

Article

How Attributes of Green Advertising Affect Purchase Intention: The Moderating Role of Consumer Innovativeness

Woohyuk Kim and Seunghee Cha *

Department of Consumer Science, Incheon National University, Incheon 22012, Korea; woohyuk@inu.ac.kr

* Correspondence: tmdgml020@inu.ac.kr

Abstract: Although the importance of green advertising has increased, there is still little research in terms of attributes of green advertising. The purpose of our study was to investigate the relationship between attributes of green advertising and purchase intention when moderated by consumer innovativeness. After collecting data from consumers in South Korea, we analyzed 200 usable surveys in structural equation modeling. The analysis revealed positive relationships between three attributes of green advertising (i.e., attractiveness, informativity, and reliability) and purchase intention and identified the moderating role of consumer innovativeness in those relationships. Our findings have implications for marketing, especially for the development of green advertising strategies.

Keywords: green advertising attributes; purchase intention; consumer innovativeness



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1. Introduction

In recent years, as efforts toward improving environmental protection and green growth have expanded, various eco-friendly consumer behaviors such as recycling and purchasing environmentally sustainable products have increasingly gained attention [1]. In particular, attention to green advertising by consumers, as well as regulators and other stakeholders, has rapidly expanded across multiple industries [2]. Because consumers rank among the most important parties to consider in attempts to support the green revolution [3], all companies face the challenge of integrating environmental awareness into their business strategies and activities [4], including their green advertising. On the other hand, consumers in some countries are still skeptical in terms of the credibility of green advertising due to “greenwashing”. Although consumers are somewhat reluctant to accept content about credibility, green advertising has positive results for business when presented efficiently [4]. Therefore, it is necessary to use green advertising to inform consumers of existing eco-friendly products to shape consumers’ orientation toward sustainable consumption [5].

In a Lending Tree survey of 1048 Americans, 55% of respondents indicated that they were willing to spend more on sustainable and environmentally friendly products, and 40% reported being willing to boycott companies that are not especially interested in eco-friendliness [6]. As the number of eco-friendly customers increases along those lines, companies have to understand and respond to external pressures to improve their environmental performance [7], and, in doing so, many have sharpened focus on creating eco-friendly products and using eco-friendly advertising to promote them. For instance, Starbucks, a global coffee chain, has run a promotion that recommends using reusable cups to reduce the company’s environmental footprint and waste created by single-use cups [8]. In addition, Coca-Cola Australia encouraged recycling in an advertisement stating that plastic Coca-Cola bottles are made of 100% recyclable plastic [9].

Although the necessity and importance of green advertising continue to increase along with the spread of green products and efforts to protect the environment, research on the attributes of green advertising has been relatively insufficient. In recent research on green advertising in general, most scholars have examined attitudes toward green

advertising [2,10], including Kao and Du [10], who concluded that designing green advertising influences attitudes toward the advertisements. Beyond that, in research on green consumers [11,12], Diamantopoulos et al. [11] found that consumers' perceptions and attitudes toward eco-friendliness differ according to their socio-demographic characteristics. Nevertheless, little research has been conducted to clarify the relationships between the attributes of green advertising and consumers' purchase intention, especially not when mediated by consumer innovativeness.

Therefore, the purpose of our study was to examine how attributes of green advertising affect purchase intention. In addition, given insufficient research on consumer innovativeness in relation to green advertising, we sought to investigate its moderating effect in the relationships between attributes of green advertising and purchase intention.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Attributes of Green Advertising

A method that marketers use to position their products as eco-friendly in the minds of consumers is green advertising [13], in which the term *green* implies the same meaning as *eco-friendly* and *natural*.

In representative scholarship on advertising attributes, Ducoffe [14] showed that the greater the influence of information, entertainment, and inconvenience on advertising value, the higher the causal relationship among advertising attitudes. In a subsequent study on consumers' responses to advertisements on commercial websites, Eighmey [15] confirmed that information and entertainment, as well as reliability and convenience, positively influenced the appeal of the advertisements. Beyond that, Bing Zhu [16] examined green advertising's effect on purchase intention among consumers in Shanghai, China, and confirmed that reliability in green advertising had an important effect on their intention to purchase eco-friendly products.

