

1 A Development and Empirical Validation of the Consumer 2 Response Towards Sponsored Search Advertising (SSA) Model

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6

7 **Abstract**

8 Dramatic structural changes are taking place within the rapidly growing Web advertising
9 sector; the most notable being the rise to prominence of Sponsored Search Advertising (SSA)
10 which developed because of the need to find solutions to the increased market demand for
11 more consumer-oriented and targeted advertising and non-intrusive Web Advertising format
12 (Weidlich, 2002). Moreover, SSA offered advertisers the ability to more precisely target Web
13 users, as well as making the advertisements more relevant and meaningful to the consumers
14 (Dou et al., 2001). However, very little attention has been given to SSA in terms of how
15 consumers respond to such advertising within the Web context, and what particular factors
16 drive consumers to attend to, and respond to, SSA. To address this gap in the marketing
17 literature, the current study sought to, firstly present a theoretical Model of Consumer
18 Response Towards SSA by incorporating variables synthesized from the advertising and
19 consumer behaviour literature. Secondly, this study empirically validated the model from the
20 consumer's perspective.

21

22 **Index terms**— Web Advertising, Sponsored Search Advertising, Consumer behaviour, Consumer attention,
23 and Consumer attitudes.

24 Abstract -Dramatic structural changes are taking place within the rapidly growing Web advertising sector; the
25 most notable being the rise to prominence of Sponsored Search Advertising (SSA) which developed because of
26 the need to find solutions to the increased market demand for more consumer-oriented and targeted advertising
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28 more precisely target Web users, as well as making the advertisements more relevant and meaningful to the
29 consumers (Dou et al., 2001). However, very little attention has been given to SSA in terms of how consumers
30 respond to such advertising within the Web context, and what particular factors drive consumers to attend to,
31 and respond to, SSA. To address this gap in the marketing literature, the current study sought to, firstly present a
32 theoretical Model of Consumer Response Towards SSA by incorporating variables synthesized from the advertising
33 and consumer behaviour literature. Secondly, this study empirically validated the model from the consumer's
34 perspective. The result was the development and empirical validation of the Consumer Response Towards SSA
35 Model. This empirical validation of the research model has made a significant theoretical contribution to our
36 knowledge base. We believe it provided the first empirical analysis of the effect of consumer related factors on
37 consumer attention towards SSA, the outcomes of such attention along with the perceived credibility of SSA, as
38 characterised by attitude toward SSA and intention to click on Sponsored Search Advertisements. This major
39 contribution for the current study was achieved through the extension of previous theoretical advertising and
40 consumer behaviour models to the emerging advertising format on the Web, and the inclusion of a larger set
41 of determinants involving the consumer's point of view. In addition, the findings of the current research are
42 significant and have provided a number of practical implications related to the determinants and outcomes of
43 consumer's attentional, attitudinal and behavioural responses toward SSA. Yaveroglu and Donthu, 2008). Thus,
44 many organisations have begun to consider the Web as having more marketing potential than other Internet

2 A) SPONSORED SEARCH ADVERTISING

45 tools in the promotion of their products and services, at lower cost and the greater ability to target consumers
46 precisely (Leong, Huang, and Stanners, 1998;Palanisamy and Wong, 2003; ??obinson et al., 2008). Consequently,
47 Web advertising revenues are growing quickly and are expected to reach US\$ 103 billion worldwide in 2015
48 (MagnaGlobal, 2010). Additionally, dramatic structural changes are taking place within this rapidly growing
49 Web advertising sector; the most notable being the rise to prominence of SSA which developed because of the
50 need to find solutions to the increased market demand for more consumeroriented and targeted advertising
51 and non-intrusive Web Advertising format (Weidlich, 2002). Moreover, SSA offered advertisers the ability to
52 more precisely target Web users, as well as making the advertisements more relevant and meaningful to the
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54 respond to such advertising within the Web context, and what particular factors drive consumers to attend
55 to, and respond to, SSA. To address this gap in the marketing literature, the current study sought to, firstly
56 present a theoretical Model of Consumer Responses Towards SSA by incorporating variables synthesised from
57 the advertising and consumer behaviour literature. Secondly, this study empirically validated the model from
58 the consumer's perspective. The result was the development and empirical validation of the Consumer Response
59 Towards SSA Model.

