

UTJECAJ DIZAJNERSKE PROFESIJE NA PERCEPCIJU PISAMA: PRIMJER POPULACIJE MLAĐE OD 35 GODINA

THE IMPACT OF THE DESIGN PROFESSION ON TYPEFACE PERCEPTION: THE EXAMPLE OF THE POPULATION UNDER 35

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SAŽETAK

Tipografija, kao i slika, ima moć prenošenja tisuću riječi. Pismo, kao njen sastavni element, ključan je element vizualne komunikacije, a njegov utjecaj na dizajn je neosporiv. Različita pisma izazivaju različite emocionalne asocijacije i utječu na način percipiranja tekstualne poruke. U ovom radu istražuje se utjecaj dizajnerske profesije na percepciju pisama kod mladih ljudi. Istraživanje je provedeno anketom od četiri dijela (demografska pitanja, odabir pisma za zadane kriterije, određivanje emocija izazvanih logotipom i odabir pisma za određene djelatnosti), a sudjelovalo je 68 ispitanika mladih od 35 godina od kojih su 60,3 % dizajneri. Pretpostavlja se da dizajnerska profesija znatno utječe na preferencije pisama kod mladih ljudi te da ju dizajnerska praksa dodatno oblikuje. Rezultati istraživanja potvrđuju sklonost mladih dizajnera modernim i inovativnim pismima u odnosu na ostale mlade ljude. Dizajnerska praksa, izloženost raznolikosti pisama i edukacija u dizajnu su ključni faktori koji oblikuju preferencije pisama. Rezultati su relevantni za edukaciju dizajnera i dizajnersku praksu uopće te naglašavaju važnost razumijevanja utjecaja pisama na percepciju poruke.

Ključne riječi: *tipografija, pismo, percepcija pisma, mladi dizajneri, utjecaj dizajnerske prakse*

ABSTRACT

Typography, like imagery, has the power to convey a thousand words. Typeface, as its fundamental element, is a crucial aspect of visual communication, and its influence on design is undeniable. Different typefaces evoke various emotional associations and affect how textual messages are perceived. This study examines the influence of design professions on typeface perception among young people. The research was conducted through a four-part survey (demographic questions, selecting typefaces for given criteria, determining emotions triggered by logotypes, and choosing typefaces for specific activities) with 68 participants under the age of 35, 60.3% of whom are designers. It is hypothesised that design professions significantly affect young people's typeface preferences and that design practice further shapes them. The results confirm young designers' tendency towards modern and innovative typefaces compared to others. Design practice, exposure to diverse typefaces, and design education are key factors shaping typeface preferences. The findings are relevant for designer education and practice in general, emphasising the importance of understanding the impact of typefaces on message perception.

Keywords: *typography, typeface, typeface perception, young designers, influence of design practice*

1. UVOD

1. INTRODUCTION

In visual communication, typography is much more than a collection of letters on paper or screen. The font, as a key element, conveys a deeper message and subtly influences perception, experience, and understanding of the information presented. Through the use of size, proportion, shape, and different font types, the message extends far beyond its literal meaning [1].

Fonts do not merely convey information; they have a significant ability to direct attention and shape the viewer's impression [2]. Research has shown that, beyond the semantic meaning of written words, typography - through the visual and elemental properties of fonts - transcends that primary meaning [3]. Therefore, by selecting the appropriate font, design is enhanced, and the transmission of the message is supported and elevated, giving words significant connotative meaning [4] [5]. In this context, typography can amplify or diminish the effect of the message and facilitate understanding of the content.

The influence of the font even extends to human senses, as the chosen font can shape the gustatory experience of food and drink. When combined with sensory elements of packaging, it can influence the taste and perception of the product [6] [7] [8]. Typography is thus an indispensable means of shaping a company's personality and an important element of marketing communication, with its influence not dependent on other visual characteristics such as colour [9].

