

TOPIC:- "ONLINE ADVERTISING: GUIDING OR MISGUIDING CUSTOMERS?"

OUTLINE:-

1. Introduction

Thesis Statement:- Online advertising is the backbone of emerging online businesses. It is guiding customers in numerous ways by keeping them up-to-date about products and changing trends. Hence, online advertisement is the tool to help customers by facilitating them with online shopping trends and protecting them against fraudulent businesses.

2. Online advertising and its guiding and misguiding elements.

3. Guiding role of online advertising.

- a) Easy access to far-off markets.
- b) Online advertising helps customers save time and money.
- c) Online advertising lets the customers know the changing trends.

- d) It helps customers compare rate and quality of products.
- e) Online sale and discount: a guiding feature of online advertising.

4- How online advertising can misguide the customers?

- a) Far-off markets may not be trustworthy.
- b) It consumes rather more time and cost of data to choose online products.
- c) Changing trends are business tactics to exploit customers.
- d) Mostly the online products have hidden charges and a cheaper quality.
- e) The unsold and out-dated products are sold in sales.

5- How online advertising ensures guidance to customers.

- a) Product reviews help customers to know whether to trust or not.
- b) Customers are smart enough to use online search options efficiently.
- c) User-friendly websites have made it easier to choose desired products.
- d) While checking out, all the costs become visible.

e) The product return policy keeps the buyer protected from scams.

6. Conclusion

Essay:-

Online advertising is a tool widely used by businesses and media to promote their products. Stewart Henderson Brit, a psychologist at Northwest university and a professor of marketing and advertising in the Medil school of journalism said, "Doing business without advertising is like winking at a girl in the dark. You know what you are doing but no one else does". This quote is demonstrating the importance of online advertisement, which, in this era of digitalization is considered as the ~~backbone~~^{keystone} of the business development. Online advertising is the backbone of emerging online businesses. It is guiding customers in numerous ways by keeping them up-to-date about products and changing trends. Hence, online advertisement is the tool to help customers by

facilitating them with online shopping trends and protecting them against fraudulent businesses. Online advertising is guiding customers by providing easy access to far-off areas, helps them in saving money and time, lets them know about changing trends, ~~and~~ by creating ease in comparison of rate and quality and by providing discounts. On the contrary, there are ~~few~~ ^{various} factors which are making online advertising, a misguide for customers. Some of them are: it's not easier to trust far off markets, most changing trends exploits customers, most products are of low quality and out-dated products in sale. However, reviews about the products helps the customer in deciding whether to purchase or not. Along with this, people are smart enough to ~~to~~ ~~to~~ use search options, user friendly websites are also helping the customers and the product return policy is keeping the ~~buyers~~ customer away from scams.

Online advertising is one of the most important tools of marketing

for attracting customers and increasing the sale of products. Advertising is defined as a paid form of government communication from a source such as TV, radio, newspaper or internet.

The history of online advertising began with the year 1994, on October 27, 1994, the world of advertising took baby steps by a small graphic ad bearing the presumptive words, "Have you ever clicked your mouse right here? you will," in a kitschy rainbow font (blog.hubspot.com, history of online advertising, 2021). Since then online advertising has remained a guiding or misguiding tool depending upon the way they are carried out and what their mottos are. It can guide by providing true information, by saving time, by not exaggerating the performance and quality. Likewise, it can be misguiding by following deceptive approach like, hiding the weak areas, posting edited pictures without proper guidance.

Since the ^{guidance} advantages of online advertisement is overshadowing its misguiding element, the first guiding role of online advertising is its easy access to far-off markets.

As the digitalization is increasing day by day, people are getting more aware about changing trends. They are knowing about the use of internet to pay bills, to file petition and to shop online. ~~But~~ The people of far-flung areas don't have access to most of the brands, they don't have access to quality material because of living in the city without infrastructure. Online advertising help such customers. For example, women living in cities with poor infrastructure can now have access to various brands through their online application. In the same way men can also fulfil their needs through online advertising. So, it is the guiding ~~pin~~ tool for people living in far-flung areas.

