pfieffelmann et al., 2010).

**Applicant Gender**

Through the abundance of research conducted on color, it is apparent that color can be perceived differently by different groups of people (Kuller et al., 2009; Kwallek et al., 1996; Kwallek et al., 2005; Pfieffelmann et al., 2010). Some colors seem to be more appropriate in specific settings, and some colors seem to be more appealing to specific people. One demographic variable that seems important to consider is gender. Research on color preference differences among gender is very limited, but Kwallek et al. (1996) investigated the effects of gender and office color on task performance, mood, and color preference. They found support for gender differences. Specifically, females indicated
greater feelings of depression and anger in white, gray, and beige rooms, whereas males felt more depression and anger in green, blue, purple, red, yellow, and orange rooms.

Regarding organizational attraction, as previously mentioned, Pfieffelmann et al. (2010) examined the relations among gender, P-O fit, quality of the website, and organizational attraction. They hypothesized that the ease of navigation among the website would be a stronger predictor of P-O fit and organizational attraction for older, female, and non-White participants than younger, male, and White participants (Pfieffelmann et al., 2010). They found support for gender differences, as results showed that website usability was positively related to organizational attraction, but only for female job applicants. Therefore, results showed that there were differences between males and females, suggesting the importance of examining applicant gender in research on organizational attraction. Hence, in the current study, applicant gender was explored.

The Current Study

It is important to investigate the effect color may have on organizational attraction. It would be very beneficial for organizations to know if certain colors are more likely to enhance individuals’ attraction to an organization. The main purpose of the current study, therefore, was to investigate the effect of color on organizational attraction. Because research has shown that the color blue tends to be a liked color (Palmer & Schloss, 2010), whereas the color red tends to be a disliked color (Kwallek et al., 1996) that can provoke anxiety and arousal (Kwallek et al., 1997), those two colors were investigated in the current research. A third color, white, was also used because it is a common color found in homes and offices. Given that applicant gender may be related to color preferences (e.g., Palmer & Schloss, 2010) and organizational attraction (e.g., Allen et al., 2007), it
was also included in this study. However, given the limited research on gender and color, the interaction between applicant gender and color on organizational attraction was examined in an exploratory manner.
Chapter II

Rationale and Hypotheses

The empirical work on organizational attraction is immense (e.g., Highhouse et al., 2003). According to Highhouse et al. (2003), the organizational attraction construct consists of three dimensions: general company attractiveness, job pursuit intentions, and company prestige. They defined company attractiveness as an individual’s perceptions of a company as a possible place of employment. Job pursuit intentions refer to an individual’s objectives to actively pursue a job at a specific company. Finally, company prestige refers to an individual’s perceptions of how others perceive a company’s social norms. One variable that may affect a person’s organizational attraction is the color of an office space. Although these two variables have not been investigated together, prior research suggests that color has an effect on variables such as emotions (Valdez & Mehrabian, 1994), job performance (Kuller et al., 2009; Kwallek et al., 1997; Kwallek et al., 2005), and job satisfaction (Kwallek et al., 2005); therefore, it is expected that color will have an effect on organizational attraction. Prior research also suggests that the color of a room may have various effects on an individual (e.g., Kwallek et al., 2005; Palmer & Schloss, 2010). The findings in regards to color are conflicting and inconclusive. For example, Kwallek et al. (1996) found that females felt more anger in a white room whereas males felt more anger in a red room. Kuller et al. (2009) found that participants rated the red room as significantly more pleasing than the blue room.
Kwallek et al. (2005) predicted that participants in a primarily blue-green office would report greater job satisfaction and performance compared to the participants in the primarily red office. Although no significant results were found for this prediction, differences between the blue-green office color and the red office color were in the predicted direction. Given the conflicting findings, the current hypotheses were developed based on the common associations with colors. Specifically, research has shown that the color blue tends to be a liked color (Palmer & Schloss, 2010), whereas the color red tends to be a disliked color (Kwallek et al., 1996) that can provoke anxiety and arousal (Kwallek et al., 1997). Moreover, the color white is a common color found in homes and offices. Therefore, this study proposed the following hypotheses:

**Hypothesis 1:** The color of an office space will have a significant effect on general company attractiveness ratings, such that blue will result in the highest ratings, followed by the color white, with red resulting in the lowest ratings.

**Hypothesis 2:** The color of an office space will have a significant effect on job pursuit intention ratings, such that blue will result in the highest ratings, followed by the color white, with red resulting in the lowest ratings.

**Hypothesis 3:** The color of an office space will have a significant effect on prestige ratings, such that blue will result in the highest ratings, followed by the color white, with red resulting in the lowest ratings.

Research has shown that color can be perceived differently by different groups of people (Kuller et al., 2009; Kwallek et al., 1996; Kwallek et al., 2005; Pflieffelmann et al., 2010). One individual difference that seems important to consider is gender. For example, Kwallek et al. (1996) found that females indicated greater feelings of
depression and anger in white, gray, and beige rooms; whereas males felt more
depression and anger in green, blue, purple, red, yellow, and orange rooms. It also seems
important to include gender in organizational attraction research, as Pfieffelmann et al.
(2010) found that website usability was positively related to organizational attraction, but
only for female job applicants. Although an interaction between gender and color on
organizational attraction was expected, the nature of the interaction was investigated in
an exploratory manner.
Chapter III

Method

Participants

The present study used Amazon’s Mechanical Turk (MTurk) to recruit participants. Previous research supports MTurk and web-based studies as viable means for data collection that obtain data similar or even better than student samples in regards to reliability and diversity (Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011). Participation was limited to those who were at least 18 years old and current residents of the United States. Also, participants needed to have a HIT (Human Intelligence Task) approval rate of at least 95%. Each participant who completed the study and passed the quality check was compensated $0.25.