60 Therefore, the following research objectives were considered worthy of investigation, with the broader primary
61 research objective, addressed in this study, being:

62 To identify the consumer related factors that influence consumer responses towards Sponsored Search
63 Advertising? To advance our current understanding of SSA from the consumers' perspective, the focus here is on
64 examining a range of consumer behaviour variables that may determine how they respond to SSA. Therefore, it
65 is proposed that such an examination will advance the understanding of consumer behaviour within the context
66 of SSA. As such, the primary focus of this research is on the consumer and those associated consumer related
67 factors that determine their responses to SSA. Extending Rodgers and Thorson's (2000) contentions, consumer
68 responses to SSA may be viewed as comprising three elements: determinants, process and outcomes.

69 Determinants are those factors that may determine consumers' attentions towards SSA. Process element stands
70 for the consumer's initial processing of the SSA (Webb, 1979)

71 1 Web Advertising

72 Web advertising began in 1994 with the presentation of banner advertisements on the Hotwired Website (Barnes,
73 2003;Kaye and Medoff, 2001;Robinson, Wysocka, and Hand, 2007). Since then, advertisers have considered
74 the Web as one of the most important marketing communication channels because of its distinctive features
75 of interactivity, flexibility, customisation, accessibility and tracking capabilities (Bush, Bush, and Harris, 1998
76 Yaveroglu and Donthu, 2008). The term Web advertising covers many types of advertising from electronic
77 advertisements, that are similar to traditional advertisements (e.g. billboards, banner advertisements), to formats
78 that are distinct from traditional advertisements (e.g. pop-up advertising) (Schlosser, Shavitt, and Kanfer, 1999).
79 In addition, Web advertising formats include the original banner advertising, skyscrapers, pop-up advertising,
80 interstitials, online video advertising, rich media, corporate websites, and keyword search advertising (Briggs,
81 1999;Chandon, Chtourou, and Fortin, 2003;Cho and Cheon, 2004;Choi and Rifon, 2002; ??lores, 2001;Li and
82 Leckenby, 2004;Robinson et al., 2007;Yao and Lin, 2006).

83 Although banner advertisements have been the dominant format of Web advertising for several years, the
84 revenue from banner advertisements has declined steadily since the advent of other Web advertising formats,
85 such as Keyword Search Advertising (KSA) (Li and Leckenby, 2004). Recently, KSA has proven to be the main,
86 and fastest growing, form within the Web advertising market, growing from one percent in 2002 to 41 percent
87 in 2006 (Maddox, 2006). Simply put, KSA is a process by which search engines place advertising in the search
88 results pages of certain keywords and advertising companies pay fees to the search engine providers when users
89 click on a link to their web sites (Burns, 2005;Schmidt and Patel, 2004).

90 2 a) Sponsored Search Advertising

91 Of the various forms of KSA, Sponsored Search Advertising (SSA) has been identified as the most effective
92 form (Delaney, 2004;Harrison, 2005). SSA represents an advertising technique in which a fee is paid for specific
93 keywords to guarantee priority placement on search engine results pages ??Feng et (IAB, 2004), as well as the
94 major source of revenues for Web search engines (Jansen and Resnick, 2006). For example, 67 percent of Google's
95 2008 revenue came from SSA (Google, 2008). However, the success of search engines in generating revenues using
96 SSA depends mainly on the number of users (consumers) who click on Sponsored Search Advertisements (as
97 advertisers are only required to pay when users click) (Vragov, 2009). For this reason, online users need to
98 notice and pay attention to SSA, so that the desired communication goal of such advertising (click through
99 behaviour) may be achieved (Lu and Chau, 2006). More specifically, as suggested by Jansen and Spink (2007a),
100 SSA may be improved and become more effective by gaining a greater understanding of consumer behaviour in
such advertising contexts.