Past studies have shown that *credibility*, defined as an attribute in advertising, means that consumers can trust advertisements and that the concept should be examined as an important antecedent variable in research on advertising [17]. In addition, the credibility of advertising can strongly influence an audience's reaction to advertisements and the advertised brands [16]. By contrast, *informativity* means that customers can access relevant information at the time of purchasing a product or service, typically from a detailed description of the advertised product [18]. From the consumer's point of view, the power of advertising rests in providing information to maximize consumers' satisfaction with purchasing products [14].

At the same time, Ongkrutraksa [19] found that emotional appeals influence consumers' attitudes toward environmental behaviors and their responses to eco-friendly advertisements. Given those findings, it is necessary to rank emotional attributes among the attributes of green advertisements in addition to the cognitive attributes of advertisements presented above. Rahim et al. [20] have suggested that the effects of green advertising, including design attractiveness and creativity, should also be considered in analyzing eco-friendly advertising and environmentally responsible consumer behavior. Therefore, in our study, we investigated the attractiveness and novelty of green advertisements, operationally defined as attractiveness.

2.2. Relationship between Attributes of Green Advertising and Purchase Intention

According to Rashid [21], *green purchase intention* refers to the probability of preferring a product with eco-friendly functions and intending to purchase it versus other products. In a study on how characteristics of mobile advertisements affected purchase intention in South Korea and Russia, advertising attributes consisted of entertainment, compensatory characteristics, informational characteristics, inconvenience, personalization, utility, and security. Among them, the attributes of informativity, compensation, inconvenience, personalization, and utility ultimately affected consumers' purchase intention [22]. Bing Zhu [16], in a study on how green advertising affects consumers' purchase intention for

green products, showed that consumers' responses to green advertising, companies, and products affect their attitudes toward green advertising, which in turn affects their purchase intention. The study also revealed that the reliability of green advertising significantly affected purchase intention. In another study on green advertising and environmentally responsible consumer behavior, Rahim et al. [20] suggested that factors of message delivery, message effect, and design attractiveness and originality should be improved in green advertising to promote consumer action. Considering all of those findings, we developed the following three-part hypothesis for our study:

Hypothesis H1a (H1a). *The reliability of green advertising has a significant positive effect on purchase intention.*

Hypothesis H1b (H1b). *The attractiveness of green advertising has a significant positive effect on purchase intention.*

Hypothesis H1c (H1c). *The informativity of green advertising has a significant positive effect on purchase intention.*

2.3. Moderating Role of Consumer Innovativeness

Consumer innovativeness refers to the degree to which a consumer embraces innovation more quickly and readily than others [23]. Consumer innovativeness is important because it affects whether consumers choose a new product and, if so, how quickly [24]. As a mark of the concept's importance, research on consumer innovativeness has received sustained attention from marketers, and various studies have been conducted on the characteristics of consumer innovativeness and methods of measuring it [25,26].

By extension, *eco-friendly consumer innovativeness* can be defined as the degree to which innovative consumers accept an eco-friendly lifestyle, eco-friendly product, or consumption pattern earlier than other members [27]. Schwarz and Ernst [28] have suggested that the acceptance of eco-friendly products is affected by consumers' innovativeness and should be a basis for distinguishing innovative consumers from others.

When Choi and Noh examined the relationship between eco-friendly behavior and innovativeness on word of mouth and purchase intention concerning green products, they found that innovativeness positively affected word of mouth about a hybrid car, which in turn positively affected purchase intention [29]. Based on those results, a second three-part hypothesis was also formulated:

Hypothesis H2a (H2a). *Consumer innovativeness significantly moderates the relationship between attributes of green advertising involving reliability and purchase intention.*

Hypothesis H2b (H2b). *Consumer innovativeness significantly moderates the relationship between attributes of green advertising involving attractiveness and purchase intention.*

Hypothesis H2c (H2c). *Consumer innovativeness significantly moderates the relationship between attributes of green advertising involving informativity and purchase intention.*

Figure 1 illustrates the relationships proposed in the two three-part hypotheses.

