

## Article

# A Study of Consumers' Intentions to Participate in Responsible Tourism Using Message Framing and Appeals

Ahyoung Yoon <sup>1</sup>, Daeyoung Jeong <sup>2</sup>, Jinhyung Chon <sup>2</sup> and Ji-Hwan Yoon <sup>1,\*</sup><sup>1</sup> Department of Tourism Management, Kyung Hee University, Seoul 02447, Korea; yayhm@khu.ac.kr<sup>2</sup> Division of Environmental Science & Ecological Engineering, Korea University, Seoul 02841, Korea; artmac@korea.ac.kr (D.J.); jchon@korea.ac.kr (J.C.)

\* Correspondence: yoon1207@khu.ac.kr; Tel.: +82-2-961-0886

Received: 21 October 2018; Accepted: 2 February 2019; Published: 7 February 2019



**Abstract:** Since responsible tourism (RT) emerged as a critical issue in the tourism literature in the early 2000s, the challenge has been how to encourage consumers to practice RT. In this context, the goal of this study is to examine effective ways to promote individuals' RT behavior using message framing and appeals. The present study used campaign advertisements as a stimulus and employed a  $2 \times 2$  factorial design ((message framing: gain framing vs. loss framing)  $\times$  (appeal: rational appeal vs. emotional appeal)) in the experiment. In addition, the study investigated the moderating impact of involvement on people's attitude towards advertising and intention to participate in RT. Independent-sample *t*-tests and a two-way analysis of variance were used to verify the hypotheses. The results of the study revealed that gain-framed messages had a greater influence on individuals' attitude towards the advertisement and their intention to participate in RT than loss-framed messages in the low-involvement group. Furthermore, rational and emotional appeals had a greater influence on people's attitude towards the advertisement in the high- and low-involvement groups, respectively.

**Keywords:** responsible tourism; message framing; appeals; involvement; intention to participate in responsible tourism

## 1. Introduction

In the late 1980s, alternative tourism appeared with a movement towards sustainable development in contrast to the typical tourism at the time, known as mass tourism [1]. Since then, many researchers and practitioners have widely studied and promoted sustainable tourism development with a focus on ecotourism, responsible tourism (RT), and rural tourism [2,3]. RT refers to individuals' social and environmental concerns about tourist destinations [4]. In other words, RT aims to seek ways to conserve local residents' lives and culture and benefit them socially while minimizing negative impacts on tourism resources in tourist destinations [3].

Although RT is not a well-known concept in South Korea, people's awareness of it has been gradually increasing as the global trend in the tourism industry shifts towards value-oriented tourism, which focuses on nature and people [5]. With this movement, tourism-related businesses have also contributed to promoting RT by spreading awareness of its concept and importance and, ultimately, persuading others to practice it [6].

Practitioners and academics have studied RT from various perspectives, including travelers' motivation for RT [4,7], the impact of environmental knowledge or travel experience on RT [7,8], constraining factors of RT development [9], and cross-cultural differences in RT behavior [10]. Recent studies have mainly focused on examining travelers' motivations for RT and its impacts on host

communities [11,12]. These studies have provided a framework to further expand a range of studies on RT, and the majority of them have stressed that people need to recognize the importance of RT. However, very little research has suggested ways to inform the public about RT.

Given this context, the present study aimed to find effective ways to encourage RT by spreading awareness of its concept and importance and, ultimately, persuading others to practice it from both practical and academic perspectives. To do so, this study examines the public's intention to practice RT as a result of message framing and appeals. The main purpose of message framing is to verify that individuals' attitudes towards messages and their actual behavior are influenced by the way messages are framed [13]. Messages are generally framed in contrasting ways, such as gain-framed versus loss-framed messages. Many previous studies on the effects of public advertising have measured the public's response to advertisements using gain- and loss-framed messages and revealed significant differences in people's attitudes and behaviors depending on how messages were framed [8,14,15]. Another communication tool, message appeal, is generally used to stimulate the emotional state of consumers who are exposed to a specific advertisement, ultimately leading to their favorable response to an ad [16,17]. Similar to message framing, appeal has different forms, including humorous, fearful, sexual, rational, or emotional appeals. Among these, rational and emotional appeals have been extensively used [16–20]. While rational appeals are likely to convey messages as objectively as possible based on accurate information, emotional appeals tend to express messages as emotionally as possible to stimulate people's emotions [17,21]. We assume that both message framing and appeal are useful for measuring communication effects according to message expression. Thus, this study employs message framing (gain vs. loss) and advertising appeals (rational vs. emotional) as strategic communication tools. We also investigate how each type of message framing and appeal interacts with people's involvement in RT as a moderator of advertising effectiveness. When people's level of involvement with RT is well matched with a specific type of message framing or appeal, a significant synergy effect is expected.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Responsible Tourism

Since RT emerged in the tourism industry as a niche market, it has been the subject of meaningful debate among many researchers and practitioners [22]. RT has been viewed from the diverse perspectives of local residents, travelers, and practitioners, and many different issues have been discussed, including providing a better life to local residents, pursuing socio-economic benefits and conserving natural resources [12,22,23]. Based on these discussions, Goodwin and Francis [23] proposed RT guidelines: companies, customers, and local suppliers are required to recognize their responsibilities to “(1) protect the environment, (2) respect local people, (3) benefit local communities, (4) conserve natural resources, and (5) minimize pollution.” With this understanding of the concept of RT, RT behavior can largely be explained in two respects. From the environmentally friendly behavior perspective, RT behavior is defined as action that reflects one's concern for protecting natural environmental resources [7]. In terms of ethical issues, individuals who are sensitive to ethical travel issues concerning local residents and communities in tourist destinations are likely to support and practice RT behavior [7].

To identify critical factors that affect people's RT behavior, many researchers have focused on travelers' motivations [5,10,12]. Mody, Day, Sydnor, Jaffe and Lehto [12] segmented travelers into three different groups—responsible travelers, novelty seekers, and socializers—depending on their degree of responsibility-oriented motivations and generic travel motivation. On the basis of the analysis, the study suggested that travel operators need to attract their target customers using different marketing messages; for example, messages highlighting the uniqueness of RT experiences would be more effective in attracting novelty seekers than other groups. In addition to travelers' motivation, culture and the environment are regarded as significant dimensions that influence travelers' attitudes towards

tourism and their intention to visit [5]. Kang and Moscardo [5] showed that there are significant differences in attitudes towards RT behavior depending on travelers' national culture, including Australia, the UK, and Korea.