Differences in font perception exist between designers and non-designers. Designers develop the ability to recognise and differentiate typographic elements [10] [11], while non-designers more often choose fonts based on familiarity and habit [12]. For non-designers, decisions about fonts are often based on visual associations, rather than functional or communicative properties [13][14]. Colour psychology also influences perception, and in many situations, colours are experienced as a stronger communication tool than the font itself [15][16].

The aim of this research is to examine how the

design profession influences font perception in people under 35 years of age. The purpose is to understand the differences in typography perception between designers and non-designers and to provide insight into how education and exposure to typography shape their preferences. In this paper, designers are defined as individuals engaged in shaping using digital tools and technologies, including graphic design, user interface and experience design, products, visual identities, and digital content. Non-designers, are individuals who do not engage in digital design, but come from other fields and professions.

2. PROVEDBA I REZULTATI ISTRAŽIVANJA

2. RESEARCH IMPLEMENTATION AND RESULTS

The research on this topic was conducted using a survey divided into four sections. In the first section, demographic data about the respondents were collected. In the second section, respondents answered theoretical questions by selecting the appropriate font. In the third section, respondents identified the emotions evoked by the font of a logo shown in an image. The fourth section presented two scenarios, for which respondents had to choose, from four options, the font they believed best suited each scenario.

2.1. PRVI DIO ANKETE - DEMOGRAFSKA SLIKA ISPITANIKA

2.1. SURVEY PART I - DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

Sex of Respondents

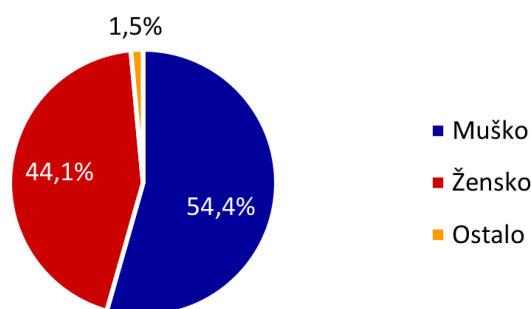


Figure 1 Distribution of respondents' gender

Age of Respondents

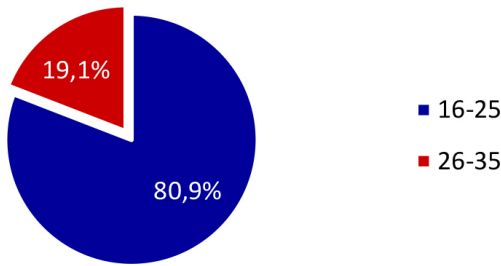


Figure 2 Respondents' age

There were 68 respondents included in the research, of whom 54.4 % (37 respondents) were male, and 44.1 % (30 respondents) were female. One respondent 1.5 % chose to be categorised as "other."

Of the 68 respondents, 80.9% (55 respondents) were in the 16 to 25 age group, while 19.1% (13 respondents) were in the 26 to 35 age group.

Respondents' occupation

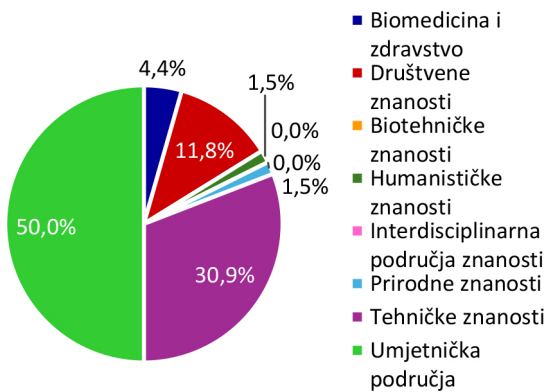


Figure 3 Respondents' occupation

Participation of designers

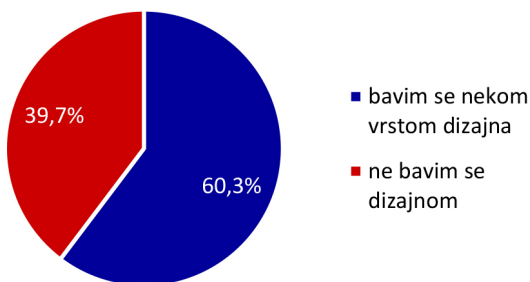


Figure 4 Participation of designers among respondents

When asked which group of sciences or field they work or study in, 50.0% (34 respondents) are from the field of arts. 30.9% (21 respondents) belong

