Seeing to Choose: Understanding Parental Visual Preferences in Selecting Early Childhood Equipment

Dinda Robayanti[1], Ridha Ainnunnisa[2]

[1] *Department of Early Childhood Teacher Education, Universitas Islam Bandung, Indonesia*
[2] *Department of Islamic Early Childhood Education, Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam Sabili Bandung, Indonesia*

✉ Corresponding e-mail: dinda.robayanti@unisba.ac.id

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Abstract

This study aims to identify parents' color preferences, sources of visual inspiration, and the roles of family members in decision-making when selecting products for early childhood. Using a quantitative descriptive approach, data were collected through an online survey involving 185 parents. The instrument included a color preference scale, Likert-based attitude statements, and comparative visual image selections. Descriptive statistical analysis was employed to interpret the data. The findings indicate that bright colors remain dominant for products such as toys and clothing, reflecting associations with playfulness and stimulation. In contrast, neutral tones, such as beige and earth colors, are more frequently preferred for educational products and room settings, as they are perceived to promote calmness and visual comfort for children. Direct visual encounters with products and exposure to social media content emerge as the primary sources of visual inspiration. At the same time, mothers are identified as the main decision-makers regarding children's product selection within the family. These results suggest that parents' visual choices are shaped not only by functional considerations but also by lifestyle aspirations and aesthetic values believed to support children's development. Within this context, color functions as a symbolic representation of family identity and parental expectations for children's everyday environments. This study recommends that designers, manufacturers, and early childhood education practitioners give greater consideration to visual aspects in product development and calls for further research on the developmental implications of visual design in early childhood settings.

Keywords: *Color Perception; Early Childhood Equipment; Early Childhood Product Design; Parental Visual Preference*

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A. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, parents' visual preferences in selecting early childhood products have attracted increasing scholarly attention, alongside the growing popularity of minimalist aesthetics and the use of neutral color palettes, such as beige, cream, and earth tones, in children's products. This trend has been widely disseminated through social media and digital parenting platforms, which function not only as sources of information but also as spaces for the construction of visual norms regarding what is considered ideal and modern parenting (Chae, 2022; McDaniel & Radesky, 2018). Repeated visual exposure through digital media has been shown to influence parents' perceptions of color and design choices deemed appropriate for children (Nansen, 2020; Pratyaharani et al., 2022). This phenomenon suggests that the selection of children's products is not visually neutral; rather, it is deeply embedded with aesthetic values, self-representation, and the social construction of parenting practices.

Within the family context, the visual environment is largely shaped by parents, who play a central role as decision-makers in the consumption of early childhood products. Parents are regarded as individuals with greater experience and responsibility, acting as facilitators who support children's lives without coercion (Ainnunnisa & Rachmawati, 2024; Ramli, 2022). The visual design of early childhood environments is manifested through the selection of everyday items such as eating utensils, toys, clothing, bedding, and hygiene products that support children's daily needs.

In contemporary settings, children's products are no longer selected solely based on functional considerations, such as safety, durability, and comfort, but increasingly on visual attributes. Visual elements, including patterns, shapes, textures, design, and color, have become key considerations for parents when choosing products for their children. Lin et al. (2016) argue that color is often the first visual element to attract human attention and is a crucial factor in object selection, even preceding considerations of form or material. Such visual stimulation may contribute to the development of imagination and creativity by providing supportive environments for children. Moreover, appropriate color selection can influence children's emotional states, particularly by enhancing motivation (Davis et al., 2021; Rezieka et al., 2021).

Several studies suggest that the dominance of parental visual preferences may reflect adult identities and aspirations more strongly than children's own needs for visual expression (Davis et al., 2021; Gumilang et al., 2024). This phenomenon generates imagery associated with self-acculturation and adaptation to rapidly evolving aesthetic standards within the social environment. Parents seek to project an image of being caring, well-organized, and aesthetically attuned, both in physical spaces and digital environments. For millennial parents, purchasing children's products is not merely a means of fulfilling functional needs but also serves as a form of personal gratification and self-expression (Pratyaharani et al., 2022).

