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From Innovation to Intention: How Green Brand Innovativeness Influences Sustainable Buying Behaviour in Urban Markets

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Abstract

Purpose

This study investigates how green brand innovativeness (GBI) influences sustainable buying behaviour among urban consumers by examining the mediating roles of green brand associations (GBA) and green brand attitude (GBATT). The study addresses an important gap in green marketing literature by explaining the psychological mechanisms through which eco-innovation translates into green purchase intention (GPI).

Design/Methodology/Approach

A quantitative, cross-sectional research design was adopted. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire from 365 urban consumers with prior experience purchasing green products. Structural equation modelling (SEM) using AMOS was employed to test the hypothesized relationships and mediation effects.

Findings

The findings reveal that green brand innovativeness does not directly influence green purchase intention. Instead, its impact is fully mediated through green brand associations and green brand attitude. Consumers are more likely to develop purchase intentions when eco-innovation strengthens favourable brand meanings and positive environmental evaluations.

Research Limitations/Implications

The study relies on self-reported cross-sectional data collected from urban consumers, which limits causal inference and generalizability. Future studies may adopt longitudinal designs, comparative rural–urban samples, and behavioural purchase data.

Practical Implications

Managers should focus not only on developing eco-innovative products but also on communicating sustainability initiatives in ways that build strong green associations and positive brand attitudes. Green innovation must be embedded into meaningful brand narratives to influence sustainable buying behaviour.

Originality/Value

The study contributes to green branding literature by positioning green brand innovativeness as an indirect behavioural driver operating through cognitive and affective mechanisms. It extends sustainable consumption research by integrating branding perspectives into the innovation–purchase intention relationship.

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Keywords: Green brand innovativeness; Green purchase intention; Green brand associations; Green brand attitude; Sustainable consumption; Urban consumers; Green marketing

1. Introduction

Environmental sustainability has become one of the defining global concerns of the twenty-first century. Escalating environmental degradation, climate change, biodiversity loss, air pollution, and resource depletion have intensified pressure on governments, organizations, and consumers to adopt environmentally responsible practices. The increasing frequency of ecological crises such as droughts, heatwaves, floods, and forest fires has shifted sustainability from a peripheral social concern to a central economic and managerial priority. These developments have significantly influenced consumer consciousness and market expectations, particularly in urban markets where environmental awareness is relatively higher.

Urban consumers are increasingly exposed to sustainability-oriented communication through digital media, educational initiatives, public discourse, and regulatory interventions. As a result, purchasing decisions are no longer based solely on functional utility, price, or convenience. Consumers are now evaluating brands on the basis of environmental responsibility, ethical commitment, and sustainability orientation. Green consumption has therefore emerged as a critical dimension of modern consumer behaviour.

Recent sustainability research indicates that urban consumers increasingly evaluate brands based on environmental transparency, sustainability performance, and ethical innovation practices rather than only functional product attributes. The growing adoption of green technologies, circular economy practices, and environmentally responsible branding strategies has intensified scholarly attention toward sustainable consumer behaviour in emerging urban markets. Contemporary studies suggest that consumers increasingly reward brands that demonstrate authentic environmental commitment through innovation-oriented sustainability initiatives (Testa et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2022; Nguyen et al., 2024)

In response to these changing market expectations, organizations have increasingly integrated environmental sustainability into branding and innovation strategies. Firms across industries are investing in renewable technologies, eco-friendly packaging, energy-efficient production systems, and environmentally responsible supply chains. Beyond operational improvements, these sustainability initiatives are also used strategically to strengthen brand image and market positioning.

Within this context, green brand innovativeness (GBI) has emerged as an important construct in sustainability marketing. Green brand innovativeness refers to consumers' perceptions regarding a brand's ability to introduce environmentally friendly and innovative products, processes, and solutions. Unlike traditional innovation, green brand innovativeness combines technological advancement with ecological responsibility. It reflects not only whether firms innovate, but also how consumers interpret and perceive these innovations in relation to environmental sustainability.

Despite growing scholarly interest in sustainable consumption, prior research presents inconsistent findings regarding the relationship between green innovation and consumer purchase intention. Some studies report that eco-innovation positively influences consumer behaviour, while others suggest that innovation alone may not directly motivate purchase decisions. Consumers often remain skeptical about environmental claims due to concerns regarding greenwashing, exaggerated sustainability communication, or lack of credibility.