A total of 241 people participated in this study. However, 10 participants failed the quality check, and 19 individuals did not complete the survey. Seven participants failed the manipulation check but they were still compensated, and their responses were retained. Finally, two participants who identified as being color-blind were compensated for completing the survey, but their data were not used in the analysis. This resulted in a final sample size of 210 participants, where 65 participants were randomly assigned to the blue condition (Male = 37, Female = 28), 73 participants were randomly assigned to the red condition (Male = 37, Female = 35, Other = 1), and 72 participants were randomly assigned to the white condition (Male = 44, Female = 28). All 210 participants
provided demographic information, and 56.2% of the participants were male. Regarding race and ethnicity, 81.4% reported they were White or Caucasian, 5.7% reported they were Black or African American, 0.5% reported they were American Indian or Alaska Native, 7.6% reported they were Asian, 3.3% reported they were Hispanic or Latino, and 1.4% answered “Other.” As for employment, 70.0% of the participants reported they were currently employed, and 31.9% participants reported they were currently searching for employment. In regards to the education background of the sample, 0.5% had no GED or equivalent, 8.1% reported having a high school diploma or GED equivalent, 31.9% had some college, 6.2% had an associate’s degree, 0.5% had technical/trade school, 41.4% reported having a bachelor’s degree, 10% had a master’s degree, 1% had a doctorate degree, and one participant did not respond to this item.

**Materials and Measures**

**Stimulus materials.** Participants were asked to imagine they were applying to a company and were asked to gauge their organizational attraction using a scale. Participants received one of three stimulus images (Kwallek et al., 1996). The stimulus images were the same, except for the color of the wall. The images were a plain office space with one of three colors: blue, red, or white. On the same page of the image, participants were presented with a brief, neutral job description. The stimulus materials are not reproduced for copyright reasons, but the relevant reference can be found in Appendix A.

**Organizational attraction.** Organizational attraction was measured by the 15-item scale developed by Highhouse et al. (2003). The items are measured using a 5-point response scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Factor analysis
suggested this scale contained three factors, which are general attractiveness, intentions to pursue, and prestige. A sample general attractiveness item is “For me, this company would be a good place to work.” An example of an item from the intentions to pursue factor is “I would accept a job offer from this company.” Finally, a sample prestige item is “There are probably many who would like to work at this company.” Scores were calculated by computing the average score for each of the three factors. Highhouse et al. found that the three subscales were internally consistent. Specifically, the general attractiveness subscale had an alpha of .88, the intentions to pursue subscale had an alpha of .82, and the prestige subscale had an alpha of .83 (Highhouse et al., 2003). In the current study, the general attractiveness subscale had an alpha of .89, job pursuit intentions had an alpha of .87, and prestige had an alpha of .90. The reference of the organizational attraction measure is included as Appendix B.

**Manipulation and quality checks.** There was a manipulation check to ensure the manipulation had the intended effect. After viewing the image, each participant was asked what color office space they viewed, where they were given a list of responses to choose from. However, participants were still compensated, and their responses were retained if they failed this manipulation check. There was one quality check to ensure participants were paying attention. The quality check asked participants to select *strongly agree*. This quality check was administered after the first 10 items of the organizational attraction measure. If participants failed the quality check, they were excluded from the study and were not compensated for their participation. The manipulation and quality checks are included as Appendix C.
**Demographics.** Demographic information such as age, gender, race, education level, tenure, and work experience were collected. Due to the nature of the study, participants were also asked to identify whether they were colorblind. In order to receive compensation, participants were required to provide their MTurk worker ID number. All demographics items are included as Appendix D.

**Procedure**

The present study was submitted to Xavier University’s Institutional Review Board (IRB). After receiving IRB approval (see Appendix E), this study was posted on MTurk and asked for participants to complete a study involving attraction to organizations. A link to Qualtrics, which is where the study took place, was listed on the MTurk posting. The MTurk recruitment interface is presented in Appendix F. An informed consent form (please see Appendix G) was presented to the participants prior to beginning the study. After agreeing to participate, participants were randomly assigned to one of three conditions, where they read a short job advertisement and viewed an image of an office space in one of three colors: blue, red, or white. Once the image was viewed, participants were presented with the organizational attraction measure. Participants then completed a manipulation check, which asked them to identify the color of the office they viewed. A quality check was employed during the study to ensure that participants were paying attention. The quality check asked participants to select *strongly agree*, and it was included after the first 10 items of the organizational attraction measure. If the quality check was failed, participants were not compensated, and their data were discarded prior to running statistical analyses. At the end of the study, participants were asked to complete a demographics sheet. When participants submitted
their responses, they were debriefed (see Appendix H). They also received a unique completion code, which they had to copy and paste in the MTurk interface prior to submitting the HIT on MTurk in order to receive compensation, if eligible.
Chapter IV

Results

This study examined the effect of the color of an office space on organizational attraction using a single-factor multi-level between-subjects design. Prior to running the main analyses, the correlations among the three main dependent variables were found to determine if one multivariate analysis of variance or three separate analyses of variance (ANOVAs) would be more appropriate. Given that the dependent variables were highly correlated (> .70; see Table 1), three separate ANOVAs were conducted in order to test the hypotheses (see Table 2 for the means and standard deviations).