However, early childhood is a developmental phase that is highly sensitive to various environmental stimuli, including visual stimuli. Visual elements such as color, shape, pattern, and design that are present in children's everyday lives, through toys, clothing, eating utensils, and learning materials, play an important role in shaping children's sensory, emotional, and

cognitive experiences. Research indicates that color and visual appearance can influence children's attention, emotional responses, and engagement in play and learning activities (Boyatzis & Varghese, 1994; Chen et al., 2023; Sari, 2004). In the context of early childhood education (ECE), the visual environment functions not merely as an aesthetic component but as an integral part of the learning environment, contributing to children's comfort, focus, and readiness to engage in activities (Küller et al., 2009; Stern-Ellran et al., 2016). In line with this, Widayati et al. (2020) argue that the use of bright colors and diverse patterns can stimulate curiosity and encourage systematic and accurate problem-solving.

Based on this phenomenon, the main issue addressed in this study concerns parents' visual preferences in selecting products for early childhood. Specifically, this research seeks to examine the colors and visual characteristics that parents tend to choose, the sources of visual inspiration that influence these choices, and the parties most dominant in decision-making related to the selection of children's products within the family.

Previous studies have extensively examined children's product selection from the perspective of parental consumer behavior, particularly focusing on functional aspects such as safety, comfort, quality, and price (Kumari et al., 2025; Pratyaharani et al., 2022). Other research has emphasized the role of physical environments and play spaces in supporting children's learning experiences (Dankiw et al., 2023; Diana, 2024), as well as the relationship between color and children's emotions and behavior (Boyatzis & Varghese, 1994; Davis et al., 2021). However, few studies have explicitly examined parental visual preferences as a distinct construct that encompasses color choices, aesthetic tendencies, and sources of visual inspiration in the selection of early childhood products. Moreover, there remains limited empirical exploration of how these visual preferences are shaped within contemporary parenting practices and digital media exposure, particularly within the field of early childhood education. Consequently, a significant research gap persists regarding the comprehensive mapping of parental visual preferences.

Recent studies have demonstrated increasing attention to the visual dimension of parenting practices and children's learning environments. Chen et al. (2023), for example, employed an eye-tracking approach to examine children's color preferences, while Gumilang et al. (2024) highlighted the relationship between color perception and the formation of early childhood identity. Other studies by Dankiw et al. (2023) and Diana (2024) emphasized the design of physical environments and children's play spaces. In contrast, the present study positions parents as the primary actors shaping children's visual environments through their everyday product choices. By adopting this perspective, the study contributes to the existing literature by foregrounding parental visual preferences within the context of early childhood education. Accordingly, this research aims to examine parents' visual preferences, including color choices, aesthetic tendencies, and sources of visual inspiration in the selection of early childhood products.

B. METHOD
1. Research Design

This study employed a quantitative approach using a survey method to obtain an overview of parents' visual preferences in selecting products for early childhood. The survey

method was chosen because it enables the efficient collection of data from a large number of respondents and allows for the identification of trends in parental perceptions and decision-making based on predetermined variables.

2. Participant and Research Setting

The study participants were parents with children aged 0–6 years who were domiciled in the West Java region. A purposive sampling technique was applied, with inclusion criteria consisting of parents who are directly involved in selecting children's products, such as toys, eating utensils, clothing, and other supporting items. A total of 185 respondents participated in the study. This sample size meets the minimum requirements for quantitative analysis and is considered sufficient to yield representative results and support statistical analysis.

