Social media engagement
Studying user engagement with beauty brands on Instagram

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Abstract: This study explores what creates engagement on social media, studying user engagement with beauty brands on Instagram. In the last few years, social media has changed the way brands and individuals interact online. Depending on the context, different factors need to be considered in engaging the users. The study uses content analysis to investigate what drives the most engagement in the form of likes on Instagram coupled with semi-structured interviews to find out more detailed explanations and information about the user needs. The study analyses the result, using the information architecture model, containing the relationship between users, content and context, to explain how it relates to what creates engagement on social media. By analysing previous research and the data collected in our study we could reach a result. The study shows that for beauty brands to engage with their followers on Instagram, they first need to understand the users, content and context. Meaning they need to understand the context in which they are posting, what content to post depending on the context and most importantly, the users and what they need.
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1 Introduction

Social media has changed the online interaction among individuals and brands all over the world (Bruhn, Schoenmueller & Schäfer, 2012; He, Zha & Li, 2013). The popularity of social media creates new possibilities for brands to present content and communicate information, which is why it is paramount to have a social media presence (Bruhn et al., 2012; Floreddu & Cabiddu, 2016; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Ungerman & Myslivcová, 2014). As a result of digital channels, there is a new possibility for brands to reach out, and for their information to reach the right audience. It may no longer be a must for companies to have a website, as more companies manage their target group communication exclusively through social media (Mills & Plangger, 2015). Today there are several different social media applications that all afford different activities like branding, marketing, customer care and support (He et al., 2013). The more current information technology society evolves the greater opportunities become, as well as the challenges, for companies to connect, communicate with and engage their target groups.

For companies to succeed with their social media engagement it is essential to be aware of the conditions and possibilities that two-way communication on social media offers, and what the user needs are. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) raise the advantages and importance of two-way communication on social media, which creates interaction and facilitates communication between the companies and the users. Furthermore, they state that this creates an environment where the information and content are of big importance for brand awareness and that companies should use it to their benefit. Thus, for companies to succeed it is a must to have an established strategy on social media to engage their audience (Bruhn et al., 2012; Ungerman & Myslivcová, 2014). Although, what content drives engagement, and based on what factors? This study investigates what creates engagement among users in the beauty community, from an information architecture perspective. This means by analysing the content in the context of Instagram, with the user needs in mind. Information architecture has not only been a relevant topic when it comes to building websites, it has also become highly relevant to incorporate the design of optimal information environments on different media channels (Burford & Resmini, 2017). Information architecture is a practice that structures and designs information environments (Lacerda, Lima-Marques & Resmini, 2018) and is, therefore, a good framework to build the future content and information of businesses upon (Kim, Kim & Lee, 2005).

Through a mix of content analysis and qualitative interviews, this study aims to investigate what creates user engagement on Instagram accounts of companies in the beauty industry in southern Sweden. The quantitative data may reveal patterns in the interaction with the beauty brands’ Instagram pages. This may show what kind of content the users are seeking for as well as appreciate. Burford and Resmini (2017) mention in their study that the quality of information architecture is determined by how well it supports the entire experience of the user. Furthermore, through semi-structured interviews with selected social
media users, the users may offer more in-depth information and background about their preferences in brands’ social media pages.

1.1 Background

Social media builds on the ideology of Web 2.0, which offers user-generated content (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). As a result of Web 2.0, online communication is two-way and allows users to create new content and share information (Mills, 2012). Before social media evolved, traditional business communication served as one-way communication (e.g. print, radio, television), which did not leave much room for customer engagement or for anyone else to share opinions about companies and products. In today's reality, social media has enabled the shift to two-way communication, with a lot of room for dialogues, which generates engagement and better user experience, ensuring stronger and long-lasting customer relationships (Mills & Plangger, 2015).

As a result of social media there is a lot of new opportunities for brands to extract unfiltered opinions and thoughts of their target audience in real-time and at a low cost (Bruhn et al., 2012; Floreddu & Cabiddu, 2016; Russmann & Svensson, 2016). Social media brings new means of engaging (Mills & Plangger, 2015). Although this is positive, being present on different social media platforms also implicates a risk, as users are able to influence the brand’s identity by public comments, images, or other user-generated content that expresses their possibly damaging opinions and experiences (Floreddu & Cabiddu, 2016; Mills & Plangger, 2015; Russmann & Svensson, 2016). Mills and Plangger (2015) suggest that social media platforms are accessible to a broad audience because they are easy to use and mediate tons of content. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010, p. 61) define social media as “a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content.”, implying the evolution of interactive online communication.

Social media enables an online place for customers and brands to connect and build, as well as evolve, relationships through reciprocal interactions of brand and customer behaviors (Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy and Silvestre, 2011; Mills & Plangger, 2015). Furthermore, visual communication studies show that images affect users’ perception of an organization, which is sufficient when it comes to creating their relationship (Russmann & Svensson, 2016). Russmann and Svensson (2016) mean that images influence how people view products and services on brand pages. Additionally, they state that images create legitimacy as well as trust which is building and cherishing the relationship to the user and foster interaction resulting in engagement.

Tsimonis and Dimitriadis (2014) found in their study that a brand’s social media objectives, in general, are to engage and interact with their followers and potential customers through competitions, as an example. Furthermore, they state that common goals are creating relationships, brand awareness, promoting products and creating engagement. Instagram is one of the platforms that allow brands to share content and create a relationship with the users (Casaló, Flavián & Ibáñez-Sánchez, 2017). Since it is such a common platform it creates a lot of
engagement (Casaló et al., 2017; Mills & Plangger, 2015; Balan, 2017). Smith and Derville Gallicano (2015) adds that to create engagement the content needs to be created with the user in mind.

1.2 Problem description

One-way communication, for instance, the traditional website communication, does not generate as many opportunities for customers and users to engage and interact as two-way communication does (Bruhn et al., 2012; Mills & Plangger, 2015). Two-way communication creates conversations, as the brand does not talk to the customer but interacts with the customer (Mills & Plangger, 2015). Ashley and Tuten (2014) similarly express this by explaining that the target audience is no longer a receiver, instead, they are a participant in a conversation. Two-way communication and user-generated content have changed the marketing situation tremendously (Bruhn et al., 2012). This has also resulted in a massive increase in the amount of information on the internet as social media mediates tons of content (Mills & Plangger, 2015). Furthermore, this is also due to the fact that social media organisations can provide their audience with content without having to rely on traditional media (Russmann & Svensson, 2016).

Rosenfeld, Morville, and Arango (2015, p. 442f) explain that information environments are everywhere, and users interact with these information environments. Rosenfeld et al. (2015, p. 11f) discuss how people in today’s society often get overwhelmed with all the information being present in almost any media; radio, TV, and above all, the internet and social media. Therefore, creating a good information architecture is needed for the content to reach the target audience, as it is seen as a framework and practice for structuring and organising an information environment and also in enriching the user experience (Kim et al., 2005; Lacerda et al., 2018; Rosenfeld et al., 2015, p. 356). The target audience, who they are, and what their preferences are, will determine where the brand communication should take place. Furthermore, how successful and engaging the communication and content of a brand is, is determined by their audiences’ engagement, for example, the number of likes on a social media platform (Casaló, Flavián & Ibáñez-Sánchez, 2017; Lee & Hong, 2016). This means that brands are highly dependent on their audience’s participation and engagement. However, knowing what factors of the content are driving this engagement in the form of likes, may be problematic. The reason for this is, as Tsimonis and Dimitriadis (2014) state in their study, that social media is constantly evolving, offering new ways of communicating, leaving companies to test and explore by themselves. Burford and Resmini (2017) similarly describe how representations of online content are not fixed, but constantly emerging.

The core for successful and engaging brand communication is to keep in mind that the content needs to be adjusted for the user, and the context must work with the businesses’ goals and resources. According to Rosenfeld et al. (2015, p. 34), the connection between the user, the content and the context need to coincide for an efficient information ecology and for practicing effective information architecture (Rosenfeld et al. 2015, p. 38). This can also be applied when striving
for creating engagement on a social media platform. If the content is not adjusted for the user needs in the context of Instagram and the objectives of the brand, it most likely will not generate in any likes or other engagement (Delsea, 2016). To what degree businesses communicate with their audiences is essential for their success, as well as the relationship between the audience and the business (Burford & Resmini, 2017; Delsea, 2016; Rosenfeld et al., 2015, p. 34f). Rosenfeld et al. (2015, p. 442) state that information architecture is for anyone who is trying to make information easier to find and understand. Furthermore, they describe how a good design for finding is about structuring information to meet people’s information needs, and designing for understanding is about creating contexts that present information in ways that make sense to people organising the content. This can be connected to the three circles of the information architecture model of the user, the content and the context, see Figure 1, explaining the importance of this being a guide in creating an information environment. This is what we will investigate in this study in the context of what creates engagement. Studying the conditions of information architecture and the conjunction between the user, the content and the context will enlighten what the most important factors are to create engagement in the interaction between users and the brands’ content, in the context of Instagram.

![Figure 1](image)

*Figure 1. The pillars of information architecture. The model of the users, the content, and the context (Rosenfeld et al., 2015, p.32).*

The population of Sweden up to the age of seventy-six uses their mobile devices more often than a computer while surfing the internet (Svenskarna & internet, 2018). It is also more common to use social media on mobile devices. With this in mind, it is simply easier and more convenient to search for a brand on social media than on the web. Therefore, this is a highly relevant topic to research in modern times. Furthermore, as a result of the volume of content being presented online to individuals daily, having knowledge about how to create engagement on social media is essential, to assure the content is being received by the users in a valuable way.

### 1.3 Purpose of study and research questions

The purpose of this study is to explore what content creates engagement on beauty salon’s accounts in the context of Instagram and their users. The reason
for taking this approach is to explore the relationship between the user, the content, and the context, and analyse and compare this to the model of information architecture, see Figure 1.

By analysing the engagement on Instagram posts from three beauty salons in southern Sweden and performing qualitative interviews with six of their followers, the study aims to find out what content creates engagement and to answer the two following questions:

**Research questions**

- What kind of posts on the beauty salons’ Instagram pages generate the most engagement?
- What factors drive engagement and encourage users to interact with content on Instagram?

**1.4 Delimitations**

The delimitations for this study were to investigate beauty companies in the Swedish market. Ungerman and Myslivcová (2014) developed a communication model for social media for small and medium-sized businesses. Their research did not show any differences in using the communication model by different-sized businesses, small or medium. Therefore, this study may apply to any beauty brand on the Swedish market regardless of the company's size.

Because social media has many different platforms, another delimitation was to focus this study on investigating Instagram, as this is the platform most exploited by beauty businesses, and is also among the most popular (Mills & Plangger, 2015; Svenskarna & Internet, 2018). Furthermore, the findings of this study should be considered exploratory, given the constant evolution and growth of social media as well as the qualitative nature of this study.

**1.5 Disposition**

This study begins by presenting the background and earlier research about brand communication and engagement on social media, in addition to the perspective of information architecture on this type of communication and interaction with users. The research is followed by the methods used, which was a content analysis coupled by semi-structured interviews.