This inconsistency highlights the importance of examining the psychological mechanisms that connect green innovation with consumer behaviour. Specifically, there is limited empirical understanding regarding whether green brand innovativeness directly influences green purchase intention or whether its effects operate indirectly through branding-related constructs such as green brand associations and green brand attitude.

The present study addresses this gap by examining the influence of green brand innovativeness on green purchase intention among urban consumers. The study proposes that green brand innovativeness influences consumer behaviour indirectly by strengthening green brand associations and cultivating favourable green brand attitudes.

The study contributes to literature in three important ways. First, it extends green branding literature by positioning green brand innovativeness as a central explanatory construct. Second, it integrates cognitive and affective branding mechanisms into sustainable consumption research. Third, the study contributes empirical evidence from an emerging urban market context where sustainability awareness continues to evolve rapidly.

Recent evidence further suggests that green innovation alone may not guarantee favourable consumer behaviour unless supported by strong environmental credibility and positive consumer evaluations. Studies conducted in sustainability marketing contexts demonstrate that consumer skepticism toward environmental claims continues

to remain a major challenge for firms attempting to convert sustainability innovation into purchase intention (Sun et al., 2023; Javed et al., 2024).

2. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

2.1 Theoretical Foundation

The present study is grounded primarily in signaling theory and the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). Signaling theory explains how firms communicate unobservable qualities through observable actions. In the context of green marketing, eco-innovation acts as a signal that conveys environmental commitment, sustainability orientation, and ethical responsibility to consumers.

Similarly, the Theory of Planned Behavior explains that behavioural intention is primarily influenced by attitudes and evaluations formed through beliefs and perceptions. Therefore, consumers' perceptions of green innovation are expected to shape purchase intention indirectly through psychological evaluations such as green brand associations and green brand attitude.

2.2 Green Brand Innovativeness

Green brand innovativeness refers to consumers' perceptions regarding a brand's ability to introduce novel and environmentally responsible products, services, technologies, or processes. Unlike traditional innovativeness, green brand innovativeness incorporates ecological responsibility into innovation-oriented brand identity.

Recent studies increasingly conceptualize green brand innovativeness as a strategic capability that enhances sustainability competitiveness and consumer trust. Research shows that environmentally innovative firms are more likely to develop stronger green brand equity, environmental legitimacy, and long-term consumer engagement (Abbas et al., 2022; Khan et al., 2023). In sustainability-oriented markets, eco-innovation is viewed not only as technological advancement but also as a symbolic indicator of corporate environmental responsibility.

Green brand innovativeness is particularly important in competitive urban markets where environmentally conscious consumers increasingly prefer brands perceived as forward-looking and sustainability-oriented. Eco-innovative brands are often viewed as more responsible, reliable, and progressive.

2.3 Green Brand Innovativeness and Green Brand Associations

Green brand associations represent the environmental meanings, beliefs, and sustainability-related perceptions linked with a brand in consumers' memory. Strong green brand associations improve brand credibility, trustworthiness, and differentiation.

Green brand innovativeness strengthens green brand associations by providing cognitive and symbolic cues regarding environmental responsibility. Consumers often interpret eco-innovation as evidence of a firm's commitment toward sustainability. Consequently, innovative green practices help consumers develop favourable environmental associations with the brand.

Contemporary sustainability literature suggests that eco-innovation strengthens consumers' environmental memory structures and sustainability-oriented brand perceptions. Consumers tend to associate environmentally innovative brands with authenticity, ecological responsibility, and ethical commitment, thereby strengthening favourable green brand associations (Sadiq et al., 2021; Lee & Raschke, 2023).

H1: Green brand innovativeness positively influences green brand associations.

2.4 Green Brand Innovativeness and Green Brand Attitude

Green brand attitude refers to consumers' overall evaluative judgments regarding a brand's environmental orientation and sustainability practices. Positive green brand attitudes emerge when consumers perceive a brand as environmentally responsible and ethically committed.

Green brand innovativeness contributes to favourable attitudes because innovative green initiatives signal proactive environmental engagement. Consumers are more likely to admire and appreciate brands that invest in eco-friendly innovation and sustainability-driven solutions.