3. Research Instrument

Data were collected using a questionnaire developed by the researchers based on relevant theoretical frameworks and previous studies related to parental visual consumption. The questionnaire consisted of closed-ended statements measured using a four-point Likert scale. It covered several visual aspects, including color, pattern, design, and form, as well as external factors influencing parental preferences, such as social media exposure and lifestyle considerations. The indicators included in the questionnaire are presented as follows:

Tabel 1. Research Survey Indicators

Variable Aspect	Indicators
Visual and aesthetic preferences	Color, pattern, shape, design, aesthetic impression
Consumption considerations	Functionality, comfort, trends, children's psychological aspects
Sources of inspiration	Social media, influencers, modern lifestyle trends, community, surrounding environment
Parental roles and decision-making	Decision-making and lifestyle influence
Child-oriented orientation	Alignment of choices with children's developmental needs

The questionnaire development process followed several systematic steps. First, the researchers constructed the research instrument by formulating items designed to measure each research variable. Next, a conceptual framework was developed by classifying the key themes and constructs to be represented in the questionnaire items. During this stage, the feasibility of data management and analysis procedures was also considered to ensure that the collected data could be effectively processed and interpreted.

4. Data Collection and Analysis Technique

After the questionnaire was finalized, data were collected through an online survey and distributed to parents domiciled in the West Java region. Upon completion of data

collection, the responses were screened and subsequently analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques. Figure 1 illustrates the sequential stages of the questionnaire development, data collection, and data analysis processes employed in this study.
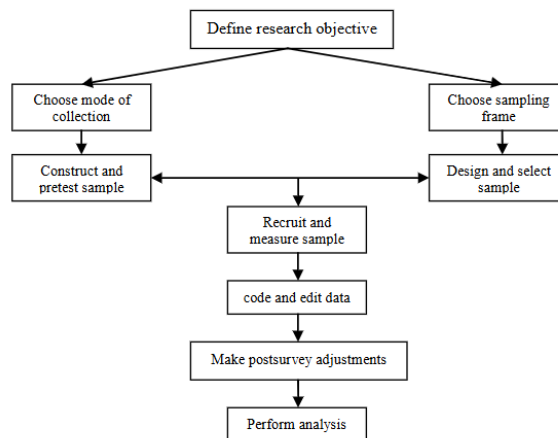
Gambar 1. Survey Method Process Groves (as cited in (Adiyanta, 2019)

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Result

This section presents the research findings on parents' visual preferences in selecting products for early childhood. Using data obtained through a structured survey, the results describe the influence of visual attributes, such as color, pattern, design, and iconographic representation in products and promotional media on parents' aesthetic perceptions and product appeal. Among these attributes, color plays a particularly important role in early childhood contexts, as it is closely associated with sensory stimulation, the formation of preferences, and cognitive as well as emotional development. Bright and contrasting colors, for instance, may enhance attention, introduce basic concepts, and support children's exploration and imagination.

a. Parental Color Preferences and Sources of Inspiration

This subsection presents the survey results related to parents' color preferences and sources of visual inspiration in selecting early childhood products. The findings are described using frequencies and percentages based on responses from 185 participants (n = 185).

Table 2. Parents' Color Preferences and Sources of Inspiration

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Reasons for choosing colors	Educational value	66	35,7%
	Durable / does not easily show dirt	37	20%
	Aesthetic value	35	18,9%
	Reflects the child's personality	35	18,9%

	Following trends	12	6,5%
Color preference for children's products	Bright colors	81	43,8%
	Neutral colors	51	27,6%
	Based on the child's gender	32	17,3%
	Adjusted to the child's mood	19	10,3%
	Matched with parents' clothing	1	0,5%
Color preference for toys	Varied/multicolored	83	44,9%
	Child's choice	79	42,7%
	Neutral colors	15	8,1%
	Price	8	4,3%
Sources of inspiration	Direct observation in stores (online/offline)	94	50,8%
	Social media	65	35,1%
	Friends/family	13	7%
	Teachers/professionals	10	5,4%
	Others	3	1,6%
Decision-maker*	Mother	148	80%
	Child	55	29,7%
	Father	14	7,6%
	Other family members	4	2,2%

Based on the data presented in Table 2, the overall findings indicate that parents' visual preferences are influenced by a combination of aesthetic values, developmental expectations, and sources of inspiration encountered in everyday life. Bright colors emerged as a prominent choice, while social media exposure and direct visual impressions of products further shaped the dynamic construction of parental visual taste. Within the family context, mothers were identified as the primary decision-makers, reinforcing their role as gatekeepers of visual preferences and as key designers of children's developmental environments. These findings provide an important basis for understanding how visual considerations reflect not only personal taste but also parental values, parenting styles, and desired developmental trajectories for children.

