From Click to Conversion: How Carousel Ads Trigger Lead Generation

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Social media advertising has become a central component of contemporary marketing strategies, enabling firms to reach and influence consumers directly within their daily media environments. Social media platforms offer advertisers multiple ad formats through which similar information can be delivered, including single-image, video, and carousel advertisements. However, prior research provides mixed evidence regarding the relative effectiveness of these formats. Drawing on interactivity research, Self-Determination Theory, and the foot-in-the-door literature, this study examines whether carousel advertisements influence consumer engagement by increasing perceived control over the advertising experience. In an experiment comparing carousel, video, and single-image ads, we test the effects of advertising format on lead generation and click-through intentions. Results indicate that carousel ads increase engagement-related responses relative to alternative formats. Mediation analyses further suggest these effects are driven by higher perceived control, highlighting the role of structured interactivity in performance-oriented social media advertising.