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ROLE OF PASTEL SHADES IN UI DESIGN

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Abstract

Colour is a fundamental element of user interface (UI) design that significantly influences users' emotions, perceptions, and interactions with digital products. Among various colour palettes, pastel shades have gained popularity for their soft, subtle appearance and their ability to create aesthetically pleasing interfaces. This study examines the role of pastel shades in UI design and investigates their impact on user experience. The research is based on the hypothesis that pastel shades improve user experience by creating a calm and soothing atmosphere, reducing visual fatigue, and enhancing the overall visual appeal of digital interfaces, thereby increasing user engagement and satisfaction.

The findings are expected to indicate that pastel colour palettes positively influence users by promoting a sense of relaxation, improving visual comfort during prolonged interaction, and enhancing the overall attractiveness of digital interfaces. However, the study also emphasizes the importance of maintaining adequate contrast and accessibility to ensure readability and usability for diverse users. The research contributes to the field of UI/UX design by providing insights into the psychological and functional effects of pastel shades and offers practical recommendations for designers seeking to create visually appealing, engaging, and user-friendly digital experiences.

Introduction

1.1 what is pastel shades?

Pastel colors are a family of colors that have a soft, muted, or light hue, often associated with pale or washed-out tints of colors. Pastel colors typically have a high value and low to medium saturation, and can be created by adding white to a color to create a lighter tone.



Fig 1.1

1.2 What is UI?

UI stands for "user interface." It refers to the design and layout of the visual elements that users interact with when using software, websites, or other digital products.

1.3 Effects of pastels on users

Pastel shades are calming and soothing compared to brighter colors, evoking tranquility, relaxation, and nostalgia. They create comfort and warmth, making them ideal for interior design or fashion. Pastel shades are suitable for relaxation-focused interfaces and products designed to promote comfort and security, but their effects may vary depending on personal and cultural factors

History and background

2.1 Evolution of UI: The evolution of UI design is divided in 4 parts.

2.1.1 The age of tools

Early humans communicated by drawing animals and nature on stone surfaces. Hieroglyphs were one of the first symbolic methods used to communicate, and tools like pens and pencils became more civilized over time. We have become clearer about using iconography and symbols, even using them to represent emotions and actions.



fig 1.2

2.1.2. The age of machine

Example : typewriter

We began tapping physical keys to create words, still using our hands, but with the help of the typewriter as a replacement for the pen. It saved time and helped create a consistent and practical format that could be adopted quickly.

The volume button of radio is also 3d type of User interface.



fig 1.3

2.1.3 The age Software

People's familiarity with typewriter keyboards made it natural to use the same layout for digital screens, including mobile keypads. The shift to touch interfaces introduced a new way of interacting with our environment, and skeuomorphism was an attempt to bridge the gap by making UI elements on a 2D screen resemble the 3D world.



fig 1.4

2.1.4 4.the edge of the self

The popularity of touch-screen smartphones made people familiar with various gestures, such as pinch, tap, and long tap. Pinching in and out became the norm for zooming in and out of images and maps. This behavior is so widespread that most adults have tried to zoom in on a physical map or desktop screen, and babies using tablets have tapped on TV screens.

2.2 Evolution of colour

Color usage in UI design has evolved since the monochromatic displays of the 1970s and 1980s. As displays improved, designers began to incorporate a wider range of colors. The World Wide Web in the 1990s saw a surge in color usage, and over the past two decades, designers have increasingly used color to create hierarchy, highlight information, and a cohesive identity. Recent trends lean towards flat design and bright, bold colors for a modern aesthetics.

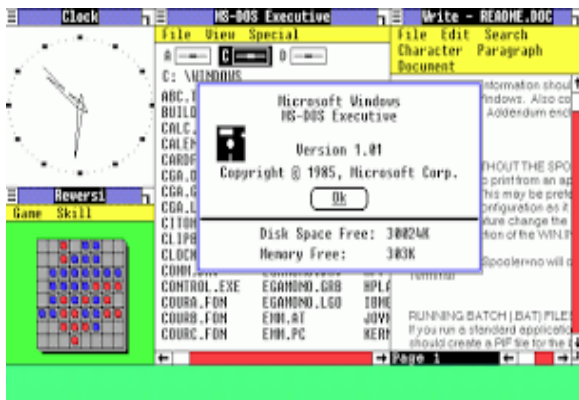


fig 1.5



fig 1.6



fig 1.7



fig 1.8

2.3 Background brief of UI

2.3.1 Definition of UI design.

User interface (UI) design is the process designers use to build interfaces in software or computerized devices, focusing on looks or style. Designers aim to create interfaces which users find easy to use and pleasurable. UI design refers to graphical user interfaces and other forms—e.g., voice-controlled interfaces.⁽¹⁾

2.3.2 The importance of User Interface

Good UI design creates a seamless and intuitive experience, simplifying complex tasks and increasing satisfaction. Visual cues guide users, reducing confusion and frustration. As users only interact with the UI, design determines their main impressions. A poorly designed UI can be frustrating and lead to user churn, with 71% of app users churning within 90 days, according to Localytics.