Some researchers have focused on RT from the perspective of business operators [9,22,24,25]. Carasuk, Becken and Hughey [3] explored the factors that make business operators facilitate RT or shift towards RT practices. Although many business operators have shown an intention to act on RT, Frey and George [24] noted that there are still limits to expanding RT due to major constraints, such as a lack of government support and the perceived costs of implementing RT. In addition, Camilleri [25] stated that digital media plays a critical role in allowing hotel owners and managers to engage in various social activities and ultimately contributes to enhancing hotels' reputation and recognition. Likewise, most previous studies have shown that business operators are aware of the importance of RT and continue to find effective ways to expand RT in the tourism industry. However, few studies have suggested managerial alternatives. Thus, the current study intends to seek ways to promote RT by utilizing strategic communication tools.

## 2.2. Message Framing

Message framing is defined as a communication tool that includes words, images, and sentences with the aim of delivering information on specific issues or events [26]. As a persuasive communication strategy, its purpose is to stimulate consumer behavior according to the type of message framing used [13].

Message framing is based on the "prospect theory" established by Tversky and Kahneman [27], which assumes that in uncertain situations, people tend to evaluate information in terms of expected benefits and losses. Therefore, people's decisions are influenced by the type of message framing (gain vs. loss) that expresses the information [27]. Gain message framing emphasizes the positive aspects and benefits of following the target behaviors presented in an advertisement. In contrast, loss message framing emphasizes the negative aspects and losses incurred when people do not follow the target behaviors [28].

Several previous studies on the effects of message framing suggest that loss message framing is more effective than gain framing [29–31]. Meyerowitz and Chaiken [30] examined the effect of the framing of messages regarding breast self-examination. The result showed that a loss-framed message ("By not doing breast self-examination (BSE), the chance of finding a tumor in the early stages will be reduced") was more persuasive than a gain-framed message ("By doing BSE, the chance of finding a tumor in the early stages will increase") [30]. However, other studies show that gain message framing is more effective than loss framing [32–34]. According to a study by Chang [33] on dental product advertisements, a positively framed message highlighting the benefits of the periodic use of disclosing gum before brushing was more effective than a negatively framed message emphasizing the losses incurred by not using a disclosing gum.

Message framing has been applied in public campaign advertisements for health care and environmental issues [14,15,28]. Loro [35] analyzed the main effects of message framing with respect to advertisements promoting recycling. According to the result, people exposed to positively framed messages developed a more favorable attitude towards recycling than those exposed to negatively framed messages. In the study by Millar and Millar [34] on the promotion of safe driving behaviors, gain messages were revealed to be more persuasive than loss messages.

In the field of tourism research, Kim and Kim [36] studied how message framing and source credibility influence green messages based on four different types of advertisements. The results showed that positively framed messages from a credible source incited a more favorable attitude towards the messages and environmentally friendly activities than other types of advertisements. When source credibility is not considered, positively framed messages are more effective than negatively framed messages. Decrop [21] examined the impact of the message format on the effectiveness of printed advertisements for tourism destinations. The results of the study showed

that in printed advertisements for tourism destinations, text is the most crucial factor that attracts consumers compared with other components, such as pictures, logos, and headlines.

Hence, based on relevant previous studies, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

**H1.** *Exposure to gain-framed rather than loss-framed messages positively affects respondents' attitude towards an advertisement.*

**H2.** *Exposure to gain-framed rather than loss-framed messages positively affects respondents' intention to participate in RT.*

### 2.3. Message Appeal

Message appeal is a communication strategy in which an advertisement uses linguistic and visual elements to appeal to the public and effectively convey information on a product or service [37]. Appeal can determine the success or failure of delivering a specific message, motivate consumers to remember the message, and eventually accept it [18].

Among the different types of message appeal, rational and emotional appeals are used primarily in communication and advertising studies [18]. Rational or informational appeals aim to convey objective and logical information on certain products or services in advertisements, whereas emotional appeals tend to cover relatively subjective information by stimulating people's experiential and emotional feelings, including humor, sadness, pleasure, trust, fear, and sympathy [19,38,39].

There are few studies on the subject of message appeals in the tourism field. In the field of leisure science, Zinn and Manfredo [40] studied the effects of rational and emotional appeals in the context of a trapping ban proposal. They hypothesized that "emotional appeal would be more memorable and more persuasive than rational appeal" [40]. The results showed that both appeals were equally persuasive, even though emotional appeal was more likely to be recalled easily. A study by Liu and Stout [41] discussed the effects of message modality (audiovisual vs. audio only) and advertising appeal (rational vs. emotional) on participants' response to a coffee commercial. Their study revealed that audiovisual advertisements with emotional appeal received the most favorable response. However, when message modality was not considered, advertisements with rational appeal were more effective in eliciting a favorable response from the participants. The contrasting results of previous studies make it difficult to reach a conclusion regarding the type of appeal that is more effective or persuasive. In addition, previous studies reveal that depending on the advertisement, the effect of message appeals varies.

Considering the types of advertisements, further research has been conducted on advertising appeals. Sciulli and Bebko [19] examined approximately 500 print advertisements using content analysis and subsequently classified them into two different types: social-cause versus profit-oriented advertisements. The main finding was that social advertisements cause more emotional cues, including fear, anger, and surprise, and therefore induce more emotional appeal than profit-oriented advertisements. In contrast, profit-oriented advertisements tend to convey informational content, such as price, quality, and performance, rather than subjective information. Consequently, it is assumed that advertisements that promote RT are social-cause rather than profit-oriented advertisements. Hence, emotional appeal, which is used mostly in social-cause advertisements, is more effective than rational appeal for RT advertisements.

