Exploring the impact of green advertising and the mediating role of consumer awareness on sustainable tourism purchase attitude Albanian case

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Abstract

This study explores the impact of green advertising on sustainable tourism purchase attitudes in Albania, focusing on the mediating role of consumer environmental awareness. It aims to identify how advertising elements—message appeal, perceived quality, and perceived credibility—shape consumer awareness and drive eco-conscious choices in the tourism sector. A quantitative approach was employed, utilizing an online survey distributed to Albanian consumers familiar with green advertising and sustainable tourism. Data from 406 valid responses were analyzed using factor analysis and hierarchical regression to test hypotheses about the relationships between green advertising attributes, environmental awareness, and purchase attitudes. Mediation analysis was conducted to assess the role of consumer awareness. Factor analysis identified six key dimensions: purchase attitude, green advertising, message appeal, perceived quality, perceived credibility, and environmental awareness. Regression results revealed that message appeal ($\beta = 0.441$, $p < 0.001$) and environmental awareness ($\beta = 0.432$, $p < 0.001$) significantly influenced purchase attitudes, while perceived quality and credibility showed no direct impact. Environmental awareness mediated the relationship between green advertising and purchase behavior, explaining 56.5% of the variance in attitudes. Green advertising significantly shapes Albanian consumers' sustainable tourism choices, primarily through compelling message appeals and environmental awareness. However, perceived product quality and credibility alone do not directly drive purchase intentions, suggesting that trust in green claims requires reinforcement through awareness-building strategies. Marketers should adopt messages that align with consumer values and emphasize transparency to combat greenwashing. Policymakers are advised to promote certifications and educational campaigns to enhance environmental literacy. Tourism businesses can use these insights to foster competitiveness in eco-conscious markets.

Keywords: Consumer awareness, Green advertising, Purchase attitudes, Sustainable tourism.

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Transparency: The authors confirm that the manuscript is an honest, accurate, and transparent account of the study; that no vital features of the study have been omitted; and that any discrepancies from the study as planned have been explained. This study followed all ethical practices during writing.

1. Introduction

Green advertising plays an important role in shaping consumer purchasing attitudes by emphasizing the environmental benefits of eco-friendly products, such as reducing emissions and conserving resources. These advertisements educate consumers about the tangible advantages of sustainable choices and foster a sense of agency in addressing environmental challenges. By delivering persuasive and credible messages, green advertising promotes eco-conscious behavior and strengthens trust in sustainable brands. From the consumer's perspective, green advertising appeals to environmental needs and desires[1, 2]. According to Dangelico and Vocalelli [3], green advertising serves to inform and raise awareness among consumers, encouraging them to adopt environmentally friendly behaviors. Durbin and Filer [4] further explain that companies use green advertising to persuade consumers to choose eco-friendly products, thereby fostering behavior change. When advertising messages are effectively communicated, they significantly influence consumer behavior in product selection and purchase attitudes [5].

Many companies recognize consumer concerns about environmental issues and incorporate discussions or facts about environmental protection into their advertisements. This strategy not only fosters long-term relationships with consumers but also enhances the company's social and environmental image. As Parsa, et al. [6], green advertising is a key component of a company's environmental marketing strategy, offering opportunities for sustainable competitive advantage. In recent years, growing awareness of environmental issues has significantly influenced consumer behavior [7], leading to increased demand for sustainable products and practices [8]. Consequently, green advertising has emerged as an innovative marketing strategy aimed at informing, persuading, and motivating consumers to adopt environmentally friendly behaviors and products [9].

Previous studies have explored key elements of green advertising, such as message appeal, perceived quality, and perceived credibility. Tih, et al. [1] highlight the influence of emotional and rational appeals in shaping consumer attitudes and purchase intentions, while Dangelico and Vocalelli [3] emphasize how product attributes like energy efficiency and environmental impact in green ads enhance consumer perceptions and increase willingness to pay for eco-friendly products. Arora [2] underscores the importance of advertising credibility, noting that transparent and truthful environmental claims foster consumer trust and drive positive responses. Additionally, Parsa, et al. [6] highlight the role of corporate social responsibility (CSR) in green advertising, which strengthens brand image and aligns with consumers' environmental values, ultimately fostering long-term relationships.

However, the efficacy of green advertising campaigns depends critically on consumer environmental awareness—a mediating factor that is often understudied, especially in emerging markets where sustainability literacy is still evolving [7, 8]. This gap is particularly relevant in Albania, a country experiencing rapid tourism growth alongside pressing environmental challenges. However, the interplay between green advertising, awareness, and sustainable consumption remains unexplored.

Existing research underscores the role of green advertising in shaping purchase attitudes through message appeal, perceived quality, and credibility [2, 3]. However, these studies predominantly focus on direct effects in developed markets, neglecting how environmental awareness mediates advertising's impact, particularly in regions like Albania, where sustainability literacy is still developing [10]. While Musgrove, et al. [11] and Carrión-Bósquez, et al. [12] highlight trust as central to green purchasing, they do not explore how awareness bridges advertising and action in contexts where skepticism toward corporate claims is prevalent.