The result has its own chapter followed by the analysis which uses the analytical tool to conclude how the information architecture model with the interplay between users, content, and context is of importance when creating engagement on beauty salons’ Instagram accounts. The study is ended by a discussion and proposal for future research.
2 Earlier research and method of analysis

Since the aim of this study is to research what creates engagement on the Instagram accounts of beauty salons and how that is related to the information architecture model of the users, content, and context, see Figure 1. Knowledge about the background of social media, user engagement, and the platform Instagram is essential. The following chapter will briefly describe social media from a brand context and why brands should have a brand page. To be able to answer the research questions, initial research on social media and Instagram has been sought. This has been performed together with research on what drives people to engage on social media. Lastly, the analytical tool in this study will help us to explore and analyse the relationship between the users, the content and the context. It will also help us to understand the importance of these three pillars of the information architecture model in regard to creating engagement. The focus of the research collection has been to gather empirical data about information architecture, social media, and engagement to create an empirical basis for the needed understanding.

The databases used for the research collection have been Diva, Google Scholar and the Library of the University of Borås, with the peer-review filter to sort out non-scientific articles. The keywords used for the research collection was “social media communication”, “social media engagement”, “social media content”, “user engagement on social media”, “social media communication design”, “user-generated content for brands”, “social media engagement for beauty brands”, “digital communication”, “storytelling on social media/Instagram”, “information architecture on social media” and “Instagram”.

2.1 Social media

According to Mills and Plangger (2015), social media is not an extension or supplement to websites, however a separate part of the communication and relationship strategy. Social media can become the best tool for communicating brand awareness, if used correctly (Ungerman and Myślívčová, 2014). Brand awareness is when a consumer can recognise and identify a brand (Kádeková & Holienčiová, 2018). According to Kietzmann et al. (2011), social media brand pages can help brands in building a reputation and trust online, as brand pages often are geared toward these objectives. Additionally, Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) adds that the key for maintaining a good relationship is through honest and qualitative content. Companies get an opportunity to interact and engage with their customers through brand pages (Lee, Lee, Moon & Sung, 2015; Tsimonis and Dimitriadis, 2014; Balan, 2017). Likewise, Michaelidou, Siamagka and Christodoulides (2011) agree with the assertion that social media can be a useful tool for communicating with customers, potential as well as existing, and building relationships and trust. Lee et al. (2015) state that social networking sites have become the major communication tool. To improve their communication model, brands should capitalise on the unique characteristics of each social media platform to be able to evolve their communication strategy as well as to work on the customer relationship (Mills & Plangger, 2015).
According to Kietzmann et al. (2011), social media serves companies as a communication landscape. Russmann and Svensson (2016) state that social media is used to inspire, to mobilise, to buy or interact, to leave feedback, and to participate in future product development. Furthermore, they state that the use of images and videos is constantly increasing on social media. As a result of social media, content, and information can be spread worldwide in a short amount of time (Kietzmann et al., 2011; Russmann & Svensson, 2016). Michaelidou et al. (2011) mention a study in their article, which shows that 93% of social media users believe that companies should have a social media presence. Similarly Mills and Plangger (2015) present research in their study which suggests that almost two-thirds of social media users learn about brands through social media alone. Furthermore, 17% feel more connected to brands they have seen on social media than those they have not. Delsea (2016) agree with this assertion as they state customers are more likely to engage in companies they have seen on social media. This shows the importance of having a brand page on social media and striving to interact and engage with the audience.

One advantage of social media, which a lot of service brands benefit from, is the possibility for the customers to leave their feedback (He et al., 2013). Russmann and Svensson (2016) state that social media users mostly engage in and interact with an organisation’s social media content to either complain or show support and appreciation. As web applications and social media platforms have become increasingly prevalent, service brands need to have a social media presence to be able to manage their own appearance in the market, as well as keeping track of their competitors (He et al., 2013). Furthermore, He et al. (2013) states that a comparison of the competitors’ social media channels can help businesses adjust their social media content. Similarly, Tsimonis and Dimitriadis (2014) agree with this statement, expressing the importance to follow competitors in order to develop one’s own social media presence and brand image.

There is a broad existence of social media platforms, each with its own unique capabilities, user demographics and managerial possibilities (Mills & Plangger, 2015). To find out what drives engagement on Instagram, it is essential to gather an understanding of the social media platform. The following chapter will describe the primary functions of the picture sharing site, Instagram, be it the primary focus of this study.

### 2.1.1 Instagram

Instagram is a picture-sharing site that allows users to watch, upload, edit, like and share pictures (Humphrey, 2016; Lee et al., 2015). If an account is open to the public, unregistered users can view the content, however, to interact with the posts a registered account is needed. The platform offers users an optional ability to create a profile and interact with other users by liking, sharing, commenting and communicating on the uploaded content. Instagram launched in late 2010 exclusively for mobile units and is the most popular platform in the picture sharing genre. It reached 75 million users by 2014, posting upwards of 16 billion photos (Mills & Plangger, 2015).
Instagram generates lots of engagement due to the popularity of the platform (Casaló et al., 2017; Mills & Plangger, 2015). It offers the ability to quickly share inspirational pictures and communicate important information updates. This further creates marketing opportunities, invites customers to interact and offers accessible support which creates relationships (Casaló et al., 2017). Newer features that also create relationships and generate engagement are daily stories and arranged competitions (Casaló et al., 2017; Humphrey, 2016; Tsimonis & Dimitriadis, 2014). According to Mills and Plangger (2015), most social media websites have primary categorisations however offer supplementary features borrowed from other platforms.

As a first impression Instagram might seem to be a simple photo-sharing platform, from an architectural perspective on the content display and data structure, one can see there is much more to it. According to Rosenfeld et al. (2015, p. 34f), the vocabulary and structure of the content is a core component of customer communication. Furthermore, this will determine what the target groups’ opinions about a brand will be, as well as determine future interaction. Today Instagram is a platform where you can repost and share others’ content in just a few seconds (Russmann & Svensson, 2016). This lifts the interaction to a higher level including the users even more. The main function has been photo sharing from the beginning, however, the application and its features have evolved a lot through the years. Instagram has developed into a platform for inspiration, mobilization, and broadcasting (Russmann & Svensson, 2016), with features like the “Explore” page and “Direct Messages” etc. (Lee et al., 2015). Today Instagram, among other social media channels, has enabled a convenient way of sharing snapshots of daily happenings (Humphrey, 2016; Russmann & Svensson, 2016). Russmann and Svensson (2016) state that posting images is a very effective way to communicate, suggesting that images influence how people view products and services on brand pages. Furthermore, they state that images create legitimacy as well as trust, which builds and cherishes a relationship to the user and fosters interaction resulting in engagement. Likewise, Lee et al. (2015) state that images are powerful for impression management. Besides sharing pictures, today it is also possible to upload video content (Lee et al., 2015). Instagram has become an all in one app for taking, editing and posting content (Lee et al., 2015).

### 2.2 Social media engagement

The first step to successful engagement on social media is understanding the users (Kietzmann et al., 2011). According to Kietzmann et al. (2011), the content needs to be adjusted to the social media channel functionalities, as well as the brands’ goals. This is comparable to how the information architecture model of Rosenfeld et al. (2015, p. 32) functions, looking at the users, content, and context working together in an information ecology. A good information ecology will emerge in understanding the users by interpreting their needs and adjusting the content accordingly. In the context of Instagram, as well as other social media platforms, the needs and desires of the users are what will generate the most engagement (Casaló et al., 2017). Casaló et al. (2017) concluded that proper combination of characteristics and content posted on a brand’s Instagram page
may invite interaction and create engagement. Furthermore, they state that content adjusted to the users’ needs is the most relevant factor to guarantee a satisfactory experience and information environment, which finally creates engagement thus influencing the number of likes. The content should also be adjusted to the functionalities on Instagram as well as the brands’ objectives. Meaning, for example, the content needs to fit all the information required to convey the intended message whilst aligning to the brands’ goals.

As a result of social media and its two-way communication possibilities creating and maintaining relationships can be done very efficiently (Mills & Plangger, 2015). Floreddu and Cabiddu (2016) state that social media has enabled a new way of interaction which is faster and more frequent. They go on to explain that interaction, which is possible because of social media, may contribute to the development of customer engagement in the content of a brand. Likewise, Smith and Derville Gallicano (2015) explain that two-way communication allows users to actively engage in content by responding and creating content. Tsimonis and Dimitriadis (2014) add that interaction and engagement between a company and its customers is the most convenient way for the brand to collect knowledge about the user needs. If a specific type of content gets a lot of engagement in the form of likes, it will suggest that users enjoy the content and it reflects the user needs. Furthermore, the result of the interviews done by Tsimonis and Dimitriadis (2014) showed that all the participating companies had a main objective with their social media channels, which was to gain customer engagement to their business.

Looking at previous research in regard to social media engagement, the major issue seems to be separating it from the concept of social media usage. Smith and Derville Gallicano (2015) discuss that engagement is not the same as interactivity or social media usage. Therefore, simply liking or commenting on a picture may not be enough to be considered as engagement. Some studies describe engagement as a progression from simply interacting with the interface to becoming cognitively and emotionally immersed in the content (Oh, Bellur & Sundar, 2010; Smith & Derville Gallicano, 2015). Paek, Hove, Jung and Cole (2013) defines engagement as experiences people have on social media platforms based on inspiration, participation, and socialisation. In their study they found that the more people use and interact on social media, the more they tend to engage in the content by clicking on “like”. Similarly, other scholars state that successful social media content is measured by the level of engagement, for example, the number of likes (Casaló et al., 2017; Lee & Hong, 2016). Smith and Derville Gallicano (2015) also state that engagement is what people experience on social media and what they do about it. Additionally, they suggest that social media engagement is often associated with interaction and support online. Even though in some cases it might be more relevant to analyse other factors of what drives social media engagement. Likewise, Lee & Hong (2016) says that it is challenging to measure how effective a social media campaign is. However, how successful a campaign is depended on its goals and can be measured by looking at the number of interactions, for example, likes, views, comments and shares.
2.3 Summary and analytical tool

A lot of scholars agree on the fact that having a brand page on social media is a primary communication tool and the perfect way for brands to engage their audience (Lee, Lee, Moon & Sung, 2015; Michaelidou, Siamagka & Christodoulides, 2011; Mills & Plangger, 2015; Tsimonis & Dimitriadis, 2014). Likewise, there are scholars and information architecture experts that also agree on the fact that the needs and desires of the users is what will create engagement (Casaló et al., 2017; Delse, 2016; Floreddu & Cabiddu, 2016; Rosenfeld et al., 2015; Tsimonis & Dimitriadis, 2014).

