

COLOUR

DESIGNING SPACES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

RESEARCH QUESTION

How can colour in Urban Public Spaces improve young people's relationship with the outdoors?

RESEARCH AIM

To establish the relationship between colour and young generations' use of Public Open Spaces and to develop design recommendations to help improve that relationship.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

Throughout centuries, the influence of colour has been studied by experts from various fields. In ancient Egypt, Greece, China and India colour properties have even been used to treat diseases (Art Therapy, 2016). Since then, the study of colour has been utilised mostly to influence emotions in arts, including painting, photography and architecture. Zint (2020) demonstrated that the properties of colour can be transferred towards urban environments to improve mental health and wellbeing of urban dwellers. Colour can be used to improve the relationship of young people with the outdoors that has been diminished as a result of digitalisation (Nwoziri, 2020), lack of security (Anderson, 2022) and the COVID-19 pandemic (UK Youth, 2021).

often go through identity formation and have unique development needs. As a result of inadequate system care that is not suited for the needs of TAY the group increasingly struggles with mental health, anti-social behaviour and substance abuse (Khetarpal et al., 2022). This inadequacy is also visible in Urban Design. While spaces are rightfully praised for their adaptation towards needs of children and elder users, the same spaces often forget to address the needs of young people.

As pointed out by Frank Mahnke "Colour is a part of our psychological and biological heritage." (1996, p.9). Research developed through centuries has proven that light and colour affect humans in more ways than just on visual basis. The review of relevant literature indicated many unique properties of colour. These properties can be applied when designing Urban Public Spaces to benefit Transition Age Youth and improve their relationship with the outdoors.

A demographic group of the population defined as Transition Age Youth (TAY), spans from older adolescence to young adulthood (15–26 years old) (Khetarpal et al., 2022). People within these age gaps, commonly called "young people",