The first hypothesis posited that the color blue would result in the highest ratings of general company attractiveness, followed by white, whereas red would result in the lowest ratings. Results showed that there was no significant effect of the color of the office space on general company attractiveness ratings, $F(2, 207) = 0.50, \ p = .605, \ \eta^2 = .01$. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 was not supported. The second hypothesis posited that the blue office would result in highest pursuit intention ratings, followed by white, whereas red would result in the lowest ratings. Results revealed that color did not significantly affect job pursuit intentions $F(2, 207) = 0.16, \ p = .856, \ \eta^2 = .00$. Hence, Hypothesis 2 was also not supported. The third hypothesis also posited that the blue office space would result in the highest ratings of prestige, followed by white, whereas red would result in the lowest ratings. However, color did not have a significant effect on
Table 1

*Correlations among the Organizational Attraction Dimensions*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. General Company Attractiveness</td>
<td>(.89)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Job Pursuit Intentions</td>
<td>.82</td>
<td>(.87)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Company Prestige</td>
<td>.76</td>
<td>.81</td>
<td>(.90)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. N = 210. Alphas are shown along the diagonal. All correlations were statistically significant, p < .001.*
Table 2

*Means and Standard Deviations for the Organizational Attraction Dimensions by Condition*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Color</th>
<th>General Company Attractiveness</th>
<th>Job Pursuit Intentions</th>
<th>Company Prestige</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red</td>
<td>3.52</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue</td>
<td>3.52</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
prestige, $F(2, 207) = 0.03, p = .972, \eta^2 = .00$. Therefore, Hypothesis 3 was not supported.

Although there was no significant main effect of color on any of the organizational attraction dimensions, in order to be comprehensive, the interaction between gender and color was examined. However, results showed there was no significant interaction between gender and color on general company attractiveness, $F(2, 203) = 0.37, p = .689, \eta_p^2 = .00$; job pursuit intentions, $F(2, 203) = 0.46, p = .629, \eta_p^2 = .01$; or company prestige, $F(2, 203) = 1.03, p = .360, \eta_p^2 = .01$. 
Chapter V

Discussion

The current study examined the effect of office color on organizational attraction. The first hypothesis proposed that the color blue would result in the highest ratings of general company attractiveness, whereas the color red would result in the lowest ratings. The second hypothesis proposed that the blue office would result in highest job pursuit intention ratings, whereas the red office would result in the lowest ratings. The third hypothesis also posited that the blue office space would result in the highest ratings of prestige, whereas the red office space would result in the lowest ratings. Results showed that there was no significant effect of the color of the office space on general company attractiveness ratings, job pursuit intentions, or prestige. Therefore, all three hypotheses were not supported. Although there was no significant main effect of color on any of the organizational attraction dimensions, in order to be comprehensive, the interaction between gender and color was examined. However, results showed there was no significant interaction between gender and color on any of the organizational attraction dimensions.

Although research suggests that the color blue tends to be a liked color (Palmer & Schloss, 2010), whereas the color red tends to be a disliked color (Kwallek et al., 1996) that can provoke anxiety and arousal (Kwallek et al., 1997), the current study’s findings did not support the claim that color may affect organizational attraction. A potential
explanation for the lack of support of all three hypotheses regarding the main effect of condition on organizational attraction can be attributed to an unintended weak manipulation. Specifically, the manipulation may not have been noticeable to the participants to elicit varying perceptions about the room color. Therefore, some may argue the three conditions may have not elicited different perceptions regarding the organization’s level of general attractiveness, intentions to pursue a job at the company, or prestige of the company.

However, it should be noted that the majority of the respondents selected the appropriate condition color in the manipulation check, with only seven participants failing the manipulation check. Therefore, these findings suggest that participants probably noticed the color of the office. An alternative explanation, also related to the manipulation of the independent variable, is the strength of the colors selected for the conditions. The colors used in the red and blue conditions were both very vibrant, therefore potentially appearing to be unrealistic in most settings, including in an organizational setting. However, these stimulus materials were used by Kwallek et al. (1996), who found that participants preferred to work in the white and beige rooms significantly more than in the red, yellow, blue, purple, or orange rooms. Although the results of the current study did not yield significant findings, the office space pictures, which were used in a previous study (i.e., Kwallek et al., 1996), resulted in significant findings, suggesting that the strength of the manipulation may not have been a problem. However, it is important to note that color was examined in another context in the Kwallek et al. study, where the focus was on task performance and not organizational attraction. Perhaps having a pleasant color is what matters when it comes to
organizational attraction. Another potential explanation may be whether or not the participants were actively searching for a job at the time of data collection. Specifically, 67% stated they were not searching for a job. Moreover, 70% of the participants were employed when the study was conducted, also suggesting they may not have been actively searching for a job. This may have affected participants’ motivation and/or ability to pretend that they were actively searching for a job during the study. Therefore, findings may differ if the sample consists of applicants who are currently looking for a job. However, analyses were run including only participants who were searching for a job, but color also did not have a significant effect on organizational attraction.