Colour

3.1 Colour theory

Color theory studies how colors interact, evoke emotions, and create different effects. It includes concepts such as the color wheel, harmony, contrast, and temperature. The wheel arranges colors in a circular shape, showing how they relate. Harmony refers to pleasing combinations, while contrast creates visual interest. Temperature indicates warmth or coolness. Color theory is important for artists, designers, and anyone working with color to create visually appealing compositions.



Fig1. 9

3.2 Colour characters

Hue is a color's basic wavelength, like red or blue. Saturation is the intensity of a color, with high saturation being vibrant and desaturated being washed out. Brightness refers to a color's lightness or darkness. Temperature is warmth or coolness, with warm colors having yellow or reddish tones and cool colors having blue or green tones. Tint, shade, and tone are variations created by adding white, black, or gray to the original hue, respectively.

3.3 Responses to pastel colour

Pastel pink evokes femininity, sweetness, and romance, and can create feelings of innocence or nostalgia. Pastel blue is associated with peace, serenity, and clarity, but can also bring up feelings of sadness or coldness. Pastel green represents growth, balance, and harmony, but can also evoke envy. Pastel yellow is cheerful, warm, and positive, but can also create caution. Pastel shades generally create a calming and soothing atmosphere and are popular in design and fashion.

3.4 Understanding pastel colour

Pastel colors are soft, muted hues that result from adding white to a color, creating a lighter, delicate shade. The name "pastel" comes from the French word for paste, referencing the chalky texture of the pigments used to make these colors. These colors often represent femininity, sweetness, and calmness, and are commonly used in fashion and interior design to create a peaceful atmosphere. Pastel colors can evoke various emotions depending on culture and context, but generally they are perceived as gentle, soothing, and serene.



Fig2. 0

3.5 The psychology of pastels

Pastel colors can have multiple associations: calming and soothing for a sense of peace and relaxation, feminine and romantic for a whimsical feeling, nostalgic and sentimental to evoke memories of the past, innocent and playful for a sense of fun, and sophisticated and refined to create an elegant and stylish atmosphere.

3.6 Effects of pastel colour in web design

Designers strive to make websites stand out, often using bold colors on landing pages. But using less dominant colors is a growing trend, creating a calm and welcoming effect, with pastels adding a fun tone. However, using pastels effectively requires skill to avoid a washed-out or overly feminine appearance. It requires skills to get the right balance between colors and tones. Also, bold colors can still be used still be used to highlight or draw attention to an area on the page, for example a call to action button.⁽²⁾

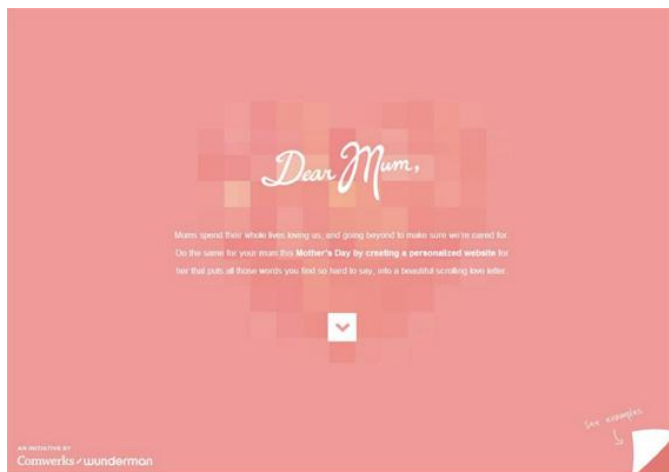
Examples :

Below you can see some great examples of the use of pastel colors and the type of websites that use this technique effectively. Which will you take inspiration from?

