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B2C Disengagement on social media

*A qualitative and quantitative investigation of the factors influencing
unfollowing behavior on Instagram.*

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MSc in Strategic Marketing Management

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Preface

This master's thesis contributes to our pursuit of a Master of Science in Strategic Marketing Management at BI Norwegian Business School.

First of all, we would like to give a great thank you to Peter Jarnebrant, who has guided and supervised us through this whole process. We also express our gratitude to everyone who dedicated their time to participate in in-depth interviews and respond to our survey. Their valuable contributions have made this research project possible.

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Abstract

Social media has become a present part of modern life, connecting billions of people worldwide. Moreover, platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn have become crucial for businesses to reach and engage with consumers, offering cost-effective promotions, brand building, and real-time interactions (Appel et al., 2020; Felix et al., 2017). Consequently, as the number of social media users continues to grow - firms are also given an excellent opportunity to grow their business. However, acquiring and retaining followers can be challenging. Thus, understanding the reasons for consumer disengagement is crucial for optimizing social media strategies and maintaining engagement (Instagram, n.d.). Based on a framework provided by Zhang et al. (2022), this thesis provides a comprehensive framework of drivers and underlying factors of unfollowing behavior on Instagram in a Scandinavian culture context. The study aims to investigate the motivations and experiences of both past and present followers and examine the potential impact of brand loyalty on this relationship. This is done by approaching a mixed method research design, where six qualitative in-depth interviews were implemented to understand the subject matter by exploring human behavior and experiences, followed by a quantitative survey with a larger sample for generalization.

During the interviews, participants were asked to recall their experiences of unfollowing a specific brand. The interviews followed a non-standardized and semi-structured approach, consisting of three sections that offered flexibility and adaptability (Saunders et al., 2016). The main section focused on key questions regarding content preferences, engagement levels, unfollowing behavior, and loyalty. Based on the in-depth interviews in combination with a comprehensive review of previous literature and theories, four independent variables were identified: information overload, information irrelevance, perceived value dissimilarity and firms lack of engagement. In the survey, respondents were then exposed to five sections with a set of 30 questions. For assessing brand loyalty, participants were asked to specify a firm they follow on Instagram. Subsequent questions were then tailored to revolve around their chosen brand, enabling them to better envision the

scenarios presented. The final section of the survey focused on various scenarios related to the four independent variables and their influence on disengagement. As for this part, respondents were once again presented with questions that included their chosen brand.

Following, the qualitative data underwent a thematic analysis, which was then summarized according to themes in a table. Findings from the qualitative study suggested that unfollowing behavior is influenced by information overload, information irrelevance, and the firm's lack of engagement. Furthermore, the quantitative data was distributed through Qualtrics and further analyzed in SPSS. The research conducted multiple descriptive analyses, an exploratory analysis, a non-parametric independent sample test, and several regression analyses. These analyses aimed to determine the most influential drivers and underlying factors of unfollowing behavior, in addition to the dynamics of brand loyalty.

Findings from the quantitative study suggested significant evidence that information overload impacts unfollowing behavior and that loyalty scores are negatively associated with unfollowing behavior due to information overload. However, no substantial evidence was found for the other factors: information irrelevance, perceived value dissimilarity, and the firm's lack of engagement. Additionally, loyalty was identified as a moderating factor for the relationship between information overload and information irrelevance with unfollowing behavior.

This research aims to work as a guided framework for B2C businesses to optimize their Instagram presence and foster meaningful audience engagement. By considering these findings, marketers can avoid some pitfalls working through their social media strategy and consequently avoid user disengagement - hence unfollowing.

1. Introduction

With billions of people using social media daily, it has become a present part of our modern life. This technology has rapidly evolved into one of the most influential technologies of our time, allowing for interaction and establishing connections and relations between individuals. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn have in recent years become an increasingly important tool for business to reach and engage with a large audience of both potential and existing consumers. (Appel et al., 2020) These platforms offer companies convenient and cost-effective ways to promote their products or services, build brand awareness, and interact directly with consumers in real time. Consequently, firms can use social media to establish and maintain a presence in the online marketplace and, in turn, acquire new customers, growth, and reach. (Felix et al., 2017)

A report from 2023 states that there are nearly 5 billion people worldwide using different social media platforms today, which is expected to grow exponentially and is anticipated to be around 6 billion in 2027. Moreover, social media constitutes a great part of daily internet use in general. Internet users spend an average of 144 minutes daily on social media and messaging apps, equal to almost a half-hour since 2015. (Statista, 2023) With the anticipated forecast of exponential growth in social media users, firms will have an even increased opportunity to reach and interact with many consumers. However, maintaining engagement and fostering a solid following base can be challenging. Resultingly, firms may experience a decline in followers over time. Thus, understanding why people unfollow firms on social media is critical when seeking to optimize their social media strategies and retain customer engagement (Instagram, n.d.).

As a part of growing businesses, multiple studies and theories have been provided for creating customer engagement on social platforms (Cao et al., 2021; Li et al., 2021; de Oliveira Santini et al., 2020). Additionally, numerous research contributes to insights on how firms can acquire followers, and in turn increase the reach of their marketing attempts (Bradley, 2022; Forbes Agency Council, 2022; Lanier, 2021;

Campbell, 2020). Nevertheless, limited research has been conducted on what makes people unfollow firms on social media, and what firms can do to avoid losing followers. A mixed methods approach will be implemented to address this research gap, combining a qualitative study based on in-depth interviews with former social media followers and a quantitative survey of a larger sample of SoMe users. Therefore, the identified research question for this study is as follows:

"What are determinant drivers of disengagement that make consumers unfollow firms on social media?"

1.1 Purpose

This study aims to identify determinant drivers of disengagement on social media platforms. It seeks to explore the motivations and experiences of both former and current followers and to examine whether brand loyalty plays a role in shaping this dynamic. Moreover, this framework of findings can guide B2C firms when building a solid follower base. Furthermore, the findings of this study will provide valuable insights for firms seeking to optimize their social media marketing strategies and retain customer engagement. By understanding the factors that have strongest influence on unfollow behavior, firms can develop strategies to minimize the likelihood of unfollows and maximize the benefits of social media marketing. Ultimately, the study aims to help B2C businesses better understand the crucial drivers of unfollow behavior and provide practical recommendations for managing and retaining their followers on social media.

1.2 Scope and limitations

The main goal of this study is to provide a comprehensive answer to the primary research question presented in the first section. However, in order to approach this topic, the study has been narrowed down through certain limitations. Firstly, the research will examine a specific social media channel – Instagram, which as of today has over 2 billion monthly active users. This makes Instagram the fourth largest social media platform in the world. (Statista, 2023) Out of the 2 billion users, more

than 200 million of these accounts are registered as business profiles. Thus, a large amount of data is available to collect and analyze (Instagram, n.d.).

Secondly, the research will only address the drivers of unfollowing behavior from Instagram users in the Scandinavian market. As previous research on this topic has been conducted in a non-Scandinavian cultural context, the results may not apply to the Scandinavian market (Zhang et al., 2022). In contrast to e.g., Asian countries and their culture, Scandinavian countries have unique cultural characteristics that would be important to consider when conducting research. These distinctive features encompass crucial factors, including the extent of social media usage, regulations governing such platforms, preferred social media channels, and prevailing consumer trends. By focusing on Scandinavian countries, one can be confident that the results of this study are relevant and applicable to this particular cultural context. This sample is not the least convenient for data collection because of our access to suitable respondents and a great network of people. Additionally, the Scandinavian market has an identified diverse user base on Instagram, whereas approximately 9.25 million Danish, Norwegian, and Swedish people use Instagram daily (Internetstiftelsen, 2022, p. 159; Ipsos, 2022; make influence, n.d.).

Finally, this research takes on a user-centered approach. Thus, the data will be collected directly from the consumers instead of selecting a specific company or brand as the research subject. This approach allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the experiences and viewpoints of individuals who interact with the product or service rather than solely relying on the company's perspective, content, and strategy. Resultingly, the full range of experiences and insights relevant to the research question can be more accurately captured. This, in turn, will contribute to a deeper understanding of the patterns of people's unfollowing behavior.