Therefore, this study proposes a second hypothesis based on the results of previous studies:

**H3.** *Exposure to emotional rather than rational appeals positively affects respondents' attitude towards an advertisement.*

**H4.** *Exposure to emotional rather than rational appeals positively affects respondents' intention to participate in RT.*

## 2.4. Involvement

The concept of involvement was first introduced by Krugman [42] in the field of consumer behavior. His study revealed that based on their intrinsic characteristics, consumers tend to react differently to the same advertisement. Furthermore, consumers who have a high degree of involvement with the messages presented in an advertisement tend to be more critical of what the advertisement presents to them. Krugman [42] suggested that consumers evaluate an advertisement based on the relevance of the messages or the issues it presents. Consistent with Krugman's study, Zaichkowsky [43] proposed that, depending on the degree of involvement, consumers exposed to an advertisement react aggressively or passively to the advertised product and tend to extend or restrict the communication process themselves. Based on this theory, Zaichkowsky [44] subsequently developed a 10-item scale called the Revised Personal Involvement Inventory (RPII) to measure a consumer's involvement with an advertisement.

In the social sciences field, involvement has been used extensively as a moderating or an intervening variable. Additionally, many studies on message framing have investigated framing effectiveness using involvement as a moderating variable to clearly verify the effects of framing on people's attitude towards advertisements [45–48]. Dardis and Shen [45] examined the effects of message framing based on the type of evidence (informational vs. exemplar) in advertising and product involvement. The results showed that loss-framed messages with informational evidence were persuasive in a high-involvement group but had no significant effect on a low-involvement group. Maheswaran and Meyers-Levy [49] verified the interaction effect between message framing and involvement for a blood cholesterol test. They found that loss-framed messages (i.e., "You fail to find out your current cholesterol level by not taking this diagnostic test") were effective in a high-involvement situation, whereas gain-framed messages (i.e., "You can find out your current cholesterol level by taking this diagnostic blood test") encouraged people in the low-involvement group to have a desirable attitude towards the test [49]. Regarding cause-related marketing campaigns, when participants were exposed to campaign advertisements that presented positively framed messages, those who were more involved in the cause were more likely to have favorable attitudes towards the campaign than those who were less involved [46].

Therefore, based on previous studies, this study proposes a third hypothesis considering respondents' involvement in RT:

**H5.** *Loss-framed messages will have a greater influence on respondents' attitudes towards an advertisement in a high-involvement group.*

**H6.** *Loss-framed messages will have a greater influence on respondents' intention to participate in RT in a high-involvement group.*

**H7.** *Gain-framed messages will have a greater influence on respondents' attitudes towards an advertisement in a low-involvement group.*

**H8.** *Gain-framed messages will have a greater influence on respondents' intention to participate in RT in a low-involvement group.*

In studies examining the influential relationship between message appeal and effectiveness, involvement has been used as a moderating variable. For instance, Geuens et al. [50] demonstrated that emotional appeal was more persuasive than rational appeal for a low-involvement product, but no significant difference was recorded for a high-involvement product. Wu and Wang [20] verified the interaction effect between message appeal (rational vs. emotional) and product involvement regarding online word-of-mouth marketing. The results showed that a rational appeal created a more favorable brand attitude than an emotional appeal given a high degree of product involvement.

The consistent results of previous studies demonstrating that advertising with emotional appeals is more effective in a low-involvement group can be explained by the elaboration likelihood model (ELM) by Petty et al. [51]. According to ELM, in certain situations, a high-involvement group tends to process information more logically and comprehensively through “central” issue involvement cues than a low-involvement group, which manages information processing through “peripheral” cues or emotional stimuli.

Accordingly, this study postulates a fourth hypothesis based on the ELM:

**H9.** *Rational appeals have a greater influence on respondents’ attitudes towards an advertisement in a high-involvement group.*

**H10.** *Rational appeals have a greater influence on respondents’ intention to participate in RT in a high-involvement group.*

**H11.** *Emotional appeals have a greater influence on respondents’ attitudes towards an advertisement in a low-involvement group.*

**H12.** *Emotional appeals have a greater influence on respondents’ intention to participate in RT in a low-involvement group.*

### 3. Materials and Methods

#### 3.1. Experimental Design and Stimulus

The present study employed a  $2 \times 2$  factorial design (message frame (gain vs. loss)  $\times$  appeal (rational vs. emotional)). The authors manipulated message framing and appeals and subsequently measured the participants’ involvement in RT. Moreover, advertising effectiveness, including the participants’ attitude towards the advertisement and their intention to participate in RT, was measured as a dependent variable.

In this study, printed advertisements on RT were used as the stimuli. Four different types of advertisements were created and manipulated based on message framing and message appeal. To distinguish between the advertisements, the contents of each advertisement were organized differently but had the same structure, including font style and size and text location. Specifically, the advertisement for < gain frame  $\times$  rational appeal > used the message, “With your small actions for RT, tourist attractions can be conserved”, whereas the advertisement for < loss frame  $\times$  rational appeal > used the message, “Without your small actions for RT, tourist attractions cannot be conserved”.

The messages in emotional advertisements tend to be slightly abstract rather than realistic, in contrast to those in rational advertisements. The advertisement for < gain frame  $\times$  emotional appeal > contained the message, “Your consideration will bring hope for travel”. In contrast, the advertisement for < loss frame  $\times$  emotional appeal > contained the message, “Your selfishness will bring disaster for travel”.

In addition, detailed information on the actual conditions of tourist destinations was added to the bottom of the advertisements emphasizing rational appeal: “(1) The average amount of garbage per day is 3.5 kg; (2) the average water consumption per hotel room is 1.5 tons; and (3) more than 70 percent of the travel expenses of tourists go to franchise hotels, restaurants, and large travel agencies, not to the local communities”. In contrast, the advertisement emphasizing emotional appeal included the following sentence at the bottom: “Many tourist attractions are sick, beset by tourists’ unconcern and selfishness”.

#### 3.2. Procedures

First, a preliminary survey targeting 140 college students was conducted to judge whether an advertisement was manipulated properly. Participants were randomly assigned one of four different

advertisements in a 2 (message frame: gain vs. loss)  $\times$  2 (advertising appeal: rational vs. emotional) between-subjects factorial design. After the questionnaires were distributed, the participants first answered the questions on involvement in RT. Subsequently, they were allowed sufficient time to observe the advertising before answering questions on advertising effects, including their attitude towards the advertisement and their intention to participate in RT.

