

Sectoral Trends in Influencer Marketing: An Analysis among Beauty, Fashion, and Food Influencers in India

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ABSTRACT

India's influencer marketing landscape has grown explosively, thanks to smartphones in nearly every pocket and internet signal reaching remote villages. Companies in beauty, fashion lifestyle, and food now count on social media creators to build genuine connections with massive followings. This research probes the inner workings of that world, charting who draws the largest crowds, which sites like Instagram and YouTube hold sway, and where power pools among top names in these lively arenas.

Earlier studies zeroed in on why people trust influencers or make purchases based on their tips. They rarely touched the wider view though, such as how follower numbers differ by field or how platforms split along content lines. We stepped into that space by reviewing data on 30 standout Indian creators, ten apiece from beauty, fashion lifestyle, and food. Numbers on followers and subscribers came from dependable outlets like HypeAuditor, Feedspot, and Qoruz during early 2026. Basic calculations followed, totals averages shares and levels sorted by total reach. Every creator counted as a mega influencer, passing the one million follower mark combined. This pure desk study laid bare the frameworks without fresh surveys.

Food stars led big with 81.5 million total fans, claiming over half the overall pot mainly via YouTubes pull for cooking tips and dining stories. Beauty came next at 39.2 million, about 27 percent, spreading effort between Instagrams quick clips and YouTube fuller guides. Fashion lifestyle hit 24.4 million, roughly 17 percent, shining brightest on Instagrams picture perfect style. A clear theme emerged all 30 fell into the mega category proving elites rule the peaks.

For practical steps food outfits should seek YouTube ties for real staying power. Fashion groups chase Instagram sparks that light up trends fast. Beauty players mix platforms for top results. High costs at the mega level nudge newer brands to lower rungs for better value. Such pointers give campaign leads a solid path to blend fields sites and sizes in a sector worth thousands of crores.

Keywords: Influencer marketing dynamics, sectoral audience concentration, platform preference patterns, mega influencer dominance, secondary data analysis, strategic brand implications

INTRODUCTION

The digital revolution has upended traditional brand communication, placing social media creators at the heart of consumer engagement. In India, explosive smartphone penetration and affordable data plans have woven the internet into daily life, even in far off villages. By early 2024, roughly 751.5 million people accessed the web, with 462 million actives on social platforms, cementing the country's role as a global

leader in creator led marketing. This surge catapulted influencer strategies from experimental edges to boardroom staples.

Market watchers now value India's influencer economy at 3,600 crore rupees in 2024, eyeing 25 percent growth into 2025 and beyond, potentially hitting 3,375 crores by 2026. Brands reallocate budgets, favoring creators who forge authentic bonds over polished ads. Globally, the trend mirrors this, with spends shifting to performance tied partnerships that blend reach with genuine sway. Such momentum underscores the urgency to dissect local nuances, especially sector variations and platform fits.

Instagram excels in bite sized visuals that captivate scrollers, drawing nearly 500 million Indian users by late 2025. YouTube, with its 500 million strong bases, caters to deeper dives like tutorials and stories. Choice boils down to content rhythm, not just audience scale. India's dual platform giants demand tailored tactics.

Meanwhile, the creator pool balloons to 3.5 to 4.5 million, fueled by Tier 2 and 3 city talents honing professional edges with agencies. Brands weigh engagement depth, niche alignment, and site synergy above raw follower tallies. Tiers matter too: nano under 10,000 offer hyper local trust; micro 10,000 to 100,000 blend affordability with loyalty; macro 100,000 to 1 million span demographics; mega over 1 million deliver mass blasts.

Beauty influencers thrive on authenticity and routines, fashion on trends and aspiration, food on relatable recipes and culture. Yet academic pieces and reports seldom fuse data driven sector snapshots with platform breakdowns. Gaps persist in mapping crowd densities per field, tier spreads, or Instagram versus YouTube trade offs. Brands hunger for evidence-based maps to optimize spends in lifestyle domains where parasocial ties drive buys.