b. Parents' Views on the Visual Value of Children's Products

Parents' views on the visual value of children's products are illustrated in Figure 2 using a stacked bar chart that presents the distribution of Likert-scale response percentages (n = 185). The figure depicts response trends related to the influence of color, the visual suitability of products, the role of social media, and color preferences.
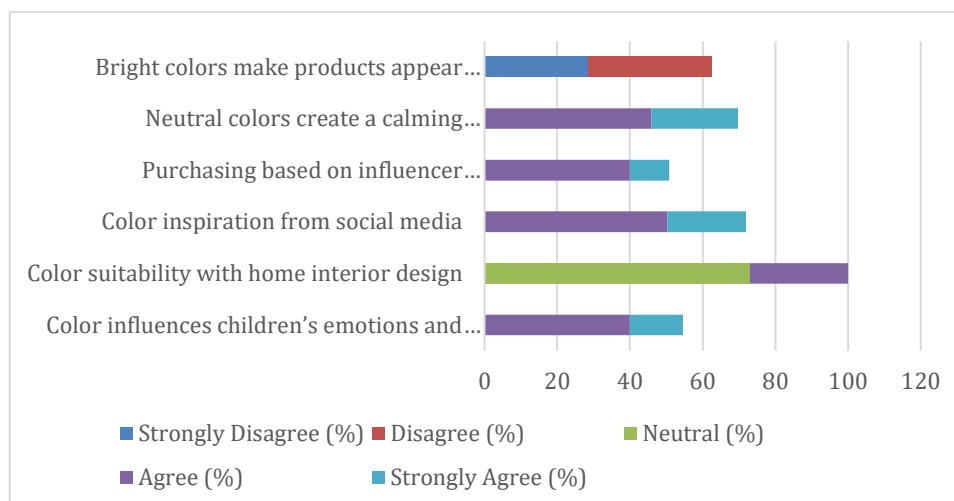
Figure 2. Survey Results on Parents' Views of the Visual Value of Children's Products

The results show that 54.6% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that color influences children's emotions and behavior. With regard to the suitability of children's product colors in relation to home interior design, 27.0% of respondents reported agreement or strong agreement, while the remaining respondents selected neutral or disagreement responses. In terms of visual sources of inspiration, 71.9% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they obtained inspiration for children's product colors and designs from social media. Furthermore, 50.8% of respondents reported having purchased children's products based on recommendations from parenting influencers.

Regarding color preferences, 69.7% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that neutral colors, such as beige and pastel tones, convey a calming, neat, and minimalist impression. Conversely, 62.7% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that bright colors make children's products appear cluttered. These findings indicate that although neutral colors represent a dominant preference, bright colors continue to hold an important place in parents' perceptions, particularly when associated with the cheerfulness and expressiveness of childhood.

c. Analysis of Visual Color Preferences in the Representation of Early Childhood Products

All 185 respondents were asked to complete a series of comparative visual questions focusing on preferences for color and styles of representation in children's products. Overall, the findings demonstrate a strong tendency toward neutral, soft, and understated color palettes, including beige, cream, pastel shades, and earth tones.

Table 3. Parents' Survey Results on Visual Color Preferences in the Representation of Early Childhood Products

Question Focus	Majority Choice	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Preferred images for children	Neutral/pastel-colored images	120	64.9%

Color atmosphere of children's play spaces	Soft/earth-tone colors	134	72.4%
Preferred purchase of similar products (Option 1)	Neutral colors	125	67.6%
Preferred purchase of similar products (Option 2)	Calm, understated colors	122	65.9%

Table 3 summarizes the comparative visual findings and illustrates the consistency of parents' preferences for neutral and subdued color schemes in the representation of early childhood products. Across nine items presenting two visual alternatives, the majority of respondents repeatedly selected options characterized by neutral, pastel, or earth-tone colors. For example, 73.5% of respondents chose visuals dominated by soft and clean colors when asked to identify images perceived as most comfortable for children to view. Similarly, 72.4% expressed a preference for playroom environments featuring earth-tone hues rather than more striking color schemes.