to technical sciences. 11.8% (8 respondents) work or study in social sciences. 4.4% (3 respondents) are part of the biomedicine and health group, while 1.5% (1 respondent) each belong to natural sciences and humanities.

Of all respondents, 60.3% (41 respondents) are engaged in some form of design and thus belong to the designer group. The remaining 39.7% (27 respondents) do not engage in design and therefore form the non-designer group.

2.2. DRUGI DIO ANKETE – TEORETSKA PITANJA

2.2. SURVEY PART II – THEORETICAL QUESTIONS

The second part of the survey consisted of a series of theoretical questions about the perception of different font categories. Each of the 13 questions offered the following: serif, sans-serif, script, decorative, and slab-serif. After each question, participants had the opportunity to explain their choice.

Based on the responses, respondents perceive serif fonts as authoritative, serious, and formal (70.7% of designers and 77.8% of non-designers), and would choose them for printing books (65.9% of designers and 55.6% of non-designers), issuing documents (51.2% of designers and 40.7% of non-designers), and writing on historical monuments (63.4% of designers and 44.4% of non-designers). Among surveyed designers, 29.3% perceive serif fonts as romantic, feminine, and nostalgic, whereas only 7.4% of non-designers share this view. More than a quarter of non-designers consider serif fonts more accessible, innovative, and moderate, while this percentage is lower among designers (14.6%). Additionally, 22% of designers and 25.9% of non-designers experience serif fonts as minimal, modern, and universal.

Respondents perceive sans-serif fonts as accessible, innovative, and moderate (68.3% of designers and 55.6% of non-designers). Furthermore, 73.2% of designers and 59.3% of non-designers consider them minimal, modern, and universal, and would use them for logos of sports and technology brands and digital media (82.9% of designers and 48.1% of non-designers).

Table 1 Comparative statistics of designers and non-designers to theoretical questions

Question	Offered answers and response percentages from designers and non-designers				
	Serif	Sans- serif	Script	Decorative	Slab- serif
1. Which category of font would you use for logos of sports and technology brands, digital media?	2,4 % 7,4 %	82,9 % 48,1 %	2,4 % 3,7 %	12,7 % 40,7 %	0 % 0 %
2. Which category of font do you perceive as romantic, feminine, and nostalgic?	29,3 % 7,4 %	0 % 3,5 %	65,8 % 88,9 %	4,9 % 0 %	0 % 0 %
3. Which font would you use in documents such as birth certificates, ID cards, or court documents?	51,2 % 40,7 %	29,3 % 25,9 %	0 % 3,7 %	0 % 0 %	19,5 % 29,6 %
4. Which font would you use for printing books?	65,9 % 55,6 %	12,2 % 14,8 %	0 % 0 %	0 % 0 %	22 % 29,6 %
5. Which font would you choose for a wedding invitation, especially for highlighting details?	12,2 % 11,1 %	4,9 % 29,6 %	75,6 % 40,7 %	2,4 % 3,7 %	4,9 % 14,8 %
6. Which font do you perceive as more accessible, innovative, and moderate?	14,6 % 25,9 %	68,3 % 55,6 %	0 % 0 %	2,4 % 0 %	14,6 % 18,5 %
7. Which font would you use for highlighting titles and drawing the viewer's attention in printed forms (for example, concert posters)?	2,4 % 11,1 %	7,3 % 3,7 %	0 % 0 %	63,4 % 63 %	26,8 % 22,2 %
8. Which font do you experience as cheerful, positive, and energetic?	2,4 % 11,1 %	9,8 % 18,5 %	17,1 % 18,3 %	63,4 % 51,9 %	7,3 % 0 %
9. Which font would you use for gym and sports recreation logos?	2,4 % 14,8 %	65,9 % 44,4 %	2,4 % 0 %	24,4 % 29,6 %	4,9 % 11,1 %
10. Which font do you experience as minimalist, modern, and universal?	22 % 25,9 %	73,2 % 59,3 %	0 % 0 %	0 % 3,7 %	4,9 % 11,1 %
11. Which font would you use for writing text on a historical monument?	63,4 % 44,4 %	4,9 % 3,7 %	2,4 % 22,2 %	2,4 % 0 %	24,4 % 29,6 %
12. Which font do you perceive as authoritative, serious, and formal?	70,7 % 77,8 %	22 % 11,1 %	0 % 0 %	0 % 0 %	7,3 % 11,1 %