1.3 Outline

The structure of this thesis is as follows: The first section provides background and context for the research. This includes a description of the issue being addressed and

the research question and objectives that the study aims to answer. Further, the scope and limitations of the study are outlined. In the second section, in addition to essential definitions, the relevant literature on customer engagement and disengagement will be reviewed. This will provide an overview of previous research conducted and include a discussion of the theoretical framework that underlies the study. This section will also identify any gaps in the literature that the current study aims to address. In the third section, the research design and methodology used in the study will be described. This will include details on the data collection methods, sample size and characteristics, implementation, and ethical and legal concerns. In the fourth section, the results of the analyses will be presented. This will include the data analysis techniques used to analyze the collected data. In the fifth section, a summary of the main findings and a discussion of the results in relation to the theoretical framework and previous research will be presented. Moreover, this section will include managerial implications, limitations, and recommendations for further research. In the sixth section, a conclusion of the study will be provided. (Saunders et al., 2016)

2. Literature review

In regard to the proposal, various terms will initially be defined and explained that are considered relevant for the research. Following that, a thorough overview of the pertinent research will be provided and presented.

2.1 Definitions

2.1.1 A follower on social media

A «follower» on a social media platform is someone who can see and interact with the content posted by an account. In addition to updates, they might also receive notifications from the account. (Stec, 2023) Five key motivation factors that drive customer interactions with a brand or a company are brand affiliation, investigation, opportunity seeking, conversation, and entertainment (Enginkaya & Yilmaz, 2014).

The concept of brand-related social media usage has been examined in several studies, leading to the development of a framework that encompasses three dimensions: consuming, contributing, and creating (Schivinski et al., 2016; Muntinga et al., 2011). According to the framework, the act of «following» brand-related content on social media falls under the category of consuming (Muntinga et al., 2011). Extending further, Pentina et al. (2018) also suggest that following someone on social media can be considered a type of engagement, even though it requires the least amount of customer effort. Although following a company on social media might imply a stronger brand relationship, it is important to emphasize that the action of clicking the "follow" button is relatively simple and requires minimal effort, as indicated by the findings presented. For instance, following a brand on social media due to a request to participate in a contest may not necessarily indicate a deep level of engagement or loyalty to the brand. Recognizing the complexity of the relationship between consumers and brands is therefore crucial when analyzing the significance of following a company on social media (Fournier, 1998).

2.1.2 Disengagement in social media

«Disengagement» refers to withdrawing or reducing one's level of involvement or participation in a particular social context, such as social media (Kuntsman & Miyake, 2019). There are various ways to disengage in social media, such as unfollowing or disliking a brand's account or page (Srinivasan et al., 2016). Moreover, disengagement may also involve reduced online engagement activities - like stopping commenting, liking, or sharing the brand's content. Physically, this can be illustrated through a decline in purchasing or using the brand's products or services. (Hall-Phillips et al., 2016) This research specifically focuses on the concept of unfollowing behavior as a form of disengagement.

2.1.3 Brand loyalty

«Brand loyalty» is traditionally referred to as the degree to which a consumer consistently purchases a particular brand over others. It measures a consumer's attachment to a brand, which various factors, such as quality, pricing, customer

service, and emotional connections, can influence. (Amine, 1998) In physical and online stores, this could involve consumers returning to the same store to purchase products they have had positive experiences with in the past. These consumers may feel a sense of trust and reliability with the store and enjoy the convenience of being familiar with the store's layout and product offerings (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001).

On social media, brand loyalty can take on a different form. Consumers may follow a brand's social media account, engage with their content, and recommend the brand to others. Social media provides a platform for customers to publicly express their loyalty to a brand, which can create a sense of community and emotional connection to the brand. (Laroche et al., 2013) However, social media also presents unique challenges for building and maintaining brand loyalty. Consumers can access a wide range of information and easily compare and switch between brands (Lam et al., 2010). Additionally, social media allows consumers to voice their dissatisfaction with a brand publicly, which can damage the brand's reputation and loyalty (Tsimonis & Dimitriadis, 2014).

Overall, brand loyalty is an essential aspect of building a successful business, and understanding how it differs in traditional stores and social media can help companies create effective strategies for building and maintaining loyalty in both contexts (Tsimonis & Dimitriadis, 2014; Laroche et al., 2013; Lam et al., 2010; Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001; Amine, 1998).

2.2 Overview of relevant research

This section provides an overview of the relevant research conducted in the field of social media engagement and its potential correlation with brand loyalty. A few studies have previously examined the topic of engagement on various social media platforms. For instance, Zhang et al. (2022) investigated the impact of various types of person-environment misfits on users' intention to unfollow. Their research shed light on the factors influencing users' disengagement from social media content. Furthermore, Kwak et al. (2011) analyzed the dynamics of unfollowing behavior on

Twitter. Examining the future of social media from a marketing perspective, Appel et al. (2020) delved into the evolving landscape of social platforms and their implications for marketing-related topics and issues. Additionally, the classic work of Fournier (1998) explored the concept of consumer-brand relationships.

These studies collectively contribute to understanding the relationship between disengagement and brand loyalty, creating the basis for further exploration for this research.

2.2.1 Information overload

Information overload happens when individuals face more information than they can effectively handle using their information-processing abilities (Lee et al., 2016). Moreover, overload is considered a critical factor that results in negative consequences from the use of information and communication technologies (Fu et al., 2020; Schiffman et al., 2012). Hence, information overload in social media channels can be expected to provoke disengagement, such as unfollowing behavior (Liang & Fu, 2017). The effect of information overload on unfollowing behavior may differ for individuals who follow many accounts compared to individuals who follow only a few accounts (Beaudoin, 2008). A user following many accounts may have different strategies for dealing with information overload, such as using different algorithms for filtering the information that reaches their feeds (Hiltz & Plotnik, 2013). Moreover, consumer behavior theory about information processing explains that individuals use decision rules as a tool to cope with exposure to too much information (Schiffman et al., 2012).

Nevertheless, the information on Instagram has previously been dominated by individuals we know, such as friends and family. Findings suggest that such personal, relevant information can prevent a user's impression of information overload. (Matthes et al., 2020; Beaudoin, 2008) However, over time, as Instagram has become increasingly popular with businesses and organizations who use it to connect with their customers and promote their products or services, content on Instagram has

become more diverse, with a mix of personal and non-personal content (Appel et al., 2020). Posting a wide range of content, such as product promotions, behind-the-scenes glimpses of their operations, and educational or informative content, are examples of what one can discover in a firm's Instagram feed. Consequently, distributing non-personal materials could affect the perception of information overload. Past research indicates that customization is a crucial psychological factor that can impact attitudes and behaviors through various mechanisms, including perceived relevance, interactivity, involvement, community, and novelty (Kalyanaraman & Sundar, 2016). By tailoring content to individual users, customization can help mitigate the negative effects of information overload. According to Liang et al. (2006), in a study on personalized content recommendation and user satisfaction, customers reported higher satisfaction levels when the content was personalized. This finding suggests that personalization can help reduce the perception of information overload.

Apart from the sheer volume of information originating from individual or multiple accounts and the impersonal nature of the information, information overload can also be attributed to how content is structured and presented. (Liang & Fu, 2017; Sasaki et al., 2015; Dunbar, 1992; Schick et al., 1990). On Instagram, posts commonly consist of pictures or videos accompanied by shorter or longer captions. However, businesses often share edited pictures with embedded text. These images' size, quality, and resolution impact how people process information (MacInnis & Price, 1987). Consequently, information overload can occur when accounts share textually or visually heavy content. In such instances, the overwhelming volume of information from one or multiple accounts can exceed an individual's capacity to process, resulting in information overload (Liang & Fu, 2017; Sasaki et al., 2015; Kwak et al., 2011; Dunbar, 1992; Schick et al., 1990).

Research on email marketing has indicated that longer emails are more likely to lead to unsubscribing by consumers (Chittenden & Rettie, 2003). Similarly, social media users may unfollow accounts that overwhelm them with excessive content. In

addition to text-heavy content, image-heavy content can also overwhelm users with its complexity (Overgoor et al., 2022; Pieters et al., 2010). Studies have shown that viewers tend to focus more on text than images in advertisements. However, viewers may cease reading the text once they feel they have obtained sufficient information, selectively focusing on highlighted text (Rayner et al., 2001). Similarly, with platforms like Instagram prioritizing visual content, users may feel overwhelmed by the vast number of images (Kwak et al., 2011).

These findings further support the impact of media richness, as highlighted in a study by Moran et al. (2020). The study indicates that utilizing rich media formats increases engagement. Visual content, such as images and videos, elicits more engagement compared to less rich content, such as text. Videos, in particular, are effective in generating engagement across various behaviors, whereas images excel in increasing liking and sharing behavior. This discrepancy might stem from videos being perceived as more time-consuming and cognitively demanding, resulting in a lower tendency for sharing. Moreover, a study by Matthes et al. (2020) expresses that images are arguably easier to process than texts and videos, which, therefore, can affect the perception of information overload. Even though this study indicated that Instagram was not related to information overload due to being considered an image-based platform, less research supports this finding regarding how individuals perceive different types of information on Instagram.