An independent-sample *t*-test of the results of the pretest indicated that mean differences in both message framing (gain:  $t = 9.85$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ; loss:  $t = -17.62$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and advertising appeal (rational:  $t = 8.10$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ; emotional:  $t = -7.90$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) were statistically significant. This test verified that message framing and advertising appeal were manipulated appropriately. Using the above advertisements and questionnaires, a final survey was conducted on 440 college students in the same manner as in the preliminary survey using convenience sampling to secure a large group of respondents.

### 3.3. Measures

#### 3.3.1. Moderating Variable: Involvement

To measure their involvement in RT, participants were required to show their level of agreement (1 = disagree to 7 = agree) based on a semantic differential scale consisting of 10 statements (i.e., interesting–not interesting, important–not important, and meaningful–not meaningful) from the RPII of Zaichkowsky [45]. The results showed that all items of involvement had a high degree of internal consistency (Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.92$ ). Participants were divided into high- and low-involvement groups on the basis of a median split.

#### 3.3.2. Dependent Variable: Advertising Effectiveness

In the assessment of advertising effectiveness, attitude towards the advertisement and the intention to participate in RT were used as dependent variables. Attitude towards the advertisement was measured using three seven-point Likert-type statements based on the scale of MacKenzie and Lutz [52] and Shimp [53]. The statements included, "This advertising is persuasive", "I like this advertising", and "This advertising is interesting". Regarding the attitude towards the advertisement and the intention to participate in RT, participants were required to answer three seven-point Likert-type statements based on the scale proposed by Choi [54]. The statements included, "I plan to participate in responsible tourism in the future", "I will try to participate in responsible tourism", and "I am willing to participate in responsible tourism".

### 3.4. Methodology

To verify the effects of advertising, this study used an independent-sample *t*-test based on message framing and message appeal. In addition, a two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was implemented to investigate the impact of participants' involvement in RT on the advertising effects with respect to message framing and message appeal.

## 4. Results

Each measurement item, including involvement, attitude towards the advertisement, and intention to participate in RT, had internal consistency; all values of Cronbach's  $\alpha$  were higher than 0.7. To verify the validity of the items, principal component analysis with varimax rotation was conducted. The results revealed that the measurement items used in this study had a high level of validity: the factor loadings for each item ranged between 0.46 and 0.92.

A *t*-test was conducted to assess the impact of message framing types (gain vs. loss) on the participants' attitude towards the advertisement and intention to participate in RT. Table 1 indicates that the main effects of message framing were significant; both the attitude towards the advertisement and intention to participate in RT were higher in gain framing (AA = 4.62, IP = 4.96) than in loss

framing (AA = 4.11, IP = 4.53;  $t$ : AA = 4.51, IP = 4.16,  $p < 0.001$ ). In other words, the results showed that gain-framed messages had a more positive influence on the participants' attitude towards the advertisement and intention to participate in RT than loss-framed messages. This finding supports hypotheses 1 and 2.

**Table 1.** The impact of message framing on attitude towards the advertisement and intention to participate in RT.

	Message Framing	N	M	SD	$t$
Attitude towards the Advertisement (AA)	Gain Framing	189	4.62	1.11	4.513 ***
	Loss Framing	201	4.11	1.13	
Intention to Participate in RT (IP)	Gain Framing	189	4.98	1.15	4.167 ***
	Loss Framing	201	4.53	1.00	

Note: M, mean; SD, standard deviation; \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ .

Furthermore, the study found that advertising effectiveness differed significantly depending on the type of message appeal (rational vs. emotional). As shown in Table 2, the rational appeal (AA = 4.62, IP = 5.04) resulted in a more favorable attitude towards the advertisement and intention to participate in RT than the emotional appeal (AA = 4.06, IP = 4.42;  $t$ : AA = 4.99, IP = 5.86,  $p < 0.01$ ).

**Table 2.** The impact of message appeal on attitude towards the advertisement and intention to participate in RT.

	Message Appeal	N	M	SD	$t$
Attitude towards the Advertisement (AA)	Gain Framing	209	4.62	1.15	4.991 ***
	Loss Framing	181	4.06	1.06	
Intention to Participate in RT (IP)	Gain Framing	209	5.04	1.18	5.864 ***
	Loss Framing	181	4.42	0.89	

\*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ .

These results rejected hypotheses 3 and 4, which stated that participants' attitude towards the advertisement and intention to participate in RT would be higher when the participants were exposed to an emotional rather than a rational appeal. To explain more specifically how message framing and message appeal influence people's attitude towards an advertisement and intention to participate in RT, the authors used involvement as a mediating variable. First, a two-way ANOVA was conducted, according to which the interaction effect of message framing and involvement (message framing  $\times$  involvement) on attitude towards the advertisement,  $F(1,386) = 6.51$ ,  $p < 0.01$ , and intention to participate in RT,  $F(1,386) = 15.45$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , was significant (see Table 3).

**Table 3.** Two-way ANOVA statistics of message framing.

	Attitude Towards the Advertisement			Intention to Participate in RT		
	MS	df	F	MS	df	F
M	27.99	1	23.62 ***	23.85	1	23.55 ***
I	18.89	1	15.93 ***	42.01	1	41.49 ***
M $\times$ I	7.71	1	6.51 **	15.64	1	15.45 ***
Error	1.012 <sup>a</sup>	386		1.012 <sup>b</sup>	386	

Note: M, message framing; I, involvement; MS, mean squares; df, degree of freedom; <sup>a</sup> Sum of squares = 457.61,

<sup>b</sup> Sum of squares = 390.79; \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

Because the interaction effect was significant, the authors conducted a follow-up test comprising an analysis of the simple main effect of message framing and involvement. In general, this test is performed to show the effectiveness of one factor for each level of another factor separately when

the interaction effect between the two factors is statistically verified using a two-way ANOVA [55]. In Table 4, the results indicate that there was a significant difference between low involvement and message framing in both attitude towards the advertisement ( $F(1,195) = 42.83$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ) and intention to participate in RT ( $F(1,195) = 59.31$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ).

**Table 4.** An analysis of the simple main effect of message framing and involvement on attitude towards the advertisement and intention to participate in RT.