While existing studies on green purchase behavior often generalize across product categories[13], the tourism sector demands distinct attention due to its unique socio-economic and environmental dynamics. Tourism has become a significant contributor to Albania's economy, with the sector continuing to grow annually [14]. However, this growth has also brought environmental challenges, such as overdevelopment, resource depletion, and increased waste [15]. To ensure long-term benefits, it is essential to prioritize sustainable tourism practices that balance economic gains with environmental preservation and cultural heritage protection [16]. By doing so, Albania can not only foster innovation within the sector but also meet the growing consumer demand for responsible travel options. The EU underscores sustainable tourism as critical for Albania's competitiveness in the European market, emphasizing practices such as eco-tourism and agritourism that align with EU environmental standards [17]. In this context, the role of green advertising becomes crucial in promoting sustainability within the tourism sector.

By focusing on tourism as a distinct category, policymakers and marketers can address its unique drivers and barriers, tailoring communication strategies that align with Albania's sustainability ambitions. This study fills a critical gap by investigating:

To what extent does green advertising raise Albanian consumers' awareness of sustainable tourism options? Do Albanian consumers support businesses that advertise sustainability in their practices? The research contributes to three key areas. First, it identifies message appeal as the dominant driver of sustainable purchase attitudes in Albania, surpassing the influence of perceived quality and credibility.

Second, it positions environmental awareness as a critical mediator, explaining how green advertising translates into eco-conscious behavior. Third, it provides actionable strategies for Albanian policymakers and businesses to align tourism growth with EU sustainability policies, address greenwashing, and foster consumer trust in sustainable practices.

2. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

2.1. Addressing Green Through Advertising

Advertising plays a crucial role in promoting green awareness by shifting public attitudes, behaviors, and perceptions toward environmental sustainability. It serves as a powerful tool for raising awareness about environmental issues, encouraging eco-friendly behaviors, and advocating for sustainable practices [4]. Through persuasive messaging, green advertising can influence individuals to adopt sustainable practices, such as reducing waste, conserving energy, and

supporting eco-friendly products [18]. Its ability to reach a broad audience makes it particularly effective for spreading green awareness on a large scale, engaging diverse demographics, and facilitating widespread knowledge about pressing issues such as climate change and deforestation [19].

Green advertising also builds trust by highlighting the environmental credentials of products and companies, which enhances consumer loyalty and brand reputation [3]. Companies that promote their sustainability efforts through advertising often gain a competitive advantage, as consumers increasingly prioritize eco-friendly options [20]. In the digital age, personalized and targeted advertising through social media platforms has further amplified its impact, allowing tailored messages to resonate with consumers based on their specific interests and behaviors [21].

The increasing visibility of green advertising has also made sustainable tourism practices more acceptable. According to Han, et al. [22], messages reinforced across various media platforms expose consumers to the idea that sustainability is an integral part of the tourism experience. In the tourism sector, fostering eco-friendly behaviors requires continuous awareness campaigns that address environmental concerns and guide tourists to adopt environmentally conscious practices while traveling [23]. Green advertising in the tourism industry plays a critical role in guiding consumers toward eco-friendly choices by aligning with their environmental values and influencing their decisions [24]. Based on the insights provided in the literature review, we can test the following hypothesis:

H₁: Green advertising influences consumer purchase behavior attitudes towards sustainable tourism products in Albania.

2.2. Message Appeal

Message appeal is an important element of green advertising, shaping consumer perceptions and increasing environmental awareness. A well-crafted message can effectively engage consumers by emphasizing the significance of environmental issues and the benefits of sustainable behaviors [2]. Ethical appeals that resonate with consumers' moral values and social responsibility have been shown to increase environmental consciousness by highlighting the ecological impact of consumer choices [25].

Research underscores that message appeal directly influences consumers' attitudes toward environmental sustainability, particularly when it aligns with their values [26, 27]. In the tourism industry, where sustainability is central, message appeal has been found to significantly influence consumer behavior, as it not only educates but also motivates individuals to adopt greener lifestyles [28]. Advertisements promoting eco-friendly options and responsible tourism can raise awareness, shape attitudes, and encourage sustainable practices [2, 27, 29]. These messages assist consumers in understanding how their tourism choices affect the environment, fostering greater environmental awareness [22]. Given that message appeal can evoke emotions, communicate environmental benefits, and align with consumer values, we hypothesize that:

H₂: Message appeal in green advertising positively influences consumer environmental awareness.

2.3. Green Perceived Quality

Perceived quality is another key factor in green advertising, particularly in the service sector. When advertisers emphasize the environmental benefits of a product, consumers tend to perceive it as being of higher quality, leading to greater awareness of its ecological implications [5, 30]. Green advertising not only enhances perceived quality but also informs consumers about the environmental impact of their purchasing decisions, fostering a stronger connection between product attributes and sustainability awareness Mehta and Chahal [31]. Heo and Muralidharan [32] highlight in their study that millennial consumers who are exposed to ads promoting ecological attributes become more aware of environmental issues and the role their purchasing attitudes can play in addressing them. This leads to a stronger connection between the product's environmental features and consumers' awareness of sustainability.