Recent empirical studies also indicate that sustainability-driven innovation positively shapes consumers' emotional evaluations toward brands. Consumers develop more positive environmental attitudes toward firms perceived as proactive in climate-conscious innovation and sustainable product development (Ali et al., 2022; Bhatia & Jain, 2024).

H2: Green brand innovativeness positively influences green brand attitude.

2.5 Green Brand Associations and Green Purchase Intention

Green purchase intention refers to consumers' willingness and likelihood to purchase environmentally friendly products. Strong green brand associations influence purchase intention by strengthening perceived environmental value and reducing perceived risk.

Consumers who associate brands with sustainability, ecological responsibility, and ethical commitment are more likely to support those brands through purchase behaviour.

Studies conducted in emerging green markets further demonstrate that favourable sustainability-related associations enhance consumer confidence and reduce uncertainty regarding green products. Strong environmental associations therefore become important antecedents of sustainable purchase intention (Rita et al., 2022; Prakash et al., 2023).

H3: Green brand associations positively influence green purchase intention.

2.6 Green Brand Attitude and Green Purchase Intention

Attitude is one of the strongest predictors of behavioural intention in consumer behaviour literature. Positive evaluations toward environmentally responsible brands significantly increase consumers' willingness to purchase green products.

Consumers who develop favourable attitudes toward green brands are more likely to translate sustainability beliefs into actual purchase intentions.

Recent sustainability studies confirm that positive environmental attitudes significantly predict consumers' willingness to support green brands through purchase intention and long-term loyalty behaviour (Sharma et al., 2022; Verma & Chandra, 2025).

H4: Green brand attitude positively influences green purchase intention.

2.7 Green Brand Innovativeness and Green Purchase Intention

Although innovation is generally associated with competitive advantage and consumer interest, prior research indicates that eco-innovation may not directly translate into purchase intention. Consumers may appreciate green innovation but still avoid purchasing due to factors such as price sensitivity, skepticism, perceived inconvenience, or habitual behaviour.

Accordingly, the study empirically examines the direct relationship between green brand innovativeness and green purchase intention.

H5: Green brand innovativeness positively influences green purchase intention.

2.8 Research Gap

Existing literature has extensively examined green purchase intention using constructs such as environmental concern, green trust, perceived value, and green attitude. However, limited attention has been given to green brand innovativeness as a branding capability influencing sustainable buying behaviour. Prior studies largely focus on direct relationships between green innovation and consumer responses, while insufficient attention has been devoted to understanding the mediating psychological mechanisms through which eco-innovation shapes purchase intention.

Furthermore, existing findings remain inconsistent regarding whether green innovation directly influences consumer behaviour. This inconsistency indicates the need to examine intermediary branding constructs such as green brand associations and green brand attitude. In addition, empirical evidence from emerging urban markets remains limited despite increasing sustainability awareness and rapid urbanization.

Accordingly, the present study addresses these gaps by examining the indirect influence of green brand innovativeness on green purchase intention through green brand associations and green brand attitude among urban consumers.

2.9 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework proposes that green brand innovativeness influences green purchase intention both directly and indirectly through green brand associations and green brand attitude.