2.2.2 Information irrelevance

«Information irrelevance» refers to the extent to which information is no longer helpful or accessible for a user (Zhang et al., 2022; Guo et al., 2020). Previous research suggests that information irrelevance in social network services can directly lead to avoidance behavior, where individuals consciously take actions to avoid irrelevant information. This avoidance behavior can manifest as disengagement and even unfollowing certain accounts on social media platforms (Guo et al., 2020).

Although the consequences of information irrelevance and its underlying dimensions have yet to be extensively studied, there are theoretical frameworks that can shed light on these phenomena. For example, selective exposure theory suggests that when the information provided is irrelevant, people may disengage as they do not find it worth attention (Sears & Freedman, 1967). Similarly, the theory of attention economics posits that attention is a scarce resource, and individuals will prioritize the most relevant information (Mintzer, 2020). Additionally, a study examining active Twitter users' unfollowing behaviors revealed that they were inclined to unfollow accounts that frequently tweeted about uninteresting topics or shared mundane details of their lives (Kwak et al., 2011).

In the context of Instagram, the platform's algorithm plays a crucial role in determining the relevance and popularity of content. Based on their past behavior on the platform, Instagram's algorithm is designed to prioritize content that it predicts users will be most interested in. This includes accounts that users interact with the most, search for, comment on, and engage with in various ways. The algorithm considers engagement metrics such as likes, comments, and shares to assess the popularity of a post and rank it in users' feeds. (Mosseri, 2023)

Research on consumer behavior highlights the importance of relevance in driving behavioral engagement. A study by Fernandes & Castro (2020) found that the relevance of the content produced by a brand is more influential in eliciting behavioral engagement than other conceptualizations. This finding suggests that users are likelier to engage with content they perceive as relevant to their interests and preferences. Moreover, Jung (2017) advocates customizing content based on geographical, demographic, and psychographic elements to ensure its relevance to consumers and increase attention of the message. Expanding on the concept of information relevance, Choi and Rasmussen (2002) conducted a study to explore the factors that influence image users' judgments of relevance. The research identified five critical criteria that significantly influenced users' assessments: topicality, accuracy, completeness, suggestiveness, and time frame. Topicality refers to the

extent to which the image relates to the user's task or purpose. Accuracy assesses how well the image represents what the user is seeking. Completeness gauges the presence of necessary details in the image for demonstration purposes. Suggestiveness examines how the image stimulates new ideas or insights for the user. Lastly, the time frame considers the appropriateness of the image for the current context or timeframe for the user. Consequently, when a consumer changes their behavior or behavioral pattern, information previously perceived as interesting and relevant could become irrelevant and lead to disengagement, hence unfollowing behavior (Kassarjian, 1971).

2.2.3 Perceived value dissimilarity

«Values» can, according to Jehn et al. be defined as "(...) individuals' fundamental beliefs regarding the desirability of behavioral choices" (1997, p. 288). Value dissimilarity relates to the variation among individuals in the psychological factors that inform their decision-making and actions, visible as the essential values, principles, and motives. When the perceived values of a consumer contradict or are incongruent with a brand or company, value dissimilarity can be experienced. (Zhang et al., 2022) Additionally, a brand's identity encompasses its values, meanings, and opinions, which hence play a crucial role in establishing brand equity. Building a strong brand, therefore, requires a well-defined brand identity as a fundamental component. (Keller & Swaminathan, 2020)

Further extending, the value congruence of a brand is an important predictor for consumer-brand identification. Thus, value congruency indicates significant importance in customer-brand relationships. One possible reason for this is that brands can be part of consumers' self-concept, which then is affected depending on what brands to associate with and what they stand for. (Elbedweihy et al., 2016) Value congruency is also critical to creating and sustaining affective commitment (Zhang & Bloemer, 2008). Moreover, prior research has shown that consumers usually buy from brands reflecting their values (Ipsos, 2021) and that they are more inclined to switch to an alternative brand when experiencing value dissimilarity - that

is, when they feel their needs, preferences, and values no longer align with those of the product or brand (Appiah et al., 2019).

Accordingly, cognitive dissonance theory suggests that when a person holds two or more contradictory beliefs, attitudes, or values, it creates psychological discomfort or dissonance, which the person will then try to resolve. This can be done by changing one's beliefs, attitudes, or behaviors or adding new beliefs that help reconcile the contradictions. The theory holds that this dissonance is an uncomfortable feeling that people try to avoid and that people have a bias to think of their actions as correct to avoid dissonance. (Schiffman et al., 2012) To alleviate this dissonance, individuals may engage in unfollowing behavior.

In the field of consumer behavior, studies have found that individuals may revisit the search stage of their purchasing journey when they encounter cognitive dissonance while evaluating different alternatives. Consequently, dissatisfaction with the choice motivates the consumer to reevaluate and distance themselves from the product, service, or brand. (Sharma, 2014) Moreover, a study by Kim (2011) finds that when consumers are exposed to negative WOM in service industries, their purchase intentions may be significantly reduced. This effect is particularly pronounced when the negative WOM message is inconsistent with the consumers' beliefs or expectations. The study highlights the role of cognitive dissonance in information processing and the subsequent impact on consumer behavior, indicating that consumers seek ways to reduce the discomfort caused by cognitive dissonance, such as lowering their repurchase intentions. Attribution theory offers further insights into how consumers respond to hostile actions or events by a company. According to this theory, consumers are motivated to understand and make sense of these actions or events. They may attribute the causes to either internal factors within the company's control or external factors such as market conditions. When consumers attribute negative actions or events to internal factors, they are more likely to perceive value dissimilarity and may disengage from the company. (Kelley & Michela, 1980)

Furthermore, the term «triggered» can describe the emotional response someone may experience when exposed to a distressing subject. This can appear in the media or a social context as violence, alcohol, or food, for example. Triggers can be both internal and external. Internal triggers refer to emotions such as anxiety and pain. In contrast, environmental factors, such as a person or a news article, might activate external triggers activated by environmental factors, such as a person or a news article. (Cuncic, 2022) To cope with triggers, consumers may use several mechanisms. Such actions might naturally be unsubscribing from email marketing or using ad-blocking for websites when exposed to triggering content. The self-regulation theory suggests that individuals use different coping mechanisms to regulate their emotions and behavior in response to triggers. Self-regulation strategies include self-control, problem-solving, seeking social support, and self-distraction. (Bandura, 1991) In accordance with this theory, unfollowing a brand on Instagram could be seen as a self-regulation strategy to avoid further exposure to triggering content. Additionally, triggering content from a brand can create a perceived mismatch between the value that the consumer expects from the brand and the value that the brand is actually providing. This value dissimilarity may evoke feelings of cognitive dissonance and dissatisfaction in the consumer, leading them to disengage with the brand and seek alternatives that align better with their values and preferences.

2.2.4 Firms lack of engagement

Maintaining consumer engagement on social media requires building positive relationships and a sense of belonging and identity, which can be achieved through engagement (Appel et al., 2020; Peters et al., 2013). To effectively engage consumers in social media channels entails incorporating post variations, encouraging the target audience to act such as liking, commenting, or sharing, as well as promptly responding to inquiries through direct messages and other contact forms (Juntunen et al., 2020; Ashley & Tuten, 2015). According to various theories, if businesses fail to engage consumers effectively, they may disengage from the brand and, subsequently, unfollow it. In a study by Lin et al. (2001), findings suggest that social networks,

norms, and trust within society can be considered valuable resources that can improve the welfare of individuals and organizations by promoting positive outcomes. The theory of Social Capital argues that social capital is built when individuals and organizations engage with each other in positive ways, such as on social media. When a firm does not engage with its customers on social media, it is not contributing to building social capital, which ultimately can lead to disengagement. Expanding on these findings, the Social Identity Theory offers a further understanding of the outcomes associated with inadequate engagement on social media. This theory elucidates how individuals construct their identities through group affiliations, assimilating the attributes and values of their chosen groups into their self-concept. Resultingly, when a firm lacks engagement with its customers on social media, it may fail to instill a sense of belonging or identity within these consumers. Consequently, this absence of identification and connection can potentially lead to disengagement behaviors, including the act of unfollowing the company's social media accounts (Hogg, 2016).