Effective communication of green attributes helps consumers associate products with higher environmental standards, elevating their overall environmental awareness [25]. Consistent and authentic green messaging further enhances consumer trust, contributing to increased awareness and sustainable behavior Wasaya, et al. [33]. Buell and Kalkanci [34]; Simmonds, et al. [35] and Meise, et al. [36] demonstrate that consumers not only perceive advertised products as higher in quality due to their environmental attributes but also become more aware of their own environmental impact. Based on these insights, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H₃: Green perceived quality communicated through green advertising positively influences consumer environmental awareness.

2.4. Green Perceived Credibility

Green perceived credibility refers to the extent to which consumers believe that the environmental claims made by a company through advertising are reliable and aligned with sustainable values [37]. In the context of green advertising, credibility is crucial because consumers must trust that eco-friendly claims reflect genuine sustainable practices rather than mere marketing strategies. When consumers perceive a product's environmental attributes as credible, they are more likely to be influenced by green advertising, which, in turn, increases their environmental awareness and motivates sustainable behaviors [38, 39]. The concept of perceived credibility has been extensively studied in the context of green advertising. Green advertising relies on consumers recognizing the environmental benefits of products as a source of added value, which shapes their attitudes and motivates environmentally responsible purchasing decisions [3]. Trust is a key factor in this process, as consumers' purchase intentions are heavily influenced by how truthful and credible they perceive environmental claims to be [40]. However, if advertisements are perceived as untruthful or engage in greenwashing—misleading environmental claims—environmentally conscious consumers, who are often more skeptical, are less likely to trust or act on them [41].

To build lasting relationships with consumers, advertisers must ensure their green claims are transparent, accurate, and trustworthy. Dangelico and Vocalelli [3] highlight that trust in green advertising enhances consumers' awareness of environmental issues, making them more receptive to eco-friendly messages. Additionally, the type of green advertising claim interacts with a company's credibility to influence consumer skepticism. For example, trustworthiness claims, such as "environmentally sustainable," are difficult to verify but are commonly used to build consumer trust. When perceived as credible, these claims enhance the effectiveness of communication and influence consumer behavior [11].

Based on these findings, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H₄: Green perceived credibility positively influences consumer environmental awareness.

### 2.5. The Role of Green Advertising in Shaping Environmental Awareness

Research consistently demonstrates that green advertising can significantly increase consumer environmental awareness[42], which in turn shapes their attitudes and purchase behavior [43]. By presenting consumers with information about the ecological benefits of products, green advertising encourages the adoption of sustainable practices [7, 44, 45]. This process not only educates consumers but also fosters a deeper understanding of the environmental impact of their choices, motivating them to act on their positive environmental attitudes [46].

Environmental awareness is not a passive byproduct of green advertising but an active process that enables consumers to assess the authenticity and credibility of environmental claims. This cognitive shift toward sustainability positions environmental awareness as a crucial mediator between green advertising and consumer behavior [46, 47]. When consumers have a high level of environmental awareness, they are more likely to interpret green advertising messages favorably and develop positive attitudes toward eco-friendly products [12]. Green advertising that raises awareness about environmental issues enhances the credibility of a brand's eco-friendly claims, leading to a stronger inclination to purchase green products [48]. As consumer awareness of the environmental benefits of products increases, so does their willingness to pay for these products, further emphasizing the mediating role of awareness in the advertising-behavior relationship [49].

In the context of Albania, where consumer engagement with environmental issues is still developing, the mediating effect of environmental awareness is particularly significant. The growing interest in sustainability [50-52], coupled with effective green advertising, can encourage Albanian consumers to adopt more eco-friendly purchasing behaviors. As consumers become more knowledgeable about the environmental implications of their decisions, they are likely to demand sustainable products and analyze green claims more carefully. Therefore, this study presents consumer environmental awareness as a mediator to explain how green advertising elements influence purchase attitudes, particularly within Albania's evolving eco-conscious market. This mediating role underscores the need to integrate awareness-building efforts into marketing campaigns targeting eco-conscious consumers. Based on these insights, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H₅: Consumer environmental awareness mediates the relationship between green advertising and purchase behavior toward sustainable products in Albania.