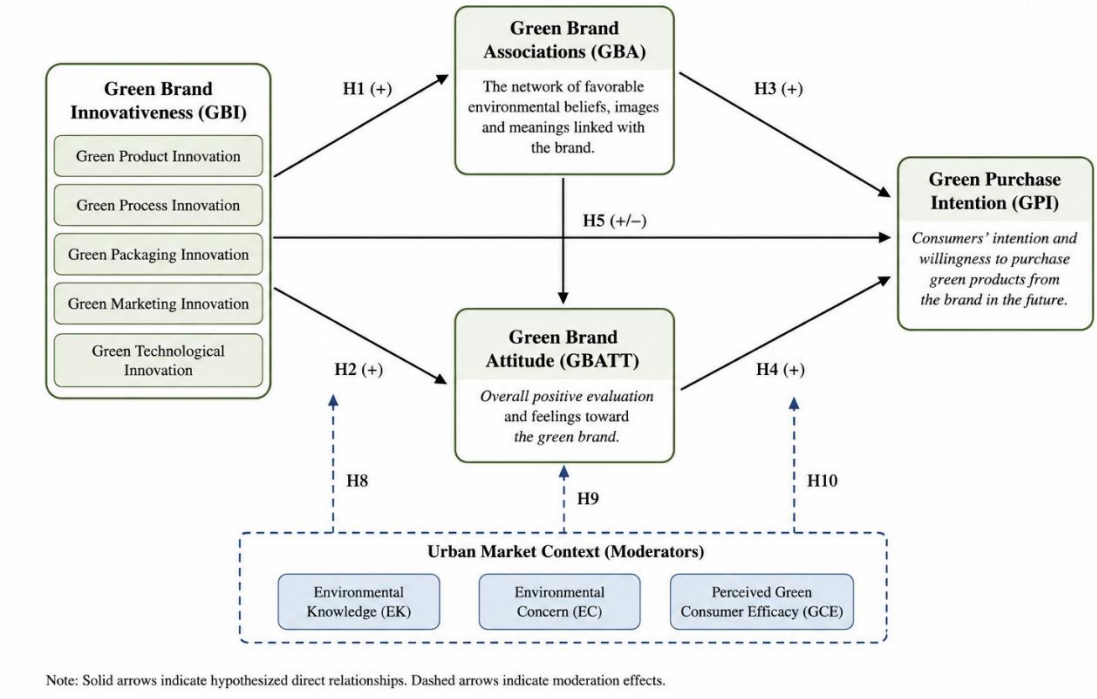
The conceptual model intentionally includes five hypotheses to maintain theoretical clarity, parsimony, and emp irical precision. The study focuses specifically on the direct influence of green brand innovativeness and the med iating mechanisms of green brand associations and green brand attitude.

Rather than incorporating numerous moderators or additional mediators, the model prioritizes the most theoretically relevant pathways supported by signaling theory and the Theory of Planned Behavior. The inclusion of excessive constructs could dilute theoretical coherence and reduce interpretability.

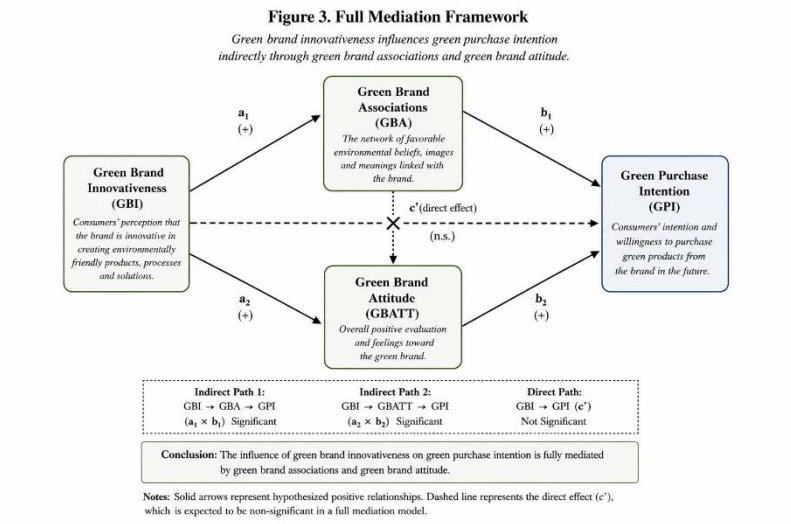
The five hypotheses are sufficient because they comprehensively capture:

1. The cognitive pathway (GBI → GBA)
2. The affective pathway (GBI → GBATT)
3. The behavioural pathway through associations (GBA → GPI)
4. The behavioural pathway through attitude (GBATT → GPI)
5. The direct pathway between innovation and purchase intention (GBI → GPI)

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework



Note: Solid arrows indicate hypothesized direct relationships. Dashed arrows indicate moderation effects.



This parsimonious framework aligns with SEM best practices and supports robust theoretical testing without unnecessary model complexity.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The study adopts a quantitative and cross-sectional research design to examine the relationships among green brand innovativeness, green brand associations, green brand attitude, and green purchase intention.

A survey method was selected because the study aims to capture consumers' perceptions, evaluations, and behavioural intentions related to green brands. Structural equation modelling (SEM) was employed to test both direct and indirect relationships.

3.2 Sampling and Data Collection

Data were collected from urban consumers who had prior experience purchasing environmentally friendly or green products. A purposive sampling approach was adopted to ensure that respondents possessed adequate familiarity with green products and sustainability-oriented brands.