Comparable patterns were observed across other visual aspects, including preferences for color choices in similar products (65.9–67.6%), design styles for children's spaces (67.0%), and family clothing color coordination (70.8%). Even in items addressing aesthetic values most closely aligned with family identity, 73.0% of respondents identified natural and minimalist colors as the most appropriate representation. Overall, both the tabular and visual data indicate that parents' visual preferences tend to favor aesthetics that are calm, harmonious, and characterized by minimal excessive visual stimulation.

2. Discussion

Within a contemporary information ecosystem characterized by intense visual stimulation and the rapid expansion of digital platforms, it is increasingly important to examine how parents navigate the diversity of early childhood products based on visual considerations. Through three analytical dimensions, sources of inspiration for color selection, attitudes toward the meaning and function of color, and responses to different visual stimuli, this study addresses key questions regarding how parents' visual preferences are formed and manifested in decisions about children's products, which visual attributes exert the strongest influence, and how social and personal contexts shape these tendencies.

This discussion extends beyond aesthetic considerations to address their relevance to principles of child development. From an early childhood education (ECE) perspective, visual attributes such as color, pattern, design, and iconographic representation in products and promotional media not only shape parents' aesthetic perceptions but also influence the quality of sensory stimulation experienced by children. Bright and contrasting colors, for example, may optimize sensory input, support the introduction of basic concepts such as color and shape, and foster curiosity. In contrast, the use of neutral or beige tones may create calmer environments with reduced visual distraction, which in certain contexts can support children's focus on primary activities.

Therefore, the analysis of parental visual preferences is important not only for understanding consumption patterns but also for linking these decisions to their implications for young children's cognitive, emotional, and social development. The findings of this study may therefore serve as a reference for educational practitioners, product designers, and policymakers, encouraging visual considerations in children's products that are not only aesthetically appealing but also developmentally appropriate.

a. Parents' Color Preferences and Sources of Inspiration

The findings indicate that parents' visual decisions in selecting children's products extend beyond functional utility and reflect broader aesthetic values, cultural influences, and developmental perceptions. Preferences for bright colors are commonly associated with representations of childhood as cheerful, expressive, and rich in stimulation. From a developmental perspective, bright colors are known to attract attention, increase arousal, and support sensory exploration in early childhood (Sari, 2004). Conversely, preferences for neutral colors indicate an orientation toward visual calmness, which is often associated with concepts of neat, aesthetic, and non-overstimulating spaces (Chen et al., 2023; Stern-Ellran et al., 2016).

The prominence of neutral and soft color preferences suggests a shift in the construction of parents' visual taste. Neutral colors are frequently perceived as symbols of calmness, order, and emotional stability, reflecting parents' desire to create environments that are visually comfortable and non-overstimulating. This finding is consistent with Stern-Ellran et al. (2016) and is reinforced by more recent studies highlighting the growing adoption of minimalist aesthetics and Montessori-inspired principles in home environments (Chen et al., 2023; Erlina & Noviani, 2024). n this context, parents' visual preferences can be interpreted as efforts to balance children's need for sensory stimulation with the visual comfort and aesthetic values of the family environment.

Preferences shaped by considerations of gender or children's moods further indicate the influence of social norms alongside more responsive approaches to children's individual personalities and emotional needs. Thus, parents' color preferences emerge from interactions among developmental expectations, cultural values, and prevailing visual trends. This interpretation aligns with Usman et al. (2024), who argue that parental visual decisions often reflect both dominant social values and sensitivity to children's self-expression. Visual attributes, therefore, cannot be understood in isolation but are closely intertwined with broader cultural norms and parenting practices.