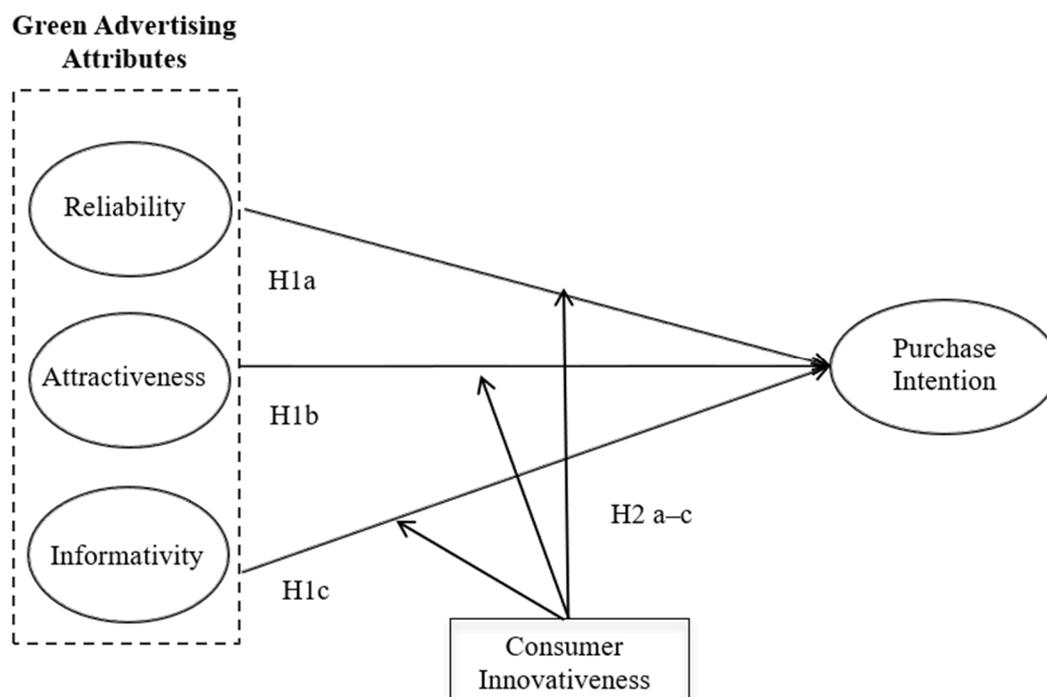


Figure 1. The proposed model.

3. Methods

3.1. Measurements

We measured variables with a questionnaire containing published items that we modified for our study's purposes. First, we measured attributes of green advertising with 12 items suggested by Ducoffe [14], Patel and Chugan [30], Rahim et al. [20], and Zhu [16]: "I think green advertising is generally reliable," "I trust the information of green advertising," "I think green advertising is sincere," "I think green advertising expresses the true nature of the product," "I think green advertising is interesting," "I think green advertising is novel," "I think green advertising is attractive," "I like green advertisements," "Green advertisements catch my attention," "I think green advertising provides information on eco-friendliness," "I think green advertising is easy to understand," and "I think green advertisements give me the information I need." Second, we measured consumer innovativeness with five items suggested by Patel and Chugan [30]: "I tend to pursue new trends more than others," "I tend to buy new products before others," "I often go to the store to see if a new product is out," "I tend to buy the latest trendy products," and "I tend to watch with interest how other people use new products." Third, to measure purchase intention, we used six items adapted from Kim and Yoon [22]: "I am willing to recommend eco-friendly products to others," "I use eco-friendly products to help the environment," "I am likely to purchase products shown in green advertisements," "Using eco-friendly products relieves the guilt of environmental destruction," "I will definitely buy the product shown in the green advertisement," and "I can make a substantial contribution to the environment by using eco-friendly products." Respondents evaluated all items on a 5-point Likert scale. The questionnaire also included items addressing the respondents' socio-demographic characteristics.