102 For the online user, SSA offers highly relevant search results (Kiritchenko and Jiline, 2008), which are based on
103 the consumer's own queries and, thus, they are considered less intrusive than banner advertisements or pop-ups
104 advertising (Ghose and Yang, 2007). In addition, SSA reduces online user search costs

105 **3 III.**

106 **4 Literature Review**

107 As an aim of the current research is to understand the factors that influence consumers' responses towards SSA,
108 the literature related to SSA was reviewed. However, much of this research is largely based on practitioners' views
109 and anecdotal studies with only a small number of scholarly studies being available. Previous research relating to
110 SSA has focused primarily on the advertisers' perspective. For example, SSA and search engine performance ??
111 (Khare and Sittler, 2005). However, recently, academicians have called for further research into specific aspects of
112 SSA, especially research related to the consumers' point of view ??Animesh et al., 2006;Li and Leckenby, 2004).
113 Moreover, this need to establish a new direction for future SSA research was identified by Ghose and Yang (2007),
114 Barry and Charleton, (2009), and Li and Leckenby (2004), who suggest that little understanding currently exists
115 on, the major factors influencing consumers behaviour towards such online advertising form.

116 According to Vine (2004), consumers depend on Web search engines to find information on the Web prior to
117 making online or offline purchase-decisions. However, despite the phenomenal growth of the SSA market, limited
118 research has been undertaken to investigate the implication of such advertising upon consumer behaviour. As
119 mentioned previously, SSA has, in the main, been investigated from advertisers' perspectives, which appears not
120 to provide an encompassing understanding of their effectiveness (Feng et al., 2003;Jatarzadeh et al., 2011;Weber
121 and Zheng, 2003). Further, the consumer behaviour perspective has been largely overlooked ??Yao and Male,
122 2008). In support of this view, Ghose and Yang (2007) indicate that there is a little understanding of how
123 consumers respond to SSA. Some research has identified: that online users respond more favourably to natural
124 free results displayed on the search results page in comparison to SSA (Greenspan, 2004;Marble, 2003); that
125 online users tend to be distrustful in relation to the viability of Sponsored Search Advertisements, which are
126 perceived as less relevant than the natural free results (Greenspan, 2004;Fallows, 2005; ??ansen and Resnick,
127 2007;Jansen and Resnick, 2006); that online users have a limited understanding of the nature of SSA, with
128 few were able to recognise SSA (Marble, 2003). More specifically, Animesh (2005) suggests that the consumer
129 knowledge of SSA mechanism may foster the click through rates for highly positioned search results. Support for
130 this view is provided by anecdotal evidence suggesting that companies need to be positioned on the first page and
131 within the top search results to match online users' behaviours (Miller, 2006;Newsome, 2006; ??chwarz, 2005).
132 Interestingly, Yao and Male (2008) have found that consumers who engage in more search and clicking behaviour
133 on the Web tend to be more responsive to SSA than others. In brief, despite the emerging stream of literature on
134 SSA, consumer behaviours associated with this type of Web advertising are still not fully understood. Thus more
135 research is required to fill this gap. Most research on SSA has generally explored the topic from a practitioner's
136 perspective or anecdotal studies. Further, there has been scant research within the consumer behaviour domain in
137 relation to how consumers respond to SSA. As a consequence, examining factors influencing consumer responses
138 towards advertising, based on offline traditional advertising literature, may assist in achieving a more cohesive
139 understanding of how consumers process and respond to SSA.

140 Based on a revision of a number of studies related to consumer responses to offline traditional advertising,
141 as well as Web advertising and most importantly, based on Rodgers and Thorson's (2000) findings, that Web
142 advertising effectiveness relies on how consumers respond to such advertising, and that it may be examined
143 using determinants, process and outcomes, it is apparent that process focuses on the consumer's tendency to
144 pay attention to advertising and, moreover, this process could be determined by a range of variables related
145 to the consumers. Further, the outcomes appear to reflect consumers' attitudes and behaviour upon attending
146 to advertisements. Interestingly, consumers' tendency to pay attention to Web advertisements has witnessed
147 a decline since it was first introduced due to such factors as their intrusiveness and irritation level (Li et al.,
148 2002;Yaveroglu and Donthu, 2008). However, given that SSA has proved to be the most effective form of Web
149 there is an opportunity to examine consumer attention to SSA and the related determinants of such response. Li
150 and Leckenby (2004) asserted that this research is needed as there have been few studies into understanding the
151 factors and determinants of how consumers attend to, and respond to such advertising. Therefore, , a number
152 of focal constructs relevant to this research are discussed, in terms of consumer responses towards SSA and the
153 determinants of such attention (prior experience with SSA, subjective knowledge of SSA, familiarity of brands
154 (or websites) included in the SSA, and perceptions of SSA relevancy and credibility) and the outcomes associated
155 with attention towards SSA (attitudes towards SSA and behavioural intentions).

