

Assessing the Success Factors of Meta Ad Campaigns in the Digital Marketing Landscape

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the key success factors determining the effectiveness of Meta ad campaigns within the Indian digital marketing landscape. As Meta platforms — encompassing Facebook and Instagram — continue to dominate digital advertising expenditure in emerging markets, understanding what drives campaign performance from a practitioner perspective has become increasingly critical. Significant gaps persist in format-specific empirical research, practitioner-centric effectiveness ranking, and experience-driven optimization behaviour within the Indian context, which this study systematically addresses. Primary quantitative data was collected from 50 digital marketing professionals using a structured questionnaire distributed via Google Forms, employing purposive sampling to ensure domain-specific expertise. The study adopts a positivist, deductive research framework grounded in the AIDA Model (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010) and applies a multi-method statistical framework comprising Chi-Square Goodness-of-Fit, Garrett Ranking Analysis, Weighted Mean Score (WMS), and Spearman Rank Correlation, enabling robust triangulation of findings. Key findings reveal that video ads are the most significantly preferred format ($\chi^2 = 14.60$, $p = 0.0056$), ad creative and audience targeting emerge as the highest-ranked effectiveness drivers (Garrett scores: 66.16 and 63.00 respectively), ad copy is perceived as critically important with a WMS of 3.44 out of 4.0, and a very strong positive correlation exists between professional experience and A/B testing frequency ($p = 0.9006$, $p < 0.0001$). These findings collectively establish a strategic framework for Meta campaign success centered on video-first creative, precision targeting, quality ad copy, and institutionalized iterative testing, offering actionable insights for practitioners and marketing educators alike.

Keywords: Meta Advertising, Digital Marketing, Ad Campaign Effectiveness, Audience Targeting, Ad Creative, A/B Testing, Video Ads, Social Media Advertising

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

The rapid proliferation of social media platforms has fundamentally transformed the global digital marketing ecosystem. Among the many platforms competing for advertising budgets, Meta - the parent company of Facebook and Instagram- has emerged as the dominant force in social a, media advertising, hosting over 3.2 billion monthly active users worldwide and over 400 million users in India alone. This unprecedented reach, combined with sophisticated data-driven targeting capabilities, has made Meta Ads an indispensable tool for businesses seeking to engage potential customers with precision, scale, and measurability (Dwivedi et al., 2021).

Over the last decade, digital advertising expenditure has consistently outpaced traditional media spending. Businesses of all sizes- from multinational corporations to small and medium enterprises (SMEs) - now allocate significant portions of their marketing budgets to social media campaigns. In the Indian context, the shift has been particularly dramatic, driven by widespread smartphone adoption, affordable mobile internet, and the

growing digital literacy of consumers. The increasing reliance on digital platforms for customer acquisition in India reflects a broader global phenomenon documented across marketing literature (**Kapoor et al., 2022**).

Within social media advertising, Meta Ads stand out due to several unique capabilities: granular audience segmentation based on demographics, psychographics, interests, and behaviors; diverse creative formats including image, video, carousel, and collection ads; real-time performance analytics through Meta Ads Manager; and advanced optimization tools such as A/B testing, lookalike audience modeling, and dynamic retargeting (**Tuten & Solomon, 2021**). These features allow marketers to design campaigns that are not only expansive in reach but also highly targeted and cost-efficient.

Despite these advantages, businesses frequently struggle to achieve consistent, desirable outcomes from their Meta advertising investments. Issues such as rising cost per click (CPC), audience fatigue, difficulty attributing conversions, and the complexity of managing multiple campaign variables simultaneously continue to challenge digital marketers (**Kumar & Raj, 2023**). The ever-evolving Meta algorithm and frequent policy changes add further layers of difficulty for practitioners.

The present study draws upon primary research conducted through a structured survey of 50 digital marketing professionals, as well as an extensive review of existing academic and industry literature. By combining practical campaign insights with scholarly frameworks, this paper identifies the key success factors of Meta ad campaigns, explores the interplay between targeting, creative strategy, and optimization, and offers actionable guidance for marketers operating in competitive, trust-intensive service sectors (**Kaur & Arora, 2023**).