	Attitude Towards the Advertisement			Intention to Participate in RT		
	MS	df	F	MS	df	F
Low Involvement $\times$ Message Framing	33.03	1	42.83 ***	39.63	1	59.31 ***
High Involvement $\times$ Message Framing	3.11	1	1.94	0.43	1	0.31

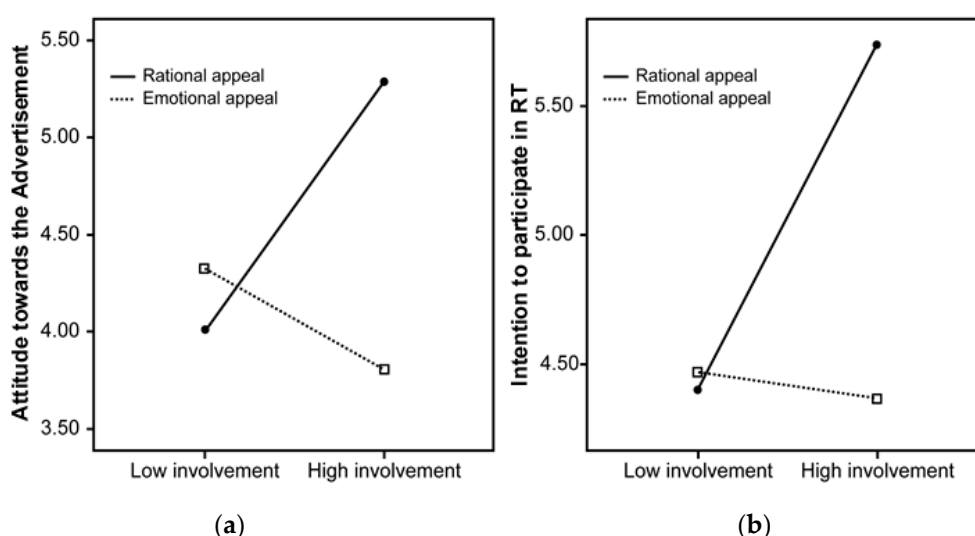
\*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ .

Specifically, in the low-involvement group, participants who were exposed to gain-framed messages (MATA = 4.54, MBI = 4.87) scored higher than those exposed to loss-framed messages (MATA = 3.73, MBI = 3.97) in terms of their attitude towards the advertisement and intention to participate in RT (see Table 5 and Figure 1). However, for the participants in the high-involvement group, no significant difference was observed between gain- and loss-framed messages with respect to both the attitude towards the advertisement and the intention to participate in RT (see Table 4). Hence, the results supported hypotheses 7 and 8 while rejecting hypotheses 5 and 6.

**Table 5.** A summary of the means and standard deviations of the dependent variables.

Message Framing	Involvement	N	ATA	IP
Gain	Low	102	4.54 (0.86)	4.87 (0.88)
Gain	High	87	4.71 (1.34)	5.12 (1.40)
Loss	Low	95	3.73 (0.90)	3.97 (0.75)
Loss	High	106	4.45 (1.21)	5.03 (0.93)

Note: Standard deviations are shown in parentheses. ATA, attitude towards the advertisement; IP, intention to participate in RT.



**Figure 1.** Interaction effect of message framing and involvement: (a) Interaction effect of message framing and involvement on the attitude towards the advertisement; (b) Interaction effect of message framing and involvement on intention to participate in RT

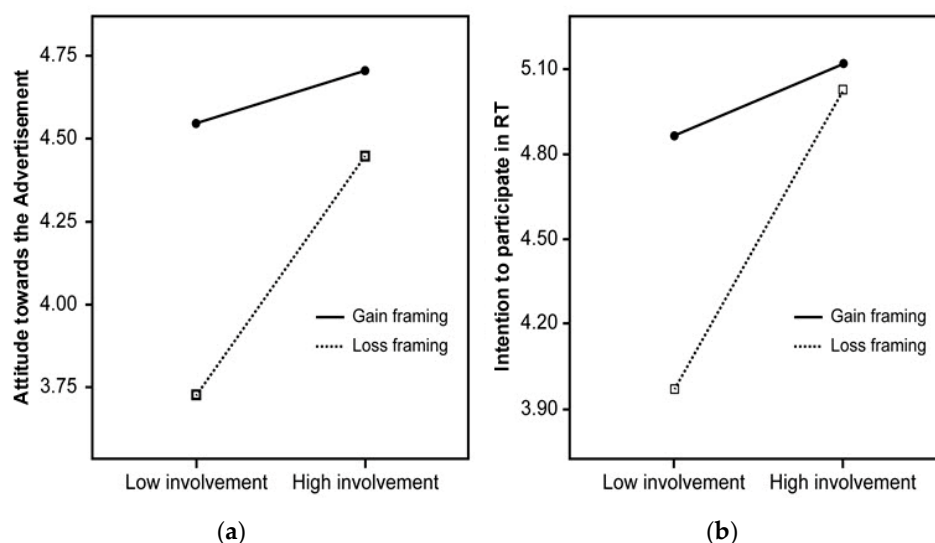
Furthermore, the interaction effects of message appeal and involvement (advertising appeal  $\times$  involvement) on the attitude towards the advertisement ( $F(1,386) = 78.52; p < 0.001$ ) and intention to participate in RT ( $F(1,386) = 56.66; p < 0.001$ ) were significant (see Table 6).

**Table 6.** Two-way ANOVA statistics of advertising appeal.

	Attitude Towards the Advertisement			Intention to Participate in RT		
	MS	df	F	MS	df	F
A	32.99	1	33.24 ***	40.92	1	46.41 ***
I	13.73	1	13.84 ***	36.72	1	41.65 ***
A $\times$ I	77.95	1	78.52 ***	49.96	1	56.66 ***
Error	0.993 <sup>a</sup>	386		0.882 <sup>b</sup>	386	

Note: A, Advertising appeal; I, involvement; MS, mean squares; df, degree of freedom; <sup>a</sup> Sum of squares = 383.18, <sup>b</sup> Sum of squares = 340.31; \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ .

The result of the analysis of the simple main effect indicated that in the low-involvement group, participants exposed to an emotional appeal ( $M = 4.33$ ) had a more favorable attitude towards the advertisement than those exposed to a rational appeal ( $M = 4.01$ ;  $F(1,195) = 5.21, p < 0.05$ ). In the high-involvement group, rational appeal advertising ( $M = 5.29$ ) was found to be more effective than advertising using an emotional appeal ( $M = 3.81$ ;  $F(1,191) = 98.79, p < 0.001$ ) (see Table 7, Table 8, and Figure 2). Thus, both hypotheses 9 and 11 were supported.