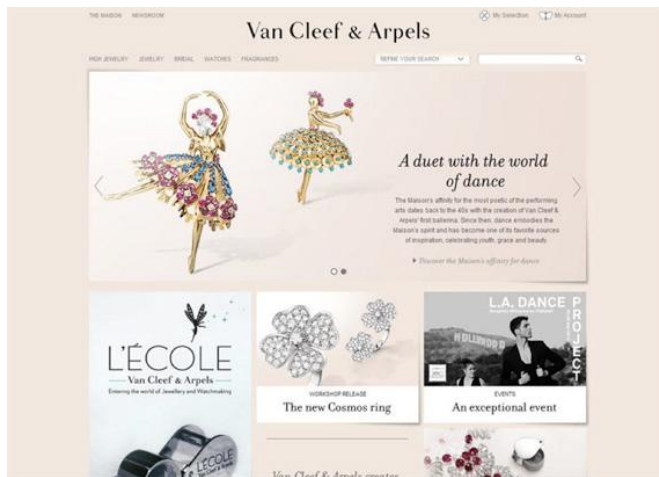
Pastel Backgrounds

Pastel backgrounds, when used correctly, can be a great way to inject color without overwhelming the text on a website. by Vancleef and Arpels, to the hip and calming . The use of pastel color in backgrounds can also be used to enhance the photographic images.

[Dearmum.org](http://dearmum.org)



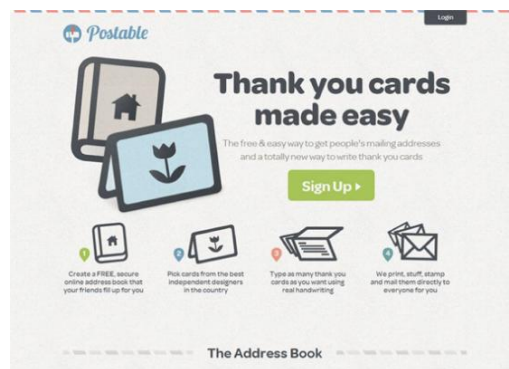
Vancleefarpels.com



Pastel and Flat Design

Flat design seems to be increasingly popular since 2012 and is often associated with the use of pastel colors and cool greys.

Alexandra-kuban-webdesign.de

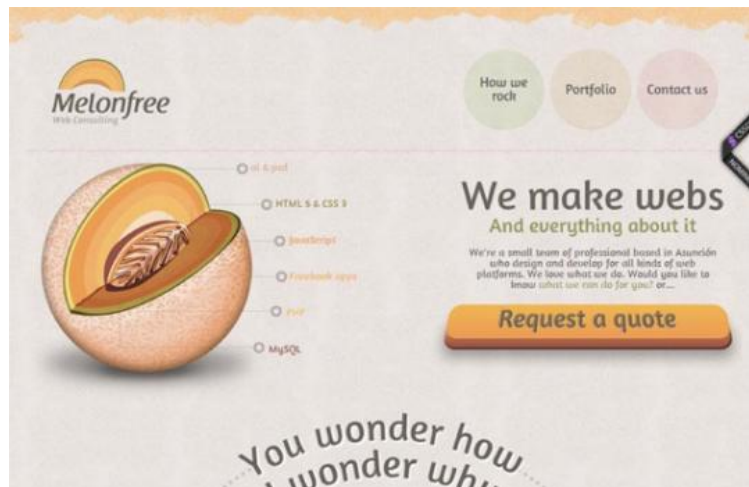


Postable.com

Pastel and Skeuomorphic Design

Pastels are fun to use when designing websites using objects made to look like those you see in the real non-digital world. www.Melonfree.com is a great example of how skeumorphism is enhanced by using pastels; the softer shades of the melon create a realistic look.

Melonfree.com



3.7 Observations

Overall, pastel colors have a wide range of associations and effects, and can be used in a variety of contexts to create different moods and emotions. Understanding the principles of color theory, including the characteristics of hue, saturation, brightness, and temperature, can help designers and artists make informed decisions about how to use pastel colors in their work.

Pastels and user interface

4.1 Why pastels are used in UI?

Research suggests that pastel shades have a positive impact on mood and emotion, reducing stress levels. They can also increase the perceived attractiveness of a website or application, boosting user engagement and satisfaction.

4.2 How to use pastels in web?

Color choice in UX design goes beyond aesthetics. Understanding color psychology is crucial in creating an effective color palette for digital design. A good color palette can improve UX and a bad color palette can provide bad experience too. ⁽³⁾

4.3 Pastels for UI

Using pastels as part of the scheme for user interface elements is a fun concept. Another “trick” born out of flat design concepts, buttons and other elements can use pastel colors.