3.2. Data Collection and Analysis

We collected data by administering the questionnaire in an online survey of consumers in South Korea in 2020. We recruited respondents by means of convenience sampling and distributed a total of 215 questionnaires [31]. All 200 returned questionnaires were subjected to empirical analysis. Although our sample size seems small compared to other studies, our

sample size is statistically sufficient to test our hypotheses based on effect size. A number of studies agreed that over 200 is a sufficient sample size to draw a logical conclusion [32,33].

We used two stages in terms of data analysis. The first involved confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) in order to test the construct validity of our research model; the second involved structural equation modeling (SEM) in order to investigate the structural model [34]. To investigate the moderating roles of consumer innovativeness, we employed a multiple-group analysis [35].

Table 1 presents a demographic profile of the respondents, 95 of whom were men (47.5%) and 105 of whom were women (52.5%). By age, 37.5% of respondents were 30–39 years old, 25.5% were 40–49 years old, 18.0% were 21–29 years old, 13.0% were 50–59, and 6.0% were over 60 years old. By level of education, 65.5% had a bachelor's degree, 14.0% had an associate degree, 13.0% had a high school diploma or less, and 7.5% had a graduate or postgraduate degree.

Table 1. Demographic profile of the respondents ($N = 200$).

Characteristic	<i>n</i>	%
Gender		
<i>Man</i>	95	47.5
<i>Woman</i>	105	52.2
Age, in years		
20–29	36	18.0
30–39	75	37.5
40–49	51	25.5
50–59	26	13.0
60 or more	12	6.0
Level of education		
High school diploma or less	26	13.0
Associate degree	28	14.0
University degree	131	65.5
Graduate or postgraduate degree	15	7.5

4. Results

4.1. Measurement Model

Table 2 presents the results of our confirmatory factor analysis on green advertising, according to which our proposed research model had an acceptable fit for the data ($\chi^2 = 238.844$, $df = 129$, $\chi^2/df = 1.850$, CFI = 0.934, TLI = 0.922, RMSEA = 0.065).

To determine the convergent validity of the variables, we calculated the average variance extracted, the results of which appear in Table 2, along with the standardized factor loadings, construct reliabilities, and composite reliabilities. Based on the results, we also evaluated support for convergent validity and confirmed discriminant validity in order to evaluate correlations among the constructs [34].

4.2. Structural Model: H1

To investigate H1, we performed a covariance structural analysis. Table 2 presents the results of structural equation modeling with a standardized estimate related to the hypothesis. The overall model fit indices indicated that the proposed model adequately represented the hypothesized construct ($\chi^2 = 238.84$, CFI = 0.934, TLI = 0.922, RMSEA = 0.065). The results included that attractiveness was significantly linked with purchase intention (H1b: $\beta = 0.62$, $p < 0.05$), which provided support for H1b. Regarding H1a, reliability was also significantly linked with purchase intention (H1a: $\beta = 0.35$, $p < 0.05$), which provided support for H1a. Moreover, H1c regarding informativity was significantly linked with purchase intention (H1c: $\beta = 0.28$, $p < 0.05$), which provided support for H1c. Therefore, H1 was entirely supported.

Table 2. Results of confirmatory factor analysis results ($n = 200$).

Constructs and Items	Standard Factor Loadings	Composite Reliability	AVE
Reliability		0.887	0.662
I think green advertising is generally reliable.	0.749		
I trust the information on green advertising.	0.782		
I think green advertising is sincere.	0.741		
I think green advertising expresses the true nature of the product.	0.727		
Attractiveness		0.886	0.611
I think green advertising is interesting.	0.789		
I think green advertising is novel.	0.766		
I think green advertising is attractive.	0.749		
I like green advertisements.	0.656		
Green advertisements catch my attention.	0.642		
Informativity		0.755	0.526
I think green advertising provides information on eco-friendliness.	0.858		
I think green advertising is easy to understand.	0.620		
I think green advertisements give me the information I need.	0.416		
Consumer innovativeness		0.893	0.627
I tend to pursue new trends more than others.	0.860		
I tend to buy new products before others.	0.834		
I often go to the store to see if a new product is out.	0.824		
I tend to buy the latest trendy products.	0.798		
I tend to watch with interest how other people use new products.	0.785		
Purchase intention		0.880	0.550
I am willing to recommend eco-friendly products to others.	0.751		
I use eco-friendly products to help the environment.	0.718		
I am likely to purchase products shown in green advertisements.	0.712		
Using eco-friendly products relieves the guilt of environmental destruction.	0.680		
I will definitely buy the product shown in the green advertisement.	0.677		
I can make a substantial contribution to the environment by using eco-friendly products.	0.671		