The lack of significant findings may also be due to office color having no effect on organizational attraction. In other words, perhaps office color does not influence organizational attraction. Cober, Brown, Levy, Cober, and Keeping (2003) investigated how perceptions of organizational web site content and style affect organizational attraction. Results indicated that perceptions of web site content and aesthetics are important in determining organizational attraction. Surprisingly, aesthetic characteristics, such as color and usability, did not independently affect organizational attraction. However, perceptions of aesthetics accounted for unique variance in organizational attraction when perceptions of web site content were controlled (Cober et al., 2003). Cober et al.’s findings suggest that color may have no effect on organizational attraction when other variables are not controlled. The job advertisement presented to participants in the current study featured a brief, neutral job description, which may have been more important or influential on organizational attraction than the color of the office space used. It would be interesting to examine if office color could provide incremental
validity above and beyond other organizational characteristics, such as compensation and company culture.

Although not a focus of this study, the potential main effect of participant gender on organizational attraction was examined. Results showed that gender did have a significant effect on reported general company attractiveness, $F(2, 203) = 3.73, p = .026$, $\eta_p^2 = .04$. Regardless of the color of the office space, females reported a significantly higher level of general company attractiveness ($M = 3.82, SD = 0.70$) than males ($M = 3.54, SD = 0.76$). Therefore, future research might benefit from further exploring any gender differences in organizational attraction. However, it is interesting to note that there was no significant main effect of gender on either job pursuit intentions or prestige.

**Theoretical and Practical Implications**

By examining the relationship between color and organizational attraction, the current research added to the literature, despite the nonsignificant results. Although there has been research conducted on color (Gorn et al., 1997; Jalil et al., 2012; Kuller et al., 2009; Kwallek et al., 1996; Kwallek et al., 1997; Kwallek et al., 2005; Palmer & Schloss, 2010; Valdez & Mehrabian, 1994) and organizational attraction (Barber, 1998; Highhouse et al., 2003; Pfieffelmann et al., 2010), no research had investigated the relationship between the two constructs prior to this study. Kwallek et al. (1996) investigated the effects of office color on task performance, mood, and color preference. The researchers found participants performed worse in the white office than the blue and red offices, and they made significantly more proofreading errors in the white office. Participants also indicated that they preferred to work in the white and beige rooms significantly more than in the red, yellow, blue, purple, or orange rooms (Kwallek et al.,
If these colors truly do not have an effect on organizational attraction, future research should focus on furthering our understanding of the effect of color on other work-related outcomes, such as job performance. Future research might also focus on the relationship between other independent variables in combination with color and their effects on organizational attraction. However, it should be noted that the context used in this study was hypothetical, and that only three colors (i.e., red, blue, and white) were used.

Lack of significant results from the current study has specific implications for organizations to consider when attracting applicants. If there truly is no effect, organizations should focus on attracting future employees through other initiatives, such as the organizational culture, aside from the visual aspects of the office space. Although the color of an office space is relatively easy and inexpensive to change, organizations can focus their energy elsewhere in order to attract applicants for their positions. It was important to investigate the effect color may have on organizational attraction due to the level of simplicity that comes with altering the color of an office space. If color does have an effect on organizational attraction but it was not detected in this study, having a better understanding of the effect that color has on the level of attraction to an organization would be beneficial for organizations to know if certain colors might attract the best and right candidates for their positions. Having a better understanding of the best approach to attracting candidates has the potential of streamlining the recruitment process, and as previously mentioned, color of an office space is easily controlled by an organization. Therefore, future research is needed prior to concluding that color does not affect organizational attraction.
Limitations and Future Research Directions

There are a few limitations to the current study. One involves the colors selected for the conditions, as previously mentioned. The office color pictures used were very potent; therefore, they may have not represented an actual blue or red color that would be used in an organization. Future research should examine using different shades of blue and red in order to determine if differences exist among variations of the same colors. It may also be beneficial to explore if subtle color differences or patterns of color within office spaces may affect organizational attraction. Future research should also consider examining the color of company logos as well as the congruence between office color and company type.

Another limitation of the current study is recruiting participants through MTurk and collecting data online. Previous research supports MTurk and web-based studies as viable means for data collection that obtain data that are similar or even better than student samples in regards to reliability and diversity (Buhrmester et al., 2011). Moreover, Buhrmester et al. (2011) found that MTurk samples were significantly more diverse demographically than traditional samples. Gosling, Vazire, Srivastava, and John (2004) compared self-report internet questionnaires with traditional paper-and-pencil methods and found that internet samples appeared to be diverse in regards to gender, socioeconomic status, geographic region, and age. Due to the research supporting the use of MTurk and web-based studies, this approach seemed to be the most effective strategy to obtain a useable sample for this study. However, future research should consider using other samples when examining the relationship between color and organizational attraction.
A third limitation of the current study was the hypothetical nature of the experiment, which might have affected the external validity of the results. Participants were asked to imagine they were applying to a job at a hypothetical company and were asked to gauge their organizational attraction using a scale, which is not the same as actually applying to a job at a real organization. Moreover, as previously mentioned, the majority of participants were not searching for a job at the time of data collection. However, a benefit of this approach was the use of a controlled setting. If this study used a company that currently existed, participants might have had preconceived notions which might have affected their responses. Therefore, this approach controlled for confounding variables and enhanced the internal validity of the findings. Future research should consider utilizing actual applicants and real organizations in their investigation of the effect of color on organizational attraction.

Finally, it should be noted that the three organizational attraction dimensions were highly correlated ( > .70), suggesting that organizational attraction may be a one-factor construct. However, the researchers who developed the scale (Highhouse et al., 2003) found support for a three-factor construct. Moreover, in the current study, gender had a significant effect on general company attractiveness but not on job pursuit intentions or prestige, suggesting that differentiating among the three dimensions may be important. Despite this finding, future research should further examine the factor structure of this organizational attraction scale.