1.2 Digital Marketing in Service Industries

Service-based industries particularly those involving high-involvement purchases such as education consulting, financial services, and healthcare present unique challenges for digital advertising. Unlike product-based businesses where purchases can be made impulsively, service industries depend heavily on trust, credibility, and repeated touchpoints to convert a prospect into a customer (**Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010**). In such contexts, digital advertising must serve not only as a vehicle for awareness generation but also as a medium for nurturing long-term relationships.

India's overseas education consulting industry exemplifies these dynamics. With more than 1.3 million Indian students projected to pursue international education by 2026, the sector has seen explosive growth, attracting numerous consultancies competing for the same digitally-savvy pool of prospective students. These customers conduct extensive online research, compare multiple service providers, and are heavily influenced by targeted digital messaging before committing to a consultancy (**Kaur & Arora, 2023**).

Meta Ads provide the perfect ecosystem for this — allowing consultancies to create awareness, generate leads, and nurture prospects across the funnel with data-backed decisions (**Tuten & Solomon, 2021**). For a company like Univ Abroad, effective Meta campaigns are not merely a marketing asset - they are a critical business development engine.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

While Meta Ads offer powerful tools for digital marketing, a significant gap persists between the platform's theoretical capabilities and practical outcomes achieved by many businesses. Marketers frequently cite high CPCs, poor conversion rates, and audience fatigue as persistent challenges, yet lack a consolidated understanding of which campaign factors most significantly determine success (**Lambrecht & Tucker, 2019**). Existing studies have largely focused on Facebook advertising in the context of FMCG brands or e-commerce in Western markets, leaving limited guidance for service-based businesses in emerging markets like India.

Moreover, the literature rarely examines the interrelationship between creative decisions, targeting granularity, and optimization practices as a holistic system. Most studies treat these variables in isolation (**Ashley & Tuten, 2015**), making it difficult for practitioners to draw integrated strategic insights. There is therefore a pressing need for empirical research that examines Meta ad success factors comprehensively within the Indian service-sector context.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study makes three distinct contributions to the field of digital marketing. First, it provides empirically grounded, actionable insights into the success factors of Meta ad campaigns, derived from practitioners with first-hand campaign management experience. Second, it contributes to the limited body of literature on Meta advertising effectiveness in Indian service-sector businesses - a geographic and industry-specific perspective that has been largely overlooked (**Dwivedi et al., 2021**). Third, through its mixed-methods approach — combining survey-based percentage analysis with chi-square statistical testing — the study establishes statistically significant associations between key variables, providing a more rigorous analytical foundation than purely descriptive studies (**Kumar & Raj, 2023**).

2. Review Of Literature

2.1 Social Media and Its Integration into Marketing Strategy

The conceptual foundation of social media marketing was established by **Kaplan and Haenlein (2010)**, whose landmark work classified social media platforms into distinct typologies and explored how organizations can strategically leverage them for marketing purposes. Their research emphasized the transformative role of user-generated content, peer influence, and community engagement in reshaping the brand-consumer relationship. They argued that authenticity and active participation are not merely desirable features of social media marketing — they are prerequisites for brand success in digitally networked environments. This insight remains profoundly relevant in the context of Meta Ads, where ad content competes for attention alongside organically generated peer content.

Building upon this theoretical foundation, subsequent scholars have examined the specific mechanisms through which social media advertising influences consumer behavior. The consensus in the literature is that social media advertising operates through a combination of cognitive (information processing), affective (emotional resonance), and conative (behavioral intention) pathways, making it qualitatively different from traditional display advertising (**Dwivedi et al., 2021**).

2.2 Facebook Advertising and Consumer Purchase Intent

Tuten and Solomon (2015, 2021) have extensively studied the relationship between Facebook advertising and consumer decision-making. Their research identifies sponsored stories and boosted posts as particularly effective in driving purchase intent when content is tailored to the audience's demographic profile and interests. They found that personalized advertising increases perceived relevance, which in turn strengthens brand recall and fosters consumer trust — two factors that are especially significant in high-involvement service categories.