Having multiple social media channels often reinforces one another (Mills & Plangger, 2015). According to Mills and Plangger (2015), the choice of the best suited social media platform for a brand to communicate their content is going to depend on the target audience - the users, the objectives, the context, and the brand’s resources to implement these objectives. This can be connected to the information architecture model, see Figure 1, as the content produced by the company is representing the content in the model, the target audience represents the users and finally, the objectives on Instagram and the business’ goals with their content are representing the context. Redish (2012, p. 37), as well as Rosenfeld et al. (2015, p. 25), add that having a content strategy is an important step to success, as it provides current and potential customers with updated content, consistent messages and builds credibility. According to Redish (2012, p. 37), these three factors are what creates engagement. Rosenfeld et al. (2015), adds that engagement is also built by the connection of the user needs, the company's content, and the context of the information environments, using social media as an example. How information is handled in digital environments, the users, and the context is what creates an information ecology.

Good information architecture can be derived from a systematic approach in structuring information so that it will be easy to find and understand (Rosenfeld et al., 2015, p. 16). Furthermore, information architecture is the way of shaping information products and experiences to support usability, findability and understanding (Rosenfeld et al., 2015, p. 24). Findability is the core for overall usability. According to Rosenfeld et al. (2015, p. 25), information architecture must balance the user needs with the brand’s goals. The analytical tool for this study will be the model of Rosenfeld et al. (2015), see Figure 1, which describes the connection between users, content and context. Using this analytical tool will create understanding and help us analyse what generates engagement on beauty brands’ Instagram accounts from an information architecture perspective. It will let us understand what catches the users’ attention and why they engage to interact with the content on Instagram. Furthermore, the analytical tool will help in understanding the connection between the user, content, and context, and through that understand how to create engagement.
3 Method

To answer this study's complex research questions, a mixed method with quantitative and qualitative methods were used. According to Sharp, Rogers and Preece (2015, p. 290), there are several benefits with using a mixed-method, one of them being the ability to compare and control the results from both methods. Furthermore, a mixed-method gives a greater understanding of the research problem and often findings from one method can contribute to helping evolve another method (Denscombe, 2018, p. 220f).

To evaluate the users we will measure their information needs when it comes to beauty brands on Instagram. By understanding the users, we will be able to see their connection to the content and how that can be adjusted to match their wishes and expectations. To evaluate and to collect knowledge about the content, we will measure what the users prefer and enjoy. This to be able to understand what content and what objects or representations the posts should consist of, to generate engagement. This will give us an idea about what engaging content is in the context of beauty brands on Instagram. Lastly, to measure the context, we will collect data and analyse whether or not the users like content depending on the context. By disclosing the reasons why the users like or dislike the content we will be able to conclude if the context does influence users’ engagement in the content. This will give us the opportunity to later discuss if the users would possibly react differently on the impulse to engage in the content if it was presented in different contexts. In what context the content is being presented in can be a meaningful factor behind the engagement level.

To achieve an effective information architecture adapted design in an information environment, for example, using an Instagram account of a brand, Rosenfeld et al., (2015, p. 49) state it is essential to learn about the information needs as well as user behaviours. Having done a content analysis of three beauty brands’ Instagram accounts, we were able to gather data about what kind of content and information their users wanted and needed by measuring the engagement on their posts. This was done by measuring the number of likes. Also, by using interviews we were able to gain a deeper understanding of the information needs and user behaviours. Semi-structured interviews are a good supplement to quantitative data, as they make it possible to ask the users supplementary questions and ask them to elaborate on their answers. This was used to see how followers of these beauty Instagram accounts interact with the platform, in an attempt to determine what works and what does not, from a user perspective.

The aim of the quantitative study, which was performed in the form of content analysis, was to answer the question, What kind of posts on the beauty salons’ Instagram pages generate the most engagement? A content analysis consists of analysing text or pictures to find patterns and explanations and is suitable when it comes to communication aspects that are simple and direct (Denscombe, 2018, p. 402f). This analysis was applied to three beauty Instagram accounts to find out what content was the most successful and efficient. One of the main reasons for using the content analysis was to gain an in-depth understanding of what
generates the most engagement and to furthermore elaborate the questions that needed to be asked in the qualitative study. The qualitative study aimed to answer the question *What factors drive engagement and encourage users to interact with content on Instagram?* and was performed using semi-structured interviews. This gave us another perspective on what the users need and why they need it. Additionally, it gave us information to apply in the information architecture model in the analysis, where we connect the context which is Instagram and the business goals, to the result from the interviews with the users and the findings from analysing the content. This helped us to suggest what factors create engagement on Instagram and why that might be.

The study has solely focused on three Instagram accounts with less than 6000 followers and only posts during the last six months. The accounts are owned by three small beauty salons in southern Sweden. Because of this, the result may be generalised, to smaller beauty companies in Sweden and a recent period of time. They all focus on displaying their products and services, offering their customers discounts, communications with their target groups and general brand awareness. The upcoming chapters will describe the methods used in this study, the sampling and participants chosen, how the methods were conducted and the data and analytic process.

### 3.1 Quantitative method – content analysis

The quantitative method has been used to answer the first research question and to help evolve the questions for the qualitative interviews. The first question of the study was *What kind of posts on the beauty salons’ Instagram pages generate the most engagement?* and to answer that the social media accounts needed to be investigated, regarding which posts have had the most amount of likes and interaction from the followers. Content analysis is beneficial when there are large amounts of data and the goals are to find patterns and explanations (Denscombe, 2018, p. 402f; Lansdall-Welfare, Sudhahar, Thompson, Lewis & Cristianini, 2017). This method of analysis will help find answers to this research question by showing which type of content had more engagement, be it images, text or messages. This will help us gain information about the user needs which can later in the analysis help us understand engagement in relation to the information architecture model.

Basic content analysis can be used to determine and characterise different themes of communication content (Drisko & Maschi, 2015, p. 26f). Therefore, this method was used both to find the different themes that the study of the Instagram posts was going to be divided into, as well as counting the likes to determine the level of engagement. A study by Balan (2017) that studied posts on Nike’s Instagram page, found significant differences in engagement when it came to the different themes of the content. Basic content analysis is a widely used method in marketing and communications, the method can outline if a certain theme or topic is being used in any type of communication material (Drisko & Maschi, 2015, p. 29). Another strength of the content analysis is the quantification of data it provides, which makes it easy for other researchers to also carry out the study (Denscombe, 2018, p. 403).
Filimonov, Russman and Svensson (2016) used content analysis in their study of Swedish parties’ activities on Instagram during the 2014 elections. This study was performed by conducting a content analysis of 220 Instagram posts (Filimonov et al., 2016). Furthermore, Russman and Svensson (2016) later wrote an article about how the same methodological framework that was applied in the study earlier that year, can be used to study Instagram accounts of other organisations. The different variables that Russman and Svensson (2016) studied were perception, image management, integration, Instagram and interactivity. In this analysis, we used a framework to categorise the different posts into themes. This was to be able to see a pattern and measure What kind of posts on the beauty salons’ Instagram pages generate the most engagement? when counting the likes.

Weaknesses associated with this type of method are that the different content tends to get lifted out of context and furthermore it can be difficult to distinguish a deeper meaning (Denscombe, 2018, p. 403). However, this is the reason that the study complements the content analysis with a qualitative method to get a second chance at understanding the experience by the user if we look at it from an information architecture perspective. There are other reasons that the users might have liked a post than that they simply found it valuable, and those types of questions were transferred and asked in the semi-structured interviews.

### 3.1.1 Sampling and participants

Since this study focuses on the beauty industry, the social media accounts were chosen accordingly. The population for the content analysis was the posts of three beauty companies in southern Sweden. The first Instagram account was chosen as we were able to get in touch with the owner of the salon called Rosa’s Beauty. The study was originally meant to be performed as a case study, however, due to different schedules and a lack of time this was later canceled. The two other Instagram accounts, Chelly and Bow’s Beauty were chosen as they were competitors of Rosa’s beauty and fit the same profile.

According to Denscombe (2018, p. 38), the population of a study is all types of people, occurrence or units that are valuable for a study. The population for this study is all the posts from the three Instagram accounts added together. On the 27 of April 2019, when the content analysis was performed, Rosa’s Beauty’s account had 212 posts, Chelly had 439 posts, and Bow’s Beauty had 166 posts. Added together that gave us a population of 817 posts.

Sampling can be drawn from the population and the study can present accurate results (Denscombe, 2018, p. 57). The sampling made in this study is referred to as non-probable as well as subjective sampling. This means that researchers have a say in which sample from the population is picked (Denscombe, 2018, p. 59; Drisko & Maschi, 2015, p. 40f). In our case, it was the fact that we decided to focus on a range of dates. In this research, the most recent posts over the last six months, from the date of the 27th of April was used. The reason for this was to only use the most relevant content and to establish a more accurate result. A study can be limited to a range of dates to restrain the amount of data that has to
be analysed or to focus on a specific matter (Drisko & Maschi, 2015, p. 40). A subjective sampling is when limited units are picked based on their relevance for the subject (Denscombe, 2018, p. 67). The analysis consisted of 241 posts, 64 from Rosa’s Beauty, 93 from Chelly and 84 from Bow’s Beauty.

3.1.2 Designing data collection instruments

It is important to establish different goals and categories when looking through content to be able to perform a content analysis (Denscombe, 2018, p. 402). An observational coding scheme was created with certain categories of the posts and the number of likes they had per post. These labels were found by an initial analysis of all the three businesses’ Instagram accounts that helped to establish what different themes the posts could be categorised into. There is also qualitative content analysis that can be used to uncover the deeper meaning behind the contents of an image (Denscombe, 2018, p. 412; Drisko & Maschi, 2015, p. 88). Different ways of looking at an image are for example as a cultural artefact, why and by who the photo was taken, or looking at their symbolic representation (Denscombe, 2018, p. 414). Furthermore, an image can be studied by its denotation, which will explain the physical aspects of an image, or its connotation, which instead is dependent on the reader’s background and conventions (Crow, 2010, p. 54f). However, this analysis was exclusively performed to establish the different categories to be used in the content analysis. We have used a simple analysis, looking solely at the elements in the images to establish the categories the images belonged to. If the image is authentic, they function as a source of actual data (Denscombe, 2018, p. 414).

Lee & Hong (2016) states that it is challenging to measure how effective a social media campaign is. However, how successful a campaign is, depends on its goals and can be measured by looking at the number of interactions, for example, likes, views, comments, and shares. Furthermore, how successful and engaging communication and content of a brand is, is determined by their audiences’ engagement, for example, the number of likes on a social media platform (Casaló, Flavián & Ibáñez-Sánchez, 2017; Lee & Hong, 2016). Therefore, measuring the number of likes will be the method used in this study to collect data to analyse the engagement.

The categories which explain the different content of the posts were the following:

**Nails (user-generated content)** - Pictures taken by customers in neutral environments later used by the salon on their Instagram. Neutral environments can be: outside, at home, at the beach, at a coffee shop, holding a wallet or phone case or similar props.

**Nails** - Different nails done by the company. Normally this type of picture consists of nails presented on a towel right after work and treatment has been applied.
**Nails (studio)** - Pictures taken with professional backgrounds, for example, on coloured backdrops, glitter or a canvas.

**Eyelash extensions** - Pictures of eyes with eyelash extensions applied by the company.

**Informational pictures** - Images containing information about opening hours, contact information or changes to the salon.