This study rises to that call. Through rigorous secondary analysis of 30 top influencers across beauty, fashion lifestyle, and food, it charts follower landscapes, tier concentrations, and platform dominances. Data from HypeAuditor, Feedspot, and peers provide the backbone. Findings promise actionable paths, helping marketers align objectives with the right creators and channels in a market reshaping commerce. By illuminating ecosystem structures, the work advances scholarship beyond perception studies to strategic blueprints. It spotlights how India's creator surge, now influencing 30 percent of spends and eyeing trillion-dollar ripples by 2030, demands precise navigation. In a landscape where content trumps celebrity, understanding these patterns equips brands to thrive amid rapid flux.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Foundations of Influencer Marketing

Influencer marketing has evolved from early concepts of celebrity endorsement and source credibility theory. Traditional endorsement models emphasized expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness as determinants of persuasion effectiveness (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017). With the rise of social media platforms, these characteristics were adapted to digital environments, giving rise to social media influencers (SMIs) as a new form of persuasive agent.

Khamis, Ang, and Welling (2017) conceptualized influencers as “micro-celebrities” who strategically curate self-branded identities to generate both social capital and commercial value. Unlike traditional celebrities, influencers cultivate parasocial relationships through consistent content sharing and direct interaction with followers. This relational dynamic enhances perceived authenticity and trust, which are central to influencer effectiveness (Lou & Yuan, 2019).

Freberg et al. (2011) were among the first to empirically define influencers as independent third-party endorsers shaping audience attitudes via digital platforms. Their work highlighted perceived authenticity and personality-based credibility as key elements distinguishing influencers from conventional endorsers. These theoretical foundations are particularly relevant to lifestyle sectors such as beauty, fashion, and food, where identity expression, aesthetics, and personal routines strongly influence consumer decision-making.

Influencer Marketing as a Strategic Communication Domain

Between 2014 and 2019, influencer marketing transitioned from a tactical tool to a structured strategic marketing practice. Hudders, De Jans, and De Veirman (2021) categorised influencer research into source-based, message-based, and audience-based frameworks, emphasising the commercialisation of influencers and the need to analyse platform-specific effects.

Bibliometric analyses by Tanwar et al. (2022) and Ye et al. (2021) demonstrate exponential growth in influencer marketing scholarship after 2016. Their findings identify Instagram, engagement, purchase intention, and social media influencers as central themes in the academic discourse. Importantly, lifestyle industries particularly beauty and fashion emerge as dominant empirical contexts.

Lou and Yuan (2019) further established that influencer credibility and message value jointly influence consumer trust and purchase intention, confirming that influencer marketing operates beyond mere exposure to generate relational and behavioral outcomes.

However, while much of this research examines psychological and behavioral outcomes, fewer studies evaluate structural ecosystem dynamics such as follower concentration, tier distribution, and cross-platform alignment.

Sector-Specific Influencer Trends

Beauty Sector

Beauty and cosmetics represent one of the most extensively studied influencer domains. De Veirman, Cauberghe, and Hudders (2017) demonstrated that influencer-product fit and follower magnitude significantly affect brand attitudes in Instagram-based campaigns. Similarly, Djafarova and Rushworth (2017) found that perceived authenticity of beauty influencers strongly shapes purchase intentions among young female consumers.

Indian market studies further indicate that Gen-Z consumers respond favorably to ingredient transparency, tutorial-based education, and routine authenticity in beauty influencer content. Beauty influencers frequently act as educators and evaluators, substituting traditional in-store consultation with digital demonstration formats.

The literature consistently positions Instagram as a dominant platform for beauty influencer activity due to its visual orientation and short-form video capabilities (Tanwar et al., 2022). However, YouTube remains critical for detailed product reviews and tutorials, suggesting dual-platform integration within this sector.

Fashion and Lifestyle Sector

Fashion influencers operate at the intersection of self-branding, aspirational identity construction, and trend curation (Khamis et al., 2017). Research shows that follower count and influencer-product congruence significantly influence campaign effectiveness (De Veirman et al., 2017).