Conclusions

In conclusion, the current study’s findings add to the literatures on organizational attraction and color within the workplace. Given that no significant results were found,
these findings suggest that organizations should spend more time focusing on other relevant factors when trying to attract the most appropriate individuals for their positions, because the color of an office space may have no effect on general company attractiveness, job pursuit intentions, and company prestige. However, future research should examine more colors as well as more shades of colors to determine if differences may exist among variations in colors. Future research should also examine the effects of subtle color differences within the office space, use actual applicants, and utilize real organizations.
Chapter VI

Summary

Color seems to be the easiest element to change in an environment; therefore, it has been a topic of interest by researchers for many years (Jalil, Yunus, & Said, 2012). We experience the effects of color on a daily basis. Researchers have conducted experiments to determine the meaning of colors and if differences exist in color preferences across groups (e.g., Kwallek, Soon, Woodson, & Alexander, 2005; Palmer & Schloss, 2010). Since then, researchers have continued to investigate the effects of color on many things, such as emotions, memory, mood, and mental states (e.g., Jalil et al., 2012; Kuller, Mikellides, & Janssens, 2009; Kwallek, Lewis, Lin-Hsiao & Woodson, 1996; Valdez & Mehrabian, 1994). It is now accepted that color has the potential to influence human behavior and decision making (Jalil et al., 2012).

In regards to the workplace, there has been an abundance of research conducted to understand the relationship between color and job performance (Kuller et al., 2009; Kwallek et al., 2005; Kwallek, Woodson, Lewis & Sales, 1997), job satisfaction (Kwallek et al., 2005), and emotions (Valdez & Mehrabian, 1994), but there is a lack of research that investigates the relationship between color and organizational attraction. The purpose of this study, therefore, was to examine the effect of color of an office space in a job ad on organizational attraction.
Color

Kwallek et al. (2005) investigated the effect of color on job satisfaction and perceived performance. Participants in the white office reported higher perceived job performance and satisfaction than those in the primarily red office. Kwallek et al. (2006) investigated the effects of office color on task performance, mood, and color preference. Results indicated that participants performed worse in the white office than the blue and red offices, as they made significantly more proofreading errors in the white office. Participants indicated they preferred to work in the white and beige rooms significantly more than in the red, yellow, blue, purple, or orange rooms (Kwallek et al. 1996). Kuller et al. (2009) conducted three experiments to investigate the impact of color on arousal or stress reactions. The series of experiments conducted confirmed that color affects individuals in different ways (Kuller et al., 2009).

Organizational Attraction

Highhouse, Lievens, and Sinar (2003) stated that the organizational attraction construct consists of three dimensions: general company attractiveness, job pursuit intentions, and company prestige. They defined company attractiveness as an individual’s overall perceptions of a company as a possible place of employment. Job pursuit intentions refer to an individual’s intentions to actively pursue a job at a specific company. Finally, company prestige refers to an individual’s perceptions of how others perceive a company’s social norms.

Organizational attraction is an important topic for organizations to understand in order to attract potential applicants and to persuade them to become members of their organization. If organizations understood what made an organization attractive to
applicants, they would be able to design more effective tools for attracting and retaining superior applicants who best fit their organization.

The purpose of this study was to examine the effect of office color on organizational attraction. The findings in regards to color are conflicting and inconclusive. Given the conflicting findings, the current hypotheses were developed based on the common associations with colors. Specifically, research has shown that the color blue tends to be a liked color (Palmer & Schloss, 2010), whereas the color red tends to be a disliked color (Kwallek et al., 1996) that can provoke anxiety and arousal (Kwallek et al., 1997). Moreover, the color white is a common color found in homes and offices. Therefore, this study proposed the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: The color of an office space will have a significant effect on general company attractiveness ratings, such that blue will result in the highest ratings, followed by the color white, with red resulting in the lowest ratings.

Hypothesis 2: The color of an office space will have a significant effect on job pursuit intention ratings, such that blue will result in the highest ratings, followed by the color white, with red resulting in the lowest ratings.

Hypothesis 3: The color of an office space will have a significant effect on prestige ratings, such that blue will result in the highest ratings, followed by the color white, with red resulting in the lowest ratings.

Research has shown that color can be perceived differently by different groups of people (Kwallek et al., 1996, Kwallek et al., 2005, Kuller et al., 2009, Pfieffelmann et al., 2010). One individual difference that seems important to consider is gender. For example, Kwallek et al. (1996) found that females indicated greater feelings of
depression and anger in white, gray, and beige rooms; whereas males felt more
depression and anger in green, blue, purple, red, yellow, and orange rooms. It also seems
important to include gender in organizational attraction research, as Pfeffelmann et al.
(2010) found that website usability was positively related to organizational attraction, but
only for female job applicants. Although an interaction between gender and color on
organizational attraction was expected, the nature of the interaction was explored.

Method

Participants

The present study used Amazon’s Mechanical Turk (MTurk) to recruit
participants. Previous research supports MTurk and web-based studies as viable means
for data collection that obtain data similar or even better than student samples in regards
to reliability and diversity (Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011. Participation was
limited to those who were at least 18 years old and current residents of the United States.
Also, participants needed to have a HIT (Human Intelligence Task) approval rate of at
least 95%. Each participant who completed the study and passed the quality check was
compensated $0.25.