**Promotional pictures** - Posts presenting promotions or competitions to get a treatment at the salon.

**From the salon** - Images taken at the salon of customers having treatments or the surrounding environments inside the salon.

### 3.1.3 Course of action

As a starting point for the research of this study, the quantitative study was done. This method was a basic content analysis of the three beauty businesses’ Instagram accounts. The engagement of their posts was studied to measure which kind of content drove the most engagement in the form of likes.

When the coding scheme was done, the social media posts were analysed by both of us as researchers. Since an observation can create issues based on the different observers collecting information and different perceptions, something called systematic observation can be used. This means a system is being used so that the answers are correspondent and not affected by variations or psychological factors (Denscombe, 2018, p. 299). This could be, for example, the framework with categories used for our observations, to eliminate our personal opinions and perceptions when we registered the data. Furthermore, the coding scheme, based on the Instagram accounts, with a thorough explanation of the different post categories, were created before the observation and coding started. This was to eliminate any possibility of confusion with the posts on the social media accounts and what category they belonged to. Basic content analysis does not require the researcher to make analytical judgments from the data since it solely relies on frequency counts of events that are straight forward and unmistakable (Drisko & Maschi, 2015, p. 25).

The analysis consisted of 241 posts, from the three Instagram accounts, first to create the categories and then to measure the number of likes per post. This was then logged into the observational coding scheme putting down the number of likes per post and in what category it belonged. The likes of the posts with the same category then got added together and divided by the total amount of posts in that category, giving an average amount of likes per post. The analysis was made separately by both of us, to give more accurate results and to discuss any confusion in which category the posts belonged to. A quantitative study done by two researchers meeting similar results strengthens the reliability (Blandford, 2013).
3.1.4 Ethical consideration

As the only data needed and gathered for this content analysis were the number of likes, there was no need to collect any personal data. No personal information was collected or analysed and the result only consisted of the number of likes. Therefore, the decision was made that there was no need to inform or collect any consent forms.

Rosa's Beauty was aware that we were performing an analysis on their account however not the competitors. The decision was made to not inform them since their accounts are open to the public and no personal information was being collected or stored. According to Sharp et al. (2015, p. 339), it is only necessary to inform people that research is being performed if it collects personal information. All the accounts are open Instagram accounts so there was, in fact, no legal or ethical need to inform them either.

Most factors pointed in the direction that it was not necessary to go through the process of informing all companies. The reason Rosa's Beauty was informed was since we wanted to perform an interview with the company’s owner and collect personal information from her, which later on did not happen because of different schedules.

Since the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR, SFS 2018:218) was implemented in 2018, the new legislation had to be put into consideration when it came to collect or show any type of images in the study. This had to be considered when it came to the Instagram posts, because of the possibility that individuals could be identified in the photographs. To avoid that, only pictures from Instagram posts of Rosa’s Beauty were implemented into this study, as their account is public and therefore so are their pictures. According to the terms and conditions of Instagram (Instagram, 2019), any content a public account shares is free to be reshared or used by anyone on or off their platform. Furthermore, it states that they provide information and content for research purposes.

3.1.5 Data preparation and analysis

The Instagram posts and its content were coded using two variables, number of likes, a ratio-level variable, and what category they belonged to, a nominal-level variable. Ratio-level measurement shows what rank, order, or level something has, and a nominal scale is used to categorise data (Denscombe, 2018, p. 347f). The number of likes was measured and analysed to find out the amount of engagement the posts had, and the categories were analysed to specify what type of content drove the most engagement. Basic content analysis uses mostly existing data (Drisko & Maschi, 2015, p. 41), in this study the data was already available on Instagram, in forms of likes on the individual posts. We had a coding scheme, where we had developed code categories to record the data. This is a common method to perform a content analysis (Drisko & Maschi, 2015; Denscombe, 2018, p. 402f).
We did use a systematic framework, in the form of a coding scheme, to avoid any type of confusion. However, during the coding or afterward, the researchers should compare their results, to see if they have different answers and if they might have to make changes (Drisko & Maschi, 2015, p. 45). Similarly, Blandford (2013) explains that having multiple coders can help to assure that there is a shared understanding of the codes and categories, and that the analysis therefore will be more accurate. According to Drisko and Maschi (2015, p. 45), in some circumstances, it can be hard to know in which category to code the data. However, in our case, all our coding matched perfectly, and no further discussions had to be performed, which might have been as a result of our systematic approach. Since the categories in a coding scheme can be both narrow and broad, the narrow ones might not get as much data as the broader ones (Drisko & Maschi, 2015, p. 45f). In our study we used broad categories, a broad category is for example “nails” compared to for example “nails with red nail polish”, that being a narrow and detailed category. For the measurements to count as nominal-level measurements, the categories need to be of the same size, limited and unique. Furthermore, the categories need to be able to categorise all the content that is being studied (Drisko & Maschi, 2015, p. 53). In content analysis, the way the researchers measure data is usually based on coded categories that they have generated specifically to explain what they are studying. Therefore, the categories and coding schemes are not standardised, they are instead developed to fit the purpose of the study (Drisko & Maschi, 2015, p. 47).

3.2 Qualitative method – semi-structured interviews

Qualitative methods as interviews are suitable when the research aims to gain a deeper understanding of a problem as well as when it comes to experiences, opinions and feelings (Blandford, 2013). Furthermore, semi-structured interviews open up a discussion with open-ended questions and the respondent has the chance to elaborate on their answers (Blandford, 2013; Denscombe, 2018, p. 268f). The open-ended approach was followed up with supplementary questions, which were evaluated throughout the interview process, to get an elaborated answer and result. As a base for the interviews, this study used the empirical material and the data from the content analysis.

Semi-structured interviews have prepared themes for the questions, however, they are not planned to be asked in any particular order, instead the researcher is very flexible (Blandford, 2013; Denscombe, 2018, p. 269). On the other hand, the interviewer still has a guide with questions or themes to follow, so that the same topics are brought up with all respondents (Blandford, 2013; Sharp et al., 2015, p. 234). The topics for our study were Instagram interaction, Rosa’s Beauty’s Instagram page, content and content engagement. The first topic, Instagram interaction, was to cover basic information about their familiarity with Instagram to measure their relevance for the study and the topic to be discussed. The second topic was to gain further information about the users and their relationship with Rosa’s Beauty. The third topic was to measure and gain more insight into what type of content they liked and why. The last topic, “content
engagement” was to find out why they would engage in a certain type of content or not. The questions for this data collection, that you can read in Appendix A, were formed to answer or give insights to the research question *What factors drive engagement and encourage users to interact with content on Instagram?* By using the open-ended approach to this semi-structured interview a wide set of experiences, feelings and opinions were expected to be collected to create a greater understanding.

A negative factor of interviews is that it is a time-consuming method (Blandford, 2013; Denscombe, 2018, p. 294; Patel and Davidson, 2011, p. 120), however in order to gather qualitative information needed for this research it was chosen regardless of the time aspect. An artificial environment may affect the respondent and their answers (Blandford, 2013; Denscombe, 2018, p. 281), which is why the interviews were done in a neutral environment, where the respondent potentially could use the social media platform normally on a regular day.

### 3.2.1 Sampling and participants

The sampling for the qualitative study was exploratory and purposive, as the objective was to gain in-depth information and by that a deeper understanding. According to Denscombe (2018, p. 58), exploratory sampling is best suited for when it comes to investigating new ideas to gain in-depth knowledge. By allowing the researchers to choose the participants deliberately based on earlier research this ensures the relevance of the sampling. The sampling is also non-probability and subjective as the followers of the beauty salon were chosen because of their relevance and knowledge of the beauty Instagram accounts. Denscombe (2018, p. 67f) describes subjective sampling as participants deliberately chosen due to their relevance, expertise and knowledge. Furthermore, subjective sampling ensures a wide cross-section of people being included in the sampling (Denscombe, 2018, p. 68).

Furthermore, the size of the sampling is cumulative as it is, according to Denscombe (2018, p. 72), a common and well-working strategy for smaller studies. Meaning the interviews will proceed until no new information emerges. Likewise, Blandford (2013) and Charmaz (2016, p. 113) explain that a study no longer needs to gather data once it stops gathering any new theoretical insights.

The population for this study was the followers of three beauty companies in southern Sweden. We reached out to about fifteen individuals on Instagram based on a few requirements. They needed to follow at least one of the accounts on Instagram and they would need to be based within the same geographical area as one of us. This was so that the interviews could be performed in person. After a few people that were not suitable or denied our request, we were left with six respondents, which information you can see in Table 1.
Table 1
Information about the respondents in the study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Follower on Instagram</th>
<th>Can meet up in person</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R1</td>
<td>Rosa’s Beauty, Chelly</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R2</td>
<td>Rosa’s Beauty, Bow’s Beauty</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R3</td>
<td>Rosa’s Beauty</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R4</td>
<td>Rosa’s Beauty</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R5</td>
<td>Rosa’s Beauty, Chelly</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R6</td>
<td>Rosa’s Beauty, Chelly</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.2.2 Designing data collection instruments

A semi-structured interview has specific topics and questions prepared from the start, however, it is flexible in regard to letting the respondents elaborate their answers (Blandford, 2013; Denscombe, 2016, p. 266; Sharp et. al., 2015, p. 234f). The questions for this interview, see Appendix 1, were established based on the findings from the content analysis and with the analytical tool in mind, see Figure 1. The analytical tool, the model of information architecture, covers the relationship between the user, content and context. Our questions were designed to cover all these aspects about the users and how they engage with content in the context of Instagram and the beauty business’ objectives. Furthermore, the reason we took this approach was so that we could later analyse the users, content and context, to find out what engages users and based on what factors. Lastly, the content analysis gave us an idea of what type of content and themes to ask questions about, as well as a basic understanding of what engages users based on the data from Instagram.

Initially, the interviews were started with the first theme which was “Instagram Interaction” by asking questions about the users’ Instagram habits. This was to get an understanding of how relevant their answers were going to be. These questions were about how often they use the platform and if they do engage and interact with it while using it. This was furthermore, to cover what the context looks like, what the users actually do on the platform as a whole. The second theme was questions about Rosa’s Beauty’s Instagram page. This was to cover more information about the users and their needs in the context of a beauty Instagram account. Theme three focuses on content more in-depth in terms of what content the users prefer, and discussions about why. The last theme consisted of questions about the pictures taken from the categories in the content analysis, from Rosa’s Beauty’s Instagram. The respondents expressed their thoughts on the posts and which factors determined if they would engage in them or not.
3.2.3 Course of action

The interview process started by approaching the followers of the beauty salons through direct messages on Instagram with a request to participate in the study. As a result of social media, new approaches to recruiting research participants have emerged (Blandford, 2013). The interviews were then conducted in neutral environments like the homes of the respondents and cafés. They were held in person with one of us researchers and the respondent, as one of us lives in Australia and the other one in Sweden, meaning that both could not be present simultaneously. The type of interviews held in person and neutral environments are, according to Denscombe (2018, p. 270) the most common. Similarly, Blandford (2013) explains how the environment where a study’s data collection takes place can be of importance when it comes to the outcome of the data collection. The respondents got to look at the different posts on Instagram during the interview and explore the posts before questions were asked. The respondent was asked the questions from the interview guide and could freely explain why they experienced the posts in the way they did. The interview and conversation were highly affected by the respondents’ answers and discussions around it. One positive factor about face to face interviews is that the researcher can control if the data is accurate and relevant during the interview (Denscombe, 2018, p. 193).