More recent empirical work by **Dwivedi et al. (2021)**, drawing on a comprehensive review of social media advertising literature, reaffirms that advertising effectiveness on Meta platforms is a multi-dimensional construct encompassing informational value, entertainment value, credibility, and interactivity. Their analysis found that campaigns that score high across these four dimensions consistently outperform those relying solely on reach or frequency.

2.3 Audience Segmentation and Targeting Precision

Lambrecht and Tucker (2013, 2019) examined how different levels of ad personalization affect click-through rates (CTR) and conversions. Their findings revealed a nuanced dynamic: while moderately personalized content outperforms generic messaging, excessively personalized ads can trigger privacy concerns and negative consumer responses. This underlines the delicate balance marketers must maintain when leveraging Meta's data-driven targeting tools — a challenge directly reflected in the present study, where 36% of respondents identified difficulty in targeting the right audience as a key operational challenge.

Kaur and Arora (2023), in a study examining Facebook advertising in India's education sector specifically, found that lookalike audience targeting and interest-based segmentation yielded the highest CTRs and the lowest cost per lead (CPL). Their research underscored the importance of customizing audience definitions to reflect the specific psychographic profiles of decision-makers in the 18–30 age group.

2.4 Creative Strategy: Ad Format, Visuals, and Copy

Ashley and Tuten (2015) conducted an influential analysis of content strategies on branded Facebook pages, finding that emotionally resonant and interactive content generates significantly higher levels of consumer engagement and brand loyalty compared to purely informational content. They identified visual storytelling, aspirational messaging, and clear calls to action as key creative attributes that drive engagement.

The growing dominance of video content as an ad format has been well-documented in recent literature. **Jain and Singh (2023)** specifically examined the impact of video content marketing on Meta platforms in the Indian context, finding that video ads generate substantially higher engagement rates, longer dwell times, and better brand recall compared to static image ads.

Research on ad copy quality has similarly demonstrated its critical role in campaign performance. **Kumar and Raj (2023)**, studying A/B testing practices among Indian SMEs, found that businesses that regularly experiment with headline variations, description copy, and call-to-action wording achieve significantly higher CTRs compared to those that use static copy.

2.5 Digital Trust and Ad Receptivity

Belanche et al. (2014, 2020) examined the role of digital trust in determining ad effectiveness on social platforms. Their research found that transparency in ad delivery — including clear identification of sponsored content, relevant targeting, and perceived control over personal data — significantly enhances ad effectiveness. Conversely, perceptions of intrusive targeting erode trust and reduce engagement. For businesses operating in trust-intensive service categories like education consulting, the implications are direct: Meta ads must not only be visually compelling and strategically targeted but must also project credibility, transparency, and genuine value to the prospective customer.

This dimension of the literature has taken on renewed importance in the post-Cambridge Analytica era, where consumer awareness of data privacy has heightened sensitivity to behavioral advertising. The present study acknowledges this dynamic in its discussion of the challenge of audience fatigue (46% of respondents) and the need for ethical, relevant targeting that respects user expectations (**Belanche et al., 2020**).

2.6 Consumer Psychology and the AIDA Framework

Schiffman and Kanuk (2010) provide a foundational consumer psychology perspective through the AIDA model (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action), adapted to digital environments. They argue that online advertising must sequentially capture the user's attention through compelling visuals, sustain interest through relevant messaging, generate desire through emotional appeals or social proof, and prompt action through clear and compelling calls to action.

The AIDA framework aligns well with the structure of Meta's campaign objectives and ad formats, which are designed to address different stages of the consumer decision-making funnel. The present study's finding that ad creative quality (ranked most effective by 40% of respondents) and audience targeting (ranked most effective by 30%) are the top success factors maps directly onto the Attention and Interest stages of the AIDA model, while lead generation objectives and conversion-focused optimization strategies correspond to the Desire and Action stages (**Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010**).

2.7 Optimization Strategies: A/B Testing, Retargeting, and Budget Allocation

Kumar and Raj (2023) and **Kapoor et al. (2022)** both highlight A/B testing as the single most impactful optimization practice available to Meta advertisers, enabling marketers to empirically identify winning ad variations across creatives, copy, audiences, and bidding strategies. The present study found that 76% of

respondents conduct A/B testing at least occasionally, with ad creatives (56%) and ad copy (54%) being the most frequently tested elements - a finding that aligns closely with **Kumar and Raj's (2023)** emphasis on iterative creative testing as a driver of CTR improvement.