This study contributes to the existing literature by demonstrating how green advertising attributes—message appeal, perceived quality, and perceived credibility—influence consumers' environmental awareness and, subsequently, their purchase intentions for sustainable products. Building on the insights from the literature review, the study develops a conceptual model (Figure 1) to explore how these advertising elements shape consumer awareness and attitudes, which in turn drive sustainable consumption behavior. By linking these elements, the research provides a comprehensive understanding of how green advertising influences consumer decision-making processes, particularly in the context of Albania's evolving eco-conscious market.
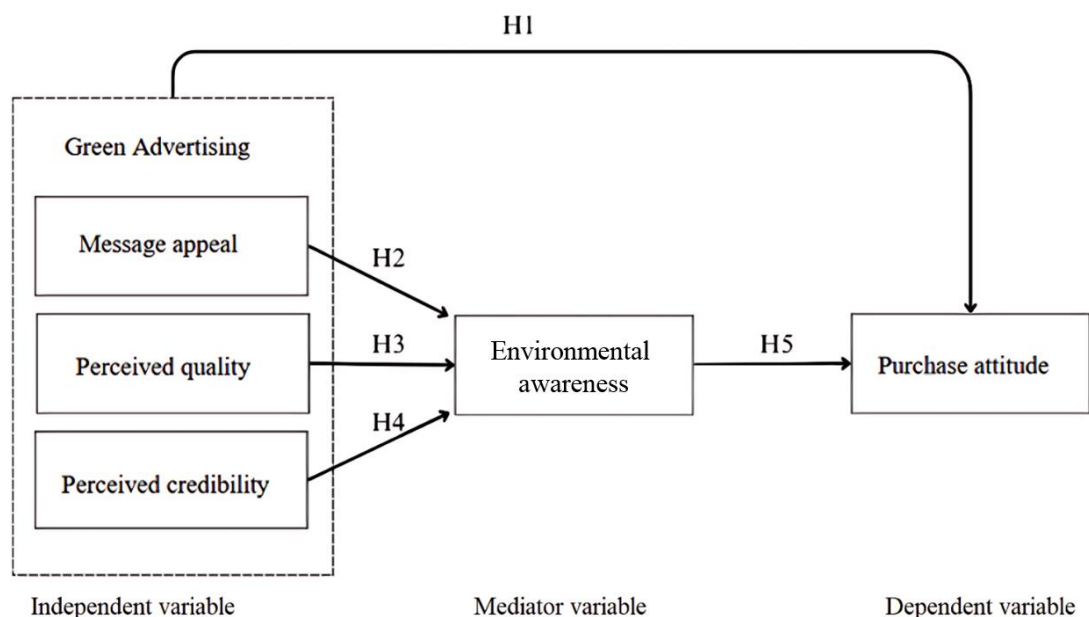
Figure 1.
Conceptual model.

3. Methodology

In contemporary research on green advertising and sustainable tourism, quantitative research methods, particularly surveys, have been extensively utilized for data collection [53].

The most commonly used tool is the online survey, as it facilitates the collection of large volumes of standardized data from a diverse sample, is time-efficient, and cost-effective. Moreover, the data collected can be easily analyzed and compared. Since this study aims to examine consumer perceptions of green advertising and the role of consumer awareness in promoting sustainable tourism, only the responses from participants with knowledge of sustainable tourism and green advertising were considered. Respondents who did not meet this criterion were excluded.

The exclusion criteria included individuals who were not familiar with green advertising and sustainable tourism; respondents who provided consistent answers without differentiation; and participants who submitted contradictory or unclear responses.

The surveys were distributed via social media platforms, online tourism forums, and other relevant digital channels, ensuring a broad reach across different demographic groups.

3.1. Research Design

In contemporary research on green advertising and sustainable tourism, quantitative methods, particularly surveys, have been widely used for data collection due to their ability to gather large volumes of standardized data efficiently [53]. This study employs an online survey as the primary data collection tool, as it allows for cost-effective and time-efficient data collection from a diverse sample.

Additionally, online surveys facilitate easy analysis and comparison of responses, making them suitable for examining consumer perceptions of green advertising and the role of consumer awareness in promoting sustainable tourism.

To ensure the relevance and quality of the data, respondents who did not meet the following criteria were excluded:

- Individuals who are unfamiliar with green advertising and sustainable tourism.
- Respondents who provided consistent answers without differentiation, such as selecting the same response for all questions.
- Participants who submitted contradictory or unclear responses.

The survey was distributed through social media platforms, online tourism forums, and other relevant digital channels to ensure a broad reach across different demographic groups.

3.2. Sample Size

The required sample size was determined using Yamane [54] formula for finite populations:

$n = N / 1 + N(e)2 = 2\ 793\ 592 / 1 + 2\ 793\ 592\ x\ (0.05)2 = 399.99 \approx 400.$

Where:

N = population size (2,793,592, based on INSTAT data for January 2023),

e = margin of error (5%),

n = required sample size.

Using a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of 5%, the calculated sample size was approximately 400 respondents. Over a two-month period, 431 surveys were collected, of which 406 were deemed valid, resulting in a response rate of 92.4%.

The sample comprised 61.3% female respondents and 38.7% male respondents. While this gender imbalance may influence the interpretation of results, particularly regarding attitudes toward green advertising and sustainable tourism, it reflects broader trends in survey participation. Future studies could address this limitation by employing targeted recruitment strategies to ensure a more equitable gender representation.

3.3. Survey Design and Measurement Scale

The survey questions were developed through an in-depth review of existing literature, utilizing established scales and adapting them to the context of green advertising and sustainable tourism. The final survey consisted of 19 questions (reduced from an initial 25) divided into two sections.

Demographic Information: This section collected data on respondents' age, gender, education level, and familiarity with green advertising and sustainable tourism.

Key Constructs: This section focuses on the study's primary variables, including green advertising, message appeal, perceived quality, perceived credibility, environmental awareness, and purchase attitudes.

All items were measured using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) to capture the degree of agreement or disagreement with various statements. This approach ensured consistency and enabled the quantification of subjective perceptions across respondents. The constructs, corresponding items, and literature sources are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1.
Constructs of the study.