Unlike the content analysis, during the interviews, the whole Instagram posts were studied and commented on by the respondents. Meaning the respondent studied the text as well as the picture of each post, as both of these parts should be analysed to motivate the engagement. Before the study, all respondents were thoroughly informed about the purpose of the study and how their answers were going to be handled. They got the information orally as well as a written copy, see Appendix B. The respondents gladly give their thoughts about the posts in most cases, often without having to be asked why or in any other way leading them to elaborate on their answers. The interview guide was used in every interview however, some questions were answered before they were asked, because of how well the discussion proceeded. This was taken into consideration and resulted in the order of the questions varying according to each occasion. Because these interviews were semi-structured, this was not considered an issue. Furthermore, the interview guide was used as a reference and a way to ensure that no questions were missed. The questions seemed to work well, and every question got answered by every respondent. The average length of the interviews was approximately twenty minutes and during this time notes were taken on every answer of the respondents. At the end of the interview, the notes were shown to the respondents for them to approve and if necessary correct them. By doing this step we assured that no incorrect assumptions of our own were made.

3.2.4 Ethical consideration

Before the interview started, the purpose of the study, as well as the handling of the collected data, was explained. The respondents were informed that the participation was optional and that they had the right to refrain from answering at any time. According to Denscombe (2018, p. 181) and Blandford (2013), it is important to provide the respondents with this information. As no personal
information was collected, nor any recordings were done, there was no risk for any respondents to be identified. The interviews were not recorded in order to not risk stressing or making the respondents uncomfortable, as the majority of them had never participated in an interview before and because the interviews were not planned to be very long. The respondents were not offered any reward for participating, still, they were motivated to answer the research questions. According to Blandford (2013), it is important to consider the respondents’ motivation for participation. In our case, they were interested in the topic and wanted to be helpful. Lastly, it was also explained to the respondents that the collected data was going to be used exclusively for research purposes. The qualitative study also used pictures as the respondents studied some posts from Rosa’s Beauty’s Instagram account. These pictures are considered public content as the account of Rosa’s Beauty is public and they are therefore free to use or reshare according to the terms and conditions of Instagram (Instagram, 2019). Furthermore, Instagram (2019) state that they provide information and content for research purposes. This also assured all four of the ethical principles explained by Patel and Davidson (2011, p. 63), and Willig (2008, p. 16), the information requirement, the informed consent, the confidentiality requirement and non-disclosure agreement to avoid undue intrusion and for the collected data to only be used for scientific purposes was implemented successfully.

3.2.5 Data preparation and analysis

Before qualitative data can be analysed it needs to be organised, so that it can be coded and categorised (Blandford, 2013; Denscombe, 2018, p. 394). To organise the collected data from the semi-structured interviews, all the notes were collected together and summarised into one text. The answers were read thoroughly by both of us several times, taking notes if we got any new insights or understandings of the data. It is important to read the text quite a few times and really get familiar with it, that way the researcher can see the smaller details in the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 87f; Denscombe, 2018, p. 405; Patel & Davidson, 2011, p. 121) and possibly find patterns. Furthermore, the text was then coded and categorised, so that the findings could be compared and analysed. To do this we used the method of thematic analysis. A thematic analysis helps to provide complex data in a rich and detailed way, as it focuses on finding patterns or themes by which the data will be easier to analyse and understand (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 78). Thematic analysis defines codes and categories as labels to identify different features of data relevant for the study (Blandford, 2013). Furthermore, as Blandford (2013) explains, the different data is gathered and placed under the different codes or themes for further analysis.

To establish codes and categories for the analysis in this study we used our analytical tool, categorising the information into the information architecture model of the user, content and context. This was to analyse the different aspects of what creates engagement on beauty brands’ social media accounts. Information from the interviews could easily be categorised, for example, information about whether, why, or under what circumstances, the respondents liked a certain post, could be categorised with context. An answer in regard to
what objects appeared in a picture could be categorised with content. And lastly, information regarding the users and their needs could be categorised under users. The type of codes and material to use in a study, depends on the research questions (Denscombe, 2018, p. 405). In our study it seemed relevant to create categories in line with the information architecture model, as we could see a pattern in the data. After the data preparation and analysis was finished, the results were compared to other studies in the same field. This is done to either strengthen the analysis or question it to create a better discussion (Denscombe, 2018, p. 405).
4 Results

In this chapter, the findings from the content analysis followed by the results from the semi-structured interviews will be presented. The results from the content analysis give insights to and respond to the first research question, *What posts on the beauty salons’ Instagram pages generate the most engagement?* Furthermore, the results from the semi-structured interviews describe the underlying factors for the engagement, responding to the second research question, *What factors drive engagement and encourage users to interact with content on Instagram?* The analysis will later be presented separately in chapter 5, in relation to the analytical tool, see Figure 1.

4.1 Results from the content analysis

The content analysis was used to answer the first research question *What posts on the beauty salons’ Instagram pages generate the most engagement?* The research was based on the posts of three different beauty salons’ Instagram pages. These included Rosa’s Beauty, Bow’s Beauty and Chelly, all based in Malmö, Sweden. The measurements that were established in the method were the variable “amount of likes” and the variable “category type”. This was to measure and analyse both the amount of engagement and for what type of post. The posts are from a six month period, 27th of October 2018 to 27th of April 2019. Rosa’s Beauty and Chelly had some video posts that were removed from the study because they consisted of a different media type than the images. After that there were altogether 241 posts, 64 from Rosa’s Beauty, 93 from Chelly and 84 from Bow’s Beauty. The number of likes per post was logged inside an observational coding scheme and coded into the categories explained in 3.1.2 Designing data collection instruments. The likes were divided by the number of posts giving an average number of likes per post. These numbers were inserted to a table to visualise the data collection and calculation, see Table 2.

The reason that some of the cells in the column have a number of zero is because there were no posts of such character on those Instagram accounts. Each of these occurrences has this specified next to their number. After the table was complete the results were analysed, this was to find out which category had the most engagement. This was easy to see with the average amount of likes per type of post. This also gave us an idea of what kind of pictures the businesses post the most and if that was creating engagement.
Table 2
Table of likes per post and category, from all participating salons’ Instagram accounts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business</th>
<th>Nail pictures user-generated content (neutral environment)</th>
<th>Nail pictures at the salon (professional)</th>
<th>Nail pictures (studio)</th>
<th>Informational pictures</th>
<th>Eyelash pictures</th>
<th>Promotional pictures</th>
<th>Images from the salon</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rosa's Beauty</td>
<td>924 likes / 25 posts = 36.96 likes per picture</td>
<td>255 likes / 9 posts = 28.33</td>
<td>35 likes / 1 post = 35</td>
<td>30 likes / 1 post = 30</td>
<td>352 likes / 11 posts = 32</td>
<td>293 likes / 6 posts = 48.83</td>
<td>350 likes / 11 posts = 31.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bow’s beauty</td>
<td>14 likes / 1 post = 14 likes</td>
<td>2224 likes / 70 posts = 31.77</td>
<td>208 likes / 6 posts = 34.67</td>
<td>43 likes / 2 posts = 21.5</td>
<td>57 likes / 3 posts = 19</td>
<td>38 likes / 2 posts = 19</td>
<td>0 posts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chelly</td>
<td>1101 likes / 4 posts = 275.25 likes per picture</td>
<td>11 812 likes / 65 posts = 181.72</td>
<td>1684 likes / 8 posts = 210.5</td>
<td>103 likes / 1 post = 103</td>
<td>1186 likes / 14 posts = 84.71</td>
<td>237 likes / 1 post = 237</td>
<td>0 posts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.1.1 Pictures with the most and least engagement

The most popular picture category on the Instagram accounts were nail pictures taken in a studio environment in the salon, with an average of 128.47 likes per post, see Table 2. This category had the highest amount of likes out of all the posts. The accounts show 35 likes on Rosa’s Beauty, 34.67 likes on Bow’s beauty’s account and 210.5 likes on Chelly’s account for this category.

The second most popular were also pictures of nails, however, taken at a salon, not in a studio setting, instead of ordinary pictures taken at the desk of the employees or simply on a towel. These posts had an average of 99.24 likes per post and for the individual businesses Rosa’s Beauty had 28.33 likes, Bow’s beauty had 31.77 and Chelly 181.72 likes per picture.

After that, the third most popular were user-generated nail pictures, this means pictures that are created by customers and then reposted on businesses’ Instagram accounts. The average likes on all the beauty businesses’ accounts were 67.97. The average engagement per post and individual business were; Rosa’s Beauty with 36.96 likes, Bow’s beauty with 14 likes and Chelly with 275.25 likes.

The post with the least amount of likes per image were images taken at the salon of customers getting treatments or the surrounding environments. These had an average of 31.31 likes with an individual average of 31.81 likes for Rosa’s Beauty and zero likes for the other businesses since they did not have any posts in that category.
4.2 Results from the semi-structured interviews

To answer the second research question *What factors drive engagement and encourage users to interact with content on Instagram?* semi-structured interviews were implemented on six respondents, which will be described in this chapter. The respondents were asked ten main questions, where nine were open-ended questions followed by some supplementary questions. The last question was regarding seven different posts from Rosa’s Beauty’s Instagram account. These posts were chosen based on the categories from the content analysis, to gain more in-depth information about the posts of certain categories. One post, or more, from each category, was asked to be commented on by the respondents. They were asked to study the different pictures and comment if they would have liked each of these posts or not, followed by an explanation on why.

According to the results of this data collection, the most desired content was “before and after” pictures as well as competitions and promotions, which was mentioned nearly by every participant. Other important aspects of a post or content, in general, is high quality, a variety of pictures, inspirational pictures and mainly nail pictures provided the main service of the salon is nail treatments.

4.2.1 Background characteristics of the respondents

The majority of the respondents use Instagram several times a day, the rest use the platform a few times a week or at least once a day, see Figure 3.
Using the platform, most of the respondents willingly engage in interaction by clicking “like” on posts from both friends and family, as well as commercial pictures from companies and brands. It is less common that these users engage in commenting on pictures simply because it takes more time and effort, see Figure 4.

One of the respondents, which did only use the platform a few times a week, said they do not comment very often because they do not dare to engage that much, because it took too much time and effort. They also added that they probably would have engaged more if they were a more diligent user. Another respondent, which was a diligent user, using the platform several times a day, stated that they do not bother engaging at all, no likes no comments, unless the content was really appealing, or it was content of someone they had a relationship with. The rest of the respondents answered they mostly engaged by clicking “like” on the content they enjoy, and in some cases, if they had time or felt like it, they could also engage in commenting.

Figure 3. Pie chart displaying the Instagram usage of the respondents.