Expanding the concept of engagement, one can also consider inactivity as a relevant aspect. In the realm of social media marketing, the term «inactiveness» specifically pertains to the relative frequency with which a brand or company posts content on Instagram. This aspect of inactiveness encompasses the level of activity exhibited by the brand's Instagram account, primarily measured by the regularity of its content updates. Essentially, it refers to the degree of engagement and interaction a brand maintains with its audience through the platform. (Thomas, 2023) Moreover, inactivity from a firm can negatively impact its position in algorithm-based systems. Consequently, this could affect their visibility, relevance, and accuracy in recommendations. In order to sustain a favorable position in such systems, firms must place importance on consistent customer engagement and continuous updates to their online presence (Mosseri, 2023).

When examining engaging content, in addition to companies' social media activity, another pertinent aspect to consider is the variation in content. «Repetitiveness» in

this setting is the variation in social media content. Thus, the amount of variation, quality, and richness of content depends on a firm's social media marketing strategy. A social media marketing strategy involves creating and sharing content on various social media platforms in order to achieve a specific business goal, such as increasing brand awareness, driving website traffic, or generating leads. The strategy should include identifying target audiences, determining which social media platforms to use, creating a content calendar, and measuring the campaign's success. It should also consider integrating paid social media advertising as part of the overall strategy (Li et al., 2021). Moreover, a social media marketing strategy is commonly associated with media richness.

Media richness refers to the amount of information that can be conveyed through a communication channel. It measures how well a medium can facilitate communication by providing cues such as natural language, tone of voice, facial expressions, and body language. (Shahbaznezhad et al, 2021) In light of the two-factor theory that explains the subtle balance between boredom and familiarity, firms that post content with low richness may experience that consumers are more easily to habituate. Habituation refers to the process by which the effect of a stimulus decreases over time due to the individual's exposure to it. As a result of boredom or fatigue, consumers will no longer pay attention to the stimulus after repeated exposure. Therefore, an optimal frequency balance between increased familiarity and liking and boredom with each exposure is preferred. (Klemens Knöferle, personal communication, 11th of November 2022; Solomon, 2003) Consequently, when a firm repeatedly posts the same or similar content, it can lead consumers to disengage from the brand or firm.

As per the Social Exchange Theory, social interactions are founded on exchanging benefits between the involved parties. According to this theory, social interactions thrive on the reciprocal exchange of benefits. Consequently, when a firm fails to engage with its customers on social media by consistently posting repetitive content lacking variety and interest, it fails to provide recurring benefits. This deficiency may

result in a potential loss of consumer engagement. (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005) Elaborating further, when a firm consistently posts repetitive content on social media, it may fail to meet the consumers' need for autonomy, as it restricts their choices and limits their sense of control over the content they encounter. Similarly, repetitiveness can undermine the consumers' perception of competence, as they may perceive the content as mundane or lacking in novelty, which diminishes their motivation to engage. Moreover, the lack of variety and fresh content can hinder the sense of relatedness, as consumers may feel a weak connection or resonance with the company's social media presence. (Deci & Ryan, 2004) Consequently, repetitive content on social media may neglect consumers' psychological needs, resulting in disengagement and reduced motivation to interact with the firm.

Within the realm of Instagram algorithms, content that is more likely to generate engagement is prioritized. Hence, algorithms send a signal to Instagram when a business account provides its followers with content that is not perceived as interesting or relevant enough for them to engage with. Consequently, Instagram is inclined to reduce the visibility of the account's content in the feeds and explore the pages of its followers. This decrease in reach and visibility poses challenges for the account in terms of attracting new followers and fostering engagement. As a result, the account may find it increasingly difficult to expand its reach and cultivate an active and engaged following. (Agung & Darma, 2019; Cotter, 2019) Search engine algorithms also support this, favoring websites that consistently provide fresh and relevant content (Al-Badi et al., 2011). Failure to regularly update and produce new content over an extended period can lead to declining search engine rankings (Gunjan et al., 2012; Odden, 2012). Thus, when a firm shares repetitive content in social channels that fails to generate significant engagement from its followers or readers, it risks being down-prioritized and filtered out by the algorithmic systems (Pariser, 2011).

2.2.5 Brand loyalty

Recalling section 2.1.3, brand loyalty can be described as the extent to which consumers consistently choose a specific brand over others, reflecting their attachment to it. Factors like quality, pricing, customer service, and emotional connections can influence this attachment. (Amine, 1998) Moreover, to comprehensively capture the factors that impact brand loyalty, Punniyamoorthy and Prasanna Mohan Raj (2007) have developed an empirical model to provide a systematic measurement of brand loyalty. Hence, considering nine key determinative factors: involvement, functional value, price worthiness, emotional value, social value, brand trust, satisfaction, commitment, and repeat purchase. Extensive research indicates that these factors significantly contribute to consumers' brand loyalty, with higher levels of each factor correlating with increased brand loyalty. By way of introducing brand loyalty further, a well-known framework that elucidates the concept is Keller's Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) model.

The CBBE model explains the concept of building brand equity through a comprehensive conceptual framework involving a series of four sequential steps. The first objective is to create awareness, followed by educating consumers about the brand. Subsequently, by establishing points of parity and points of difference, customers respond through their cognitive judgments and emotional perceptions. Finally, the pinnacle of the pyramid signifies the brand-consumer relationship, representing the most challenging and desirable level to achieve. Consumers reaching this stage have established an emotional connection with the brand, demonstrating strong loyalty and attachment. They exhibit consistent behavioral loyalty by displaying repetitive purchase behavior and a propensity to choose the brand over competitors. Furthermore, customers develop a deep attitudinal attachment to the brand, wherein they establish personal identification and self-expression through their association with the brand. This emotional connection fosters a sense of community, enabling consumers to engage with other brand enthusiasts, participate in brand-related events, and share experiences. (Keller & Swaminathan, 2020)

Nevertheless, most importantly, consumers also actively engage with the brand beyond the act of purchase or consumption. This involvement encompasses activities such as affiliating with brand-related clubs, participating in online discussions or events, or following the brand on social media platforms. (Keller & Swaminathan, 2020) Brand loyalty, therefore, plays a significant role in sustained engagement. A consumer's loyalty to a brand could make them less inclined to disengage or unfollow the company on platforms like Instagram. Moreover, this indicates that customers who exhibit loyalty towards a brand are inclined to be more forgiving when faced with minor mistakes or inconveniences. Additionally, their loyalty fosters a stronger commitment to the brand, enabling them to persevere through challenges or changes without easily switching to alternative options. (Knox & Walker, 2001) Thus, customers with high brand loyalty may be less likely to unfollow a brand on social media, even when experiencing information overload or irrelevance, perceived value dissimilarity, or lack of engagement.

In alignment with the CBBE model, Fournier's Customer-Brand Relationship (CBR) framework provides additional conceptualization of the relationship between a consumer and a brand, emphasizing emotional, psychological, and social dimensions. Self-concept connection refers to the degree to which a brand helps consumers to express their identity and values. (Fournier, 1998) A brand's successful establishment of robust and enduring customer relationships fosters a strong sense of identification among customers. As a result, this sense of identification leads to increased levels of advocacy and greater purchase frequency and elicits various other supportive behaviors (Hall-Phillips et al., 2016). Consequently, consumers with a stronger self-concept connection with a brand demonstrate higher brand loyalty. This connection acts as a mitigating factor against the negative impact of diverse brand experiences. (Fournier, 1998) Findings also suggest that consumers with a strong self-brand connection tend to maintain a favorable evaluation of a brand, even in the face of failure, because brand failure is seen as a threat to their self-image. As a result, consumers employ defensive strategies to protect their self-concept by maintaining positive evaluations of the brand, even when it performs poorly. (Cheng et al., 2012)

Resultingly, consumers with strong brand relationships might be more inclined to overlook failures such as information overload, irrelevance, or a lack of brand engagement. (Fournier, 1998). Thus, this self-concept connection could reduce the risk of consumers unfollowing brands. Accordingly, firms can foster consumers' loyalty and reduce these challenges by creating a strong brand personality and identity that resonates with consumers and aligns with their values and self-concept. (Fournier, 1998)

The social exchange theory further extends consumer-firm relationships, which suggests that individuals who invest their time and effort in building relationships are more likely to remain loyal and committed to those relationships. Additionally, this theory proposes that relationship investment can act as a buffer against inconveniences. Emphasizing the importance of reciprocal actions and interactions in maintaining relationships, the theory can also be applied to a consumer-brand relationship. Consumers who strongly connect with a brand might be more likely to overlook instances such as information overload, irrelevance, value dissimilarity, or a firm's lack of engagement (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). If a strong relationship between the consumer and the brand fosters a sense of trust, loyalty, and satisfaction, it could reduce the likelihood of users disengaging or unfollowing the brand on Instagram.