A total of 241 people participated in this study, but 29 participants were discarded
due to failing the quality check or not finishing the survey. Two participants who
identified as being color-blind were compensated for completing the survey, but their
data were not used in the analysis. This resulted in a final sample size of 210 participants,
where 65 participants were randomly assigned to the blue condition (Male = 37, Female
= 28), 73 participants were randomly assigned to the red condition (Male = 37, Female =
35, Other = 1), and 72 participants were randomly assigned to the white condition (Male
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= 44, Female = 28). All 210 participants provided demographic information, and 56.2% of the participants were male. Regarding race and ethnicity, 81.4% reported they were White or Caucasian, 5.7% reported they were Black or African American, 0.5% reported they were American Indian or Alaska Native, 7.6% reported they were Asian, 3.3% reported they were Hispanic or Latino, and 1.4% answered “Other.” As for employment, 70.0% of the participants reported they were currently employed, and 31.9% participants reported they were currently searching for employment. In regards to the education background of the sample, 0.5% had no GED or equivalent, 8.1% reported having a high school diploma or GED equivalent, 31.9% had some college, 6.2% had an associate’s degree, 0.5% had technical/trade school, 41.4% reported having a bachelor’s degree, 10% had a master’s degree, 1% had a doctorate degree, and one participant did not respond to this item.

Materials and Measures

Stimulus materials. Participants were asked to imagine they were applying to a company and were asked to gauge their organizational attraction using a scale. Participants received one of three stimulus images (Kwallek et al., 1996). The stimulus images were the same, except for the color of the wall. The images were a plain office space with one of three colors: blue, red, or white. On the same page of the image, participants were presented with a brief, neutral job description. The reference to the stimulus materials is included as Appendix A.

Organizational attraction. Organizational attraction was measured by the 15-item scale developed by Highhouse et al. (2003). The items are measured using a 5-point response scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Factor analysis
suggested this scale contained three factors, which are general attractiveness, intentions to pursue, and prestige. In the current study, the general attractiveness subscale had an alpha of .89, job pursuit intentions had an alpha of .87, and prestige had an alpha of .90. The reference of the measure of organizational attraction is included as Appendix B.

**Manipulation and quality checks.** There was a manipulation check to ensure the manipulation had the intended effect. After viewing the image, each participant was asked what color office space they viewed, where they were given a list of responses to choose from. However, participants were still compensated, and their responses were retained if they failed this manipulation check. There was one quality check to ensure participants were paying attention. The quality check asked participants to select *strongly agree*. This quality check was administered after the first 10 items of the organizational attraction measure. If participants failed the quality check, they were excluded from the study and were not compensated for their participation. The manipulation and quality checks are included as Appendix C.

**Demographics.** Demographic information such as age, gender, race, education level, tenure, and work experience were collected. Due to the nature of the study, participants were also asked to identify whether they were colorblind. In order to receive compensation, participants were required to provide their MTurk worker ID number. All demographics items are included as Appendix D.

**Procedure**

The present study was submitted to Xavier University’s Institutional Review Board (IRB). After receiving IRB approval (see Appendix E), this study was posted on MTurk and asked for participants to complete a study involving attraction to
organizations. A link to Qualtrics, which is where the study took place, was listed on the MTurk posting. The MTurk recruitment interface is presented in Appendix F. An informed consent form (please see Appendix G) was presented to the participants prior to beginning the study. After agreeing to participate, participants were randomly assigned to one of three conditions, where they read a short job advertisement and viewed an image of an office space in one of three colors: blue, red, or white. Once the image was viewed, participants were presented with the organizational attraction measure. Participants then completed a manipulation check, which asked them to identify the color of the office they viewed. A quality check was employed during the study to ensure that participants were paying attention. The quality check asked participants to select strongly agree, and it was included after the first 10 items of the organizational attraction measure. If the quality check was failed, participants were not compensated, and their data were discarded prior to running statistical analyses. At the end of the study, participants were asked to complete a demographics sheet. When participants submitted their responses, they were debriefed (see Appendix H). They also received a unique completion code, which they had to copy and paste in the MTurk interface prior to submitting the HIT on MTurk in order to receive compensation, if eligible.

Results

This study examined the effect of the color of an office space on organizational attraction using a single-factor multi-level between-subjects design. Prior to running the main analyses, the correlations among the three main dependent variables were found to determine if one multivariate analysis of variance or three separate analyses of variance (ANOVAs) would be more appropriate. Given that the dependent variables were highly
correlated (see Table 1), three separate ANOVAs were conducted in order to test the hypotheses (see Table 2 for the means and standard deviations).

The first hypothesis posited that the color blue would result in the highest ratings of general company attractiveness, whereas red would result in the lowest ratings. Results showed that there was no significant effect of the color of the office space on general company attractiveness ratings, $F(2, 207) = 0.50, \ p = .605, \ \eta^2 = .01$. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 was not supported. The second hypothesis posited that the blue office would result in highest pursuit intention ratings, whereas red would result in the lowest ratings. Results revealed that color did not significantly affect job pursuit intentions $F(2, 207) = 0.16, \ p = .856, \ \eta^2 = .00$. Hence, Hypothesis 2 was also not supported. The third hypothesis also posited that the blue office space would result in the highest ratings of prestige, whereas red would result in the lowest ratings. However, color did not have a significant effect on prestige, $F(2, 207) = 0.03, \ p = .972, \ \eta^2 = .00$. Therefore, Hypothesis 3 was not supported. Although there was no significant main effect of color on any of the organizational attraction dimensions, in order to be comprehensive, the interaction between gender and color was examined. However, results showed there was no significant interaction between gender and color on any of the three dependent variables.