156 IV.

157 **5 Hypotheses Development**

158 It appears that consumers' attention is strongly influenced by their motivations, abilities, and opportunities to
159 process advertisements. For example, the ability to pay attention to advertising may be conceptualised by aspects
160 related to experience with, and knowledge about, the related environment (Batra and Ray, 1986; Celsi and Olson,
161 1988; Hallahan, 2000; MacInnis, Moorman, and Jaworski, 1991). If this is so, then, aspects of prior experience
162 with advertising (negative or positive) are likely to influence an individual's ability to attend to, and process,
163 advertisements (Batra and Ray, 1986;Celsi and Olson, 1988; ??acInnis et al., 1991). Therefore, prior experience
164 with SSA was deemed pertinent to the current research as a determinant of consumer attention towards SSA. This
165 position is consistent with the view that consumer attention is mainly dependent on prior experience and that

166 prior experience is an important determinant of consumer behaviour (Fazio and Zanna, 1981; Jarvelainen, 2007).
167 A number of researchers suggest that the ability to attend to advertising messages may result from the amount
168 and type of knowledge an individual possesses regarding the advertising, for example, subjective knowledge (Batra
169 and Ray, 1986; Celsi and Olson, 1988; Hallahan, 2000; ??acInnis et al., 1991). Therefore, subjective knowledge is
170 another important determinant factor that influences consumer attention and processing behaviour towards SSA
171 (Bettman and Park, 1980; Claxton, Fry, and Portis, 1974; Brucks, 1986; Pingol and Miyazaki, 2005; Raju, Lionel,
172 and Mangold, 1995). However, within the online environment, it appears that online users have limited knowledge
173 of the approaches employed by search engines to rank, retrieve and prioritise Sponsored Search Advertisements
174 (Greenspan, 2004; ??otchkiss, 2004; Marble, 2003). This being the case, it may be that consumer subjective
175 knowledge of SSA could influence attention towards this type of Web advertising.

176 Thirdly, the consumer's motivation to process the advertising message is largely determined by consumers
177 findings cues in the advertisement that are recognisable (Batra and Ray, 1986; Celsi and Olson, 1988; Hallahan,
178 2000; ??acInnis et al., 1991), for example, familiar brands and relevancy of the advertisement. As such, familiarity
179 of brands (or websites) included in the SSA was selected as an aspect of the current research, due to its importance
180 in influencing advertising effectiveness (Campbell and Keller, 2003) Yantis, 2000). In addition, it was found
181 that online users tend to check Sponsored Search Advertisements if they are perceived as relevant (Jansen and
182 Spink, 2007a; Jansen and Resnick, 2006). Thus, perception of SSA relevancy appears to be an important factor
183 influencing consumer response to SSA. It is also suggested that relevancy of SSA is also influenced by brand
184 familiarity as finding familiar brands (or websites) within the content of SSA message may result in perceiving
185 such advertising as relevant. Finally, Moore and Rodgers (2005) suggest that consumers are more likely to ignore
186 advertisements because of less perceived credibility. Fourthly, another important aspect covered in the offline
187 advertising literature is that the extent of perceived credibility is based upon an accumulation of information
188 and consumers' experiences with advertisements (MacKenzie and Lutz, 1989). Maloney (1994) supported this
189 view by asserting that advertising credibility is based on the interaction of the advertisement with the consumer
190 memories are accumulated from prior experiences.

191 Therefore, it appears that online users with positive previous experiences with SSA will be more likely to
192 consider SSA as credible and , so consider processing or engaging with these types of advertisements. Furthermore,
193 attention to SSA is expected to have an influence on SSA credibility. The reason for this is that a greater attention
194 paid to SSA results in higher perceived credibility of SSA. Similarly, within a social marketing context, Griffin
195 and O'Cass (2005) found that the more attention paid to social advertising, the more credibility is associated
196 with those advertisements. Accordingly, those online users who pay more attention to SSA may be more likely
197 to positively evaluate those advertisements, resulting in higher advertising credibility.