Another guiding element of online advertising is it helps customers save time and money. It saves the time by not allowing the customer to visit the stores or outlets to get desired item because everything is just a click away. It is also economical as one don't have to pay rent for reaching the store and coming back. Online advertisement also saves

money by providing coupons on shopping upto a certain amount, and on placing order through application. Such applications are, foodpanda, foodwalay. These advertisement also save time by putting online customer service performance. For example with Amazon customer service, one can have access to store's email address and telephone number to reach them with your inquiries. Hence, in these ways online advertising is guiding tool for the customers.

Adding more to it, online advertising help the customer by keeping him informed about the changing trends. In a world where over 170 million people use social media on regular basis, every working professional is expected to be familiar with the changing trends in terms of marketing, education, shopping and many others. So this is possible to be in touch with changing trends through online advertisement. For example, A recent trend in education due to covid-19 is online-education. and the special feature opportunity it is offering is online evaluation

through Learning Management System (LMS). So the institutions are updating their profiles and letting ^{people} know about these changing trends. Same is the case in clothes, ^{brands} they keep the customer updated through online advertisement. Therefore it is a guiding feature of online-advertising.

Moreover, it helps customer to compare rate and quality of products. It is greatly helpful in saving money during online shopping. One can get thousands of results of a single search and can compare the quality with price in order to get the best. For example, one can search different e-commerce sites for the same item and read consumer reviews to get the best deal. This comparison of prices across multiple stores gives you insight into how much the item cost elsewhere and helps to save the money in long run. It is much feasible than visiting the store for the item and getting price about the item to purchase it from a store with reasonable price. So, it is truly facilitating the customers

by providing comparison opportunities along with knowing about prices and quality.

Furthermore, online sale and discount is also a guiding feature of online advertisement. Many of the businesses either they are of clothes, paints, furniture, home ~~care~~ ^{decor}, etc offers seasonal sale events.

It is one of the most-adopted marketing and advertising strategy. The very first coupon strategy was adopted by coca-cola. Since then it is the practice of every businessman.

According to a survey conducted by Khalid Saleh, CEO and co-founder of Invesp "64% of online customers wait to buy things until they go for sale. whereas 57% of them purchase product they already have, just because of lower price." These advertising helps customers to keep an eye on the store's calendar for sale and plan shopping activities accordingly. Hence, sale and discount advertising is guiding customers.

on the other hand, there are ~~few~~ various factors which

are turning guiding ^{element} of online advertising into misguiding one. Like, many far-off markets may not be trust worthy. Due to increase in digitalization, hundreds of people are selling online and advertising their products. There are many fake pages with the name of brands. The one living in far off areas don't know much about the real ~~to~~ brands and most of the times they are trapped with the one's running pages on social media with same names. In such circumstances, if one place online order, there are chances to get low quality product. So, it can be said that far-off markets and their advertisement may not always be trustworthy.

Along with it, online purchasing rather consumes more time and cost of data to choose the desired products. Most of the times, for a given product; different online sellers provide nearly the same information, making it difficult and time consuming for the online customer to choose the product.

For example, customer may search for and compare information online for approximately one hour on the day first hand then spend several more hours searching for and comparing information the next day. Even on the third and fourth days, they may not make any purchase decision.

In this way, online advertising is consuming more data and time for search and comparison of the items which is considered as a misleading feature of online advertisement.

In the same way, exploiting customers through changing tactics is also a misleading element of online advertisement. Spending money is actually need and satisfaction based. Businesses by creating unreal demand exploit their customers. Most of the times they use the strategy of 'Demand Generation', in which users interest is exploited to bring attention to the marketing and products. This is like forcing the customer to purchase your products through the images and videos of

product that induces mesmerization for the product. Hence, it is a misleading tactic through which a new product with a slight variation is launched that is actually unnecessary innovation and thereby motivating the customer to buy the new one.

In addition, most of the online products have hidden charges and a cheaper quality. It is one of the biggest misleading aspect of online advertisement where the prices while advertisement are shown less, whereas, when one continues shopping it give a huge amount of total bill. Most of the time these quantities with lower prices have higher delivery charges. For example, one may experience it while shopping from daraz store, where the charges for the products are lower but it has twice delivery charges as that of the product. and most of the times the item with lower quantity amount is of cheap quantity, too. Hence, it adds more to make it misleading feature of the online advertisement while advertisers want

to captivate customers with lower prices.

To say more about it, another misleading aspect of online advertising is that they try to tame the customers but most of the products sold during sale and discount offers is out-dated and the one with lower sale ratio.