Additionally, 65.9% of designers and 44.4% of non-designers would use them in logos for gyms and sports recreation. 29.3% of designers and 25.9% of non-designers believe sans-serif fonts are suitable for printing official documents. While 22% of designers see them as authoritative, serious, and formal, 18.5% of non-designers consider sans-serif fonts cheerful, positive, and energetic. A significant portion of non-designers (29.6%) consider these fonts a good choice for designing wedding invitations.

Respondents perceive sans-serif fonts as accessible, innovative, and moderate (68.3% of designers and 55.6% of non-designers). Additionally, 73.2% of designers and 59.3% of non-designers consider them minimal, modern, and universal, and would use them for logos of sports and technology brands and digital media (82.9% of designers and significantly fewer non-designers, 48.1%). Furthermore, 65.9% of designers would use them in logos for gyms and sports recreation, compared to 44.4% of non-

designers. Only 29.3% of designers and 25.9% of non-designers believe that sans-serif fonts are suitable for printing official documents. While 22% of designers see them as authoritative, serious, and formal, 18.5% of non-designers consider sans-serif fonts cheerful, positive, and energetic. A significant portion of non-designers (29.6%) consider these fonts a good choice for designing wedding invitations.

Script fonts are considered romantic, feminine, and nostalgic by 65.8% of designers and as many as 88.9% of non-designers, which is why they would use them to highlight information on wedding invitations (75.6% of designers and 40.7% of non-designers). 17.1% of designers and 18.3% of non-designers believe that script fonts leave a cheerful, positive, and energetic impression. 22.2% of non-designers would use a script font for inscriptions on historical monuments, a view shared by only 2.4% of designers.

Decorative fonts are considered cheerful, positive, and energetic by 63.4% of designers and 51.9% of non-designers. 63.4% of designers and 63% of non-designers would use them for highlighting titles and drawing attention in printed materials (for example, concert posters). In contrast to designers, 40.7% of non-designers would use decorative fonts for logos of sports and technology brands and digital media, and a similar comparison is seen for creating logos for gyms and sports recreation (24.4% of designers and 29.6% of non-designers).

Slab-serif fonts have the most moderate statistics, with only some perceiving them as more accessible, innovative, and moderate (14.6% of designers and 18.5% of non-designers). Nearly one fifth of designers and 29.6% of non-designers would use such fonts for official documents. 22% of designers and 29.6% of non-designers consider them suitable for printing books, and similar proportions view them as appropriate for highlighting titles and drawing attention in printed forms (26.8% and 22.2%). Nearly a quarter of designers and 29.6% of non-designers consider them a good choice for text on a historical monument.