**Discussion**

The current study examined the effect of office color on organizational attraction. The first hypothesis posited that the color blue would result in the highest ratings of general company attractiveness, whereas the color red would result in the lowest ratings. Results showed that there was no significant effect of the color of the office space on general company attractiveness ratings. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 was not supported. The
second hypothesis proposed that the blue office would result in highest job pursuit intention ratings, whereas the red office would result in the lowest ratings. Results revealed that color did not significantly affect job pursuit intentions. Hence, Hypothesis 2 was also not supported. The third hypothesis also posited that the blue office space would result in the highest ratings of prestige, whereas the red office space would result in the lowest ratings. However, color did not have a significant effect on prestige. Therefore, Hypothesis 3 was not supported. Although there was no significant main effect of color on any of the organizational attraction dimensions, in order to be comprehensive, the interaction between gender and color was examined. However, results showed there was no significant interaction between gender and color on any of the organizational attraction dimensions.

A potential explanation for the lack of support of all three hypotheses regarding the main effect of condition on organizational attraction can be attributed to an unintended weak manipulation. Specifically, the manipulation may not have been noticeable to the participants to elicit varying perceptions about the room color. Therefore, the three conditions may have not elicited different perceptions regarding the organization’s level of general attractiveness, intentions to pursue a job at the company, or prestige of the company.

However, it should be noted that the majority of the respondents selected the appropriate condition color in the manipulation check. Therefore, participants may have noticed the color of the office. An alternative explanation, also related to the manipulation of the independent variable, is the strength of the colors selected for the conditions. The colors used in the red and blue conditions were both very vibrant,
therefore potentially appearing to be unrealistic in most settings, including in an organizational setting. Although the results of the current study did not yield significant findings, the office space pictures, which were used in a previous study (i.e., Kwallek et al., 1996), resulted in significant findings, suggesting that the strength of the manipulation may not have been a problem.

The lack of significant findings may also be due to office color having no effect on organizational attraction. In other words, perhaps office color does not influence organizational attraction. Cober, Brown, Levy, Cober, and Keeping (2003) investigated how perceptions of organizational web site content and style affect organizational attraction. Results indicated that perceptions of web site content and aesthetics are important in determining organizational attraction. Surprisingly, aesthetic characteristics, such as color and usability, did not independently affect organizational attraction. However, perceptions of aesthetics accounted for unique variance in organizational attraction when perceptions of web site content were controlled (Cober et al., 2003). Cober et al.’s findings suggest that color may have no effect on organizational attraction when other variables are not controlled. It would be interesting to examine if office color could provide incremental validity above and beyond other organizational characteristics, such as compensation and company culture.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

By examining the relationship between color and organizational attraction, the current research added to the literature, despite the nonsignificant results. Although there has been research conducted on color (Gorn et al., 1997; Jalil et al., 2012; Kuller et al., 2009; Kwallek et al., 1996; Kwallek et al., 1997; Kwallek et al., 2005; Palmer & Schloss,
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2010; Valdez & Mehrabian, 1994) and organizational attraction (Barber, 1998; Highhouse et al., 2003; Pfieffelmann et al., 2010), no research had investigated the relationship between the two constructs prior to this study. If color truly does not have an effect on organizational attraction, future research should focus on furthering our understanding of the effect of color on other work-related outcomes, such as job performance. Future research might also focus on the relationship between other independent variables in combination with color and their effects on organizational attraction.

Lack of significant results from the current study has specific implications for organizations to consider when attracting applicants. If there truly is no effect, organizations should focus on attracting future employees through other initiatives, such as the organizational culture, aside from the visual aspects of the office space. Although the color of an office space is relatively easy and inexpensive to change, organizations can focus their energy elsewhere in order to attract applicants for their positions. If color does have an effect on color but it was not detected in this study, having a better understanding of the effect that color has on the level of attraction to an organization would be beneficial for organizations to know if certain colors might attract the best and right candidates for their positions. Therefore, future research is needed prior to concluding that color does not affect organizational attraction.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

There are a few limitations to the current study. One involves the colors selected for the conditions, as previously mentioned. The office color pictures used were very potent; therefore, they may have not represented an actual blue or red color that would be
used in an organization. Future research should examine using different shades of blue and red in order to determine if differences exist among variations of the same colors. It may also be beneficial to explore if subtle color differences or patterns of color within office spaces may affect organizational attraction.

Another limitation of the current study is recruiting participants through MTurk and collecting data online. Previous research supports MTurk and web-based studies as viable means for data collection that obtain data that are similar or even better than student samples in regards to reliability and diversity (Buhrmester et al., 2011). Moreover, Buhrmester et al. (2011) found that MTurk samples were significantly more diverse demographically than traditional samples. Due to the research supporting the use of MTurk and web-based studies, this approach seemed to be the most effective strategy to obtain a useable sample for this study.