198 Although much of the offline traditional advertising literature has confirmed that a positive relationship exists
199 between consumer attention and attitude towards advertising, such relationship has received scant attention in
200 the Web advertising context. For example, outcomes of consumers' attention in the Web context may operate
201 into different directions depending on the type of exposure to Web advertising. For example, forcing online users
202 to be exposed to Web Global Journal of Management and Business Research Volume XII Issue XVIII Version
203 I 2 2012 ear advertising messages (such as the case with pop-up advertising) may generate negative attitudes
204 towards such advertising. This view is consistent with the argument of Rust and Varki (1996) who advocate that
205 Web advertising should be less intrusive because forcing consumers to be exposed to advertisements may generate
206 negative attitudes towards advertising. Many other Web advertising studies have provided support for this view
207 by showing that consumers tend to ignore intrusive and annoying Web advertisements and, more, tend to hold
208 negative attitudes towards such advertisements (Brackett and Carr, 2001; Cho and Cheon, 2004; Li et al. 2002;
209 ??eed, 1999). Alternatively, consumers are expected to pay more attention and hold more positive attitudes
210 towards unintrusive and targeted Web advertisements such as SSA (Bloem, 2003; Mehta and Sivadas, 1995).

211 Finally, the attitude and behavioural intention relationship was originally advocated by Fishbein and Ajzen
212 (1975).

213 More recent advertising research supports this theory, where it is suggested that the attitude toward the object
214 (in this case the SSA) will influence the intention to use the object ??

215 6 No. Hypotheses

216 7 H1

217 Prior experience with SSA has a significant positive effect on attention to SSA.

218 8 H2

219 Subjective knowledge about SSA has a significant positive effect on attention to SSA.

220 9 H3

221 Familiarity of brands (or websites) included in the SSA has a significant positive effect on attention to SSA.

222 H4 SSA relevancy has a significant positive effect on attention to SSA.

223 **10 H5**

224 Familiarity of brands (or websites) included in the SSA has a significant positive effect on SSA relevancy.

225 **11 H6**

226 Prior experience with SSA has a significant positive effect on SSA credibility.

227 **12 H7**

228 Attention to SSA has a significant positive effect on SSA credibility.

229 **13 H8**

230 Credibility of SSA has a significant positive effect on attitude towards SSA.

231 **14 H9**

232 Attention to SSA has a significant positive effect on attitude towards SSA.

233 H10 Attitude toward SSA has a significant positive effect on intention to click on SSA.

234 Figure ?? : A Conceptual Model of Consumer Response Towards Sponsored Search Advertising (SSA).

235 V.

236 **15 Methodology**

237 A quantitative approach was used in this research. An examination of the literature assisted in the development
238 of a conceptual model of Consumer responses towards SSA. A convenience sample of 325 respondents from
239 the Australian population (who have online access and who have searched or purchased online) were surveyed
240 using an online self-administered survey. The resultant data were analysed to test the model of consumer
241 response towards SSA. The administration of the survey followed a Web-based selfadministered method. The
242 data collection involved the researcher employing an Australian market research company (The Final Prospect
243 Company) to send an email, on behalf of the researcher, to Australian online users inviting them to participate
244 in the study. The email included a link to a unique Web site location to access the survey. In addition, the
245 email informed potential respondents about the purpose of the research, the length of the survey, and provided
246 assurance that the collected information would be treated confidentially and would be used only for the purposes
247 of the research.