Note. Standardized factor loadings were all significant at $p < 0.001$. AVE = average variance extracted.

4.3. Structural Relationships across Groups: H2

To assess the moderating roles of consumer innovativeness in the sample, we conducted a multiple-group analysis to identify any differences in that variable [35]. Figure 2 provides the results in relation to the hypotheses. Using the average value of consumer innovativeness, the analysis involved classifying respondents as having less-than-average or above-average consumer innovativeness. Among the results, having less-than-average consumer innovativeness did not have a significant moderating effect on purchase intention in relation to attractiveness, reliability, or informativity. By comparison, having above-average consumer innovativeness had no significant moderating effect on purchase intention in relation to reliability and informativity. However, attractiveness ($\beta = 0.84$, $p < 0.001$) had a significant modulating effect on purchase intention. Thus, H2 was partly supported.

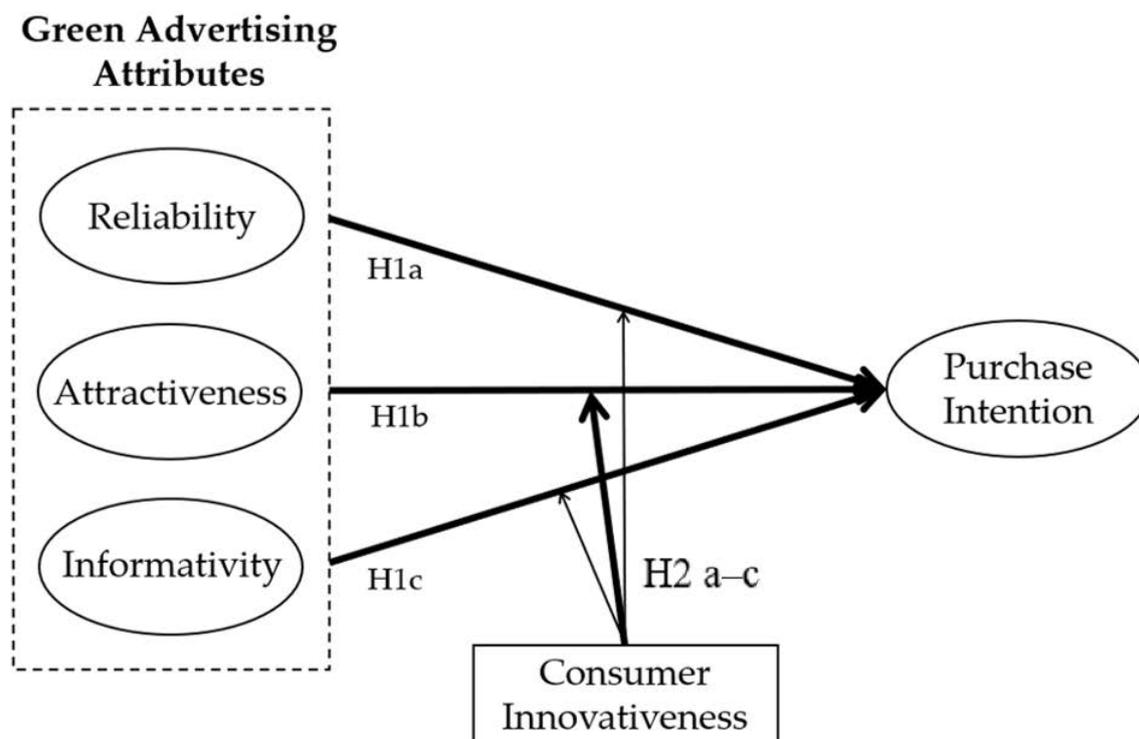


Figure 2. The results of hypotheses.