A third limitation of the current study was the hypothetical nature of the experiment, which might have affected the external validity of the results. Participants were asked to imagine they were applying to a job at a hypothetical company and were asked to gauge their organizational attraction using a scale, which is not the same as actually applying to a job at a real organization. However, a benefit of this approach was the use of a controlled setting. If this study used a company that currently existed, participants might have had preconceived notions which might have affected their responses. Therefore, this approach controlled for confounding variables and enhanced the internal validity of the findings. Future research should consider utilizing actual applicants and real organizations in their investigation of the effect of color on organizational attraction.
Conclusions

In conclusion, the current study’s findings add to the literatures on organizational attraction and color within the workplace. Given that no significant results were found, these findings suggest that organizations should spend more time focusing on other relevant factors when trying to attract the most appropriate individuals for their positions, because the color of an office space may have no effect on general company attractiveness, job pursuit intentions, and company prestige. However, future research should examine more colors as well as more shades of colors to determine if differences may exist among variations in colors. Future research should also examine the effects of subtle color differences within the office space, use actual applicants, and utilize real organizations.


Appendix A

Stimulus Materials

Job Advertisement

Imagine you are searching for a job and you came across a few job ads that interested you. Below is one of those job ads.

Voxquest Inc. is looking for talented associates to be a part of their quickly expanding team. All majors, areas of expertise, and levels of relevant experience welcome!

Voxquest Inc. offers competitive salaries and employees are given a comprehensive benefits package. Here is what your office space would look like.

The office spaces are not reproduced for copyright reasons, but below is the relevant reference:

Appendix B

Organizational Attraction Measure

This scale is not reproduced for copyright reasons, but below is the relevant reference:


Educational and Psychological Measurement, 63, 986-1001. doi:

10.1177/0013164403258403
Appendix C

Manipulation and Quality Checks

 Manipulation Check

What color was the office space you viewed?

- Blue
- Red
- White

Quality Check

Please select strongly agree for this item.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree
Appendix D

Demographics

Age _____

Gender
- Male
- Female
- Other _________

Race/Ethnicity
- White or Caucasian
- Black or African American
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- Hispanic or Latino
- Other _________
- Prefer not to respond

Are you currently employed?
- Yes
- No

Are you currently searching for a job?
- Yes
- No

If you are currently employed, how long have you worked at your current place of employment?

Education Level
- No GED or equivalent
- High School Diploma or GED equivalent
- Some college
- Associate’s Degree
- Technical/Trade School
- Bachelor’s Degree
- Master’s Degree
- Doctoral Degree
Are you colorblind?
- Yes
- No

What is the color of the room in which you completed this study?
- White
- Blue
- Red
- Yellow
- Other _________

MTurk Worker ID Number _________
November 4, 2015

Kayla Keith

Re: Protocol #15-049, The Effect of Color on Organizational Attraction

Dear Ms. Keith:

The IRB has reviewed the materials regarding your study, referenced above, and has determined that it meets the criteria for the Exempt from Review category under Federal Regulation 45CFR46. Your protocol is approved as exempt research, and therefore requires no further oversight by the IRB. We appreciate your thorough treatment of the issues raised and your timely response.

If you wish to modify your study, including the addition of data collection sites, it will be necessary to obtain IRB approval prior to implementing the modification. If any adverse events occur, please notify the IRB immediately.

Please contact our office if you have any questions. We wish you success with your project!

Sincerely,

Morell E. Mullins, Jr., Ph.D.
Chair, Institutional Review Board
Xavier University

MEM/sb
Appendix F

The MTurk Recruitment Interface

Please note that you will receive a completion code after you complete the study, which you will have to copy and paste HERE in order to be compensated.

1. Please enter your completion code HERE:

[Box for completion code was included here]

Also, please WRITE DOWN your unique identifier (worker ID number) because you will be required to enter it once again AT THE END OF THE STUDY.

2. Please click the following link in order to access the survey. After you complete the survey and AFTER you enter your unique completion code above, click the “Submit” button below.

[Survey link was included here]

[SUBMIT]
Appendix G

Informed Consent Form

You are being asked to participate in a thesis project conducted by Kayla Keith at Xavier University. The purpose of this study is to investigate attraction to organizations.

In this study, you will view a picture of an office space and read a job description, and then will be presented with a 15-item questionnaire. You will also be asked to complete some additional items, such as demographic items. The total time to complete this task is approximately 5 minutes, but you will be given 1 hour to complete the entire survey.

There are no known risks associated with this study. Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Refusal to participate in this study will have no effect on any future services you may be entitled to from Xavier University. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. You will be paid $.25 for participating in this study. However, please note that **if you do not complete all required items or if you do not pass the quality check, you will not be eligible for compensation.** You will be given a unique completion code at the end of the study, which you must enter in the MTurk interface in order to get compensated. You have to be at least 18 years old to participate in this study.

The questionnaires do not ask for your name; therefore, your responses will remain anonymous. Additionally, all data analyses will be conducted at the group level. Finally, only the researchers conducting this study will have access to your responses.

If you have any questions at any time during the study, you may contact the principal investigator, Kayla Keith at keithk1@xavier.edu, or the faculty advisor, Dr. Dalia Diab at diabd@xavier.edu. Questions about your rights as a research subject should be directed to Xavier University’s Institutional Review Board at 513-745-2870.

By clicking “Next,” you agree to the following statement: I have been given information about this research study and its risks and benefits. I freely give my consent to participate in this research project.
Appendix H

Debriefing Form

Thank you for participating in our research project. The purpose of this study is to investigate the effect of color on organization attraction.

You were randomly assigned to view one of three different office space colors. Please do not discuss the specifics of our study with anyone or distribute this form to any potential participants, as data collection is ongoing. If you have any questions or concerns, or if you would like to inquire about the results of this study, please contact the principal investigator Kayla Keith at keithkl@xavier.edu, or the faculty advisor, Dr. Dalia Diab at diabd@xavier.edu.