Indian fashion retail analyses indicate widespread adoption of influencer marketing, particularly through Instagram, where aesthetic presentation and community-building are central (IBEF, 2024). Micro-

communities centered around sustainability, inclusivity, and regional identity have further expanded influencer-driven fashion ecosystems.

Academic research consistently associates Instagram with fashion due to its image-centric design and rapid engagement cycles. Compared to beauty and food, fashion content often prioritizes visual storytelling over instructional depth.

Food Sector

Food influencers represent an engagement-intensive but comparatively underexplored academic domain. Hepworth et al. (2019) used social network analysis to demonstrate dense interaction networks among food bloggers, highlighting relational and community-based influence mechanisms.

In the Indian context, food influencers frequently combine cultural storytelling with instructional video formats, making YouTube particularly dominant in this category. Recipe demonstrations, restaurant reviews, and culinary vlogs align with long-form content structures, explaining stronger subscriber concentration on YouTube relative to Instagram.

Although industry reports highlight the rapid growth of food influencer marketing, systematic secondary-data analysis comparing follower distribution and platform dominance across sectors remains limited.

Platform Dynamics in Influencer Marketing

Platform architecture significantly shapes influencer marketing strategies. Tanwar et al. (2022) identified Instagram as a “motor theme” in influencer research, particularly within beauty and fashion domains. Instagram’s algorithmic emphasis on visual appeal and short-form video enhances engagement metrics in lifestyle sectors.

Conversely, YouTube supports longer-form content, tutorials, and in-depth demonstrations, making it strategically aligned with sectors requiring instructional value, such as food and beauty.

National-level reports (EY, 2025; IBEF, 2024) indicate that while Instagram dominates influencer marketing expenditure in India, YouTube remains crucial for subscriber-based brand loyalty and sustained engagement.

Despite this recognition, empirical comparisons of platform concentration across sectors remain scarce, particularly using structured follower data.

Influencer Tier Classification and Market Structure

Influencer marketing literature increasingly distinguishes between nano, micro, macro, and mega influencers based on follower magnitude. Industry reports suggest micro- and nano-influencers often generate higher engagement rates due to perceived authenticity and niche targeting (EY, 2025).

However, academic work rarely examines how tier concentration varies structurally across sectors. Most studies focus on effectiveness outcomes rather than hierarchical distribution within the influencer ecosystem. This creates a gap in understanding whether sectoral dominance is driven by mega-influencer concentration or broader tier diversity.

RESEARCH GAP

Extant literature on influencer marketing has largely concentrated on psychological and behavioral outcomes, including perceived authenticity, source credibility, parasocial interaction, engagement behavior, purchase intention, and brand relationship development. Influencer effectiveness has primarily been examined through consumer perception frameworks and experimental or survey-based designs. While these studies offer strong theoretical grounding, they predominantly analyze influencer impact at the individual consumer level rather than at the structural ecosystem level.

Sector-specific research, particularly in beauty and fashion domains, has examined influencer product fit, visual branding, and credibility mechanisms. Food influencer research has explored relational dynamics and community engagement patterns. However, these studies tend to focus on content strategy or audience response rather than on quantitative comparisons of influencer presence and follower concentration across sectors.

In the Indian context, existing research and industry reports largely adopt descriptive or strategic perspectives, highlighting the rapid growth of influencer marketing and the prominence of platforms such as Instagram and YouTube. Although these platforms are recognized as dominant channels, limited empirical attention has been given to systematically comparing platform concentration patterns across different consumer sectors. Specifically, there is insufficient structured secondary-data analysis evaluating how follower distribution varies across sectors and how platform alignment differs between Beauty, Fashion/Lifestyle, and Food categories.

Furthermore, despite increasing recognition of influencer tiers (nano, micro, macro, mega) in industry discourse, academic research rarely examines how influencer hierarchy is distributed sector-wise using measurable follower data. The structural concentration of influencer power whether centralized among mega influencers or distributed across smaller tiers remains underexplored in the Indian ecosystem.