On the other hand, when individuals perceive their investments to be in vain or not reciprocated, they may feel dissatisfied and be more likely to disengage or terminate the relationship. Additionally, individuals tend to compare their current relationship to alternative options. If the alternative options offer better rewards or outcomes, they may be more inclined to disengage from their current relationship and pursue alternatives. This aspect further underscores the significance of a company's social presence, particularly in the face of competition. (Stafford & Kuiper, 2021)

Moreover, research findings support that the order of following impacts unfollowing behavior. Individuals tend to exhibit a reduced tendency to unfollow users with

whom they have established longer connections. This phenomenon can be attributed to the perception that longer connections indicate stronger ties, reducing the probability of being unfollowed (Liang & Fu, 2017). These findings are consistent with the argument by Kwak et al. (2011), who contend that newly followed accounts or users are more likely to be unfollowed.

2.3 Theoretical framework

A perceptual theoretical framework has been constructed based on an extensive review of the existing literature. This framework outlines the potential impact of four independent variables (IVs) - information overload, information irrelevance, perceived value dissimilarity, and firms' lack of engagement - on the dependent variable (DV) of disengagement, hence unfollowing behavior. Moreover, the framework posits that the relationship between the IVs and DV is moderated by brand loyalty, underscoring its crucial role in influencing the dynamics within the model.

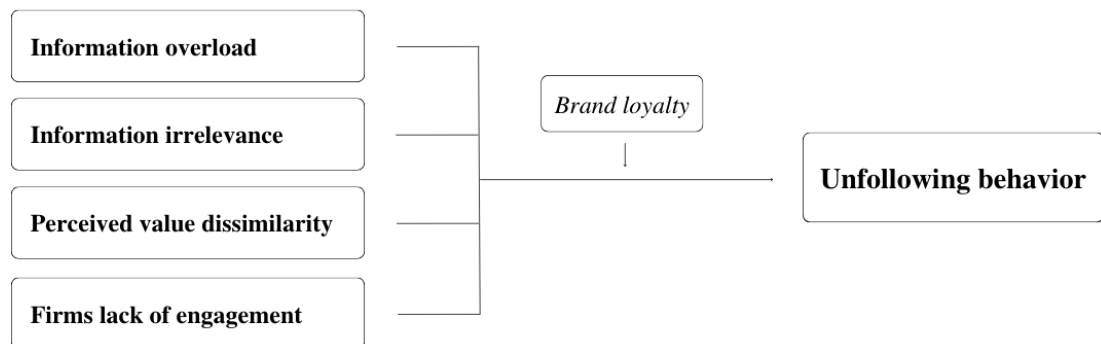


Figure 1: Theoretical framework

2.4 Gaps in the literature

The theoretical framework was implemented by extensively reviewing the existing literature. From which, there are several identified gaps that this research aims to address. Initially, abundant research is available on topics like creating engagement on social media and strategies for achieving growth. However, the area of disengagement on social media platforms has been significantly overlooked, with very few studies addressing this aspect. Moreover, there is additionally a need for

studies investigating B2C disengagement on social media in culturally similar countries, such as Scandinavia. Most studies in this domain have primarily focused on Asian cultures, which may potentially influence the outcomes observed for the topic.

Furthermore, prior research has predominantly concentrated on microblogging. It has yet to delve into the interaction dynamics between companies or brands and their consumers on various social media platforms such as Instagram or Facebook. Lastly, as previously studied, an examination of the potential underlying factor of the independent variables has yet to be conducted in relation to B2C disengagement on social media.

2.5 Hypothesis

The framework presented in chapter 2.3 establishes the groundwork for the formulated hypotheses derived from a thorough review of previous literature and will undergo empirical testing. Below are the hypotheses related to each of the independent variables under investigation. In this context, the term «positive effect» refers to an increase in the likelihood of consumers unfollowing a brand or company.

Information overload refers to the overwhelming feeling caused by the subjective perception of an excessive amount of information (Lee et al., 2016). In the realm of social media, hence Instagram, this overload is believed to result in unfollowing behavior, where consumers choose to stop following or unsubscribing from a brand's social media account. However, we propose that brand loyalty could moderate this effect, meaning that highly loyal consumers may be less likely to unfollow a brand even when experiencing information overload. Therefore, we hypothesize the following:

H1: Information overload has a positive effect on unfollowing behavior, but this effect is weaker for consumers with high levels of brand loyalty.

Information irrelevance indicates the level to which information loses its utility or significance to the receiver (Zhang et al., 2022; Guo et al., 2020). This phenomenon may lead to disengagement and unfollowing behaviors on social media platforms. However, the hypothesis suggests that brand loyalty may moderate this impact, indicating that highly loyal consumers are less inclined to unfollow the brand even when they perceive the content as irrelevant:

H2: Information irrelevance has a positive effect on unfollowing behavior, but this effect is weaker for consumers with high levels of brand loyalty.

Perceived value dissimilarity refers to the perceived mismatch between the values held by consumers and those exhibited by a company (Zhang et al., 2022). Specifically, in the realm of social media, if consumers perceive a substantial discrepancy between their values and the values portrayed by a brand, it could cause unfollowing behavior. Nevertheless, we posit that brand loyalty may moderate this association, implying that highly loyal consumers are less likely to unfollow a brand even in the presence of perceived value dissimilarity:

H3: Perceived value dissimilarity, arising after an initial choice to follow a firm, has a positive effect on unfollowing behavior, but this effect is weaker for consumers with high levels of brand loyalty.

Lack of firm engagement refers to the perception that a brand is not actively diversifying its posts and stimulating audience interaction, such as through likes, comments, and shares, while also failing to promptly respond to inquiries via direct messages and other communication channels (Juntunen et al., 2020; Ashley & Tuten, 2015). When consumers perceive a brand's limited involvement on social media, it may affect their unfollowing behavior. However, we suggest that brand loyalty may moderate this connection, suggesting that highly loyal consumers are less prone to unfollow a brand even when they perceive a lack of active engagement from the brand on Instagram:

H4: Lack of firm engagement on social media has a positive effect on unfollowing behavior, but this effect is weaker for consumers with high levels of brand loyalty.

Through the examination of these hypotheses, the objective is to make a meaningful contribution to the existing body of knowledge and acquire valuable insights into the underlying mechanisms that contribute to user disengagement on social media platforms. However, it is important to note that these hypotheses are currently being tested, focusing on short-term effects and the influence they are anticipated to have on brand loyalty. Nonetheless, the long-term impact may manifest differently. Over time, the disparities between loyal and non-loyal customers may further widen, providing stronger indications of how these factors influence the behavior of each customer group. Furthermore, loyalty exists on a continuum, with high loyalty being a more enduring state and low loyalty being more transient and susceptible to change. Considering this, this study aims to comprehend the present consumer landscape and assess the level of loyalty within the context of disengagement drivers.

3. Methodology

The methodology section of this study presents the approach and procedures employed to investigate and analyze the research questions and objectives. This study has a mixed-methods design comprising two parts. The first part is qualitative and involves conducting in-depth interviews to gather data. The data collected in this part will, in addition to the literature review, later be used to design a quantitative questionnaire for the second part of the study, forming a sequential research design. Resultingly, the research is both exploratory and descriptive. This enables a more thorough and nuanced understanding of the research topic, as combining different data types allows for a more comprehensive analysis. Additionally, by using mixed methods, the validity and reliability of the findings can be increased. (Saunders et al., 2016)

3.1. Qualitative in-depth interviews

3.1.1 Research method

When exploring the complexity of emerging social phenomena, qualitative research allows for an in-depth understanding of the subject matter as it explores the nuances and complexities of human behavior and experiences. As limited research has been conducted on the underlying drivers of disengagement, hence unfollowing behavior in social media within European countries, in-depth interviews will facilitate access to in-depth knowledge of the topic that would not be as easily accessed through quantitative research. Furthermore, the interviews will be non-standardized and semi-structured, allowing for flexibility and adaptability. Unlike standardized interviews, which adhere to rigid questions, non-standardized interviews allow for a more fluid and natural conversation. This allows for exploring topics that may not have been covered and the ability to probe deeper into the participant's thoughts and experiences. As a result, non-standardized interviews can provide a more in-depth understanding of the participant's perspective and generate more detailed information through follow-up questions. (Saunders et al., 2016) Conducting such qualitative interviews can generate new theories and hypotheses that may be subject to further research and examination.