2.3. TREĆI DIO ANKETE – ASOCIJACIJE I EMOCIJE IZAZVANE PISMOM U LOGOTIPU

2.3. SURVEY PART III – ASSOCIATIONS AND EMOTIONS ELICITED BY THE TYPEFACE IN THE LOGO

In the third part of the survey, respondents were shown eight logos. Each logo used a different font. Respondents were presented with several positive and negative emotions and associations, and asked to select which of these emotions and associations they experienced when viewing each logo individually. They could also specify any emotion or association that occurred to them but was not included in the provided options. The options were: minimalism/simplicity, originality/uniqueness, tradition and classicism, formality



Figure 5 Logos presented to the respondents; source: Behance: 1. Iren Levi, 2. Studio NinetyOne, 3. Hamed Alshamrani, 4. Irina Selivanova, 5. Fazril Zulkarnain, 6. Won Verse, 7. Alex Aperios, 8. Alice Iv

and seriousness, tenderness and warmth, love, joy and happiness, nostalgia, trust, modernity/contemporaneity, reliability, relaxation, movement, sadness, and fear and anxiety.

According to the statistics, both designers and non-designers predominantly experience similar emotions and associations when viewing the fonts of the logos, with only minor differences and similarities. For example, designers associate the first logo significantly more with tradition (51.2%, or 21 people) than non-designers (25.9%, or 7 people). A similar pattern is observed with

the characteristics of formality and seriousness, nostalgia, trust, and reliability.

Compared to non-designers, designers perceive the second logo as more formal and serious, minimal/simple, original/unique, and more reliable. It also evokes more tenderness and warmth, love, joy and happiness, and trust among designers.

Non-designers find the third logo more minimal, simple, and relaxed, while designers see it as more traditional and classic.

Table 2 Comparative statistics for designers and non-designers on induced emotions and association

Emotions and associations	Logo number and the percentage of responses for designers and non-designers							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Minimalism/simplicity	26,8 % 25,9 %	39 % 18,5 %	19,5 % 29,6 %	22 % 33,3 %	19,5 % 40,7 %	68,3 % 63 %	4,9 % 18,5 %	75,6 % 59,3 %
Originality/uniqueness	12,2 % 14,8 %	36,6 % 7,4 %	48,8 % 40,7 %	51,2 % 44,4 %	12,2 % 11,1 %	26,8 % 25,9 %	46,3 % 33,3 %	36,6 % 33,3 %
Tradition and classicism	51,2 % 25,9 %	7,3 % 3,7 %	65,9 % 48,1 %	31,7 % 25,9 %	75,6 % 74,1 %	7,3 % 0%	2,4 % 3,7 %	4,9 % 3,7 %
Formality and seriousness	39 % 14,8 %	31,7 % 11,1 %	2,4 % 3,7 %	48,8 % 18,5 %	78 % 77,7 %	17,1 % 33,3 %	4,9 % 7,4 %	26,8 % 25,9 %
Tenderness and warmth	51,2 % 55,6 %	24,4 % 11,1 %	39 % 22,2 %	14,6 % 25,9 %	0 % 0 %	2,4 % 0 %	12,2 % 0 %	9,8 % 3,7 %
Love	43,9 % 40,7 %	14,6 % 3,7 %	22 % 18,5 %	7,3 % 11,1 %	0 % 0 %	0 % 0 %	2,4 % 0 %	0 % 0 %
Joy and happiness	17,1 % 14,8 %	14,6 % 7,4 %	51,2 % 44,4 %	4,9 % 3,7 %	0 % 0 %	7,3 % 0 %	34,1 % 7,4 %	0 % 0 %
Nostalgia	17,1 % 7,4 %	9,8 % 7,4 %	31,7 % 25,9 %	0 % 3,7 %	2,4 % 3,7 %	0 % 0 %	22 % 11,1 %	2,4 % 0 %
Trust	34,1 % 14,8 %	29,3 % 11,1 %	17,1 % 11,1 %	26,8 % 25,9 %	41,5 % 22,2 %	17,1 % 7,4 %	14,6 % 3,7 %	19,5 % 3,7 %
Modernity and contemporaneity	19,5 % 22,2 %	31,7 % 37 %	26,8 % 18,5 %	24,4 % 33,3 %	4,9 % 3,7 %	70,7 % 48,1 %	61 % 48,1 %	63,4 % 59,3 %
Reliability	34,1 % 7,4 %	24,4 % 7,4 %	9,8 % 11,1 %	31,7 % 22,2 %	46,3 % 33,3 %	24,4 % 14,8 %	14,6 % 7,4 %	17,1 % 7,4 %
Relaxation	19,5 % 18,5 %	19,5 % 14,8 %	29,3 % 40,7 %	14,6 % 18,5 %	4,9 % 3,7 %	4,9 % 3,7 %	26,8 % 14,8 %	7,3 % 3,7 %
Movement	7,3 % 11,1 %	19,5 % 14,8 %	26,8 % 22,2 %	14,6 % 14,8 %	2,4 % 0 %	36,6 % 25,9 %	48,8 % 25,9 %	2,4 % 0 %
Sadness	0 % 0 %	2,4 % 0 %	0 % 0 %	0 % 0 %	2,4 % 3,7 %	0 % 0 %	0 % 0 %	0 % 3,7 %
Fear and anxiety	4,9 % 0 %	0 % 11,1 %	0 % 0 %	2,4 % 3,7 %	9,8 % 7,4 %	0 % 0 %	0 % 7,4 %	2,4 % 0 %