Variables	Items	Author
ADV/ Green advertising	1. Green advertising demonstrates that companies are addressing consumers' environmental concerns. 2. Tourist products advertised as environmentally friendly are safer to use. 3. Green advertising is a reliable source of information about eco-friendly tourist products.	Haytko and Matulich [55].
MES/ Message appeal	1. I am very concerned about the state of the world's environment. 2. I am willing to reduce my consumption to help protect the environment. 3. Major social changes are necessary to protect the natural environment.	Maichum, et al. [56].
PQU/ Perceived quality	1. The quality of advertised green tourist products is superior regarding environmental considerations. 2. Advertised green tourist products are reliable concerning their environmental performance. 3. Advertised green tourist products are durable and environmentally sustainable.	Chen, et al. [57].
PCR/ Perceived credibility	1. Green advertising accurately represents the environmental benefits of the advertised tourist products. 2. Companies that advertise green tourist products have sincere intentions to protect the environment. 3. I believe the environmental claims made in green advertising are truthful.	Haytko and Matulich [55].
AWA/ Environmental awareness	1. I am aware of environmental initiatives and programs in my community. 2. I understand the environmental labels and symbols used on tourist products. 3. I consider myself knowledgeable about environmental issues related to tourism.	Haytko and Matulich [55].
PUR/ Green product purchase attitudes	1. I have a positive attitude toward purchasing and consuming green tourist products. 2. I actively seek out and purchase environmentally certified and eco-friendly tourism products. 3. I plan to switch to tourist products that are advertised as eco-friendly. 4. I am willing to pay more for tourist products and services that are advertised as environmentally friendly.	Chen, et al. [57] and Haytko and Matulich [55].

3.4. Validity and Reliability of the Questionnaire

During the development of the questionnaire, particular attention was paid to ensuring that the questions were clear, concise, and easily understandable. Ambiguous, hypothetical, or sensitive questions were avoided to minimize respondent confusion and ensure the accuracy of the data. To further strengthen the survey instrument, both validity and reliability were assessed.

3.5. Content Validity

Content validity was evaluated by consulting a panel of experts, including academics and professionals in the fields of green advertising and sustainable tourism. The questionnaire was translated into Albanian and then back into English to ensure linguistic accuracy and cultural relevance. This process was conducted in collaboration with a professional translator, and the translated versions were reviewed to confirm consistency and clarity. The expert evaluation indicated that the questions were well-constructed overall, with minor adjustments suggested to improve clarity and relevance. These suggestions were incorporated into the final version of the questionnaire.

3.6. Pilot Testing

A pilot test was conducted to assess the questionnaire's reliability and validity before its official release. The pilot test involved a small sample of respondents (approximately 10% of the target sample size, as recommended by Haytko and Matulich [55] to identify any issues with question wording, response options, or overall structure. Feedback from the pilot test was used to refine the questionnaire, ensuring that it accurately captured the intended constructs.

3.7. Reliability Assessment

The reliability of the questionnaire was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, a measure of internal consistency. A Cronbach's alpha value above 0.7 was considered acceptable, indicating that the items within each construct were consistent and reliable. The results of the reliability analysis confirmed that the questionnaire was a robust tool for data collection.

3.8. Factor Analysis

Factor analysis was employed as a statistical method to uncover the underlying structure of the data and identify the key factors influencing the variables under study [58]. The primary goal of this analysis was to reduce the dataset to the smallest and most significant number of factors, ensuring that the questionnaire effectively measured the intended constructs, such as green advertising, message appeal, perceived quality, perceived credibility, environmental awareness, and purchase attitudes.

Before conducting the factor analysis, the dataset consisted of 25 items. After the analysis, these were reduced to 19 items, which were grouped into six factors based on the variables with the highest loadings. Each factor was named according to the underlying construct it represented. The suitability of the data for factor analysis was assessed using two key tests presented in Table 2. The KMO value was 0.626 (62.6%), which exceeds the threshold of 0.50, indicating that the dataset is suitable for factor analysis. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity showed a significant result ($p < .001$), confirming that there are significant correlations among the variables, further supporting the appropriateness of factor analysis.

Table 2.
KMO and Bartlett's test.

KMO and Bartlett's test		
Kaiser-meyer-olkin measure of sampling adequacy		0.626
Bartlett's test of sphericity	Approx. Chi-square	715.740
	df	210
	Sig.	<0.001

3.9. Factor Extraction and Interpretation

Principal component analysis (PCA) was used to extract factors, and Varimax rotation was applied to improve the interpretability of the factor structure. This process allowed for the identification of six distinct factors, each representing a key construct in the study. The final step involved naming these factors based on the variables with the highest loadings, ensuring a clear and meaningful interpretation of the results. To determine the number of factors, the Eigenvalue criterion was applied, retaining factors with Eigenvalues greater than 1. As shown in Table 3, seven factors met this criterion, collectively explaining 75.437% of the total variance. The first factor accounted for 15.213% of the variance, indicating its significant contribution to the model. In the initial step of the factor analysis, variables with low variance (below 0.50) were excluded, and the analysis was repeated to refine the factor structure. This iterative process ensured that the final factors were robust and representative of the underlying constructs.