3.1.2 Sample

The study's main objective is to gain insight into why people choose to unfollow firms on Instagram. Thus, the population for this research consists of Instagram users in Scandinavia. Nevertheless, this requires that specific individuals within the population have previous experience with this exact situation. Therefore, as the in-depth interviews will be fundamental for the questionnaires, a specific sample for this research will be based only on users that have previously unfollowed a firm on Instagram. This sampling method, purposive sampling, requires specific eligible criteria (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012).

3.1.3 Data collection

From April 3rd to April 9th, personal in-depth interviews were conducted with a sample of six participants who had previous experience with unfollowing a firm on Instagram. The primary objective of these interviews was to delve into their experiences, thoughts, and opinions regarding the process of following and unfollowing businesses on Instagram. In order to enroll participants for the in-depth interviews, a multi-pronged approach was employed. Initially, invitations were extended to potential participants through Facebook and LinkedIn platforms. Additionally, one participant graciously volunteered to take part in the study. Furthermore, proactive efforts were made to personally contact and invite five other individuals considered relevant to the research.

Prior to commencing the research, we ensured data protection compliance by submitting a notification form to Sikt. This step was crucial in safeguarding the privacy and confidentiality of the collected data (Sikt, n.d.). During the in-depth interviews, the Nettskjema-diktafon app was utilized for recording purposes in adherence to the guidelines set forth by the GDPR (UiO, 2023).

The estimated time for completing the interview was assumed to be 30 minutes.

3.1.4 Implementation

The in-depth interviews were conducted using a structured interview guide comprising three sections. The introduction included an opening statement, factual questions, and transition questions. The main part focused on key questions related to content preferences, engagement levels, unfollowing behavior, and loyalty. Finally, the ending section allowed participants to share any additional information they wished to provide freely. Overall, the interview guide consisted of 19 questions, serving as a framework for conducting the interviews from start to finish. To ensure a natural flow, follow-up questions were prepared in advance. (Appendix 1) Prior to the interviews, the interviewers were instructed to recall a company or brand they had recently unfollowed, facilitating easier discussion during the interview. On average,

the interviews lasted approximately 25 minutes to complete. Considering the previously presented framework for this study, minimal modifications have been made to the hypothesis. Nevertheless, a more comprehensive investigation into the factors driving unfollowing behavior has been conducted and incorporated into the existing framework. The elaborated theoretical framework, outlined below, will serve as the principle for further examination of the hypothesis.

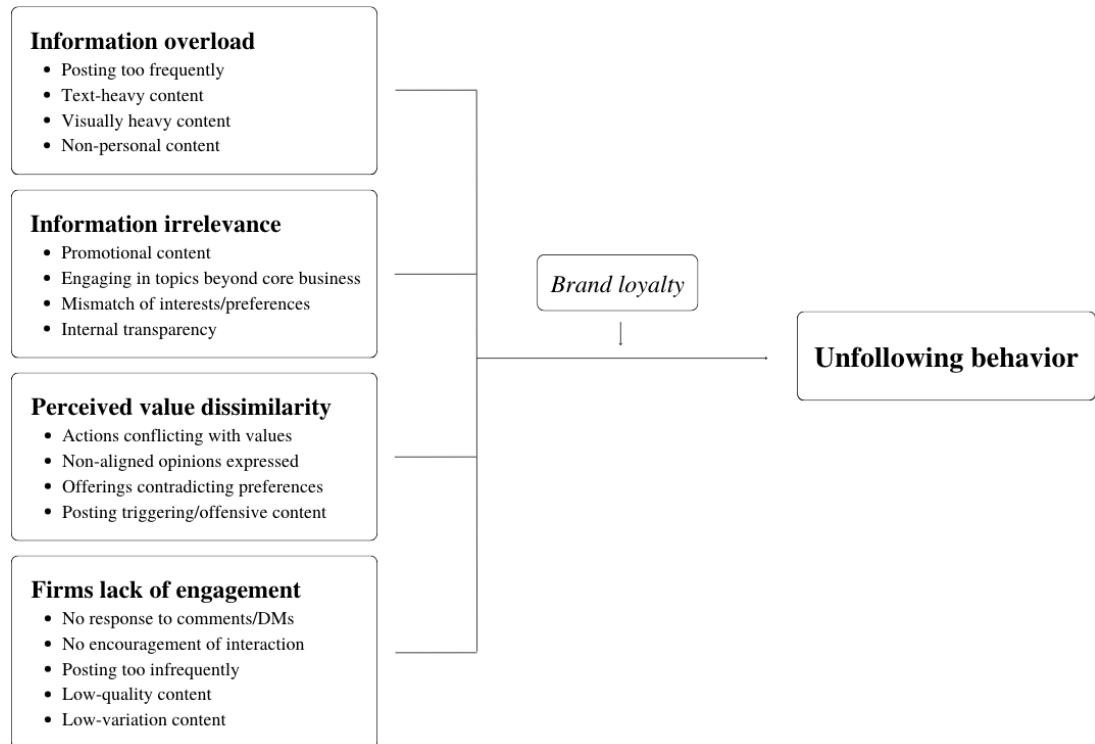


Figure 2: Elaborated theoretical framework

3.2 Quantitative survey

3.2.1 Research method

The survey will further explore the hypotheses and allow for a comprehensive analysis of consumer perceptions of social media content, engagement, and brand loyalty. The quantitative research allows for the generalization of findings to a larger population, using a sample of participants to represent a larger population. Thus, it is well suited for testing the hypotheses, as it uses statistical analyses to determine whether relationships between variables are statistically significant. It also allows the

ability to control certain factors and measure variables precisely. (Saunders et al., 2016)

A self-completed online questionnaire will be designed to manipulate and test different scenarios related to a self-chosen brand or company to understand the underlying drivers of unfollowing behavior. Additionally, survey will involve only closed questions. They will have a limited set of predefined response options, which makes it easier to analyze the data and compare the responses of different participants in contrast to open-ended questions. (Saunders et al., 2016)

3.2.2 Sample

Further, to gather data through questionnaires, a convenience sample method will be employed. A non-probability sampling method is cost-effective and flexible yet less generalizable and representative. Although, due to the constraints of resources, this approach is the most practical option for obtaining a significant number of responses. (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012) To be able to make predictions of the population in general, the sample for the questionnaire will not have any contractions regarding if a respondent has previously unfollowed a firm or not. However, the respondents must meet specific criteria, including being over 18 years old, originating from Scandinavia, and following at least one company on Instagram.

3.2.3 Pilot testing

To assess the validity of the quantitative data collection, a pilot survey serves as an essential component of the process. The purpose of the pilot survey is to perform a pre-test, enabling us to identify any potential issues or limitations with the survey questions before implementing the main study. This allows for identifying and modifying any potential sources of error or bias, ultimately enhancing the overall quality and reliability of the data. (Saunders et al., 2016) Six respondents were enrolled to provide feedback and ideas for potential improvements. Based on their valuable input, we are implementing several modifications to enhance the survey's design, question order, and wording. These optimizations are being implemented

prior to the data collection, ensuring a more refined and effective survey. By conducting the pilot survey, we are confident that the data collected during the main study will be accurate, valid, and reliable, which is crucial for the credibility and integrity of the research. (Saunders et al., 2016)

3.2.4 Data collection

Subsequent to conducting qualitative interviews, a quantitative survey was administered to acquire more comprehensive insights into the factors influencing disengagement on Instagram. A survey was anonymously administered using the BI-approved survey tool Qualtrics XM. A convenience sampling method was employed, in order to be able to collect as many responses as possible, mainly through our network. Consequently, the questionnaire was distributed through various social media channels, including LinkedIn, Instagram, Facebook, and Snapchat.

Moreover, the collection process was extended from the 8th of May to the 24th of May. During this process, no private data that could identify any of the respondents was collected. Consequently, there was no need to submit a notification form to NSD.

The average response time for completing the questionnaire was 8.8 minutes.

3.2.5 Data cleaning

For the quantitative data, a total of 147 responses were initially collected. However, upon reviewing the data, it was found that N = 49 responses did not meet the necessary requirements. These criteria included being 18 years or older, originating from Scandinavia, actively using Instagram, and following at least one company or brand on the platform. Furthermore, specific responses were excluded due to containing invalid or unreliable information. As a result, the final data set consisted of 98 valid and reliable responses.