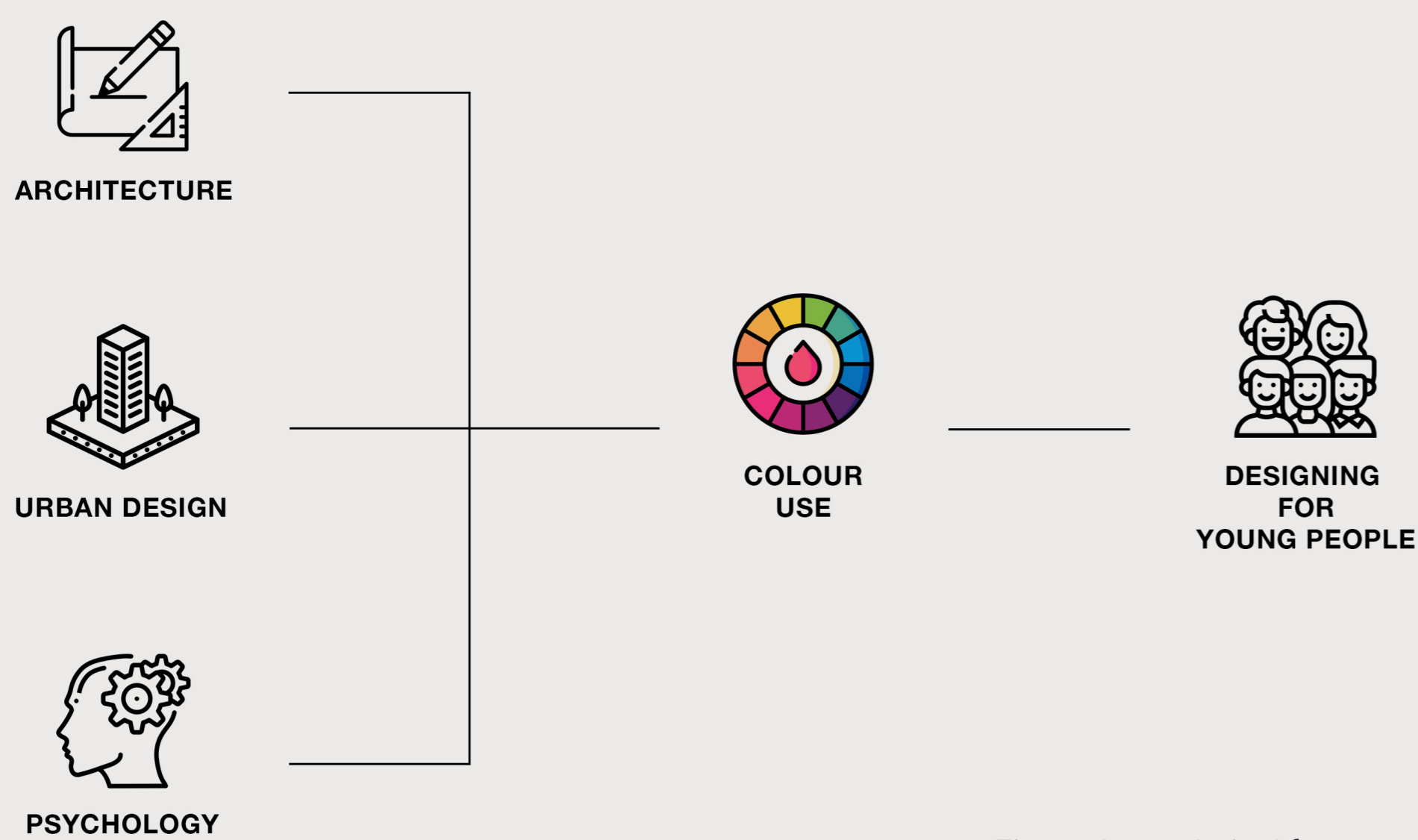


Figure 1 - analytical framework

METHODOLOGY

Objective	Method	Rationale	Chapter
O1. To review the existing literature on the influence of colour on people's experience in the built environment	literature review	Using existing literature to establish the background for the research and develop a conceptual framework.	2. Literature Review
O2. To analyse relevant case studies that used colour to influence users' experience in the urban environment.	case study analysis	Learning from previous examples to identify existing trends and future potential of colour use.	4. Case Study Analysis
O3. To gather people's opinions on the influence of colour and young people's perspective of Urban Public Spaces.	survey, semi-structured interviews	Finding out the extent of existing knowledge from 3 different professionals: urban designer, researcher and public council officer. Studying the opinions of young people about the use of colour in public spaces by conducting survey among 30 participants aged 18-26 (consenting Transition Age Youth)	5. People's Opinions
O4. To develop design recommendations that will help use colour in Urban Public Spaces to improve young people's relationship with the outdoors, their mental health and wellbeing.	mix approach	Combining the knowledge gathered through all methods to establish design principles that will help improve Urban Public Spaces for young people.	6. Findings & Recommendations

RESULTS

The analysis of case studies highlighted the existing relationship between colour and young people. Cities and spaces that are dominated by variety of colours tend to attract young people and vitality in the urban spaces.

Data gathered through the survey method indicated that blue, yellow and green were the colours most desired in Urban Public Spaces. White spaces with lack of primary colours were the least appealing to young people. Mixed opinions occurred when participants

were shown spaces with variety of highly-contrasting colours and spaces with very muted shades.

Interviews with professionals found that colour was a part of all the professions, although the knowledge about appropriate colour use was limited. All professionals agreed that the benefits of colour for young people should be given more attention and that urban design would benefit from deeper understanding of colour properties.

CONCLUSIONS

Colour will never be the solution to pressing issues in the urban environment and on its own isn't enough to make young people feel safe and invited into Urban Public Spaces. Nevertheless, it can be a good starting point for improving young people's relationship with the outdoors. There are many properties of colour that urban designers are not aware of and that the built environment could benefit from

not only for the sake of young people. The research also highlighted the need for young people to be involved in the planning process. Letting young people contribute to designing spaces which they will want to use is important, and letting them choose the colour of these spaces might be a good way to start.

CASE STUDIES

3 LOCATIONS

Analysing existing examples of urban environments showcasing different approaches to colour use & attracting young people

SURVEYS

30 PARTICIPANTS

Gathering young people's opinions on coloured spaces in the urban environment

INTERVIEWS

3 PROFESSIONALS

Developing deeper understanding of colour use and designing for young people through professional interviews

Figure 2 - methods

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