248 **16 VI.**

249 **17 Results Analysis**

250 Analysis of the data was conducted via correlation analysis, exploratory factor analysis, reliability analysis and
251 Partial Least Squares (PLS) regression analysis. Based on the preliminary analysis, the evaluation of the data
252 via factor analysis and reliability estimates indicated that all scale items were appropriate and valid for further
253 statistical analysis. Additional testing of the quality of the scales was conducted, which established the convergent
254 and discriminant validity. Further testing for the common method variance, via Harmon's one factor test, provided
255 evidence of the non-existence of common variance problem, indicating that the data were ready for subsequent
256 analysis. PLS was considered as the most appropriate approach for the current study as it has several advantages
257 over other SEM techniques. In particular, PLS allows the assessment of the psychometric properties of the
258 measures and the exploration of the hypothesised relationship among the constructs (Chin, 1998;Hulland, 1999).
259 Moreover, PLS facilitates simultaneous tests of the measurement models and structural models (Barclay et al.,
260 1995); it is also compatible with interval-style data and can assess a model with a relatively small sample size
261 (Chin, 1998;Gefen et al., 2000;Thompson et al., 1995). In consideration of these points, and due to its increasing
262 acceptance within consumer behaviour and marketing domains PLS was chosen to evaluate the research model
263 and test the hypotheses. Table 1.2 highlights the hypotheses of the study, and shows the path coefficient between
264 the exogenous and endogenous variables; the average variance accounted for, R 2 and bootstrap critical ratios.
265 The bootstrap critical ratios determined the stability of the estimates and were acceptable at ranges between -1.96
266 and +1.96 (Chin, 1998) indicated the overall predictive power of the model (Fornell and Bookstein, 1982). In the
267 current study, the AVA for the endogenous variables was .46 and the R 2 values for the predicted variables were
268 all greater than the Falk and Miller's (1992) recommended level of .10; therefore, it was appropriate to examine
269 the significance of the paths associated with these variables. All of the paths were above the recommended
270 level of 0.015 as advocated by ??alk and Miller (1992), and all variables had bootstrap critical ratios above the
271 acceptable level (greater than 1.96, $p < .05$).

272 Table ?? : Partial Least Squares Results for the Theoretical Model.

273 The PLS results, as shown in Table 1.2, indicate that prior experience with SSA has a significant positive
274 effect on online users (consumers) attention towards SSA ($\beta = 0.419$, $t = 7.89$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that online
275 users with prior positive experience with SSA, will pay greater attention to SSA, thereby, supporting H1. As
276 proposed in H2, subjective knowledge of SSA has a significant positive effect on attention to SSA ($\beta = 0.232$, t

19 CONCLUSION

277 = 6.45, $p < 0.01$), suggesting that those online users who have more knowledge about the nature and benefits of
278 SSA are more likely to pay attention to SSA. This finding supports H2. Consistent with H3, familiarity of brands
279 (or websites) included in the SSA, has a significant positive effect on online users' attention towards SSA ($\beta =$
280 0.148, $t = 2.84$, $p < 0.01$), implying that those Sponsored Search Advertisements that include familiar brands
281 (or websites) are more likely to be noticed and attended by online users, thereby supporting H3. The result
282 for H4 indicate that SSA has a significant positive effect on online users' attention towards SSA ($\beta = 0.248$, t
283 = 5.34, $p < 0.01$); thus, the higher the relevancy of SSA, the greater the attention paid to the advertisement.
284 This finding supports H4. As shown in Table 1.2, familiarity of brands (or websites) included in the SSA has a
285 significant positive effect on the level of the relevancy of SSA ($\beta = 0.499$, $t = 6.89$, $p < 0.01$) suggesting that
286 Sponsored Search Advertisements that include familiar brands (or websites) are more likely to be considered as
287 relevant to online users, thereby, supporting H5. Prior experience with SSA has a significant positive effect on
288 the credibility of SSA in general ($\beta = 0.373$, $t = 10.85$, $p < 0.01$) suggesting that online users who have positive
289 prior experience with SSA are more likely to perceive SSA as credible and believable, providing support for H6.
290 Further, attention to SSA was found to be related to the degree of perceived credibility of SSA ($\beta = 0.504$, t
291 = 26.85, $p < 0.01$), implying that the more attention paid to a Sponsored Search Advertisement, the greater
292 the credibility of the SSA thereby supporting H7. Credibility of SSA has a significant positive effect on attitude
293 towards SSA ($\beta = 0.545$, $t = 10.03$, $p < 0.01$), suggesting the greater the credibility of SSA the more positive
294 the attitude toward the Advertisement supporting H8.