Preferences for bright colors and children's involvement in decision-making also reflect contemporary parenting orientations. Bright colors are strongly associated with sensory stimulation and cognitive development in early childhood. According to Piaget's theory of cognitive development, children in the preoperational stage (approximately ages 2–7) demonstrate heightened sensitivity to visual stimuli, and their attraction to color reflects emerging symbolic thinking (Santrock, 2013). Similarly, Montessori-based approaches emphasize environments that support children's

autonomy and natural interests, including the provision of visually engaging objects (Erlina & Noviani, 2024; Sholeh, 2025; Usman et al., 2024).

Parents' decisions to involve children in product selection can also be understood as expressions of democratic and responsive parenting styles, in which children's preferences are increasingly acknowledged. At the same time, the relatively lower emphasis on price considerations and strict minimalist aesthetics suggests that emotional comfort and children's engagement often take precedence over efficiency-oriented or adult-centered aesthetic logics.

These preferences are shaped by multiple sources of visual inspiration encountered in parents' daily lives. While digital platforms and social media play a significant role in shaping visual expectations, the findings indicate that final decisions are frequently guided by direct visual impressions of products. Moreover, the dynamics of visual preferences are closely related to decision-making roles within the family. Mothers emerge as the dominant decision-makers, reflecting their central role in filtering visual choices based on aesthetic appeal, functional value, and perceived suitability for children's characteristics.

The findings suggest that parents' visual preferences in selecting early childhood products are shaped by a complex interaction of aesthetic values, developmental considerations, and sources of visual inspiration encountered in everyday life. Bright colors remain prominent, aligning with perceptions of childhood as expressive and highly stimulating, while social media exposure and direct product encounters contribute to the ongoing construction of visual taste. Within the family context, mothers' dominance in decision-making reinforces their role as gatekeepers of visual preferences and as designers of children's developmental environments. These insights underscore that visual choices in early childhood products are not merely matters of taste, but also expressions of parenting values, styles, and aspirations for children's development.

b. Parents' Perspectives on the Visual Value of Children's Products

Visual preferences have become one of the primary considerations in parents' selection of children's products in contemporary contexts. Visual aspects such as color, form, and harmony with the home environment are no longer viewed merely as supplementary features, but as integral components of the aesthetic and psychological experiences offered by children's products. The findings of this study indicate that the majority of parents believe color influences children's emotions and behavior. This aligns with color psychology theory, which posits that colors can elicit physiological and emotional responses, including in children (Boyatzis & Varghese, 1994). Warm colors, such as red and orange, tend to stimulate activity and arousal, whereas cool colors, such as blue and green, are generally associated with calming effects (Sari, 2004).

This tendency is closely related to parents' consideration of visual harmony between children's products and home interiors, reflecting the growing prominence of domestic aesthetic values. As argued by Norman (2004) in *Emotional Design*, visually pleasing objects not only enhance emotional comfort but also shape affective

relationships between users and the objects themselves.

Social media continues to play a significant role in shaping parents' visual perceptions and aesthetic preferences. In this study, 50.3% of respondents reported frequently gaining inspiration from platforms such as Instagram, Pinterest, and TikTok. This finding supports the argument of McDaniel & Radesky (2018), who suggest that social media has become a major reference source in parenting decision-making, including aspects related to aesthetics and lifestyle. Within the context of early childhood education, this phenomenon suggests that visually driven preferences influenced by digital media not only shape parental taste but also have the potential to affect children's learning and play environments at home.

Exposure to visual content shared by parenting influencers further influences parental consumption behavior. Approximately 40% of respondents reported selecting children's products based on recommendations from public figures, indicating a transfer of trust and visual validation to individuals perceived as knowledgeable or inspirational (Abidin, 2016). From an ECE perspective, this influence presents dual implications. On the one hand, such recommendations may introduce educational and developmentally appropriate products; on the other hand, in the absence of adequate visual and pedagogical literacy, parents may prioritize aesthetic trends over educational considerations. These findings therefore underscore the importance of supporting parents in critically filtering social media content to ensure that visual choices remain aligned with children's developmental needs.