Most of the times discount is offered on the product which they are unable to sale for various months or a year. This happens most of the times with the sale and advertising of luxury good brands. Luxury brands in Pakistan offers discount on national days, along with this they offer mid-year and end of the year sale which is clearly depicting the fact that offering sale 4 to 5 times in a year means they are trying to sell their out-dated and unsold products. Hence, offering sales is a way to lure customer which is indeed a misleading feature, due to above mentioned reasons.

Despite of the above mentioned guiding and misleading role played by online advertisement

it ensures guidance to customers by ~~product reviews~~ that following ~~facilitate~~ to facilitate customers. To begin with these, first are the product reviews that help customers to know whether to trust or not.

~~Cons~~ customer reviews are of great importance for online shopping. This helps to identify the best seller and avoid substandard products. Website like, PissedConsumer.com, helps you one to easily compare customers experiences and ratings of products. This way, one can make informed decisions on the best store or product without walking from one store to next to get the desired product.

Another way to ensure online advertising as guiding, is that the customers are smart enough to use online search options. The world is fastly moving towards digitalization and individuals are now well aware of the use of internet. The fast growing competition has built the abilities of efficient ^{use of} search engine. According to a estimate over 204 billion shoppers

now buy items online, which is a significant increase from just a few years ago. With current world population of 7.9 billion, it means that 27% of all people that are alive are digital buyers (www.tidi.com, online shopping statistics: Ecommerce Trends ~~for 2023~~, 2023). This fact is evidencing the fact that more than a quarter of the world population is efficient in using search engine ~~efficiently~~ effectively to get their desired products.

Also, -the design of websites in such a way that -they are friendly in use has also overshadowed the guiding elements over misguiding one. The websites are designed by keeping in view the common man who don't have much command on english language. Along with this the website possesses the most prominent features like, they are mobile compatible, accessible to all users, well-planned information architecture and well-formatted & content-regarding the products. Incorporation of these features and common

men approach has made it easier for its easy access by every individual. Hence, the designing of user-friendly websites which is a correct-balance between design, aesthetics and usability is contributing in increased number of online advertising and shopping.

Along with this, the ease in checking out process, during which all the costs ~~will~~ become visible is a feature offering guidance to the customers. Not only this but also the free shipping services for the customers is also helping them to attract more towards online businesses. They offer free shipping ~~over~~ for items above a specific value. Like, if one plans to buy multiple items from the same store and more products until one reaches the required purchase amount for delivery helps in saving money and it is customer facilitation. and if one don't want to get ~~such~~ this much amount of money, checkout process reveals all the hidden charges and total amount before proceeding to the confirmation process of the order.

Hence, clarity in checkout prices ensures guidance for the customers.

In the same manner, product return policy keeps the buyer protected from scams. A return policy is one of the ~~most~~ friendly customer friendly policy that helps to return and exchange unwanted products they have purchased. A Marwar customer survey found that 49% of customers actively check the retailers return policy before buying something. because in this way they are informed about their rights to return and refund and are more likely to make a purchase. This policy is seen by many as a guarantee that the product will be good or else they will be able to get their money back. It also helps in building customer trust and increasing sale. Therefore, it can be said that return policy keeps customers away from scams and is adding effectively in online marketing and advertising facts.

To conclude, it can be said that, online advertising is a

most commonly used tool for online advertising. It is the backbone of emerging online business which is guiding ~~some~~ customers in numerous ways like, its providing easy access to far-off markets, helping in saving energy, time and money, informing customers about the changing trends in the business world and society, providing sales and discount which is attracting customers in bulge.

~~However~~ But, on the other hand, it is leaving misleading elements, too for the customers, that ~~we~~ can be seen in the form of trust issues on far-off markets, individuals spending their precious hours in researching for and comparison of products, exploitation of customers by launching unnecessary products with unnecessary changes, and out-dated products sale in discount. However, its guidance is overshadowing the misleading element by incorporating the customer reviews on their website, by ~~be~~ designing user-friendly application that could be easily used on mobile, and by providing user's most favourite return policy. Hence,

online advertisement is one of the greatest wave in the sea of ~~online~~ business development and marketing. As it is said,

"Ignoring online marketing is like opening ~~opening~~ a business but not telling anyone."

(KB Marketing Agency).