Table 3.
Total variance explained.

	Initial Eigen values				Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
Component	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %		Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	5.145	24.499	24.499		5.145	24.499	24.499	3.195	15.213	15.213
2	2.606	12.410	36.909		2.606	12.410	36.909	2.511	11.959	27.172
3	2.134	10.164	47.073		2.134	10.164	47.073	2.321	11.053	38.226
4	1.958	9.323	56.396		1.958	9.323	56.396	2.159	10.280	48.506
5	1.545	7.358	63.754		1.545	7.358	63.754	2.118	10.085	58.590
6	1.341	6.388	70.142		1.341	6.388	70.142	1.909	9.089	67.679
7	1.112	5.295	75.437		1.112	5.295	75.437	1.629	7.758	75.437
8	0.921	4.385	79.822							
9	0.720	3.426	83.248							
10	0.604	2.875	86.123							
11	0.358	1.707	92.658							
12	0.319	1.517	94.175							
13	0.277	1.320	95.495							
14	0.239	1.136	96.631							
15	0.196	0.933	97.563							
16	0.171	0.813	98.377							
17	0.141	0.669	99.046							
18	0.118	0.562	99.608							
19	0.082	0.392	100.000							

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

3.10. Rotation Matrix and Factor Loadings

The rotation matrix represents the final output of the factor analysis, illustrating the correlations between the original variables and their respective factors. Variables with the highest factor loadings under a specific factor indicate a strong relationship with that factor. According to Hair Jr, et al. [59], factor loadings of 0.50 and above are considered significant, with higher values indicating stronger associations. To group the questions for each component, the Varimax rotation method with Kaiser normalization was applied. This approach maximizes the variance of the loadings, making the factor structure clearer and more interpretable. The factor loadings for the variables in this study ranged from 0.643 to 0.905, confirming strong relationships between the variables and their respective factors (Table 4).

Table 4.
Modeled matrix.

Rotated Component Matrix[a]

Component

	1	2	3	4	5	6
PUR1	0.872					
PUR2	0.810					
PUR3	0.791					
PUR4	0.788					
ADV1		0.845				
ADV2		0.835				
ADV3		0.687				
MES1			0.827			
MES2			0.690			
MES3			0.643			
PQU1				0.905		
PQU2				0.819		
PQU3				-0.653		
PCR1				0.731		
PCR2				0.709		
PCR3				0.643		
AWA1				0.701		
AWA2				0.865		
AWA3				0.734		

Note: *Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. a. Rotation converged in 5 iterations.*

3.11. Reliability Analysis

The reliability coefficients of the constructs used in the study exceed 0.7, which is the widely accepted threshold in the literature for ensuring the validity of questionnaires. Most of the scales exhibit reliability ranging from acceptable to good across both samples. While there is a slight variation in Cronbach's Alpha values between the samples, a consistent trend is observed, with the larger sample demonstrating marginally higher reliability (Table 5).

Table 5.
Reliability analysis of constructs across samples.

Constructs	Cronbach's Alpha n=40	Cronbach's Alpha n=406
Green advertising	0.784	0.702
Message appeal	0.764	0.735
Percieved quality	0.809	0.746
Percieved credibility	0.796	0.712
Envioremntal awareness	0.790	0.736
Purchase attitude	0.742	0.746

4. Results

4.1. Correlation Values and Implications

Statistical analyses, including Pearson correlation and hierarchical multiple regression, were conducted using SPSS version 26 to examine the relationships between variables and assess the impact of independent variables on the dependent variable. The Pearson correlation coefficient was used to evaluate the linear relationships between variables, as it is a robust tool for assessing the strength and direction of associations [60]. Pearson correlation was used to assess the strength and direction of the linear relationship between two continuous variables. The correlation coefficient (r) and p-value were calculated to determine the significance of the relationship.

4.1.1. Green Message Appeal and Environmental Awareness

The Pearson correlation analysis revealed a moderate-to-strong positive relationship between green message appeal and environmental awareness (r = 0.500, p = 0.000). This indicates that as participants' perception of green message appeal increases, their environmental awareness also tends to increase. The result is statistically significant (p < 0.05), confirming that the relationship is not due to chance.

4.1.2. Perceived Quality and Environmental Awareness

A moderate positive correlation was found between perceived quality and environmental awareness (r = 0.436, p = 0.000). This suggests that higher perceptions of quality are associated with greater environmental awareness. The result is statistically significant (p < 0.05), further supporting the validity of this relationship.

4.1.3. Perceived Credibility and Environmental Awareness

The analysis also identified a moderate positive correlation between perceived credibility and environmental awareness (r = 0.404, p = 0.000). This indicates that as participants' understanding of credibility improves, their environmental awareness also increases. The result is statistically significant (p < 0.05), confirming the reliability of this finding.

4.1.4. Green Advertising and Purchase Attitude

Pearson correlation was used to provide a preliminary understanding of the relationship between the two variables, while regression analysis was used for more advanced testing of predictive relationships and mediation.

