

31st May 2015

Recently, I was thinking about the use of colour in our displays. We make use of different colour schemes such as RGB or HSL/HSV (Hue, Saturation, Lightness/Value). The displays generated with RGB are usually brighter and those generated with HSV, (pastels) come across as somewhat soft or 'soothing' to the eye. As I was going through this stuff, I came across an interesting observation.

Neuroscientists have found that men and women see colour slightly differently. Though this conclusion is based on indirect evidence, but visual tests given to men and women does indicate that women are able to describe slight better the fine variations in colour. Women seem to possess a larger vocabulary when it comes to describing colours, and neuroscientists are curious to understand how or why the human nervous system or neural mechanisms that determine colour perception, behave differently in men and women.

Did you know that? I didn't.

Reply by Manish

Hello Manish,

Thanks for the swift reply.

My post today was meant more as information, and you lost track of the words I used 'slightly better'. It did not imply for sure that 'a lady geoscientist will find subtle facies variation better than you or I do'. But if in fact that turns out to be true, now I won't be surprised.

Let me clarify: the difference that I was referring to is not a night-and-day difference in that what a man sees as red, a woman will see that as pink. But what neuroscientists have found is that women are able to distinguish subtle shades somewhat better. Check out the link below and read more on this topic online and you will be better informed. Can you do that Manish?

<https://www.google.ca/search?q=color+perception+man+woman&biw=1482&bih=742&tbm=isch&tbo=u&source=univ&sa=X&ei=jABrVbCXC8yrggSa04GACQ&ved=0CCoQsAQ&dpr=0.9#imgsrc=mlTfcHPV5YPScM%253A%3BGdKg3skleK8JqM%3Bhttp%253A%252F%252Fwww.dailystatistic.com%252Fwp-content%252Fuploads%252F2011%252F04%252Fhow-women-and-men-see-colors.jpg%3Bhttp%253A%252F%252Fwww.dailystatistic.com%252F2011%252F04%252Fhow-men-and-women-see-colours-infographic%252F%3B500%3B526>

Reply by N. K. Arjun

Hi Chopra! Though I am not much aware of neuroscience views on the issue raised but my personal observation testify that Women have better discerning and discriminating powers of colours. They are more photo-sensitive than men. More colour blinds are seen amongst men than women. In fact women's world view is different from that of men. This happens not only in visual perception but also in interpretative perspectives. This might have a kind of genetic

linkage. Women excel more in detecting the shades of composite colours. Men are ok at gross perception of colours but women do better at subtle differentiations. Could it qualify them to be better interpreters than men may be questionable? Because G & G interpretation demands a lot more of integration than mere colour differentiations. The technicolorific potential of women could be attributed to their tetrachromatic sensitivity than that of trichromatic poor men. You may be more qualified to share your personal experiences in this regard as you are more in interaction with fairer gender in western world than me in a narrow cone. Thanks for a new issue...

Hello Arjun, As usual you are prompt with your reply. I like it.

Happy to know your take on the observation that I posted today. I have to say that some of my acquaintances who are colour blind and have openly shared this, are men. In my experience I do not remember if a lady has ever said this openly. This may be their general trait. Of course this does not suggest that more men are colour blind than women. Since you have stated this in your note, is this a confirmed fact or a guess? That 'men are ok at gross perception of colours but women do better at subtle differentiations', can be seen clearly from the image that Amit Roy has posted. With regard to women being better interpreters than men, I am not sure if I would say it is 'questionable'. I would say it is 'possible'. Why not?