From a theoretical standpoint, Montessori emphasizes the importance of the prepared environment, an environment intentionally designed to support children's independence, curiosity, and concentration. Within this framework, the selection of visual attributes such as color, pattern, and design is not simply a matter of following trends but constitutes part of a pedagogical strategy. Neutral colors may help minimize distractions, while bright colors can be used strategically to highlight specific activity areas or to draw attention to learning materials.

Similarly, Vygotsky's sociocultural theory emphasizes that children's development occurs through social interaction and cultural mediation, including through everyday objects and artifacts. When parents select children's products inspired by social media content, they indirectly introduce cultural values, norms, and aesthetic preferences derived from digital environments into children's domestic spaces. While this process may enrich children's experiences if managed selectively, it also carries the risk of narrowing visual diversity if choices are limited to prevailing aesthetic trends.

These parental preferences align with contemporary interior design trends that emphasize simplicity and visual calmness. Küller et al. (2009) found that neutral colors tend to reduce visual stress and contribute to perceptions of more organized spaces. Although colorful hues are widely associated with children's cheerfulness—as acknowledged by 45.4% of respondents—the majority of parents in this study perceived excessive use of bright colors as contributing to visual clutter and discomfort.

The findings suggest that contemporary parents no longer view early childhood products solely as functional tools, but also as media for expressing family aesthetic values and psychosocial identities. Choices related to color, design, and visual style reflect parental aspirations, identity construction, and expectations for children's holistic development. This shift indicates a movement from predominantly utilitarian consumption toward symbolic and emotional consumption, in which visual qualities generate feelings of comfort, security, and emotional connection between children and their environments.

This phenomenon further illustrates how visual elements have become embedded within broader narratives of modern parenting shaped by social media practices, shared imagery, and expectations of an "aesthetic home." Children's products no longer function as isolated objects, but as components of a curated domestic visual landscape. Preferences for neutral or soft colors, for instance, are influenced not only by considerations of children's needs, but also by interior harmony, practicality, and parents' self-image as aesthetically attentive and well-organized caregivers. Thus, the findings of this study extend beyond consumption behavior to situate parental visual preferences within early childhood education, where visual choices have direct implications for the quality of stimulation, habit formation, and children's everyday learning environments.

c. Analysis of Visual Color Preferences in Early Childhood Product Representations

Preferences for visual colors in early childhood products reflect the aesthetic, psychological, and social values held by parents. From a child development perspective, color does not function merely as a decorative element, but plays an important role in influencing children's mood, levels of attention, and sensory comfort (Burkitt et al., 2003). The majority of parents demonstrate a strong preference for neutral, soft, and understated colors, such as beige, cream, pastel shades, and earth tones. These colors are commonly perceived as calming, supportive of concentration, and less demanding on children's visual processing. This preference is supported by the theory of low-arousal color environments, which suggests that visually calm environments can promote emotional security and reduce distraction in children (Küller et al., 2009; Stern-Ellran et al., 2016). In addition, neutral colors are considered easier to coordinate with home interiors, thereby creating visual harmony that is aesthetically pleasing not only for children but also for other family members.

The consistency of these color preferences is evident across multiple contexts, including similar product categories, visual designs in children's spaces, and clothing colors deemed suitable for the family as a whole. Even in representations of family aesthetic values, natural and minimalist color schemes are frequently regarded as most reflective of shared principles. This pattern suggests that the dominance of neutral colors is not incidental, but rather represents a visual manifestation of broader parenting values. Color selection, therefore, extends beyond practical considerations to encompass beliefs about creating environments characterized by calmness, order,

and balance. Accordingly, preferences for neutral colors in early childhood products should not be understood merely as stylistic choices, but as expressions of families' emotional aspirations and visual identities. These preferences contribute to shaping the psychological and social climates of children's everyday environments, underscoring the role of color aesthetics in contemporary parenting practices.