Pearson correlation demonstrated significant positive relationships between green advertising components and purchase attitude. Specifically, message appeal (r = 0.435, p < 0.01), perceived quality (r = 0.481, p < 0.01), and perceived credibility (r = 0.621, p < 0.01) were all positively correlated with purchase attitude, with perceived credibility showing the strongest effect. When controlling for environmental awareness, the correlations weakened but remained significant for perceived quality (r = 0.182, p = 0.035) and perceived credibility (r = 0.467, p < 0.001). However, the correlation between message appeal and purchase attitude became weak and non-significant (r = 0.120, p = 0.147).

4.2. Regression Analysis

A hierarchical multiple regression analysis was conducted to evaluate the impact of green advertising on consumer purchase attitudes in Albania. Two models were tested to progressively assess the influence of predictors (the model summary is shown in Table 6 *and* Table 7).

4.3. Model 1: Core Predictors

The first model included message appeal, perceived quality, and perceived credibility as predictors. This model explained 46.3% of the variance in purchase attitude ($R^2 = 0.463$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.439$, $F(3, 89) = 26.009$, $p < 0.001$). Among the predictors, message appeal emerged as the most significant factor ($\beta = 0.531$, $p < 0.001$), while perceived quality ($\beta = 0.121$, $p = 0.253$) and perceived credibility ($\beta = 0.132$, $p = 0.169$) were not statistically significant.

4.4. Model 2: Inclusion of Environmental Awareness

The second model introduced environmental awareness as an additional predictor. This significantly improved the model's explanatory power, increasing the variance explained to 56.5% ($R^2 = 0.565$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.545$, $F(4, 89) = 28.633$, $p < 0.001$). In this model, both message appeal ($\beta = 0.441$, $p < 0.001$) and environmental awareness ($\beta = 0.432$, $p < 0.001$) were significant predictors, highlighting their critical roles in shaping consumer purchase attitudes.

Table 6.
Summary of hierarchical regression models for purchase attitudes.

Model Summary				
Model	**R**	**R Square**	**Adjusted R Square**	**Std. Error of the Estimate**
1	0.688[a]	0.463	0.439	0.63334
2	0.766[b]	0.565	0.545	0.57525

Note: a. Predictors: (Constant), Message appeal, Perceived quality, and Perceived credibility
b. Predictors: (Constant), Message appeal, Perceived quality, and Perceived credibility, Environmental awareness
A hierarchical multiple regression analysis assessed how green advertising impact consumer purchase attitude in Albania, using two progressively detailed models.

Table 7.
Multiple linear regression analysis for purchase attitudes.

Coefficients[a]						
Model		**Unstandardized Coefficients**		**Standardized Coefficients**	**t**	**Sig0.**
		B	**Std0. Error**	**Beta**		
1	(Constant)	0.026	0.411		0.061	0.962
	Perceived credibility	0.161	0.115	0.129	10.369	0.175
	Perceived quality	0.144	0.131	0.114	10.13	0.261

	Message appeal	0.602	0.111	0.531	50.483	0
	(Constant)	-0.048	0.371		-0.131	0.889
	Perceived credibility	-0.037	0.113	-0.031	-0.328	0.744
2	Perceived quality	0.003	0.123	0.001	0.015	0.988
	Message appeal	0.498	0.103	0.441	40.88	0
	Environmental awareness	0.482	0.106	0.432	40.543	0

Note: a. Dependent Variable: Purchase attitude

Table 8 provides an overview of the statistical tests conducted to examine the proposed hypotheses. These results highlight the importance of message appeal in green advertising and the role of environmental awareness in shaping consumer attitudes and behaviors toward sustainable products.

Table 8.
Summary of hypothesis testing results.

Hypothesis	Test Used	Findings	Result
H1	Regression	Model 1: $\beta = 0.531$, $p < 0.001$	Partially Supported
		Model 2: $\beta = 0.432$, $p < 0.001$	
		$R^2 = 0.565$.	
H2	Pearson Correlation	$r = 0.500$, $p = 0.000$	Supported
H3	Pearson Correlation	$r = 0.436$, $p = 0.000$	Supported
H4	Pearson Correlation	$r = 0.404$, $p = 0.000$	Supported
H5	Regression	$R^2 = 0.565$,	Partially Supported
		$p < 0.001$ and $\beta = 0.432$,	

5. Conclusion and Implications

Based on the findings, it is evident that message appeal is the most influential factor in shaping consumer purchase attitudes within the context of green advertising in Albania. This underscores the importance of crafting compelling and engaging messages that resonate with consumers' values and environmental concerns. For businesses, particularly in the tourism sector, this means prioritizing transparent and authentic communication about their sustainability practices. Misleading claims or greenwashing can damage a brand's reputation and undermine consumer trust. Therefore, marketers must ensure that their messaging is not only attractive but also truthful and aligned with actual environmental efforts. Environmental awareness also emerges as a critical factor, significantly enhancing the explanatory power of the model. This suggests that consumers who are more informed about environmental issues are more likely to respond positively to green advertising. Clear, accessible, and relatable information can help bridge the gap between consumer awareness and sustainable purchasing behavior. For instance, tourism businesses could highlight how their operations contribute to broader sustainability goals, such as those outlined in the EU Green Deal. By aligning their messaging with these global initiatives, businesses can appeal to eco-conscious tourists and strengthen their competitive position in both local and international markets. While product quality and credibility remain important, their impact appears secondary to the appeal of the message itself. This highlights the need for marketers to strike a balance between promoting the tangible attributes of their offerings and crafting messages that emotionally and rationally engage consumers. For example, emphasizing how a product or service contributes to environmental preservation or supports local communities can create a deeper connection with consumers who prioritize sustainability.