Figure 4. Bar chart of the users Instagram interaction.
4.2.2 What drives engagement and invites users to like a post

According to the respondents, the three main reasons for liking a picture were, the posts represent or address their interests and desires, they are supporting their friends, or they simply like what they are seeing. One of the respondents said they would have only engaged in clicking “like” if they enjoyed the content, if it was visually appealing, represented their interests or if the content was fun and made them laugh or smile. Two other respondents stated they would engage more in the content of friends and family or posted by another account they had some type of relationship with. This could be a brand, in the form of a companies’ products they liked and used. The rest of the respondents’ responses were very similar expressing they would engage in clicking “like” or even commenting on inspiring and visually appealing content. They stated that sometimes they would engage in the content of friends and family even if they were not that fond of the images, as a way of support. The respondents called it “support”, because as the majority of them expressed, posts with a higher number of likes are considered to be more successful, even if it is only regarding private posts, not in a marketing context.

The preferred content is superior the “before and after” pictures, followed by pictures of the interior of the salon, pictures that display a particular product or service performed on people of different ages, and lastly a combination of all content categories together. The respondents agreed that a mix of all types of content relevant to the beauty-topic, or relevant for the brand in question, was preferable as this gave the users a good insight into what kind of salon it was. The preferred type of content of these social media users was promotional posts like competitions and offers, as well as positive and inspiring content, see Figure 5. The majority of the respondents stated that they appreciated a variety of content of different categories like “competitions” because one had the chance to win a free treatment or new products, “inspirational content” which made them feel motivated, and “before and after pictures” as they clearly represented the end-results of the different treatments.

![Figure 5. Bar chart of the preferred content and of the users.](image)

Regarding the beauty salon, Rosa’s Beauty, the respondents were following the Instagram account because their page had nice content with beautiful colorful pictures, seemed to offer good quality services and had a good variety of content.
Yet only one of the respondents was a customer, and another one had tried their services however was not satisfied. This fact excludes the risk of potential bias as it demonstrates that not all the users have had the same experience with the brand, yet their answers were similar. Therefore, it suggests whether or not they were a customer or have had any other relationship with the brand, this did not influence their thoughts on the content. The respondents also mentioned a few things they would have liked more of on Rosa’s Beauty’s Instagram page, which was more “before and after” photos, short videos of the nails with both closeup and zoomed out shots, and more pictures of nails as that is their main and most popular service.

4.2.3 Opinions about the different posts

![Bar chart of the hypothetical engagement (number of likes) of the respondents on real content of Rosa’s Beauty.](image)

*Figure 6. Bar chart of the hypothetical engagement (number of likes) of the respondents on real content of Rosa’s Beauty.*
Nails (professional picture)

Figure 7. A professional picture of nails on a towel, taken at and by the staff at Rosa’s Beauty.

Four out of six respondents, see Figure 6, would have given this post, see Figure 7, a “like” because this was a typical picture and setup for this kind of content. This made it easy for the respondents to compare the end-result of the nail treatment with competitors and form an opinion about the skills of the employees of the salon. A few of the respondents said that they appreciated the close-up shot, the high quality of the picture and the angle because this was an angle a lot of beauty salons used, and it was therefore easily comparable. One of the respondents added this was a picture one could take a screenshot of and show at a salon for reference. The two respondents which would not have given this post a “like” said it was because they did not like the nails, however, they reacted positively to this type of content as it is easily comparable.

Nails user-generated content

Figure 8. User-generated content of nails.
User-generated content is something most of the respondents enjoyed however, two of the respondents felt this particular photo included in the interview, see Figure 8, could have been of better quality. The respondents found the picture to be too dark and wished it was lighter so that you could see the detail in the picture. Another two of the respondents thought the focus was more on the exclusive props, in this picture it was a wallet of the exclusive brand Prada, rather than on the actual nails which were the purpose of this picture. Yet, another respondent appreciated the details in the picture expressing that gave the picture an elegant and luxurious feeling. This picture would have gotten three out of six likes, see Figure 6. Again, the three respondents that would not have liked this photo said it was because they did not like the pictures overall, they explained they do enjoy user-generated content in general, but this picture was too dark and could use a bit more contrast and color.

Nails (studio environment)

![Image](image.jpg)

*Figure 9. Images of nails in a studio environment.*

This picture, see Figure 9, was not a successful one, as none of the respondents would have liked this picture, see Figure 6, if it showed up on their Instagram feed. Yet, the study does show that content like this usually is visually appealing and perfect for inspiration, see Table 2. The content analysis presents an average of 128.46 likes per post regarding images of nails in studio environment. However, according to the respondents, it does not always give a fair picture of the reality, as pictures and colors are often manipulated by lighting and other editing factors. Four out of six respondents mentioned that professional nail pictures, taken in a studio environment and posted on beauty salons’ Instagram feeds, are often edited and therefore they felt that they could not be sure the color of the nail polish would be the same in real life. These four respondents similarly answered that this picture did not catch their attention and they all found the background unflattering. Furthermore, the majority of the respondents found that in this particular photo the nails were too far away from the camera, which made it impossible to see any details, as well as the fact that the photo was too dark and not visually appealing. The respondents agreed on the fact that this photo
did not display the nails properly. Furthermore, the background of this picture was considered strange by the respondents, which again led to a negative effect.

**Eyelash extensions**

![Images of eyes with eyelash extensions.](image)

*Figure 10. Images of eyes with eyelash extensions.*

Pictures of eyelash extensions is quite enjoyable content as long as the eyes do not look irritated, because that had the effect of scaring the respondents making them not want to use the service of eyelash extensions. Two of the respondents mentioned that they had previously seen pictures of eyelash extensions with irritated and red eyes on other beauty related Instagram accounts. They both stated that it looked scary and put them off getting this type of treatment. Here two pictures were shown, see Figure 10, one with an open eye and one of a closed eye. This combination would have resulted in four out of six likes, see Figure 6, if posted together. The users really enjoyed seeing the final result on both an opened and closed eye. All the four respondents which would have given this picture a “like”, stating they appreciated several pictures from different angles. Lastly, they added the eyelashes looked really nice and natural. Two of the six respondents mentioned they missed a picture from far away where they could have seen the whole face of the person in the picture, they said that would have given them a better overall picture of the effect and end-result. Two of the respondents commented that they would not have engaged in this picture if they did not know this was a post about eyelash extensions. The two respondents similarly commented, if these pictures would have been taken out of context, they would have interpreted them as strange pictures because why take a picture of an eye or a sleeping woman from those angles.
Informational pictures

*Figure 11.* Informational picture displaying a business card from Rosa’s Beauty with their contact details.

This informational picture, see Figure 11, contained the final result of the nails holding a business card. This way non-followers (Instagram users who do not follow the brand in question) could easily recognise the brand. This post only got three out of six likes, see Figure 6, because it was interpreted as dull and uninteresting. The three respondents which would not have given this picture a “like”, stated that the picture may display valuable information, however, the image overall was not perceived as visually appealing nor was it educating. Two of these three respondents mentioned they appreciate when content is informative in an educating way. Furthermore, they commented that this type of information in a post was something they could read elsewhere on the Instagram page, like the biography. The third one, commented they appreciated content like this on a page and informative content in general, yet would not have engaged in giving this post a “like”. One other respondent expressed that this kind of content gave the impression of raw marketing content, but still would have given this post a “like” because the nails looked nice. Another respondent commented that they would have liked the picture because it was informative, and the color of the nails gave the picture a nice contrast.
Promotional pictures

![Promotional picture with a hand holding flowers, displaying nails.](image)

*Figure 12. Promotional picture with a hand holding flowers, displaying nails.*

This type of picture was among the users most popular as answered in the interview. On the contrary, this post, see Figure 12, only would have collected three out of six likes, see Figure 6, because it did not look like a competition post unless the caption was read from that perspective. The focus was more on the props than the nails, which made the respondents a bit confused over what the picture was representing. One of the respondents commented that the flowers disturbed the attention from the nails and that they became uncertain if the post was about the nails or the flowers. They added that they probably could assume that it was referring to the nails because they knew what type of account this was. However, they still perceived it as disturbing. Two other respondents similarly commented that the nails ended up being perceived as in the background since the flowers caught the attention instead. The majority of the respondents stated that this picture did not represent a competition, and unless we would have given them that information during the interview, they would have not perceived it that way. They added that if users will not read the captions they might miss to engage in a post, as they stated they probably would have if this picture was on their Instagram feed. They added that this was fine because the post is about the picture and caption together, however, they all still mentioned this issue. Other than that, this type of post usually does very well because of the competitions, which are the aim of the posts. The context of the posts, and the context in which these pictures are posted influence the level of engagement as expressed by the majority of the respondents.
Images from the salon

*Figure 13.* Images of the staff and surrounding environments at the salon Rosa’s Beauty.

Images of the salon only would have generated three out of six likes, see Figure 6. The respondents thought there was nothing special with this category, it only showed a person having her nails done by an employee. These kinds of posts (see Figure 13), as concluded out of the respondents’ comments, are much appreciated though because this gave them an idea of how the interior of the salon looked as well as who the employees are and based on that the respondents were given a chance to determine whether they would consider becoming a customer or not. The majority of the respondents commented that they appreciated these types of images on beauty brands’ accounts, yet only three of them would have engaged in this picture. One of the respondents said they were not interested in seeing a coffee mug, but more interior of the salon which these pictures did not show. Another negative comment was similar, expressing they missed a more overall image of the salon’s interior, which was the argument for why this content category would have been of interest. The third respondent which did not appreciate this picture, simply said it was not interesting. The three respondents which would have given this picture a “like”, agreed that these were the kind of posts that represented the salons enough to help them in deciding whether or not they would have used their services. This means these types of pictures are important for the brand.
5 Analysis

In this chapter, we will analyse the results in relation to the analytical tool that was presented in chapter 2.4. This was the model of information architecture by Rosenfeld et al. (2015), see Figure 1, which describes the connection between users, content and context. The analysis will use the model to cover all the different factors and to explain their relationship. We have analysed the users, followed by the content and lastly the context. Later on, in the next chapter “Discussion”, we will tie them all together, explaining how they all work together to create engagement.

5.1 Users, content and context

The result of this study has shown independent factors about all the pillars of the information architecture model, the users, content and context on Instagram. The content analysis and the semi-structured interviews showed us how they all work together as a whole to create engagement. Furthermore, all the factors provide information about why or why not, users will engage in the content and how it might be affected by the context in which the posts are published.

5.1.1 Users

What has been learned in this study about the users and their information needs, is that they want and need to feel inspired. Furthermore, they want to see examples of the salon’s work to feel fulfilled and gain trust for the brand. Similarly, Russman and Svensson (2016) mention in their study that images create trust and build a relationship with the brand that makes the users engage in their content. This is also compatible with the brands’ social media objectives, which is to create relationships with the users and build trust (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Kietzmann et al., 2011; Michaelidou et al. 2011). Furthermore, what was learned about the users, is that the reason this group seems to follow beauty accounts on Instagram is to feel inspired. They need to find engaging content to feel excited and encourage them to keep following these pages on social media. This is similar to what was shown in a study by Paek et al. (2013), that users engage in social media based on inspiration, participation and socialisation. Furthermore, Delsea (2016) adds, that customers are more likely to engage in companies they have seen on social media, as they are more likely to trust and visit a salon based on their social media page. This again shows the importance of a brand’s social media presence and the importance of striving to interact and engage with the audience.