Questionnaires were distributed through both online and offline modes across major urban locations. After eliminating incomplete and inconsistent responses, 365 valid questionnaires were retained for analysis.

The sample size satisfies the minimum requirements for SEM analysis and provides adequate statistical power.

3.3 Measurement Scale

All constructs were measured using previously validated multi-item scales adapted from green marketing and branding literature.

Responses were recorded using a seven-point Likert scale ranging from:

1 = Strongly Disagree 7 = Strongly Agree

Table 1. Measurement Constructs and Sources

Construct	Number of Items	Adapted From
Green Brand Innovativeness	3	Chen (2008)
Green Brand Associations	3	Keller (1993); Chen (2010)
Green Brand Attitude	3	Fishbein & Ajzen (1975)
Green Purchase Intention	3	Paul et al. (2016)

3.4 Reliability and Validity Assessment

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to assess construct reliability and validity.

Internal consistency reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (CR). Convergent validity was examined through factor loadings and average variance extracted (AVE).

Discriminant validity was assessed using the Fornell–Larcker criterion.

4. Data Analysis and SEM Results

4.1 Respondent Profile

Table 2. Demographic Profile of Respondents

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	198	54.2%
	Female	167	45.8%
Age	18–25 Years	96	26.3%
	26–35 Years	154	42.2%
	36–45 Years	73	20.0%
	Above 45 Years	42	11.5%
Education	Undergraduate	87	23.8%
	Postgraduate	201	55.1%
	Doctoral/Professional	77	21.1%

4.2 Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

Construct	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4
1. GBI	5.21	0.91	1			
2. GBA	5.38	0.88	0.61**	1		
3. GBATT	5.44	0.85	0.57**	0.66**	1	
4. GPI	5.29	0.93	0.18	0.59**	0.63**	1

**$p < 0.01$

4.3 Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Table 4. Reliability and Validity Results

Construct	Item	Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE
GBI	GBI1	0.78	0.88	0.89	0.62
	GBI2	0.81			
	GBI3	0.77			
GBA	GBA1	0.82	0.90	0.91	0.66
	GBA2	0.85			
	GBA3	0.78			
GBATT	GBT1	0.84	0.91	0.92	0.69
	GBT2	0.87			

Construct	Item	Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE
	GBT3	0.79			
GPI	GPI1	0.80	0.89	0.90	0.64
	GPI2	0.83			
	GPI3	0.78			

All factor loadings exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70. Cronbach's alpha and CR values were above 0.70, confirming internal consistency reliability. AVE values exceeded 0.50, establishing convergent validity.

4.4 Discriminant Validity

Table 5. Discriminant Validity (Fornell–Larcker Criterion)

Construct	GBI	GBA	GBATT	GPI
GBI	0.79			
GBA	0.61	0.81		
GBATT	0.57	0.66	0.83	
GPI	0.18	0.59	0.63	0.80

The square root of AVE for each construct exceeded inter-construct correlations, confirming discriminant validity.

4.5 Structural Model Fit

Table 6. Model Fit Indices

Fit Index	Recommended Value	Obtained Value
χ^2/df	< 3.00	2.41
GFI	≥ 0.90	0.92
CFI	≥ 0.90	0.95
IFI	≥ 0.90	0.95
RMSEA	≤ 0.08	0.062

The model demonstrated acceptable goodness-of-fit.