**Figure 2.** Interaction effect of advertising appeal and involvement: (a) Interaction effect of advertising appeal and involvement on attitude towards the advertisement; (b) Interaction effect of advertising appeal and involvement on intention to participate in RT.

**Table 7.** An analysis of the simple main effect of advertising appeal and involvement on attitude towards the advertisement and intention to participate in RT.

	Attitude Towards the Advertisement			Intention to Participate in RT		
	MS	df	F	MS	df	F
Low Involvement $\times$ Advertising Appeal	4.78	1	5.21 *	0.23	1	0.26
High Involvement $\times$ Advertising Appeal	105.79	1	98.79 ***	90.31	1	101.11 ***

\*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ , \*  $p < 0.05$ .

**Table 8.** A summary of the means and standard deviations of the dependent variables.

Advertising Appeal	Involvement	N	ATA	BI
Gain	Low	110	4.01 (0.95)	4.40 (0.09)
Gain	High	99	5.29 (0.10)	5.74 (0.09)
Loss	Low	87	4.33 (0.11)	4.47 (0.10)
Loss	High	94	3.81 (0.10)	4.37 (0.10)

Note: Standard deviations are shown in parentheses. ATA, attitude towards the advertisement; IP, intention to participate in RT.

These results support the ELM developed by Petty, Cacioppo and Goldman [51] and are consistent with the findings of Putrevu [56] and Wu and Wang [20]. However, in terms of behavioral intention, a significant interaction effect was observed between advertising appeal and involvement in the high-involvement group only ( $F(1,191) = 101.11, p < 0.001$ ) (see Table 7). In this group, rational appeal advertising ( $M = 5.74$ ) was found to be more effective in triggering intention to participate in RT than emotional appeal advertising ( $M = 4.37$ ) (see Table 8 and Figure 2). Consequently, the results supported hypothesis 10 but rejected hypothesis 12.

## 5. Discussion

This study offers findings regarding the significant impact of the use of message framing (gain vs. loss) and message appeal (rational vs. emotional) in advertising campaigns on RT and the attitude towards an advertisement and behavioral intention of the participants. First, it theoretically clarifies that the persuasiveness of messages, which affects consumers' attitude towards an advertisement and their behavioral intention, can change depending on how the messages are framed. This result is consistent with the findings of previous studies (e.g., [35,36]), which found that gain-framed messages have more positive effects on both the attitude towards an advertisement and behavioral intention than loss-framed messages. From a business perspective, it is helpful to encourage people to practice RT by displaying advertisements with favorable messages. These messages may convey the benefits, including healing or hope, that people can obtain by participating in RT.

Regarding message appeal, the present study hypothesized that the participants' attitude towards the advertisements and behavioral intention would be more positive when they were exposed to emotional rather than rational appeals. The results of this study were contrary to the hypotheses proposed by previous studies [40]. The findings indicate that rational appeal is more persuasive than emotional appeal in eliciting a positive attitude towards advertisements and behavioral intention. Drawing upon this result and considering that the awareness of RT among the participants was low, the authors assume that the participants might have had difficulty fully understanding and taking interest in advertising that emphasized an emotional appeal that presented relatively little objective information.

The authors propose that the effect of message framing or message appeal on consumers' attitude towards advertisements and behavioral intention differs depending on their level of involvement, that is, the degree to which consumers find RT personally relevant. First, the interaction effect of message framing and involvement was consistent with the finding of Donovan and Jalleh [57] that positively framed messages are more likely than negatively framed messages to evoke a favorable attitude in a low-involvement group. However, the present study found no significant interaction effect in the high-involvement group. The results revealed that advertising using positive messages that express the hope or benefits that people can obtain by participating in an RT campaign would be more persuasive for people with little interest in RT than for those with high interest. This study's notable result regarding message appeal reveals that advertising using an emotional appeal can evoke a favorable attitude towards the advertisement in the low-involvement group, whereas using a rational appeal had a positive impact on the same factor in the high-involvement group. Hence, people who have more interest in and are concerned about RT tend to be in favor of advertisements that deliver objective and

logical facts on RT. The results of the interaction effect between advertising appeal and involvement theoretically support the ELM proposed by Petty, Cacioppo and Goldman [51] and demonstrate that the moderating role of involvement is important for understanding the effect of advertising appeal (rational vs. emotional) on people's attitude towards an advertisement and intention to participate in RT.

Based on the abovementioned results, the authors suggest that advertising using rational appeals would be more persuasive for certain groups, such as travel bloggers and parties interested in RT or other relevant issues. People who have less interest in and are less concerned about RT are more likely to focus on visual elements, such as images or the overall tone of the advertisement, rather than its central elements, such as objective facts. Therefore, the authors assume that advertising using emotional appeals would be more effective for groups that have little interest in RT because it would arouse these people's interest by stimulating their morality or promoting their awareness of social issues. It would be helpful for practitioners to create advertisements containing interesting pictures, authentic storytelling, or other visual details to attract people with little interest in RT. This approach would be even more effective if the messages or images in these advertisements involved the issues or dangers currently faced by tourism so that people could seriously recognize the need for RT.

As a pioneering study on advertising campaigns promoting RT, the current study contributes to the literature on a wide range of sustainable tourism and provides baseline information for future research. Tourism practitioners or related business owners can draw lessons from this study to make persuasive advertisements for RT that better communicate with the public.

However, the study sample was limited to college students, which resulted in limited verification of the difference between advertising effects depending on demographic factors, including occupation, income, and residence. Further research is required to apply intrinsic characteristics other than consumers' involvement, which is used as a moderating variable in this study to explore its impact on the effectiveness of advertising for RT. Moreover, it may be meaningful to empirically investigate the effectiveness of advertising on RT from the perspective of value-oriented differences, which are divided into personal and social value orientations.

**Author Contributions:** A.Y. wrote the paper and worked with J.-H.Y. to conceive and design the experiments; D.J. and A.Y. performed the experiments and analyzed the data; and J.-H.Y. and J.C. contributed to parts of the experiments and the conclusions. All authors made contributions to the work in this study.