An interesting fact we learnt in this study was that sometimes users can appreciate content, without engaging or interacting with it. This has been seen in our study as the respondents commented that they appreciated informational content as well as the posts of the interior of the salon, yet they did not always feel motivated to engage because the content sometimes was either boring or obvious. We learned in our study that users will not like or interact with a brands’ Instagram account unless they feel motivated to engage or are excited about the content. Furthermore, as Kietzmann et al. (2011) state, the first step to successful social media engagement is to understand the users and their needs. Another
study performed by Balan (2017) analysing Nike’s Instagram page, also suggests that posts that focused on the users and their experience had more engagement than other themes. Furthermore, the users also want to use the Instagram accounts of the brands as a tool to show what nails or eyelashes they want when they visit a beauty salon. This agrees with a study by Lee et al. (2015) which shows that social networking sites have become a significant communication tool. Since beauty is a common interest for the users, these Instagram accounts are where they come to feel engaged, inspired and to enjoy the daily content. As earlier research states, sharing daily content is what helps brands to reach their goals regarding engagement and relationship building (Kietzmann et al., 2011; Michaelidou et al. 2011; Tsimonis & Dimitriadis, 2014), and Instagram has enabled a convenient approach to do this (Humphrey, 2016; Russmann & Svensson, 2016). This is yet another example where we can see how the user, content and context is all working together in creating an efficient information ecology.

5.1.2 Content

The empirical data suggested several different types of content for beauty brands’ social media pages in regards to creating engagement. This was content with competitions, inspirational content, informative content, product or service representations, and honest content which creates trust and builds relationships (Kietzmann et al., 2011; Paek et al., 2013; Tsimonis & Dimitriadis, 2014). The type of content that the beauty accounts are posting and have the resources to post on social media consist mostly of their own work. Pictures of nails or eyelashes taken by the staff at the salon or user-generated content that has been posted and reposted by the salon. Other examples of content that were discovered in the content analysis were different competitions, promotions, information and news about the salons. As Tsimonis and Dimitriadis (2014) also argue, competitions are something that brands use to interact and engage the users. The collected data from the interviews contained several suggestions on preferred content for a beauty brand’s Instagram page. According to the respondents in this study, users want to see examples of what the salon’s quality of work is, they want to see customers’ nails or eyelashes before and after their treatment to be able to compare it with the final result. This will encourage them to “like” the posts and to engage more in the brands’ content on Instagram because it will create and build trust for the brand and their products and services. This is in agreement with Russmann and Svensson’s (2016) claim that content like authentic images of objects influence how people view products and services on social media brand pages. Furthermore, we found that the respondents find witnessing the transformation to be fulfilling and satisfying.

A study by Casaló et al. (2017) tested the role of perceived satisfaction and its effect on user behaviour on Instagram. They based the study on different hypotheses established from other studies in the same field. These studies suggested that qualitative content in a large quantity correlates to positive user experience on a brand’s social media page (Casaló et al., 2017). One of the hypotheses Casaló et al. (2017) tested was that content perceived to have good quality on a brand’s Instagram account, has a positive effect on the user’s satisfaction. This hypothesis is similar to what we found in our study, that is the users prefer high-quality images. Based on our findings, this was an important
factor for them to engage and interact with the content. Therefore, to have a successful Instagram account a beauty brand needs to post high-quality images, as it is important for the users to clearly see all the details in the picture. This goes for all content that beauty brands post even if it is user-generated content. Furthermore, we found that users want to see different types of content since they are interested in different services and derive inspiration from the variation. From the content analysis, we could see that the most amount of engagement was for nail images, however, the users still want the posts to be diverse and unique. The final result of the study by Casaló et al. (2017) suggested that the most important factor for perceived user satisfaction was that the content is original and is posted in a large quantity (Casaló et al., 2017). Furthermore, they suggest that to keep the users engaged, it may still be relevant to make high-quality content as it compliments quantity (Casaló et al., 2017). It can be determined from this, that if a brand is going to post a lot, the content should be high quality.

5.1.3 Context

When performing the basic content analysis, finding out the number of likes per post and category, we could observe that beauty brands use Instagram as a way of reaching out to their users. Their business goals and objectives are mainly to create more engagement and gain more followers. Tsimonis and Dimitriadis (2014) study also suggests that companies’ main objective with their social media channels is to gain customer engagement to their business. Likewise, Floreddu and Cabiddu (2016) explain that as a result of social media it is possible to create customer engagement, describing it as a positive effect for the brands. One approach through which businesses are trying to achieve this is for example with competitions where they ask the users to like, follow and tag a friend. What we found in our study is that context is a highly significant and dependent factor for the amount of engagement an image receives. By this, we suggest that an image that gets posted without offering anything to the users, will not result in the same amount of engagement as for example, an image that offers a competition or includes a promotion. The users would be more prompt to engage in a post because it would involve entering a competition, compared to just giving the post a “like”, because they simply enjoyed the content. This shows that the context in this analysis is how the beauty brands’ are trying to engage the users on Instagram, by posting content in the context of competitions or promotions.

Smith and Derville Gallicano’s (2015) study furthermore shows that millennials follow organisations online to stay up-to-date and to receive content, exclusive information and promotions. Tsimonis and Dimitriadis (2014) additionally suggest in their study, that in order to engage users, the most important activities for brands on social media are competitions, product promotions and daily conversations. This was also confirmed in our study, the fourth most liked category was the promotional pictures with an average of 63.11 likes per post, see Figure 2. This suggested that users enjoy competitions and promotions on Instagram. Additionally, this was confirmed during the interviews, where the respondents said they enjoy competitions, see chapter 4.2.1. Earlier research also states that the general objectives for brands on social media are to create
engagement, create relationships and build trust among consumers and spread brand awareness which can all be obtained through competitions and daily content (Kietzmann et al., 2011; Michaelidou et al. 2011; Tsimonis & Dimitriadis, 2014).

We also found that when the respondents commented on the posts of eyelash extensions, there was again an example of that context matters when it comes to engagement. The respondents explained that they would have found the pictures unusual and would not have engaged in them unless they knew they represented eyelash extensions. They commented that if the pictures were taken out of its context they would have been strange pictures of “sleeping faces”, or very close-up images of a human face. Russman and Svensson (2016) explain that a post on Instagram can be made to look different ways, for example very professional or casual, depending on the context of the post. Furthermore, it has been proven that an image and what the image is representing is influenced by the context (Crow, 2010, p. 182).

5.2 User engagement with beauty brands on Instagram

By studying how engagement with three beauty brands on social media may be related to the model of information architecture by Rosenfeld et al. (2015), see Figure 1, helped us understand and explain what creates engagement and why. Looking at the information architecture model, studying the users, content and context, we have discovered the following about creating engagement on beauty brands on Instagram.

The most important factor is that beauty brands need to find out what their users need and then customise the content after that. Furthermore, the brands need to consider what they want to achieve with their post, as in what context it is being shared in. With the material in this study, the companies will be able to find valuable information about their target group and their needs, especially within the area of southern Sweden. This study shows that a good approach is that businesses need to get to know their users. They need to figure out who is using their information environments and what the users need from these environments (Rosenfeld et al., 2015, p. 38). This will help create engagement because the beauty brands understand their users, what they want and when they want it, visiting the Instagram pages.

We applied the data from this study in the information architecture model, see Figure 14. We filled out the different aspects of the users, content and context, presenting a suggestion for how the information architecture model can be applied in explaining what creates engagement on Instagram for beauty brands. In summary, we can draw the conclusion that these three pillars are depended on each other in order to create a good information ecology on a brands’ Instagram page. Companies need to adjust to the context of Instagram and their businesses’ goals, which is to engage their target groups. They will then be able to customise the content to fit the user needs based on the resources of their individual businesses.
Figure 14. Proposed model.

Based on the data in this analysis, we could see a relationship with the three pillars and it was easy for us to apply our collected data in the same model. Based on the information in our study, the context is that the businesses’ goals are to generate more engagement from their users on Instagram. When users visit these information environments, they need to feel engaged. One way they can feel engaged is for example by competitions or promotions. To generate engagement, reach their business goals, the beauty brands adjust their content to the users and the context, by posting competitions on Instagram. The users will then engage with the posts, generating a larger engagement on the beauty brands’ Instagram accounts. Rosenfeld et al. (2015, p. 33) explain, that all of these factors have to work together to create a good information architecture design. Furthermore, they suggest that the model works for all types of information environments, from large websites to smaller applications. Which we can also see in this study. Other studies also confirm the relationship of the users, content and context (Casaló et al., 2017; Balan, 2017; Smith & Derville Gallicano, 2015; Kietzmann et al., 2011; Tsimonis & Dimitriadis, 2014). Smith and Derville Gallicano’s (2015) study suggest that to create engagement in the context of social media, the content needs to be created with the users’ information needs in mind.

The context of this study is Instagram and the businesses’ goals, which is to engage the users and to have a two-way communication possibility between the customers and the brand. For companies to succeed with communication and engagement, they have to adjust the content to the context of Instagram and their business’ goals, keep the user needs and preferences as a priority, and adjust their content for the users.
6 Discussion

People in today’s society can get overwhelmed with all the information being present on social media (Rosenfeld et al. 2015), because of this, for companies to succeed it is a necessity to engage their target audience (Bruhn et al. 2012; Ungerman & Myslivcová, 2014). Social media is constantly evolving and offering new ways of communicating, therefore, it may be a difficulty for companies to enjoy the benefits (Tsimonis & Dimitriadis, 2014). As people in Sweden use social media frequently (Svenskarna & internet, 2018), scholars agree on the fact that the presence on social media platforms is of big importance for the brands (Bruhn et al., 2012; Floreddu & Cabiddu, 2016; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Michaelidou et al., 2011). Furthermore, how successful and engaging the content of a brand is, is determined by their audiences’ engagement, for example, the number of likes on a social media platform (Casaló, Flavián & Ibáñez-Sánchez, 2017; Lee & Hong, 2016). The same conclusion can be drawn from the results of the qualitative data collection in this study as the respondents interestingly expressed that in some cases, the reason for their engagement in content is that they are aiming to be supportive of their friends and family. This shows that, according to Instagram users or social media users in general, the more engagement content has in the form of the number of “likes” the more successful it is considered being. Therefore, the aim of this study was to explore what content creates engagement and how it connects to the information architecture model and the relationship between the users, the content and the context, see Figure 1. To, later on, be able to explain what content creates engagement on Instagram and how it relates to keeping all the three factors in mind. Meaning focusing on the user needs, the content that is being shared and the business’ context the content is being shared in.