Beyond psychological considerations, neutral color preferences are also strongly influenced by contemporary digital visual culture. Increased exposure to aestheticized parenting content on social media platforms, such as Instagram and Pinterest, contributes to the construction of idealized images of clean, orderly, and harmonious domestic spaces. McDaniel & Radesky (2018) demonstrate that millennial and Generation Z parents are particularly influenced by social media in shaping visual decisions related to children's products, including color and design choices. In this context, color preferences function not only as aesthetic choices but also as markers of family identity and aspirations toward a curated lifestyle.

This phenomenon is further linked to symbolic consumption in parenting. Parents do not select products solely based on functional utility, but also because these products communicate values such as simplicity, warmth, and emotional closeness. This aligns with the concept of aesthetic consumption proposed by Arnould & Thompson (2005), which emphasizes that consumption practices are embedded in cultural meanings and value systems rather than driven purely by practicality.

Taken together, these findings suggest that the design of early childhood products cannot be separated from parents' visual preferences as primary consumers. Designers, manufacturers, and educators should therefore consider the prevailing tendency toward calming and neutral color palettes, while also recognizing that such visual choices reflect parents' aspirations to create environments that are perceived as safe, aesthetically pleasing, and supportive of optimal child development.

d. Research Limitations

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the use of a questionnaire-based survey method limits the ability to explore in depth the cognitive processes, motivations, and subjective meanings underlying parents' visual preferences. As a result, the findings primarily reflect general tendencies and self-reported perceptions, rather than causal relationships or rich contextual explanations. Second, the reliance on self-reported data introduces the potential for response bias, including social desirability bias. This is particularly relevant in research related to parenting practices and aesthetic choices, where respondents may be inclined to provide answers that align with socially accepted norms or idealized representations of parenting. Third, this study does not explicitly examine variations in parents' social, cultural, and economic backgrounds—such as educational level, residential context, or differential exposure to design trends—which may significantly influence visual preferences. Consequently, the results should be interpreted as an overview of general patterns rather than as detailed representations of specific demographic or cultural groups.

e. Recommendations for Future Research

Based on the identified limitations, future research is recommended to integrate survey methods with qualitative approaches, such as in-depth interviews or focus group discussions, to more comprehensively explore parents' motivations, interpretations, and decision-making dynamics. A mixed-methods design would enable quantitative findings to be complemented by richer contextual insights and deeper understanding of parental visual preferences. Future studies may also examine variations in visual preferences across parents' social, cultural, and economic backgrounds in order to generate more context-sensitive and inclusive findings. In addition, longitudinal research designs could be employed to investigate changes in parents' visual preferences over time, particularly as children grow older and their developmental needs evolve.

Finally, future research is encouraged to expand its analytical scope beyond visual attributes alone by examining the interaction between visual design, product quality, and safety considerations. Such a holistic approach would allow for more comprehensive and practical recommendations for product designers, early childhood education practitioners, and policymakers.

D. CONCLUSION

This study aims to examine parents' visual preferences in selecting products for early childhood, with particular attention to color perception, decision-making patterns, and sources of visual inspiration. The findings indicate that these preferences are shaped by a combination of educational, aesthetic, and practical considerations. Parents tend to favor bright colors for children's products to support engagement and stimulation, while also preferring neutral and soft color palettes to create calm, orderly, and visually harmonious environments. Social media platforms and direct visual impressions of products emerge as the primary sources of inspiration, while mothers play a dominant role in purchase decision-making.

The novelty of this study lies in its descriptive and integrated mapping of parents' visual preferences by linking color selection, sources of visual inspiration, and decision-making roles within the context of parenting and early childhood education. By positioning visual consumption as part of both educational practice and family lifestyle, this study contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of how aesthetic considerations influence parenting choices.

The implications of these findings suggest that the visual aspects of children's products function not merely as aesthetic features, but also as elements that shape environments conducive to children's comfort, emotional security, and readiness for learning. For early childhood education practitioners, product designers, and policymakers, these results provide a foundation for developing products and learning environments that align with parents' preferences while remaining responsive to children's developmental needs. By balancing visual stimulation with visual calmness, early childhood learning environments are expected to more effectively support children's cognitive, emotional, and social development.

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