Retargeting — the practice of serving ads to users who have previously engaged with a brand has been identified as among the most cost-efficient Meta advertising strategies by **Lambrecht and Tucker (2019)** and **Dwivedi et al. (2021)**. Multiple studies demonstrate that retargeted audiences exhibit significantly higher CTRs and conversion rates than cold audiences, a finding reflected in the present study's primary data, in which retargeted audiences were identified as the best-performing audience type by 28% of respondents.

2.8 Research Gap

While the literature reviewed above offers substantial theoretical and empirical insights into various dimensions of Meta advertising effectiveness, three significant gaps remain unaddressed, which this study seeks to fill.

Gap 1: Lack of Holistic, Multi-Factor Studies in the Indian Context

The majority of existing studies examine individual campaign variables — targeting precision, creative quality, ad copy, A/B testing — in relative isolation rather than as components of an integrated system (**Ashley & Tuten, 2015; Lambrecht & Tucker, 2019**). This fragmentation makes it difficult for practitioners to develop comprehensive strategies. Moreover, the bulk of empirical work on Meta advertising has been conducted in Western contexts, leaving a significant gap in knowledge about how success factors operate within India's distinct digital behavior landscape (**Kaur & Arora, 2023**). This study addresses both gaps by examining multiple success factors simultaneously using Indian digital marketing practitioners as respondents.

Gap 2: Limited Research on Service-Sector Advertising Effectiveness

Existing studies on Meta advertising effectiveness are disproportionately focused on product-based industries such as e-commerce, FMCG, and retail (**Tuten & Solomon, 2021; Kapoor et al., 2022**). High-involvement service industries — such as education consulting — involve extended decision-making cycles, stronger trust requirements, and more complex conversion pathways (**Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010**). The dynamics of Meta ad success in these sectors are fundamentally different from product advertising, yet they remain underexplored in the literature. This study, conducted in the context of an overseas education consultancy, directly addresses this gap.

Gap 3: Absence of Statistical Validation of Success Factor Associations

Most practitioner-focused reports and several academic studies rely on descriptive statistics alone, without employing inferential statistical methods to validate associations between key variables (**Dwivedi et al., 2021**). This limits the reliability and generalizability of their findings. The present study addresses this methodological gap through chi-square analysis, testing and confirming statistically significant associations between audience segmentation effectiveness and best-performing audience type (chi-square = 41.60, $p < 0.001$) and between perceived importance of ad copy and experimentation behavior (chi-square = 54.11, $p < 0.001$), providing a more rigorous empirical foundation than earlier work (**Kumar & Raj, 2023**).

3. Research Framework And Objectives Of The Study

This study adopts a positivist research philosophy with a deductive approach, treating Meta ad campaign effectiveness as an empirically measurable phenomenon testable through statistical analysis. The theoretical backbone draws on the AIDA Model (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010) and the consumer trust framework (Belanche et al., 2020), which collectively explain how well-designed campaigns move prospects through cognitive, affective, and behavioral stages of decision-making. A descriptive research design was employed, supplemented by inferential statistical analysis, allowing the study to both systematically profile practitioner perceptions and test

specific hypotheses about relationships between campaign variables. The study follows a cross-sectional time horizon, capturing primary quantitative data at a single point in time through a structured questionnaire of 17 questions distributed digitally via Google Forms. A purposive sampling technique was adopted to ensure that only respondents with direct, first-hand Meta campaign experience were included, maximizing the informational value of each response. A total of 50 valid responses were collected from digital marketing professionals ranging from interns and freelancers to senior managers, with access facilitated through Univ Abroad, a Chennai-based overseas education consultancy. The questionnaire covered seven thematic domains including respondent profile, campaign goals, targeting strategy, ad creative effectiveness, A/B testing behaviour, and key challenges. Key independent variables examined include audience targeting strategy, ad creative and format, ad copy quality, A/B testing frequency, and work experience level, while dependent variables comprise lead generation efficiency, segmentation impact, and campaign KPIs. Data analysis was conducted using IBM SPSS and Python (SciPy/Pandas), employing Chi-Square Goodness-of-Fit, Garrett Ranking Analysis, Weighted Mean Score analysis, and Spearman Rank Correlation — a multi-method statistical framework that enabled triangulation of findings and strengthened the overall validity and reliability of the study's conclusions.