The study shows that a good experience for the user is when their needs are being met, which results in engagement, trust and interest in the business’s Instagram account. It also shows that the information architecture model is an advantaging approach in creating engagement on social media as it involves all the important building blocks for an efficient information ecology. Meaning it involves the users in the process of creating content and furthermore helps in establishing and understanding in what context to post the content for the most possible engagement. Based on this study it is crucial for the success and efficiency of any information ecology, that it gets developed with the three pillars of the information architecture model in mind, meaning the user, the content and the context. This statement is supported by Burford and Resmini (2017), as they state the user needs, the company’s content and the context all need to be adapted for a good information architecture environment. Finding out relevant information about all of these factors in the model creates a larger understanding of what needs to be done to fulfill both the user needs and satisfy the goals of a business.

Earlier research concludes that social media allows a new way of interaction which may also contribute to the development of customer engagement (Bruhn et al., 2012; Floreddu & Cabiddu, 2016; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Ungerman & Myslivcová, 2014). This study identified what the user needs of beauty
brands’ users consist of and thereby what drives the engagement in the form of likes. More precisely, the study showed that the user needs consist of content of high-quality, “before and after” pictures, as well as pictures with end results on different people and lastly relevant pictures of the services and products offered by the company. This is confirmed in a study by Casaló et al. (2017), as they suggest that to maintain engagement it may be relevant to make high-quality content as it compliments quantity. High-quality content can simply mean the image quality, but also high-quality content in the meaning of valuable content for the user. Yet, the users still enjoy a variety of content, as shown in the results of this study. The respondents agreed that a mix of all kinds of content relevant to the beauty-topic or relevant for the brand in question was preferable as this gave the users a good insight into what kind of salon this was. Similarly, the preferred content of these social media users in addition to all the above, was promotional posts like competitions and different offers as well as positive and inspiring content. This is data that is confirmed in earlier research by Tsimonis and Dimitriadis (2014), as they state that brands’ objectives with their social media are to create relationships and brand awareness through for example competitions. This answers both the research questions for this study, which was What kind of posts on the beauty salons’ Instagram pages generate the most engagement? and What factors drive engagement and encourage users to interact with content on Instagram? An interesting fact we learned in this study was that sometimes users can appreciate content, without engaging or interacting with it. This has been seen in our study as the respondents did comment that they appreciate informational content, as well as posts of the interior of the salon, yet did not always feel motivated to engage because the content sometimes was either dull or obvious. This can be explained as Smith and Derville Gallicano (2015) discuss in their study, users sometimes have a hard time describing their engagement. They mean their engagement is something that just happens and is a very spontaneous and impulsive act. With this being said, there will always be exceptions, however through the data obtained in this study we can draw general conclusions of what contributes to increased engagement.

Furthermore, Tsimonis and Dimitriadis (2014) confirm that companies that decide to have a social media presence need to follow a strategy in order to reach their objectives in relationship building and engagement. A popular way of reaching these objectives is through competitions, communication with the users, announcements of new products or services as well as provision of advice and useful as well as educational information. This is comparable to the collected data from the interviews with the followers of three beauty brands in this study. This showed the preferred content, and thereby the content that drove the most engagement in the form of the number of likes, was competitions, different offers, “before and after” pictures, and information about the different products and services. We could draw similar conclusions from the content analysis, see Table 2, which shows a high average number of likes of the promotional pictures on nearly every salon’s Instagram page. This result did not solely show that the users preferred these pictures because of their content, it also showed it was affected by the context it was posted in, which was a promotion. Furthermore, Smith and Derville Gallicano (2015) found that social media users often go online and engage with content of educational and informative nature. The participants of their study explained their engagement as an information-based
activity and experience. They also found that other reasons for engagement were to leave as well as gather feedback. According to Tsimonis and Dimitriadis (2014), engagement is the most important benefit expected by the brands from their presence on social media. Furthermore, they suggest that the emergence of engagement is possible as a result of the interactive aspects of Web 2.0 and two-way communication. Personal relationships and engagement are two factors developed by customer communication through social media (Tsimonis & Dimitriadis, 2014). Since the key benefit for a brand’s social media presence is engagement, brands should adjust their content to the user needs in order to encourage and generate the likes (Kietzmann et al., 2011; Tsimonis & Dimitriadis, 2014). Similarly, Smith and Derville Gallicano (2015), as well as Delsea (2016) state that in order to create engagement on social media the content should be created from the users’ perspective.

Combining data from the content analysis with the semi-structured interviews was a good way of reaching this point of understanding. This served as a reminder of how important it can be to look at data and to speak to individuals in order to gain a deeper understanding. It was also important to understand the context of the content posted by the businesses, in relation to the users and the content, which allowed us to get a more comprehensive understanding of this matter. The context is playing an important role for the engagement in content, as shown in the interviews of this study. Posts might get more or less engagement depending on which context they are posted on Instagram. In our case, this was for example how the users liked to enter competitions and how they would engage in a picture if it was posted in that context. We also saw another example in the lash extensions post, where the users stated they would not engage in the content if they were not aware of the context they were posted in. This is essential and necessary information to collect before the process of developing a plan for creating engagement can be started.

The results of our study do not allow a broad generalisation, however, allowed us to obtain a specific understanding of what creates engagement on beauty brands’ Instagram accounts. It allowed us to see a relationship between the different aspects of what it takes to create a good information architecture, with creating engaging content for users on social media. We also believe that other beauty brands can find valuable information in either using the data established in this study or implementing an equivalent method to create engagement among their audience on social media. Any other industry that uses social media to reach out to customers, could also most likely find benefits in this study. The reason for this is because the study is regarding creating engagement on social media by looking at the content, context and users, which any brand, regardless of the business type, can implement.

6.1 Limitations

Despite the interesting discoveries, this study also has limitations that should be acknowledged. We might have categorised the different posts incorrectly based on our personal opinions. The content of a beauty brand can vary a lot, which most likely depends on the brands’ in question preferences and objectives. Based
on this fact the categorization might have been done differently. Yet to avoid any confusion we made a strict description of the different categories for the posts. The content analysis was also made by the both of us to strengthen the liability.

Since purposive sampling was used in this study another type of sampling might have given a different result. Due to the number of participants for the semi-structured interviews and the fact that different people may have different opinions, this can lead to important facts being missed. Because of this, a larger sample than 6 participants as in this study, is recommended to really assure no new information will emerge.

Another limitation is the way that we might have misunderstood and perceived the answers made by the respondents in the semi-structured interviews. To avoid any misinterpretation of the respondents’ answers, after each interview was ended each participant got to read and control the notes from their interview in order to assure we didn’t make any assumptions of our own. Yet still, the analysis may have been done differently by different researchers with other experiences and knowledge, which also may have resulted in different results and discussions. Furthermore, because this study is written in English and the interviews were held in Swedish, some smaller details may be lost in translation. Yet the results were not translated literally which otherwise could have twisted the significance unintentionally.

Lastly, this study is based on one single industry and limited to only southern Sweden. One should take care to generalise the results to other contexts as well, for example, other industries and other countries or even continents.

6.2 Suggestions for future research

A possibility for future research would be to do a study within a different context, this can be on another social media platform, for example, Facebook. Other social media channels allow different types of content sharing, which results in a different type of engagement (Mills & Plangger, 2015) and it could be interesting to find out what the users need in terms of content on these different platforms and how the suggested results and social media strategies would compare. This would give an even broader result and understanding of what the users need in an even larger context than Instagram. Here it would also make it possible to measure other parameters on top of likes, for example, the number of individuals sharing and commenting.

This also raises our second suggestions for future research which would also take form in the frame of information architecture. This is to investigate how the underlying information architecture of Instagram and Facebook as applications, affects how the content is being posted, how the users interact with it and how the businesses can communicate with their target groups. This might show underlying reasons for the platforms’ usability that might affect the users’ engagement in content or the ability to interact. This could be restrictions on what type of content and how you can share it on the different channels. This is a different information architecture perspective to social media than the one we
had in this study, however, it might be interesting to find out if there is more to it than simply the content that the businesses’ are sharing.
7 References


Appendix A: Interview guide

Appendix A is the interview guide that was used for the interviews with the respondents.

Theme 1: Instagram interaction

- Do you use Instagram, if yes how often?
- When you are using Instagram, do you use to interact with posts meaning like and comment on pictures?
- Why do you like/comment, or if you don’t how come?

Theme 2: Rosa’s Beauty’s Instagram Page

- Why do you follow Rosa’s beauty on Instagram?
- Have you ever tried any of Rosa’s beauty’s services or products?
- Looking at their Instagram account; What type of content would you like to see more of?

Theme 3: Content

- What type of content do you prefer to see on Instagram pages of beauty companies?
- What type of content is your favorite content?
  - (If the respondent hesitates or does not know what to answer, some examples are: Competitions? Example pictures of different nails? Informational pictures about the brands’ services? Try to avoid this step, to avoid any guidance of the respondent to any misleading/incorrect answer.)
    - Why?
- Do you prefer natural pictures e.g. taken by other users or by the saloon but in real environments? Or do you prefer more arranged photos in studio environment which will look more professional?

Theme 4: Content engagement

- I will now show you a couple of photos from Rosa’s Beauty’s Instagram, and I would like you to answer if you would’ve engaged in liking the picture or not, and why? Is that OK?
Appendix B: Information to the respondents

Appendix B is the information the respondents were provided with orally, before the interview started. They were also provided with a copy of this appendix.

Presentation and purpose of the study

My name is Sandra/Jennie and we are studying a bachelor’s degree in Web editing at the University of Borås. We are working on study of beauty brand’s Instagram pages to research what creates engagement for Instagram from an information architecture perspective. We would like to invite you to join the study and interview you, as you are a follower of Rosa’s Beauty’s Instagram account.

The aim of this study is to find out what content creates engagement on a beauty salon’s account in the context of Instagram and their users.

The interview process

It you agree to participate, you will be asked approximately ten questions, with supplementary questions, where you will have to chance to elaborate your answers if you wish. During the interview I will take notes, and I will write everything in my own words, meaning I will not quote you so that your answers will not be able to be traced back to you. After the interview you will get the chance to review and control my notes to assure I did not make any assumptions of my own. Fill free you remove or change anything you feel is not correct in any way. We also want to make sure that you know that you are free to withdraw from the study at any time, as your participation is voluntary, and you may also refuse to ask any of the questions without any problems.

Confidentiality

In this study we will not collect any personal information from you, neither are we going to make any recordings. All the information that will be collected in this study will be kept confidential and will only be available to us two, Jennie and Sandra as we both are scholars for this study, and the data will only be used for the purpose of this study. The data will also be erased after the analysis is done. The results will as mentioned be written in our own words with no risk for the information to be traced back to identify you. You may keep this copy.

Questions?

Do you have any questions or thoughts?
Appendix C: Observation Scheme

Appendix C is the observational coding scheme that was used in the content analysis to keep track of the data and log the information easily. The numbers go on to 241 however that is not included in the appendix. The date is 27th of April for all the data and the only variables were the company name, which could be Rosa’s Beauty, Bow’s Beauty or Chelly. The different categories were the ones presented in 3.1.2 Designing data collection instruments and the “amount of likes” was to log the engagement in the form of likes for each individual post.

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