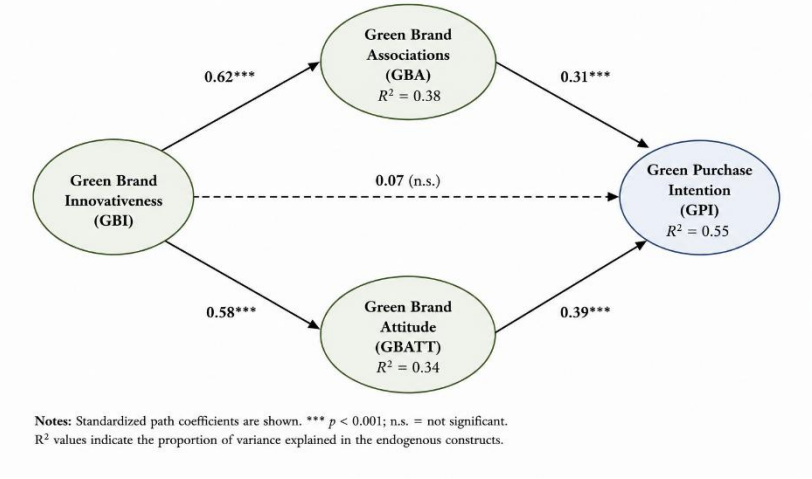
4.6 Hypothesis Testing

Table 7. Structural Model Results

Hypothesis	Relationship	Standardized β	t-value	p-value	Result
H1	GBI → GBA	0.62	9.48	<0.001	Supported
H2	GBI → GBATT	0.58	8.91	<0.001	Supported
H3	GBA → GPI	0.31	5.44	<0.001	Supported
H4	GBATT → GPI	0.39	6.72	<0.001	Supported
H5	GBI → GPI	0.07	1.21	0.226	Not Supported

Figure 2. Structural Equation Model Results

(Standardized Path Coefficients)



Notes: Standardized path coefficients are shown. *** $p < 0.001$; n.s. = not significant.
R^2 values indicate the proportion of variance explained in the endogenous constructs.

4.7 Mediation Analysis

Table 8. Bootstrapping Mediation Results

Indirect Relationship	Indirect Effect	95% Confidence Interval	Result
GBI → GBA → GPI	0.19	[0.12, 0.28]	Significant
GBI → GBATT → GPI	0.23	[0.15, 0.32]	Significant
Direct GBI → GPI	0.07	[−0.03, 0.14]	Not Significant

The mediation analysis confirms full mediation because the indirect effects were significant while the direct effect remained insignificant.

6. Discussion

The findings provide significant insights into the relationship between green brand innovativeness and sustainable buying behaviour among urban consumers.

The findings are consistent with recent sustainability studies emphasizing that green innovation becomes behaviourally influential only when consumers perceive environmental credibility and develop favourable sustainability-oriented evaluations toward brands (Khan et al., 2023; Sun et al., 2023). This suggests that urban consumers increasingly demand authentic sustainability communication rather than symbolic environmental positioning.

The most important finding is that green brand innovativeness does not directly influence green purchase intention. Although consumers recognize and appreciate eco-innovative practices, innovation alone is insufficient to motivate actual purchasing behaviour.

Instead, the influence of green brand innovativeness operates indirectly through green brand associations and green brand attitude. This indicates that consumers process sustainability-oriented innovation cognitively and emotionally before translating it into behavioural intention.

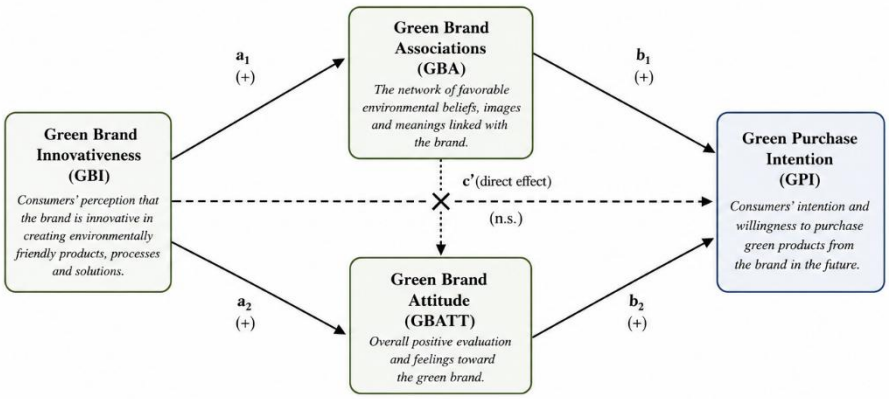
The findings support signaling theory by demonstrating that eco-innovation functions as a signal of environmental responsibility. Consumers interpret innovative sustainability initiatives as indicators of authenticity, ethical commitment, and environmental competence.

The study also aligns with the Theory of Planned Behavior, which explains that attitudes significantly influence behavioural intentions. Green brand innovativeness shapes favourable attitudes and brand meanings, which subsequently influence purchase intention.

The insignificant direct effect further highlights the growing skepticism among consumers regarding environmental claims. Urban consumers may admire green innovation but still hesitate to purchase unless they perceive the brand as credible, trustworthy, and genuinely committed to sustainability.