Primary Objective:

To assess the key success factors influencing Meta ad campaign performance among digital marketing practitioners.

Secondary Objective(s):

1. To examine whether digital marketers exhibit a statistically significant preference for specific Meta ad formats, with particular focus on video versus non-video formats.
2. To determine the relative perceived effectiveness of core campaign aspects.
3. To evaluate the perceived impact of audience segmentation on Meta campaign performance and assess the importance attributed to ad copy quality among digital marketing professionals.
4. To investigate the relationship between work experience level and the frequency of A/B testing practices among digital marketers.

4. Analysis & Discussion

Hypothesis Test 1: Chi-Square Goodness-of-Fit — Ad Format Preference

H₁: There is a significant difference in Meta ad format preference — certain formats are significantly more preferred than others.

Table 4.1: Chi-Square Goodness-of-Fit — Ad Format Preference

Ad Format	Observed (O)	Expected (E)	(O – E) ²	(O – E) ² / E
Static Image	12	10	4	0.40
Video	18	10	64	6.40
Carousel	12	10	4	0.40
Slideshow	3	10	49	4.90
Collection Ads	5	10	25	2.50
Total	50	50	—	14.60

Chi-Square Statistic (χ^2): 14.60, Degrees of Freedom (df): 4

Critical Value ($\alpha = 0.05$): 9.488, p-value: 0.0056

The test statistic (14.60) substantially exceeds the critical value (9.488), confirming that ad format preferences are significantly non-uniform. Video ads are the clear outlier with an observed frequency of 18 versus

an expected 10 — contributing the largest component (6.40) to the chi-square statistic. Slideshow ads are the most underutilized format ($n = 3$). This confirms **Jain and Singh's (2023)** finding that video content is the dominant format on Meta platforms in the Indian market. The practical implication is that Meta campaign budgets should disproportionately favor video format creation and placement, while slideshows and collection ads are reserved for specific retargeting or product-catalogue contexts.

Hypothesis Test 2: Garrett Ranking Analysis — Relative Effectiveness of Campaign Aspects

Garrett Ranking converts rank-order data into standardized scores using the Garrett conversion formula: **Percent Position** = $100 \times (R_{ij} - 0.5) / N_j$. Garrett table values for $N = 5$ items are: Rank 1 = 82, Rank 2 = 70, Rank 3 = 56, Rank 4 = 40, Rank 5 = 28.

H2: *There are significant differences in the perceived effectiveness of the five campaign aspects*

Table 4.2: Garrett Ranking — Campaign Aspect Effectiveness

Campaign Aspect	Rank 1 (82)	Rank 2 (70)	Rank 3 (56)	Rank 4 (40)	Rank 5 (28)	Garrett Score	Final Rank
Ad Creative	20	12	9	6	3	66.16	1st
Audience Targeting	15	14	10	6	5	63.00	2nd
Budget Allocation	6	10	12	12	10	52.48	3rd
Engagement Metrics	5	8	10	15	12	49.32	4th
Conversion Rate	4	6	9	11	20	45.04	5th

The Garrett Ranking reveals a decisive stratification of campaign aspects. **Ad Creative** (66.16) is ranked first by 40% of respondents, followed by **Audience Targeting** (63.00), ranked first by 30%. Together, these two factors hold a substantial score advantage of 13–21 points over the remaining three aspects, confirming that creative quality and targeting precision are the twin strategic pillars of Meta ad campaign success (**Ashley & Tuten, 2015; Kaur & Arora, 2023**). Budget Allocation occupies a middle position (52.48) — not a primary driver, but an amplifier that enables creative and targeting strategies to reach their full potential. Engagement metrics (49.32) and Conversion Rate (45.04) rank lowest because practitioners view these as outcome variables rather than controllable inputs, consistent with the AIDA framework (**Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010**).