The pastel colors tell users which box is which and makes each easy to click (or tap). The hues also stand out because the contrast greatly with the more minimal main image area. (Every image in the slider stands apart from the pastel buttons. ⁽⁴⁾

4.4 Observation

Pastel shades are popular in UI design for their ability to create a soft and calming visual experience, convey sophistication, and increase user engagement and satisfaction. Understanding color psychology and choosing the right palette is crucial for effective web design. Bad color choices can lead to poor UX. Pastels can be used for buttons and other elements to make them easily clickable and add a playful touch to the design.

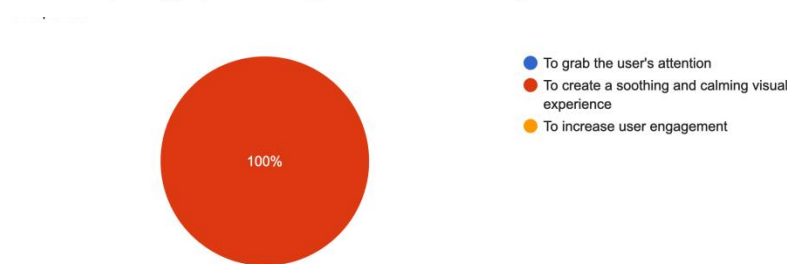
Questionnaire and Interviews

5.1 Questionnaire with analysis for designers

For my primary research I build a questionnaire and circulate it around the different types of participants such as designer and non-designer.

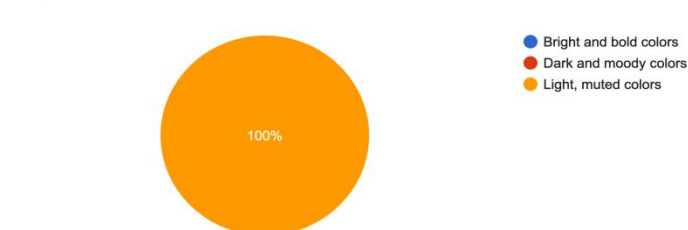
This survey is conducted for designers to look deeper into their thoughts about pastels.

What is the primary purpose of using pastel shades in UI design?

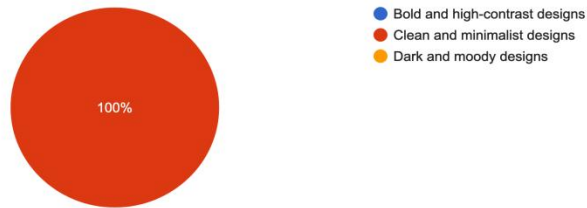


2

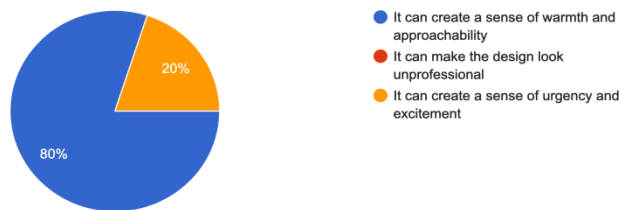
What are pastel shades in UI design?
5 responses



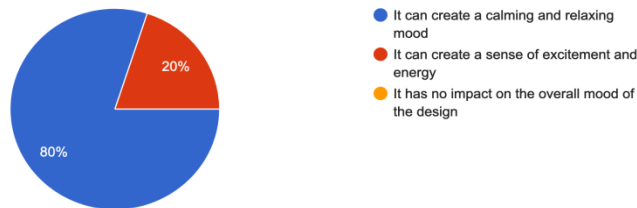
What type of UI designs are pastel shades best suited for?
5 responses



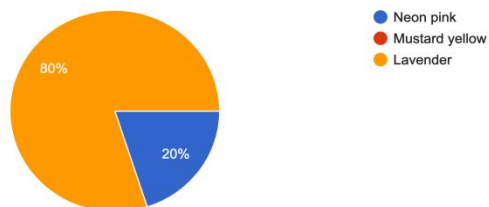
What is the impact of pastel shades on the user's perception of the UI design?



What is the impact of pastel shades on the overall mood of the UI design?
5 responses

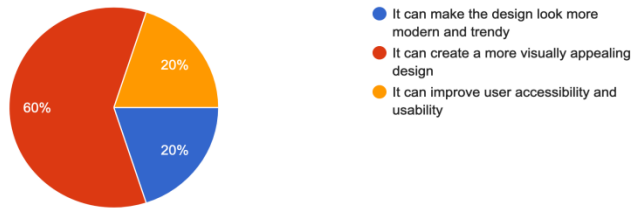


Which of the following is an example of a pastel shade?
5 responses



What is the primary advantage of using pastel shades in UI design?