**Funding:** This research was supported by the National Research Foundation of Korea(NRF) grant (No. 2017R1A2B4008866) funded by the Korea government (MEST).

**Conflicts of Interest:** The authors declare no conflict of interest.

## References

1. Butler, R.W. Alternative tourism: Pious hope or Trojan horse? *J. Travel Res.* **1990**, *28*, 40–45. [[CrossRef](#)]
2. Liu, Z. Sustainable tourism development: A critique. *J. Sustain. Tour.* **2003**, *11*, 459–475. [[CrossRef](#)]
3. Carasuk, R.; Becken, S.; Hughey, K.F. Exploring values, drivers, and barriers as antecedents of implementing responsible tourism. *J. Hosp. Tour. Res.* **2016**, *40*, 19–36. [[CrossRef](#)]
4. Cheng, T.-M.; Wu, H.C. How do environmental knowledge, environmental sensitivity, and place attachment affect environmentally responsible behavior? An integrated approach for sustainable island tourism. *J. Sustain. Tour.* **2015**, *23*, 557–576. [[CrossRef](#)]
5. Kang, M.; Moscardo, G. Exploring cross-cultural differences in attitudes towards responsible tourist behaviour: A comparison of Korean, British and Australian tourists. *Asia Pac. J. Tour. Res.* **2006**, *11*, 303–320. [[CrossRef](#)]
6. Dief, M.E.; Font, X. Determinants of environmental management in the Red Sea Hotels: Personal and organizational values and contextual variables. *J. Hosp. Tour. Res.* **2012**, *36*, 115–137. [[CrossRef](#)]
7. Cheng, T.; Woon, D.K.; Lynes, J.K. The use of message framing in the promotion of environmentally sustainable behaviors. *Soc. Mark. Q.* **2011**, *17*, 48–62. [[CrossRef](#)]

8. Lee, H.Y.; Bonn, M.A.; Reid, E.L.; Kim, W.G. Differences in tourist ethical judgment and responsible tourism intention: An ethical scenario approach. *Tour. Manag.* **2017**, *60*, 298–307. [[CrossRef](#)]
9. Choi, Y.E.; Doh, M.; Park, S.; Chon, J.J.S. Transformation planning of ecotourism systems to invigorate responsible tourism. *Sustainability* **2017**, *9*, 2248. [[CrossRef](#)]
10. Hultman, M.; Kazemina, A.; Ghasemi, V. Intention to visit and willingness to pay premium for ecotourism: The impact of attitude, materialism, and motivation. *J. Bus. Res.* **2015**, *68*, 1854–1861. [[CrossRef](#)]
11. Mathew, P.V.; Sreejesh, S. Impact of responsible tourism on destination sustainability and quality of life of community in tourism destinations. *J. Hosp. Tour. Res.* **2017**, *31*, 83–89. [[CrossRef](#)]
12. Mody, M.; Day, J.; Sydnor, S.; Jaffe, W.; Lehto, X. The different shades of responsibility: Examining domestic and international travelers' motivations for responsible tourism in India. *Tour. Manag. Perspect.* **2014**, *12*, 113–124. [[CrossRef](#)]
13. Gerend, M.A.; Sias, T. Message framing and color priming: How subtle threat cues affect persuasion. *J. Exp. Soc. Psychol.* **2009**, *45*, 999–1002. [[CrossRef](#)]
14. Gerend, M.A.; Shepherd, J.E. Using message framing to promote acceptance of the human papillomavirus vaccine. *Health Psychol.* **2007**, *26*, 745. [[CrossRef](#)] [[PubMed](#)]
15. Zhao, G.; Pechmann, C. The impact of regulatory focus on adolescents' response to antismoking advertising campaigns. *J. Mark. Res.* **2007**, *44*, 671–687. [[CrossRef](#)]
16. Chang, C. How mood and ad-self-congruency affect the relative influence of hedonic ad appeals and utilitarian ad appeals on product evaluations. *Adv. Consum. Res.* **2004**.
17. Paek, H.-J.; Kim, K.; Hove, T. Content analysis of antismoking videos on YouTube: Message sensation value, message appeals, and their relationships with viewer responses. *Health Educ. Res.* **2010**, *25*, 1085–1099. [[CrossRef](#)] [[PubMed](#)]
18. Kotler, P.; Armstrong, G. *Principles of Marketing*; Prentice Hall: Upper Saddle River, NJ, USA, 2003.
19. Sciulli, L.M.; Bebeko, C. Social cause versus profit oriented advertisements: An analysis of information content and emotional appeals. *J. Promot. Manag.* **2006**, *11*, 17–36. [[CrossRef](#)]
20. Wu, P.C.; Wang, Y.-C. The influences of electronic word-of-mouth message appeal and message source credibility on brand attitude. *Asia Pac. J. Mark. Logist.* **2011**, *23*, 448–472. [[CrossRef](#)]
21. Decrop, A. The influence of message format on the effectiveness of print advertisements for tourism destinations. *Int. J. Advert.* **2007**, *26*, 505–525. [[CrossRef](#)]
22. Caruana, R.; Glozer, S.; Crane, A.; McCabe, S. Tourists' accounts of responsible tourism. *Ann. Tour. Res.* **2014**, *46*, 115–129. [[CrossRef](#)]
23. Goodwin, H.; Francis, J. Ethical and responsible tourism: Consumer trends in the UK. *J. Vacat. Mark.* **2003**, *9*, 271–284. [[CrossRef](#)]
24. Frey, N.; George, R. Responsible tourism management: The missing link between business owners' attitudes and behaviour in the Cape Town tourism industry. *Tour. Manag. Perspect.* **2010**, *31*, 621–628. [[CrossRef](#)]
25. Camilleri, M.A. The promotion of responsible tourism management through digital media. *Tour. Plan. Dev.* **2018**, *15*, 653–671. [[CrossRef](#)]
26. Chong, D.; Druckman, J.N. A theory of framing and opinion formation in competitive elite environments. *J. Commun.* **2007**, *57*, 99–118. [[CrossRef](#)]
27. Tversky, A.; Kahneman, D. Advances in prospect theory: Cumulative representation of uncertainty. *J. Risk Uncertain.* **1992**, *5*, 297–323. [[CrossRef](#)]
28. O'Keefe, D.J.; Jensen, J.D. Do loss-framed persuasive messages engender greater message processing than do gain-framed messages? A meta-analytic review. *Commun. Stud.* **2008**, *59*, 51–67. [[CrossRef](#)]
29. Homer, P.M.; Yoon, S.-G. Message framing and the interrelationships among ad-based feelings, affect, and cognition. *J. Advert.* **1992**, *21*, 19–33. [[CrossRef](#)]
30. Meyerowitz, B.E.; Chaiken, S. The effect of message framing on breast self-examination attitudes, intentions, and behavior. *J. Personal. Soc. Psychol.* **1987**, *52*, 500. [[CrossRef](#)]
31. Ganzach, Y.; Karsahi, N. Message framing and buying behavior: A field experiment. *J. Bus. Res.* **1995**, *32*, 11–17. [[CrossRef](#)]
32. Apanovitch, A.M.; McCarthy, D.; Salovey, P. Using message framing to motivate HIV testing among low-income, ethnic minority women. *Health Psychol.* **2003**, *22*, 60. [[CrossRef](#)] [[PubMed](#)]
33. Chang, C.T. Health-care product advertising: The influences of message framing and perceived product characteristics. *Psychol. Mark.* **2007**, *24*, 143–169. [[CrossRef](#)]