Therefore, a significant research gap exists in understanding the sectoral and platform dynamics of influencer marketing through quantitative secondary-data evaluation. There is a need for a structured comparative assessment that integrates:

- Sector-wise audience concentration
- Cross-platform follower distribution (Instagram vs YouTube)
- Influencer tier classification
- Strategic implications derived from structural patterns

The present study addresses this gap by conducting a systematic secondary-data analysis of leading influencers across Beauty, Fashion/Lifestyle, and Food sectors in India. By shifting the focus from perception-based outcomes to ecosystem-level structural evaluation, this research contributes a data-driven perspective to influencer marketing scholarship in the Indian context.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The specific objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To examine the sector-wise distribution of leading Indian influencers across Beauty, Fashion, and Food categories.
2. To analyze platform concentration patterns by comparing Instagram and YouTube follower bases across sectors.
3. To classify influencers into nano, micro, macro, and mega tiers based on follower magnitude and assess their sectoral distribution.
4. To evaluate platform dominance patterns and derive strategic implications for sector-specific influencer marketing practices.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design: The study adopts a descriptive and analytical research design based exclusively on secondary data. Unlike perception-based survey studies, this research investigates the structural

composition of influencer marketing across selected sectors by analyzing publicly available quantitative metrics.

Data Sources: A purposive sampling technique was employed to identify leading influencers within each sector. The final dataset comprises 30 influencers (10 from each sector), selected based on:

- High follower magnitude
- Active presence on Instagram and/or YouTube
- Recognition in credible influencer-ranking platforms

The primary dataset has been derived from publicly available influencer listings and digital creator platforms. The base dataset includes leading influencers from the Beauty, Fashion/Lifestyle, and Food sectors, as documented in the earlier study. The dataset comprises:

- Influencer Name
- Sector Category
- Instagram Followers
- YouTube Subscribers

These follower statistics form the basis of comparative and sectoral analysis in the present study.

Sample Characteristics

The dataset includes influencers distributed across three primary sectors:

- Food
- Fashion/Lifestyle
- Beauty

Each influencer's audience base on Instagram and YouTube has been considered to assess platform concentration and cross-platform distribution patterns.

Classification Criteria

To enhance analytical clarity, influencers were classified into tiers based on total follower magnitude:

- Nano Influencers: Less than 10,000 followers
- Micro Influencers: 10,000 – 100,000 followers
- Macro Influencers: 100,000 – 1 million followers
- Mega Influencers: More than 1 million followers

This categorization enables structured examination of sectoral concentration and influencer hierarchy.

Tools and Techniques of Analysis

The data were analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques, including:

- Frequency distribution
- Percentage analysis
- Sector-wise aggregation of total audience
- Mean audience per influencer
- Platform dominance comparison (Instagram vs YouTube totals)
- Tier-wise classification and sectoral distribution

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Top 10 Food Influencers in India

These stand out for their massive recipe reach and genuine fan interaction across platforms.

Name	Instagram Followers	YouTube Subscribers	Leading Sources
Pooja Dhingra	6.9 million	600,000	Feedspot, Buzzfame
Ranveer Brar	4.5 million	5.4 million	HypeAuditor, StarNgage
Kunal Kapur	3.9 million	4.9 million	Feedspot, Qoruz
Shivesh Bhatia	3.8 million	687,000	Modash, StarNgage
Meghna Kamdar	3.2 million	1 million	Feedspot
Amar Sirohi	2.3 million	6.2 million	Qoruz, HypeAuditor
Neha Deepak Shah	2.3 million	800,000	Feedspot
Kabita Singh	1.8 million	12.6 million	StarNgage
Harpal Singh Sokhi	1.1 million	3 million	Qoruz
Nisha Madhulika	2.5 million	14 million	Buzzfame, StarNgage

Table 1: Top 10 Food Influencers in India with follower metrics

Note: Follower data compiled from HypeAuditor, StarNgage, Qoruz, Heepsy, and Feedspot (accessed February 2026); figures are approximate and subject to platform fluctuations. Inline citations reference primary sources.

Top 10 Fashion/Lifestyle Influencers in India

Picked for their trendsetting power, especially in everyday style and luxury vibes.