A greater difference appears in the perception of formality and seriousness in the fourth logo: 48.8% of designers (20 people) see it as formal and serious, compared to only 18.5% of non-designers (5 people). Non-designers also see it as less traditional and classic, less reliable, but more minimal/simple, tender and warm, and modern/contemporary.

Non-designers consider the fifth logo significantly more minimal/simple (40.7%), while only 19.5% of designers share this view. The same logo inspires almost twice as much trust among designers, who also perceive a greater sense of reliability.

There are no significant differences in the perception and experience of fonts in the sixth and eighth logo examples. The seventh logo partially follows the same trend, with a greater difference in the experience of joy and happiness among designers (34.1%), compared to only 7.4% of non-designers. Designers also consider it more modern/contemporary, and it evokes a stronger sense of nostalgia and a greater association with movement for them.

**2.4. ČETVRTI DIO ANKETE –
ODABIR PISMA ZA ZADANE
DJELATNOSTI**

**2.4. SURVEY PART IV – CHOOSING
TYPEFACES FOR SPECIFIC
ACTIVITIES**

In the fourth part of the survey, respondents were presented with two scenarios for logo creation. Each scenario represented a different activity, and for each, they received four font choices. They were asked to select the font they considered most suitable for the given activities.

The first scenario required respondents to choose one of the fonts for creating a logo that would best convey the identity of a modelling agency (“Pretty Agency”). The second scenario asked them to select a font for creating the visual identity of an application for organising sports recreational events (“Shuttle”).

In the first scenario, designers mostly shared the same opinion: 80.5% chose option one, 4.9% chose option two, 2.4% chose option three, and 12.2%

chose option four. Among non-designers, 66.7% selected the first option, 3.7% the second, and 29.6% the fourth; no respondent chose option three.

The second scenario produced more varied responses from both groups. Among designers, 53.7% chose option one, 19.5% option two, 22.0% option three, and 4.9% option four. Among non-designers, 29.6% selected the first option, 22.2% the second, 18.5% the third, and 29.6% the fourth.