3.2.6 Implementation

The survey comprised a total of 30 questions, which were divided into five sections (Appendix 2). The estimated time for completing the questionnaire was 5-10 minutes. The initial part of the survey served the purpose of filtering out respondents who did not meet the criteria mentioned in section 3.2.2. Subsequently, the second and third sections focused on gathering demographic, behavioral, and psychographic information from participants to better understand our sample. The fourth section of the survey focused on assessing brand loyalty through a set of 10 questions. These questions encompassed various response formats, including categorical options, rating scales, and text entry boxes. Measures were then implemented to avoid the study being too hypothetical and enhance the relevance and authenticity of the research findings. Participants were asked to specify a brand or company they follow on Instagram prior to responding to the questions about loyalty. Subsequent questions were then tailored to revolve around their chosen brand, enabling them to envision better the scenarios presented. This approach aimed to provide valuable insights by aligning the questions with the respondents' personal experiences and fostering a deeper engagement with the research context.

The dimensions proposed by Punniyamoorthy & Prasanna Mohan Raj (2007) provided the framework for developing the questions to assess brand loyalty. However, considering the specific context of our study and aligning it with our hypothesis and research question, we made necessary adjustments to ensure the questionnaire served its intended purpose. The dimension of perceived value covers both functional, emotional, and social value in addition to price worthiness, in accordance with the original framework (Punniyamoorthy & Prasanna Mohan Raj, 2007). Moreover, the concept of «brand trust» was excluded from the measurement framework as it overlapped with constructs already addressed by other questions (Qualtrics, n.d.).

The following is an overview of the categorization of the 10 questions:

<i>Involvement</i>	Q15: How familiar are you with (chosen brand) and their products/services? Q17: How often do you check for new products/services from (chosen brand)? Q18: How frequently do you use (chosen brand) products/services?
<i>Perceived value</i>	Q21: How likely are you to pay more for products/services from (chosen brand) compared to products/services with similar attributes from its competitors?
<i>Satisfaction</i>	Q20: How likely are you to recommend (chosen brand) to a family member, friend or colleague? Q23: How satisfied are you overall with the products/services from (chosen brand)?
<i>Commitment</i>	Q13: For how long have you been following (chosen brand) on Instagram? Q16: How long have you been a customer of (chosen brand)? Q22: How decisive is (chosen brand) to you when making a purchase decision within its specific product/service category?
<i>Repeat purchase</i>	Q19: How many times have you purchased from (chosen brand) in the last 12 months? (in digits)

Figure 3: Loyalty measurement categorization

The final section of the survey focused on various scenarios related to information overload, information irrelevance, value dissimilarity, and lack of firm engagement. As for this part, respondents were once again presented with questions that included their chosen brand. Most of these questions utilized constant sum bars, facilitating easier comparison and combination during the analysis. Moreover, these questions encompassed both each option's ranking and relative weighting. (QuestionPro, n.d.)

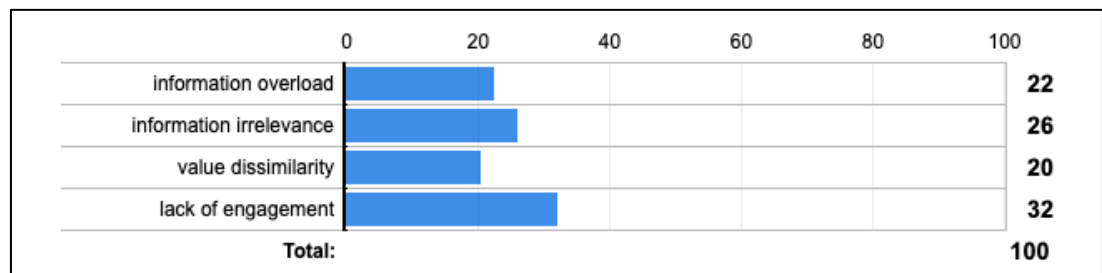


Figure 4: Illustration of constant sum bars from the survey

Participants were presented with an allocation task that necessitated evaluating and assigning weights to various alternatives, considering their respective levels of importance. The final question was included to evaluate the likelihood of unfollowing the chosen brand based on the preceding scenarios. This addition was crucial for testing the hypothesis.

Additionally, a control question involving a straightforward mathematical calculation was incorporated and strategically placed within the middle section of the survey to ascertain the respondents' inclination toward providing random or arbitrary responses. No responses were excluded directly due to this question, but rather to missing value responses. Subsequently, the data set analysis confirmed that all 98 participants had correctly answered the control question. This outcome bolsters the reliability of the gathered responses, underscoring their heightened credibility.

3.3 Validity

Validity refers to how accurately a study measures what it aims to measure (Malhotra, 2010). The subsequent section will provide a comprehensive account of the measures implemented to enhance the validity of both the qualitative interviews and the quantitative survey.

To ensure acceptable validity within the in-depth interviews, several steps were implemented. Firstly, participants with pre-existing relationships were selected, establishing an already established trust to encourage openness and honest sharing of experiences. Secondly, prior to the execution of the interview, participants were asked to recall a specific situation where they had unfollowed a brand or company. This step aimed to minimize the potential for recollection bias. Thirdly, an interview guide was utilized to maintain consistency and comparability across interviews, focusing on relevant information. Fourthly, open-ended questions facilitated a deeper exploration of the topic and elicited more valid and insightful responses. Lastly, active listening and probing techniques were employed during the interviews to adapt to participants' tone and body language. Additionally, all these steps implemented to

ensure validity could prevent interviewer-, response- and participation bias. (Saunders et al., 2016)

To evaluate the questionnaire's validity, several supplementary measures were implemented. The survey was divided into sections covering essential metrics, with dedicated questions addressing the independent variables, moderator, and dependent variable. Additionally, content validity was ensured through feedback from a select group of friends and family during a pilot test. This feedback helped identify misunderstandings and areas needing clarification, leading to necessary adjustments. To enhance construct validity, questions related to the independent variables required respondents to allocate points among associated terms and underlying factors. This ranking approach reduced the possibility of random or careless responses and minimized the risk of unreliable results. (Saunders et al., 2016)

Furthermore, to ensure internal validity, the attribution of observed effects on dependent variables to the manipulation of independent variables or treatments was upheld in this survey by deriving questions from established theories and previous research on disengagement factors. (Malhotra, 2010) Participants were also free to choose their preferred brand or company, providing a personally relevant survey experience. Standardized protocols, such as consistent loyalty questions, were implemented to enhance internal validity further. Further, external validity relates to generalizing experiment findings to a larger population (Malhotra, 2010). In this study, the sample consisted of Scandinavian consumers aged 20 to 64 who use Instagram and are over 18 years old. By representing the population of interest, the study's findings can extend beyond the sample and apply to a broader context.

Finally, the validity of the study's conclusions depends on how well the sample aligns with the population it represents (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012). To minimize biases, adjustments were made based on Qualtrics' recommendations before distributing the survey to the sample. These adjustments aimed to enhance user-friendliness,

compatibility across devices and reduce response bias arising from factors like mood or fatigue (Malhotra, 2010).

3.4 Reliability

To assess the reliability of the study, internal consistency was examined by evaluating the extent to which items or questions within the questionnaire measure the same construct or concept. This examination provides indications of the study's consistency and the stability of the obtained measurements or results. A Cronbach's alpha test was performed on question Q20, which asked about the likelihood of recommending the chosen brand or company to a family member, friend, or colleague, and question Q23, which assessed overall satisfaction with the products/services from the chosen company or brand. These questions were selected because they measure similar concepts and are expected to correlate highly. The Cronbach's alpha test yielded a value of 0.80, corresponding to the commonly accepted criterion that a Cronbach's alpha of 0.60 or higher is considered acceptable (Appendix 3). Furthermore, the inter-item correlation was 0.709 (Appendix 4). These results suggest that the study demonstrates an acceptable level of internal consistency. (Malhotra, 2010)

By also including a control question that is known or easy to verify, one can evaluate the consistency of participants' responses and identify potential response errors or lack of attention. If participants consistently answer the control question incorrectly, it may suggest problems with the reliability of their responses to other questions. (Hughes et al., 2000) Hence, a specific question was included within the survey questionnaire: "What is the sum of 3 and 4?" The provided answer choices were 2, 7, and 10. If answers were incorrect, this allowed for identifying and excluding unreliable or inattentive respondents from the analysis, which should help improve the overall reliability of the data.