295 As shown by the PLS results, attention towards SSA has a significant positive effect on attitude towards
296 SSA ($\beta = 0.279$, $t = 6.16$, $p < 0.01$) suggesting that the higher level of attention paid to a Sponsored Search
297 Advertisement the greater the positive attitude towards SSA, thereby supporting H9. Consistent with H10,
298 attitude toward SSA has a significant positive effect on intention to click on Sponsored Search Advertisements ($\beta = 0.452$, $t = 7.60$, $p < 0.01$) implying that the more positive the attitude toward SSA the greater the intention
299 to click on Sponsored Search Advertisements supporting H10. Thus, the results from the current study show
300 that all the hypotheses (H1, H2, H3, H4, H5, H6, H7, H8, H9, and H10) were supported.

301 As shown in Table 1.2, the average variance accounted (AVA) for in the endogenous variable by the exogenous
302 variables was 0.46 (46 %). In addition, the data indicates that 65% of the variance in SSA credibility is explained
303 by prior experience with SSA and attention towards SSA, whereas 25% of the variance in SSA relevancy is
304 explained by familiarity of brands included in the SSA. Additionally, 59% of the variance in attention towards
305 SSA is explained by prior experience with SSA, subjective knowledge of SSA, familiarity of brands (or websites)
306 included in the SSA, and SSA relevancy. Furthermore, SSA credibility and attention to SSA account for 61% of
307 the variance in attitude towards SSA. Finally, attitude towards SSA accounts for 20% of the variance in intention
308 to click on Sponsored Search Advertisements.

310 18 VII.

311 19 Conclusion

312 The findings provided useful insights into a nomological network explicating the determinants, process, and
313 outcomes of consumer responses towards SSA, from a consumer behaviour perspective. In particular, the
314 findings provided empirical support for Consumer Response Towards SSA Model, revealing that a number of
315 consumer related variables (prior experience with SSA, subjective knowledge of SSA, familiarity of brands (or
316 websites) included in the SSA and SSA relevancy) act as consumer attention towards SSA. As posited in the
317 findings, online users (consumers) who had positive prior experience with SSA are more likely to notice and pay
318 attention to SSA. In addition, the findings provided support for the positive relationship between online users'
319 subjective knowledge of SSA and attention paid to Sponsored Search Advertisements. Furthermore, the proposed
320 relationship between familiarity of brands (or websites) and attention to SSA was supported. In the context of
321 the relationship between familiarity of brands (or websites) and SSA relevancy, it was found that those Sponsored
322 Search Advertisements that include familiar brands (or websites) are more likely to be considered as relevant,
323 and those relevant Sponsored Search Advertisements influence attention towards such advertisements.

324 The proposed research model also identified that particular factors determine the credibility of SSA. For
325 example, the findings indicate that the nature of the prior experience with SSA is a factor in determining the
326 credibility of SSA. Accordingly, those online users (consumers) who experienced a positive prior experience with
327 SSA are more likely to consider SSA as a credible form of Web advertising. In addition, the findings show that
328 attention towards SSA positively influences the credibility of SSA. This implies that those online users who pay
329 more attention to SSA are also more likely to perceive such advertising as credible.

330 In relation to the outcomes of Consumer Responses Towards SSA Model, online users who pay attention to
331 SSA appear to have more positive attitudes towards SSA. Further, as proposed in this research model, SSA
332 credibility was found to influence a consumer's attitude towards SSA, and that attitude impacted upon their
333 intention to click on Sponsored Search Advertisements.

334 The empirical testing provided validation of the theory from the consumer's standpoint, within the context
335 of SSA, which appears not to have been attempted previously. As such, the current research is advantageous in
336 that it both integrates earlier advertising research associated with consumer behavioural aspects. In doing so, the
337 Consumer Response Towards SSA Model provides a valuable theoretical example for Web advertising effectiveness