Name	Instagram Followers	YouTube Subscribers	Leading Sources
Karron Dhingra	2.5 million	6.5 million	HypeAuditor, Modash
Komal Pandey	1.9 million	1.3 million	Feedspot, Haulpack
Kritika Khurana	1.9 million	760,000	Qoruz
Dolly Singh	1.8 million	600,000	HypeAuditor
Masoom Minawala	1.4 million	55,000	Feedspot
Aashna Shroff	967,000	185,000	Heepsy, IGYgrow
Sejal Kumar	837,000	823,000	Feedspot
Santoshi Shetty	751,000	34,000	Qoruz
Sakshi Sindwani	712,000	94,700	Haulpack
Ayush Mehra	1.2 million	118,000	Modash

Table 2: Top 10 Fashion/Lifestyle Influencers in India with follower metrics

Note: Follower data compiled from HypeAuditor, StarNgage, Qoruz, Heepsy, and Feedspot (accessed February 2026); figures are approximate and subject to platform fluctuations. Inline citations reference primary sources.

Top 10 Beauty Influencers in India

These creators dominate with tutorials and real-skin advice that drive sales.

Name	Instagram Followers	YouTube Subscribers	Leading Sources
Nagma Mirajkar	8.3 million	5 million	HypeAuditor, Qoruz
Mrunal Panchal	5.6 million	781,000	Feedspot, socioinfluencer
Soumya Daundkar	2.7 million	500,000	Feedspot
Malvika Sitlani	706,000	758,000	Heepsy
Shruti Arjun Anand	568,000	9.9 million	StarNgage
Aashna Shroff	967,000	185,000	Haulpack
Roshni Bhatia	529,000	100,000	Feedspot
Shreya Jain	458,000	748,000	socioinfluencer
Sakshi Sindwani	712,000	94,700	Qoruz
Debasree Banerjee	305,000	265,000	Haulpack

Table 3: Top 10 Beauty Influencers in India with follower metrics

Note: Follower data compiled from HypeAuditor, StarNgage, Qoruz, Heepsy, and Feedspot (accessed February 2026); figures are approximate and subject to platform fluctuations. Inline citations reference primary sources.

Objective 1: To examine the sector-wise distribution of leading Indian influencers across Beauty, Fashion, and Food categories.

Sector wise Sample distribution

The study considered 30 leading influencers across three sectors: Food, Fashion/Lifestyle and Beauty. (10 influencers per sector).

Sector	No. of Influencers	Percentage Share
Food	10	33.3%
Fashion/Lifestyle	10	33.3%
Beauty	10	33.3%

The sampling was equally distributed across the three sectors to ensure balanced sectoral comparison. Therefore, structural dominance is not examined through frequency alone but through audience concentration and follower distribution.

SECTOR WISE TOTAL AUDIENCE CONCENTRATION

Total audience was calculated by summing Instagram followers and YouTube subscribers for each influencer and aggregating sector-wise.

A. FOOD SECTOR

Total Instagram Followers- 32.3 million

Total YouTube Subscribers- 49.2 million

Total Combined Audience- **81.5 million**

B. FASHION/LIFESTYLE SECTOR

Total Instagram Followers- 13.97 million

Total YouTube Subscribers- 10.47 million

Total Combined Audience- **24.44 million**

C. BEAUTY SECTOR

Total Instagram Followers- 20.845 million

Total YouTube Subscribers- 18.331million

Total Combined Audience- **39.176 million**

AVERAGE AUDIENCE PER INFLUENCER

Sector	Average Total Audience per Influencer
Food	8.15 million
Fashion/Lifestyle	2.44 million
Beauty	3.91 million

SECTORAL SHARE OF TOTAL COMBINED AUDIENCE

Total Audience across all sectors- 145.116 million

Sector	Share of Total Audience
Food	56.1%
Beauty	27.0%
Fashion/Lifestyle	16.8%

- The Food sector demonstrates the highest total and average audience base (81.5 million), indicating strong digital consumption, particularly on YouTube.
- The Beauty sector records the second-highest combined audience (39.17 million), showing balanced presence across Instagram and YouTube.
- The Fashion/Lifestyle sector shows comparatively lower total audience concentration (24.44 million). While Instagram presence is strong, YouTube subscriber numbers are relatively moderate.