Figure 3. Full Mediation Framework

Green brand innovativeness influences green purchase intention indirectly through green brand associations and green brand attitude.



Indirect Path 1:	Indirect Path 2:	Direct Path:
GBI → GBA → GPI	GBI → GBATT → GPI	GBI → GPI (c')
($a_1 \times b_1$) Significant	($a_2 \times b_2$) Significant	Not Significant

Conclusion: The influence of green brand innovativeness on green purchase intention is fully mediated by green brand associations and green brand attitude.

Notes: Solid arrows represent hypothesized positive relationships. Dashed line represents the direct effect (c'), which is expected to be non-significant in a full mediation model.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that innovation becomes behaviourally meaningful only when integrated into strong brand narratives and positive consumer evaluations.

7. Theoretical and Practical Implications

7.1 Theoretical Implications

The study contributes to green marketing and sustainable consumption literature in several important ways.

First, the study extends green branding literature by positioning green brand innovativeness as an indirect behavioural driver rather than a direct predictor of purchase intention.

Second, the findings strengthen the application of signaling theory in sustainability marketing by demonstrating how eco-innovation communicates environmental credibility and shapes consumer perceptions.

Third, the study integrates branding mechanisms into sustainable consumption research by incorporating green brand associations and green brand attitude as mediating constructs.

Fourth, the study contributes empirical evidence from an urban emerging-market context where green branding research remains relatively limited.

7.2 Practical Implications

The findings provide several managerial implications for firms pursuing sustainability-oriented strategies.

First, managers should recognize that eco-innovation alone may not directly influence consumer purchasing behaviour. Green innovation must be communicated effectively through branding initiatives.

Second, firms should focus on strengthening green brand associations by creating consistent sustainability narratives, eco-labels, certifications, and environmental communication strategies.

Third, organizations should prioritize building positive emotional responses toward green brands. Trust, credibility, sincerity, and environmental commitment play critical roles in influencing purchase intention.

Fourth, managers should avoid exaggerated or misleading environmental claims because consumer skepticism can weaken the effectiveness of green branding initiatives.

Finally, sustainability communication should emphasize authenticity and long-term environmental commitment rather than short-term promotional messaging.

8. Conclusion

The present study examined the influence of green brand innovativeness on sustainable buying behaviour among urban consumers.

The findings reveal that green brand innovativeness does not directly influence green purchase intention. Instead, its influence operates indirectly through green brand associations and green brand attitude.

The results demonstrate that eco-innovation becomes behaviourally meaningful only when consumers cognitively associate sustainability with the brand and emotionally evaluate the brand positively.

The study contributes to green branding literature by clarifying the psychological pathways through which innovation influences sustainable consumption.

From a managerial perspective, the findings highlight that successful green branding requires more than technological innovation. Firms must strategically communicate sustainability initiatives in ways that strengthen brand meaning, credibility, and positive consumer attitudes.

Overall, the study reinforces the importance of integrating innovation, branding, and sustainability communication to promote environmentally responsible consumer behaviour in urban markets.

The study emphasizes that sustainable buying behaviour is shaped not merely by innovation itself, but by how consumers interpret and emotionally evaluate environmentally responsible innovation within the branding context. Consequently, firms seeking to promote sustainable consumption must integrate eco-innovation with authentic sustainability communication and long-term brand-building strategies.

9. Limitations and Future Research Directions

Despite its contributions, the study has several limitations.

First, the study focused exclusively on urban consumers, limiting the generalizability of findings to rural or semi-urban contexts.

Second, the cross-sectional research design restricts causal interpretation because perceptions and behavioural intentions were measured at a single point in time.

Third, the study relied on self-reported measures, which may be influenced by social desirability bias.

Fourth, the study examined green products broadly rather than focusing on specific product categories.

Future research may address these limitations in several ways.

Researchers may conduct comparative rural–urban studies to examine contextual differences in green consumer behaviour.

Longitudinal studies may provide stronger causal evidence regarding how green brand attitudes evolve over time.

Future studies may also incorporate moderators such as green trust, eco-literacy, environmental concern, or perceived consumer effectiveness.

Additionally, comparative studies across industries such as fashion, electronics, food, and automobiles may provide deeper insights into category-specific green purchase behaviour.

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