Figure 6 Offered fonts for creating a modelling agency logo, source: author

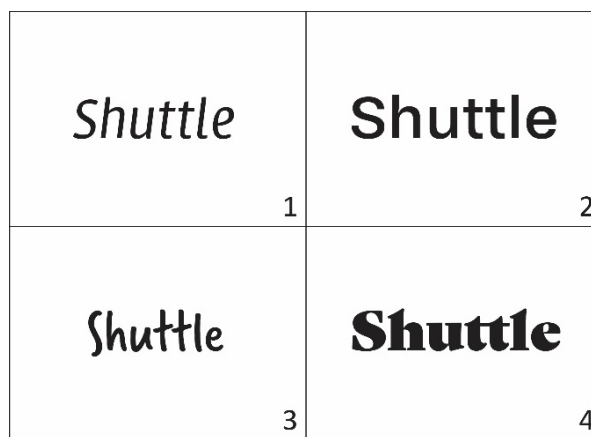


Figure 7 Offered fonts for the visual identity of an application for organizing sports events, source: author

**3. DISKUSIJA REZULTATA
3. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS**

Results of the research showed that the perception of typefaces varies significantly between designers and non-designers. Although both groups basically recognize similar characteristics of typefaces, the differences become pronounced when their application is requested in specific contexts.

Designers showed a greater preference for modern and innovative typefaces and more often associated them with professionalism, clarity, and reliability. One respondent, for example, explained: *“For me, sports and technology brands primarily seek professionalism, reliability, and simplicity. These are the characteristics conveyed by sans-serif typefaces.”* Such comments confirm that when choosing a typeface, designers reflect on its communicative values and the broader context of its application.

Non-designers, on the other hand, based their decisions more on familiarity and personal associations. In their explanations, they often emphasized: *“It looks like that because of the colours and style.”*, *“Because of the red colour.”*, *“The use of red colour reminds me most of food.”*, *“Because of the cool tones.”* These examples show that non-designers find it difficult, or do not at all, to separate the psychology of type from the psychology of colour and that they perceive colour as the dominant communication element. This confirms that the lack of formal education and practice limits their ability to recognize typographic properties as a separate and independent factor of communication.

Additional analysis of the emotions and associations evoked by the logos confirmed the difference in the way of thinking between the two groups. While designers found fundamental communication values such as professionalism, reliability, or modernity in typography, non-designers reacted more strongly to colour and form, which often led them to a superficial interpretation of the message, thereby confirming the hypothesis that design education develops sensitivity to typography and increases the ability to apply typefaces in specific communication situations.

4. ZAKLJUČAK

4. CONCLUSION

The aim of this paper was to investigate the influence of the design profession on the perception of typefaces among people younger than 35. The purpose was to understand how different educational and professional

backgrounds shape typography preferences. The obtained results confirmed the initial hypothesis that designers develop a preference for modern and diverse typefaces, while non-designers more often rely on familiar patterns and intuitive impressions, especially through colours and basic visual elements. In addition, they do not apply their perception of typefaces well in practical situations. Designers recognize and distinguish different typefaces with greater precision than non-designers and apply them more successfully in their design solutions.

The results confirm the importance of education in this field and of understanding the impact of typeface perception on message reception and the ability of designers to apply this knowledge in design. The significance of this research is reflected in a better understanding of the influence of typography and typefaces on visual communication and the emotional experience of messages. The results can be used to improve design practice and education by providing useful insights for future designers and educators. An advantage of the research is that it encompasses different groups of respondents and thus offers a broader picture of differences in the perception of typography. A limitation of the paper arises from the fact that non-designers could not clearly separate the influence of colour from typography, which, to some extent, shaped the results.

The space that opens up for new research questions is to explore the impact of digital technology on the perception of typography and how typeface preferences change over time. For future research, it is also useful to examine how specific educational interventions can further improve the ability of designers and non-designers to recognize and apply different typographic elements in their work.

Finally, it is important to emphasize that typography is not just a set of letters, but a powerful tool that significantly influences the perception and experience of messages. Understanding this influence is indispensable for every designer who strives to create effective and emotionally impactful visual communications, and it is also a key factor for successful communication, design, and education.

5. REFERENCE**5. REFERENCES**

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