5. Discussion and Implications

In our study, we investigated how the attributes of green advertising affect purchase intention and verified the moderating effect of consumer innovativeness in those relationships. Among our results, three attributes of green advertising—attractiveness, reliability, and informativity—had a significant positive effect on purchase intention. The significant positive effect of reliability and informativity on behavioral intention confirms the results of several studies and, in turn, suggests that green advertising should provide sufficient information on eco-friendly products and services and be produced so that consumers can trust the information conveyed. Attractiveness, however, had the greatest influence on purchase intention. Our findings verify that the attractiveness of green advertising, with a novel method of expression, message, and eye-catching characteristics as positive factors for consumers, significantly affects purchase intention in a positive way. Following the argument of Rahim et al. [20] that the effect of green advertising, including the attractiveness of design and creativity, has to be considered in consumer behavior, our findings thus showcase that attractiveness, of all attributes of green advertising, has a positive effect on purchase intention.

Second, we found that having high consumer innovativeness exerted a significant positive moderating effect on the relationship between attractiveness and purchase intention. A likely explanation is that consumers who adopt eco-friendly consumption patterns or eco-friendly products earlier than others are more likely to contribute to protecting the environment. Therefore, our study suggests that for attractive advertisements that grab consumers' attention, delivering a message that can stimulate consumers to be at the trend's forefront can promote eco-friendly behavior and the purchase of eco-friendly products.

5.1. Theoretical Implications

From a theoretical perspective, first, whereas other studies have involved analyzing the relationship between green advertising and attitudes toward it and have revealed advertising's effects, ours made the significant departure of identifying the attributes of green advertising that affect purchase intention. Second, by confirming consumer innovative-

ness's moderating effect in the relationship between the attributes of green advertising and purchase intention, the results can inform the establishment of green advertising strategies at companies in the future. Additionally, studying green advertising according to consumer innovativeness can help researchers to expand the current theoretical frameworks related to green advertising in the marketing and advertising industry.

5.2. Practical Implications

First, it is necessary to emphasize the attributes of attractiveness, reliability, and information when developing green advertising strategies seeking to guide consumer behaviors. In particular, to direct consumers to choose eco-friendly products, advertisements need to attract the attention of consumers and spark their interest with novel advertising messages and delivery methods. For example, creating green advertising using new, creative forms of media can attract consumers' attention and imprint eco-friendly products and/or brands in their memories. It is also necessary to produce advertisements with messages that stimulate consumers' emotions. Last, when consumers' innovativeness was high in our study, it significantly affected purchase intention in relation to eco-friendly products as an eco-friendly behavior. Thus, for effective marketing through green advertising, companies need to discover highly innovative consumers and target them.

5.3. Limitations and Future Research

Before moving forward with these results, researchers should note the study's limitations. To measure consumers' perceptions of the attributes of green advertisements, we administered a questionnaire based on consumers' perceptions of such advertisements. Therefore, it may be difficult to generalize the results, because the green advertisements familiar to respondents may differ from person to person. In a follow-up study, the experimental method should involve presenting a standardized example of green advertising. As a result, the findings would be able to help companies establish green advertising strategies in the future and contribute to the spread of eco-friendly behaviors among consumers and the purchase of eco-friendly products.

6. Conclusions

To explore consumers' purchase intention related to the attributes of green advertising, we examined the relationship between attributes of green advertising, purchase intention, and consumer innovativeness. This study found that attributes of green advertising (i.e., attractiveness, informativity, and reliability) have a significant positive effect on purchase intention. Moreover, our research adds the empirical support that consumer innovativeness has a moderating effect between attributes of green advertising and purchase intention. Our findings indicate that marketers and players could use the attributes of green advertising to encourage consumers to buy green products as a marketing strategy.

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