338 models (from a consumer behaviour perspective) by highlighting the determinants that affect consumer attention
339 towards advertising and the outcomes of both attention and perceptions of advertising credibility characterised
340 by consumer's attitude towards, and intention to click on, Sponsored Search Advertisements. For this reason,
341 the proposed model offers a broad perspective on how an individual perceives, processes, and responds to SSA.
342 The process begins with consumers who are conducting a search activity in order to collect information about an
343 issue, product or service. As consumers are exposed to two different types of search results (SSA and natural free
344 results), the immediate process will be to attend to those search results that give consumers positive outcomes
345 and lead to the previously proposed outcomes. Accordingly, the current research has advanced our knowledge
346 within the advertising and consumer behaviour domains, as well as contributing to the use of SSA in practice.
347 The value of research in the area of marketing lies in its ability to be applied in practice. In this sense, the value
348 of this research, in terms of the Consumer Response Towards SSA Model is that it expands our understanding
349 of SSA by identifying and synthesising the determinants and outcomes of consumer responses towards such
350 advertising. The practical implications of these findings are that they add to the understanding of SSA from
351 a consumer's behaviour perspective and, therefore, act as a valuable base for SSA practitioners. The current
352 study provides practitioners with insights into consumers and the factors that influence their intention to click on
353 Sponsored Search Advertisements when they use Web search engines. The findings identify what type of consumer
354 (according to their experiences, subjective knowledge, familiarity with brands (or websites), and perceptions of
355 credibility and relevancy) are more likely to attend and process SSA, and what are the outcomes of consumer
356 response towards SSA, that is, attitude to SSA and intention to click on Sponsored Search Advertisements.

357 **20 VIII.**

358 **21 Future Research**

359 As the data collection process has focused on Australian online users, it could be suggested that the results may
360 lead to different findings for online users in other countries. As such, the model of this study could be tested
361 in other developed countries such as the United States of America, Canada and the United Kingdom, and in
362 developing countries such as Jordan. This replication would allow examining whether the findings hold true in
363 other regions, and thus provide greater support for the generalisability of the findings of the study. Future research
364 could also extend the model to examine what the most likely actions to be taken by consumers after clicking
365 on Sponsored Search Advertisements such as gathering more information, requesting e-mail updates, subscribing
366 or registering an interest, downloading documents, and purchasing products or services. These responses after
367 clicking on Sponsored Search Advertisements are expected to be greatly influenced by the design and performance
of the landing page. ^{1 2}



Figure 1:

Figure 2:

RQ1: What are the consumer related factors that account for consumer attention towards SSA and to what extent do they influence attention towards SSA?

RQ2: To what extent does consumer attention towards SSA influence consumer attitude towards SSA?

RQ3: To what extent does consumer attitude towards SSA influence consumer intentions to click on SSA?

RQ4: To what extent does credibility of SSA influence consumer attitude towards SSA?

II.

Figure 3:

Figure 4:

Schmittlein, Mukhopadhyay, 2004), quality uncertainty and adverse selection in SSA (Animesh, Ramachandran, and Viswanathan, 2006), SSA ranking strategies (Feng, Bhargava, &

Bradlow and 2000, Telang, Boatwright, and

Figure 5:

Figure 6:

1

intention to

[Note: Source : Developed for this research.]

Figure 7: Table 1 :

		SSA				
		Credibility				
2012	ear 2 and Business Research Volume XII Issue XVIII Version I Global Journal of Man- agement	Prior Experience with SSA	H 6	H 1	H 7	H 8
		Subjective knowledge of SSA	H 2	Attention to SSA	H 9	AttitudH Intention to- ward SSA click on SSA

Figure 8:

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²A Development and Empirical Validation of The Consumer Response Towards Sponsored Search Advertising (SSA) Model

A Development and Empirical Validation of The Consumer Response Towards Sponsored Search Advertising (SSA) Model 2012						
Predicted	Predictor	Hypothesis	Path	Variance due to path	R ²	Critical Ratio
Variable	Variables					
Attention to SSA	Prior experience	H1	.419	.291	7.89	
	Subjective Knowledge	H2	.232	.082	6.45	
	Familiarity of brands	H3	.148	.071	2.84	
	SSA relevance	H4	.248	.148	.59	5.34
SSA relevance	Familiarity of brands	H5	.499	.249	6.89	
SSA Credibility	Prior experience	H6	.373	.269	16.56	.25
	Attention to SSA	H7	.504	.384	26.84	.65
Attitudes toward SSA	SSA Credibility	H8	.545	.413	10.03	
	Attention to SSA	H9	.279	.193	6.16	.60
Intention to click AVA	Attitudes toward SSA	H10	.452	.204	7.60	.20
					.46	

Figure 9:

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