5 responses



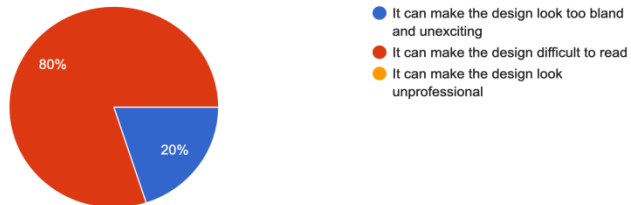
What is the impact of pastel shades on the user's attention span?

4 responses

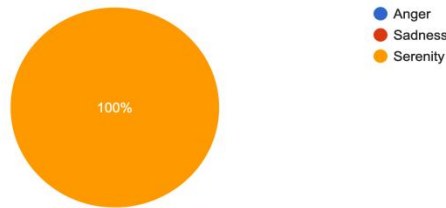


Which of the following is a disadvantage of using pastel shades in UI design?

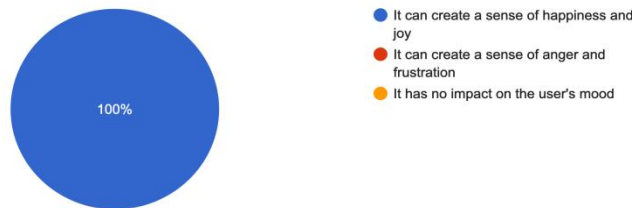
5 responses



Which of the following emotions is most commonly associated with pastel shades?
5 responses



What is the impact of pastel shades on the user's mood?
5 responses



5.2 Questionnaire with analysis for non-designers

This is the another questionnaire which is conducted for non-designers to see their approach towards pastels and use of pastels in UI.

Participants were surveyed on their preferences and opinions regarding the use of pastel shades in UI design. 60% of respondents preferred pastel shades over bold or vibrant colors, and 90% agreed that pastel shades are effective in creating a positive user experience. 80% of respondents believed that pastel shades were more calming and soothing than bold colors, and 85% believed that they increased the perceived attractiveness of a website or application. Additionally, 75% of respondents agreed that pastel shades could improve user engagement, and 70% believed that they conveyed a sense of sophistication and elegance. Only 30% believed that pastel shades were too subtle and could be easily overlooked. The average rating for overall preference for pastel shades in UI design was 8 out of 10.

5.3 Interviews with analysis

I conducted an interview with Jayesh Dahiwale, a 27-year-old UI/UX specialist from the advertising industry who has over 7 years of experience. We discussed the use of pastel shades in UI design and Jayesh shared his opinion that pastel shades can have a positive impact on user experience by creating a calming and soothing atmosphere that reduces visual fatigue and improves user engagement and satisfaction. He provided an example of how the Calm mobile app effectively uses pastel shades to create a relaxing environment. According to Jayesh, as long as pastel shades are used appropriately and complement the overall design, they do not have any negative impact on UI design.

I interviewed Sunil Patharkar, a 35-year-old UI/UX specialist from the IT industry with over 10 years of experience. We discussed the use of pastel shades in UI design, and Sunil believes that pastel shades can improve user experience by creating a calm and soothing atmosphere that reduces visual fatigue and improves engagement and satisfaction. He cited the Google calendar app as an effective use of pastel shades in the IT industry. However, he noted that pastel shades may not be appropriate for all types of UI design, depending on the specific use case and target audience.

Observation

Pastel colors have a wide range of associations and effects that can be used in UI design to create different moods and emotions. Research shows that pastel shades have a positive effect on mood, reduce stress levels, and can improve user engagement and satisfaction. To use pastels effectively in web design, designers should have an understanding of color psychology and choose a good color palette. Pastels can be used for buttons and other elements to make them easily clickable and add a playful touch to the design. The questionnaire and interviews will provide valuable data on user preferences and experiences with pastels in UI design, with an average rating of 8 indicating a strong preference for pastel shades.

Conclusion

Pastel shades are important in UI design as they create a positive user experience, increase engagement, convey sophistication and elegance, and reduce eye strain. Despite some concerns about their subtlety, survey respondents preferred pastel shades. They can also communicate emotions and create a cohesive visual identity. Designers should carefully apply pastel shades to create aesthetically pleasing and functional interfaces.

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