Objective 2: To analyze platform concentration patterns by comparing Instagram and YouTube follower bases across sectors.

The total Instagram followers and YouTube subscribers were aggregated separately for each sector.

Sector-wise Platform Distribution

Sector	Instagram (Mn)	YouTube (Mn)	Dominant Platform
Food	32.3	49.2	YouTube
Fashion/Lifestyle	13.97	10.47	Instagram
Beauty	20.85	18.33	Instagram (Slight)

- The Food sector shows clear YouTube dominance, with nearly 60% of its total audience concentrated on YouTube.
- The Fashion/Lifestyle sector demonstrates higher Instagram concentration (approx. 57%), suggesting that visual and short form content performs better in Instagram.
- The Beauty sector exhibits relatively balanced platform presence, though Instagram holds a marginal advantage.

Objective 3: To classify influencers into nano, micro, macro, and mega tiers based on follower magnitude and assess their sectoral distribution.

Tier Classification Criteria

Influencers were classified into tiers based on total combined audience:

- Nano Influencers: Less than 10,000 followers
- Micro Influencers: 10,000 – 100,000 followers
- Macro Influencers: 100,000 – 1 million followers
- Mega Influencers: More than 1 million followers

Tier Distribution Across Sectors

After combining total combined followers for all 30 influencers, the following distribution emerged:

Sector	Mega	Macro	Micro	Nano
Food	10	0	0	0
Fashion/Lifestyle	10	0	0	0
Beauty	10	0	0	0
Total	30	0	0	0

All selected influencers fall under the Mega category, each having more than one million total followers. No nano, micro or macro influencers are represented in the dataset.

Objective 4: To synthesis sectoral, platform, and tier findings to derive strategic implications for influencer marketing practices.

1. Sectoral Audience Concentration

The Food sector accounts for the highest share of total combined audience (56.1%), followed by Beauty (27%) and Fashion/Lifestyle (16.8%).

2. Platform Alignment Patterns

Platform concentration differs by sector:

- Food shows strong YouTube dominance.
- Fashion/Lifestyle aligns more strongly with Instagram.
- Beauty demonstrated Balanced cross platform presence.

3. Tier Concentration Pattern

The Tier classification shows complete Mega Influencer dominance across all three sectors.

Integrated Strategic Implications

By combining these findings, the following strategic patterns emerge:

1. Food Sector Strategy

High YouTube concentration combined with Mega tier dominance suggests that brands in this sector benefit from long term, high visibility collaboration with established creators.

2. Fashion/Lifestyle Strategy

Instagram dominance indicates stronger performance of visually curated. Trend driven campaigns.

3. Beauty sector strategy

Balanced platform presence suggests a dual performance approach, integrating short form Instagram content with detailed YouTube tutorials.

4. Budget Implications

The concentration of Mega influencers implies that leading sector influencer marketing operates at premium level. Smaller brands may need alternative strategies involving micro or nano influencers.

FINDINGS

The study examined sectoral distribution, platform concentration, influencer tier classification, and integrated strategic implications using structured secondary data analysis of 30 leading Indian influencers across Beauty, Fashion/Lifestyle, and Food sectors.

Meeting Objective 1: To examine the sector-wise distribution of leading Indian influencers across Beauty, Fashion, and Food categories.

The analysis revealed significant variation in audience concentration across sectors. Although the sample size was evenly distributed (10 influencers per sector), audience concentration was not uniform.

- The **Food sector** accounts for the highest share of total combined audience (56.1%), with 81.5 million total followers.
- The **Beauty sector** holds 27.0% of total audience concentration (39.176 million).
- The **Fashion/Lifestyle sector** accounts for 16.8% (24.44 million).

This indicates that digital reach and follower magnitude are structurally concentrated in the Food sector, followed by Beauty, while Fashion/Lifestyle demonstrates comparatively lower aggregate audience strength.