The implications of these findings extend beyond individual businesses to policymakers and industry stakeholders. Policymakers should consider developing frameworks or certification systems that validate the authenticity of green claims, thereby enhancing the credibility of green advertising. Public campaigns aimed at raising environmental awareness could further encourage sustainable consumption patterns, creating a more receptive market for green products and services. For the tourism sector, integrating sustainability into national and regional strategies could not only attract environmentally conscious travelers but also position Albania as a leader in sustainable tourism within the region.

6. Discussion

The findings of this study resonate with and build upon existing literature, offering insights into the dynamics of green advertising and consumer behavior. For instance, the results align with the work of Wasaya, et al. [33], who identified green trust and green perceived quality as significant factors influencing green purchase attitudes. However, this study introduces environmental awareness as a moderating variable, revealing its positive influence on the relationships between green purchase attitudes and their predictors. Similarly, Japutra, et al. [61] explored the impact of environmental benefit message appeals on tourists' behavioral intentions, finding that such appeals enhance destination brand quality and perceived green value, thereby indirectly influencing behavioral intentions. While their study underscores the importance of perceived quality and credibility, the current research suggests that, in the context of green advertising, these factors may be secondary to the appeal of the message itself. This study provides a more direct assessment of how message appeal and environmental awareness drive purchase attitudes, offering a clearer understanding of their relative importance. This distinction is particularly relevant for marketers aiming to optimize their green advertising strategies, as it emphasizes the need to prioritize compelling messages.

The findings also resonate with the work of Do Paco, et al. [39], who argued that green advertising alone has a weak direct influence on green buying behavior. Their study suggests that consumers with strong environmental values may already be inclined to make sustainable purchases, reducing the immediate impact of advertising. This aligns with the current study's emphasis on environmental awareness as a mediator, which enhances the effectiveness of message appeal. It implies that while green advertising may not independently drive purchasing decisions, it can significantly influence consumers who are already environmentally conscious. Further supporting this perspective, Carrión-Bósquez, et al. [12] explored how environmental attitudes, a component of environmental awareness, positively influence consumers' intentions to purchase green products. Their findings reinforce the idea that environmental awareness is a key driver of sustainable consumer behavior. However, while their study focuses on the direct influence of environmental attitudes on purchase intentions, this research highlights the mediating role of environmental awareness in strengthening the relationship between message appeal and purchase attitudes. This distinction provides a more comprehensive understanding of how environmental awareness operates within the broader framework of green advertising. To conclude, this study contributes to the growing body of literature on green advertising by emphasizing the interplay between message appeal, environmental awareness, and consumer behavior. By integrating these insights, businesses can develop more effective strategies to engage eco-conscious consumers, while policymakers can create an enabling environment that supports sustainable consumption patterns.

7. Limitations and Further Studies

The findings of this study offer valuable insights into the role of message appeal and environmental awareness in shaping consumer behavior within the context of green advertising, particularly in Albania. However, it is important to acknowledge several limitations that could influence the interpretation and generalizability of the results.

First, the study's focus on Albanian consumers limits its applicability to other cultural and geographical contexts. Consumer attitudes and behaviors are often shaped by cultural norms, economic conditions, and levels of environmental awareness, which vary significantly across regions. Future research could address this limitation by expanding the sample to include participants from diverse cultural and geographical backgrounds. This would provide a more comprehensive understanding of how cultural differences influence responses to green advertising.

Second, the study focused on tourism-related green advertising, which represents only one sector where sustainability messaging is prevalent. Consumer behavior is likely to vary across different product categories, such as food, fashion, or consumer electronics, where factors like price, functionality, and brand loyalty may play a more prominent role. Future studies could explore how green advertising functions in other industries, offering a broader perspective on its effectiveness and applicability across sectors.

A third limitation lies in the reliance on self-reported data, which can introduce biases such as social desirability. Participants might overstate their positive attitudes toward green advertising to align with perceived societal expectations, even if their actual behaviors do not reflect these attitudes. To mitigate this issue, future research could incorporate experimental designs or observational methods to capture real-world consumer behavior.

Additionally, while this study highlighted the importance of message appeal and environmental awareness, it did not account for other critical factors that influence consumer decision-making, such as price sensitivity or product availability. Price, in particular, is a significant consideration for many consumers, especially in markets where green products are often priced higher than conventional alternatives. Future research could explore how price interacts with environmental messaging to shape purchasing decisions. Understanding this dynamic would help businesses refine their pricing strategies and better position their green products in competitive markets.

By addressing these gaps, future studies can build on the current findings and offer a more holistic understanding of how green advertising can effectively drive sustainable consumer behavior.

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