34. Millar, M.G.; Millar, K.U. Promoting safe driving behaviors: The influence of message framing and issue involvement. *J. Appl. Soc. Psychol.* **2000**, *30*, 853–866. [[CrossRef](#)]
35. Loro, P.S. The interaction of message frames and reference points in prosocial persuasive appeals. *Psychol. Mark.* **2007**, *24*, 1001–1023. [[CrossRef](#)]
36. Kim, S.-B.; Kim, D.-Y. The effects of message framing and source credibility on green messages in hotels. *Cornell Hosp. Q.* **2014**, *55*, 64–75. [[CrossRef](#)]
37. Belch, M.A.; Belch, G.E. The future of creativity in advertising. *J. Promot. Manag.* **2013**, *19*, 395–399. [[CrossRef](#)]
38. Holmes, J.H.; Crocker, K.E. Predispositions and the comparative effectiveness of rational, emotional and discrepant appeals for both high involvement and low involvement products. *J. Acad. Mark. Sci.* **1987**, *15*, 27–35. [[CrossRef](#)]
39. Rosselli, F.; Skelly, J.J.; Mackie, D.M. Processing rational and emotional messages: The cognitive and affective mediation of persuasion. *J. Exp. Soc. Psychol.* **1995**, *31*, 163–190. [[CrossRef](#)]
40. Zinn, H.C.; Manfredo, M.J. An experimental test of rational and emotional appeals about a recreation issue. *Leisure Sci.* **2000**, *22*, 183–194. [[CrossRef](#)]
41. Liu, S.S.; Stout, P.A. Effects of message modality and appeal on advertising acceptance. *Psychol. Mark.* **1987**, *4*, 167–187. [[CrossRef](#)]
42. Krugman, H. The impact of television advertising: Learning without involvement. *Public Opin. Q.* **1965**, *29*, 349–356. [[CrossRef](#)]
43. Zaichkowsky, J.L. Measuring the involvement construct. *J. Consum. Res.* **1985**, *12*, 341–352. [[CrossRef](#)]
44. Zaichkowsky, J.L. The personal involvement inventory: Reduction, revision, and application to advertising. *J. Advert.* **1994**, *23*, 59–70. [[CrossRef](#)]
45. Dardis, F.E.; Shen, F. The influence of evidence type and product involvement on message-framing effects in advertising. *J. Consum. Behav. Int. Res. Rev.* **2008**, *7*, 222–238. [[CrossRef](#)]
46. Grau, S.L.; Folse, J.A.G. Cause-related marketing (CRM): The influence of donation proximity and message-framing cues on the less-involved consumer. *J. Advert.* **2007**, *36*, 19–33. [[CrossRef](#)]
47. Moorman, M.; van den Putte, B. The influence of message framing, intention to quit smoking, and nicotine dependence on the persuasiveness of smoking cessation messages. *Addict. Behav.* **2008**, *33*, 1267–1275. [[CrossRef](#)] [[PubMed](#)]
48. Williams, T.; Clarke, V.; Borland, R. Effects of message framing on breast-cancer-related beliefs and behaviors: The role of mediating factors. *J. Appl. Soc. Psychol.* **2001**, *31*, 925–950. [[CrossRef](#)]
49. Maheswaran, D.; Meyers-Levy, J. The influence of message framing and issue involvement. *J. Mark. Res.* **1990**, *361*–367. [[CrossRef](#)]
50. Geuens, M.; De Pelsmacker, P.; Fasseur, T. Emotional advertising: Revisiting the role of product category. *J. Bus. Res.* **2011**, *64*, 418–426. [[CrossRef](#)]
51. Petty, R.E.; Cacioppo, J.T.; Goldman, R. Personal involvement as a determinant of argument-based persuasion. *J. Personal. Soc. Psychol.* **1981**, *41*, 847. [[CrossRef](#)]
52. MacKenzie, S.B.; Lutz, R.J. An empirical examination of the structural antecedents of attitude toward the ad in an advertising pretesting context. *J. Mark.* **1989**, 48–65. [[CrossRef](#)]
53. Shimp, T.A. Attitude toward the ad as a mediator of consumer brand choice. *J. Advert.* **1981**, *10*, 9–48. [[CrossRef](#)]
54. Choi, Y.J. Developing a Tourist's Responsible Tourism Intention Model Using a Theory of Planned Behavior. Ph.D. Thesis, Dong-A University, Busan, Korea, 2010.
55. Howell, D.C. *Statistical Methods for Psychology*, 5th ed.; Duxberry: Pacific Grove, CA, USA, 2002.
56. Putrevu, S. Consumer responses toward sexual and nonsexual appeals: The influence of involvement, need for cognition (NFC), and gender. *J. Advert.* **2008**, *37*, 57–70. [[CrossRef](#)]
57. Donovan, R.J.; Jalleh, G. Positive versus negative framing of a hypothetical infant immunization: The influence of involvement. *Health Educ.* **2000**, *27*, 82–95. [[CrossRef](#)] [[PubMed](#)]