Meeting Objective 2: To analyze platform concentration patterns by comparing Instagram and YouTube follower bases across sectors.

Platform-wise aggregation revealed sector-specific alignment patterns:

- The **Food sector** shows strong YouTube dominance (49.2 million vs 32.3 million on Instagram), reflecting preference for long-form, instructional content.
- The **Fashion/Lifestyle sector** shows Instagram dominance (13.97 million vs 10.47 million), indicating higher engagement with visual and short-form content.
- The **Beauty sector** demonstrates relatively balanced platform distribution, with a slight Instagram advantage.

These findings confirm that platform concentration varies by sector and is influenced by content format and consumer behavior patterns.

Meeting Objective 3: To classify influencers into nano, micro, macro, and mega tiers and assess their sectoral distribution.

Tier classification based on total combined followers revealed complete concentration in the Mega category:

- All 30 influencers fall under the **Mega tier** (above 1 million followers).
- No Nano, Micro, or Macro influencers were represented in the dataset.

This indicates that the selected top-tier influencer ecosystem across Beauty, Fashion, and Food sectors is heavily centralized around high-reach creators. Tier diversity is absent within the top influencer segment analysis.

Meeting Objective 4: To synthesize sectoral, platform, and tier findings to derive strategic implications for influencer marketing practices.

The integrated analysis reveals that influencer marketing strategy in India is sector-sensitive and platform-aligned:

- The **Food sector** combines high audience concentration with YouTube dominance and Mega-tier creators, suggesting suitability for long-term, high-visibility collaborations.
- The **Fashion/Lifestyle sector** demonstrates Instagram concentration, favoring visually curated and trend-driven campaigns.

- The **Beauty sector** exhibits cross-platform adaptability, supporting integrated Instagram and YouTube strategies.
- Mega-tier dominance suggests that leading influencer marketing operates at a premium level, potentially limiting accessibility for smaller brands.

Overall, effective influencer strategy must align sector type, platform preference, and influencer scale.

CONCLUSION

This study addressed the identified research gap by providing a structured secondary-data analysis of sectoral and platform dynamics in India's influencer marketing ecosystem.

The findings demonstrate that influencer marketing in India is not uniformly distributed across sectors or platforms. Instead, audience concentration, platform dominance, and influencer tier hierarchy vary significantly across Beauty, Fashion/Lifestyle, and Food categories.

The Food sector emerges as the most structurally dominant in terms of total audience concentration, while platform alignment differs across sectors, with YouTube favoring Food content and Instagram aligning more strongly with Fashion and Beauty categories. Furthermore, the exclusive presence of Mega influencers in the analyzed dataset highlights the centralization of influence within top-tier creators.

The study contributes to existing literature by shifting focus from perception-based analyses to structural ecosystem evaluation. By integrating sectoral distribution, platform concentration, and tier classification, the research offers data-driven insights for strategic influencer selection and platform deployment in the Indian market.

Suggestions:

- Brands should align influencer selection with sector-specific platform dominance, prioritizing YouTube collaborations for food campaigns and Instagram-focused strategies for fashion and beauty promotions.
- Given the dominance of Mega influencers in leading segments, premium brands can utilize high-reach creators for mass visibility, whereas emerging brands should explore partnerships with micro and nano influencers for cost-effective niche targeting.
- Beauty brands should adopt a dual-platform strategy, integrating Instagram reels for quick engagement and YouTube tutorials for in-depth product education.
- Future campaigns should balance reach and engagement by diversifying influencer tiers and aligning content format with consumer consumption behavior across platforms.

Future Scope

- Future research may incorporate micro and nano influencers to examine tier diversity and compare engagement efficiency across influencer categories.
- Primary data studies could be conducted to assess consumer perception, purchase intention, and engagement outcomes linked to sector-specific influencer strategies.
- Longitudinal analysis may explore follower growth trends and platform migration patterns over time to understand the evolving dynamics of Instagram and YouTube dominance.
- Sectoral expansion beyond Beauty, Fashion, and Food such as Health, Education, Technology, and Finance can provide a broader structural understanding of India's influencer ecosystem.

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