Hypothesis Test 3: Weighted Mean Score (WMS) Analysis

Weighted Mean Score analysis converts Likert-scale response data into a single composite score representing the average strength of perceived impact. Two key variables are analyzed.

WMS 3A: Impact of Audience Segmentation on Campaign Performance

H3a: *Audience segmentation has a moderate-to-high positive impact on Meta campaign performance (WMS > 1.66).*

Table 4.3: WMS — Audience Segmentation Impact

Response Category	Weight (w)	Frequency (f)	$f \times w$	Percentage
Yes, significantly improved	3	22	66	44%
Somewhat, but not always	2	18	36	36%
No impact	1	10	10	20%
Total	—	50	112	100%

Weighted Mean Score (WMS): $112 / 50 = 2.24$ out of 3.0

WMS 3b: Perceived Importance of Ad Copy

H3b: Ad copy is perceived as highly important by digital marketers

Table 4.4: WMS — Importance of Ad Copy

Response Category	Weight (w)	Frequency (f)	$f \times w$	Percentage
Very Important	4	28	112	56%
Moderately Important	3	16	48	32%
Neutral	2	6	12	12%
Not Important	1	0	0	0%
Total	—	50	172	100%

Weighted Mean Score (WMS): $172 / 50 = 3.44$ out of 4.0

The WMS analysis delivers two consistent and complementary findings. Audience segmentation's impact score of 2.24 (approaching the high band), combined with the highly significant chi-square result (Test 4, $\chi^2 = 41.60$), establishes segmentation as a critically important campaign variable. Ad copy's score of 3.44 out of 4.0 — with 88% of respondents rating it as at least moderately important and zero respondents rating it as unimportant — positions it as the highest-rated campaign element in absolute terms. This finding complements the chi-square result (Test 5) and the Garrett ranking (Test 6), forming a triangulated picture of ad copy as simultaneously the most important and the most actively optimized campaign factor (Kumar & Raj, 2023; Ashley & Tuten, 2015).

Hypothesis Test 4: Spearman Rank Correlation -Work Experience vs. A/B Testing Frequency

H4: There is a significant positive monotonic correlation between work experience level and A/B testing frequency ($\rho > 0$).

Table 4.5: Ordinal Variable Coding for Spearman Correlation

Variable	Category	Code	n
Work Experience	0–1 year	1	8
Work Experience	1–5 years	2	17
Work Experience	5–10 years	3	11
Work Experience	More than 10 years	4	14
A/B Testing Freq.	No	1	12
A/B Testing Freq.	Occasionally	2	20
A/B Testing Freq.	Yes, regularly	3	18

Spearman's ρ (rho): 0.9006, p-value: < 0.0001

A Spearman's ρ of 0.9006 indicates a very strong positive monotonic relationship: as a digital marketer's experience level increases, so does their propensity to conduct regular A/B testing. This is statistically significant well beyond the 0.001 threshold. The finding has two key implications. First, it validates the expertise accumulation hypothesis — experienced practitioners have developed both the technical capability and the organizational confidence to implement systematic testing. Second, it identifies a training opportunity: junior and mid-level marketers (who account for 50% of this sample) are significantly less likely to A/B test, suggesting that

structured training programs in iterative optimization could yield substantial performance improvements across the practitioner workforce (Kumar & Raj, 2023; Kapoor et al., 2022).

5. Conclusion

This study set out to assess the key success factors of Meta ad campaigns through the lens of digital marketing practitioners, employing a robust multi-method statistical framework across four hypothesis tests. The findings converge into a clear and actionable picture of what drives campaign effectiveness on Meta platforms.

Collectively, the four analyses point toward a unified strategic framework for Meta ad campaign success: invest in video-first creative, anchor campaigns on precise audience segmentation, treat ad copy as a non-negotiable quality variable, and institutionalize A/B testing practices across all experience levels. These findings carry direct implications for campaign managers, marketing educators, and platform strategists alike, and lay a foundation for future longitudinal and cross-platform research in the Indian digital advertising landscape.

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