3.5 Ethical and legal concerns

Through anonymous participation, respondents were allowed to provide their input without revealing personal identifying information, thus ensuring confidentiality and privacy. Additionally, the inclusion of listed statements for informed consent at the outset of the survey ensured that participants were adequately informed about the nature of the study, its objectives, potential risks, and their rights as participants. These measures were undertaken to uphold ethical principles and safeguard participant confidentiality and autonomy in the research process.

4. Analysis

This chapter presents the data gathered from in-depth interviews and questionnaires, along with the analyses performed in the study. As part of the mixed method research design, the in-depth interviews were coded through a thematic analysis before utilizing the results to analyze the questionnaire. Furthermore, multiple descriptive analyses, an exploratory analysis, a non-parametric independent sample test, and several regression analyses were conducted to address the hypotheses and examine exploratory findings.

4.1 In-depth interviews

Following the interviews, the gathered data underwent an initial transcription process to organize and arrange the information systematically. Subsequently, a thematic analysis was performed to identify themes and patterns. Additionally, a summary of the findings that have been identified is provided.

4.1.1 Research sample

The sample included respondents with diverse demographic and psychographic backgrounds, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of user behavior in this context. All six interviewees actively follow at least a few business accounts on Instagram, although there is significant variation in the frequency and number of businesses they follow.

4.1.2 Thematic analysis

A thematic analysis is an approach used to analyze qualitative data, where the data set is examined through coding and categorization techniques to identify recurring patterns and meaningful themes (Villegas, n.d.).

Following the initial transcription of the six interviews, we proceeded to code the transcripts. Moreover, the coding process led to the identification of two distinct categories, namely positive and negative aspects related to Instagram and business accounts. Furthermore, the coding also captured descriptive information regarding participants' usage of the platform and their level of brand loyalty.

<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>
<p>Drivers of following a company</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inspirational See new products and offers See new products Seek inspiration Aesthetics Competitions Relevant at the time 	<p>Drivers of unfollowing a company</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lots of advertising - too promotional Uninteresting content Perceived as disturbing in feed because of irrelevance Not interesting Too much advertising Posting too often Posting too frequently Posting irrelevant content No longer active No longer enjoyable Not relevant anymore Not interesting Not relevant No longer interesting content No longer a customer of the brand
<p>Desired content from company</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> High quality Engaging Visually appealing Interesting product photos Engaging texts and hashtags Relevant Interesting Pictures and videos of products Updates one or every other day Honest Know their followers Relatable Personal Product photos Instruction photos Updates twice a week 	<p>Unesired content from company</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To large focus on sales promoting Not engaging/communicating in a meaningful way Advertising Irrelevant Excessive advertising Trying too hard to be trendy Too much advertising Not engaging with their followers Post too frequently Express irrelevant opinions Behind-the-scenes The brands engagement Spam Irrelevant sponsored posts and advertisements

<p>Visual aesthetics Listen to their followers Video content Posts twice a week and maximum five stories Consistent with brands theme Interesting Relevant Reels Transparency Offerings Visual Weekly post updates Interesting and remaining relevant</p>	
<p>Positive effects of business accounts</p> <p>Informative of products and services Informative of campaigns and special offers Can affect mood and mental health Can be inspiring Can lead to purchases Gaining access to exclusive offers and campaigns Make loyal customers Increase consumption by simplifying access to products/services</p>	<p>Negative effects of business accounts</p> <p>Informative of products and services Informative of campaigns and special offers Can affect mood and mental health Can be inspiring Can lead to purchases Gaining access to exclusive offers and campaigns Make loyal customers Increase consumption by simplifying access to products/services</p>

<p>Types of accounts</p> <p>Follows mainly family and friends in addition to many companies Follows an equal distribution of family, friends and companies Follows a few companies, but mainly family and friends Follows five companies, the remaining is family and friends Follows around 50 business accounts, the rest is family and friends Follows mostly family and friends, and a few companies</p>
<p>Business accounts preferred</p> <p>Related to interests: Clothing, interior, health care Related to interests: Clothing brands Related to interests, such as car brands Work-related companies Related to interests: fashion and interior design accounts Related to interests: skiing and gaming equipment</p>
<p>Loyalty</p> <p>Unfollowed even though liking the brand and was satisfied with previous purchases Unfollowed even though still interested in he product offering</p>

Table 1: Coded themes

The interviewees follow businesses that align with their interests and appreciate the ability to stay updated on new products, special offers, and campaigns. They also

enjoy seeing these businesses' visual content, including pictures and videos. However, the interviewees also express frustration with businesses that post too often, share irrelevant content, or bombard their followers with advertisements. Thus, the major drivers for unfollowing a firm - despite some being satisfied with the products or services, are too much advertising, uninteresting content, posting too frequently, and lack of activity or relevance.

The interviewees also suggested that following businesses on Instagram can have positive and negative effects. On the positive side, they find inspiration and enjoyment in seeing products and offers from businesses they follow. As well as it simplifies and becomes more easily accessed to buy products and services. However, excessive advertising and pressure to follow trends can lead to stress and negative emotions.

Overall, the interviewees suggest that businesses on Instagram can succeed by creating high-quality visual content, engaging with their followers meaningfully, and avoiding over-promotion or irrelevant content. They also believe that transparency, honesty, and authenticity are essential qualities for businesses on Instagram to cultivate.

4.2 Survey

Subsequently, the collected quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS. Descriptive and exploratory analyses, in addition to a non-parametric independent sample test and several regression analyses, were performed based on the formulation and measurement scale of the questions. These tests aimed to confirm or reject the hypotheses outlined in the study (Moore et al., 2017; Malhotra, 2010).

4.2.1 Research sample

To examine the composition of Instagram users within our sample, we initiated the quantitative analysis by assessing frequencies and descriptive statistics derived from the behavioral and psychographic questions. In the total sample of 98 respondents,

the gender distribution reveals a predominance of females, with 71 female and 27 male participants. Moreover, it is worth mentioning that the majority of participants in the study are from Norway (N=77), while 21 participants originate from Sweden. Notably, there were, unfortunately, no participants from Denmark, although this aligns with the absence of Danish individuals in our representative sample. (Appendix 5) The respondents' average age is 29.73 years, ranging from a minimum of 20 to a maximum of 64 (Appendix 6).

Moreover, it was revealed that 85.7% of the sample predominantly follows their friends on Instagram- Conversely, the remaining 14.3% of respondents indicated a relatively equal distribution among family, public figures, companies, and brands regarding their Instagram follows. (Appendix 5). On average, the participants in the sample spend approximately 8 hours per week on the Instagram platform and follow around 550 accounts ($\bar{X}=548.27$ with a 95% confidence interval= 548.27 ± 74.5). However, there is a significant variation in the number of accounts followed, as indicated by the standard deviation 376.355. This means that the responses vary widely among participants. The minimum number of accounts followed is 5, while the maximum is 2600. Finally, the respondents in the study have, on average, been using Instagram for ten years. (Appendix 6)

4.2.2 Loyalty measurement

In order to measure participant loyalty, the responses on various Likert and interval scales were initially adjusted to account for different rating scales, enabling meaningful comparisons. This adjustment was achieved by converting the responses from Q13, Q15-Q23 on each scale into Z-scores, thereby standardizing the scores for easier comparison. Furthermore, a factor analysis was conducted to assess the measurement quality and control the correlation between the questions related to loyalty measurement (Punniyamoorthy & Prasanna Mohan Ray, 2017). The findings revealed strong statistical evidence suggesting the existence of at least one shared factor influencing loyalty ($\text{prob} > \text{ChiSq} = < 0.0001^*$). However, the results also highlighted the necessity for additional factors to comprehensively explain loyalty

($\text{prob} > \text{ChiSq} = < 0.0001^*$). Although additional factors were required to fully explain loyalty, Punniyamoorthy & Prasanna Mohan Ray (2007) study indicates that these factors are unidimensional and factorially distinct and that all items used to operationalize a particular construct are loaded onto a single factor. Consequently, the factor loading attributed to a single factor was selected for further calculations of loyalty scores (Appendix 7).

In order to assess the level of loyalty among the participants, the factor loading was multiplied by the corresponding Z-scores and subsequently summed. This process yielded a loyalty scale ranging from -9.5226 to 10.7570. The loyalty scores exhibit a significant variance, as evidenced by the normal distribution with a mean of 2.3867 and a standard deviation of 4.3518. (Appendix 8) In the subsequent analysis, these loyalty scores will be utilized as a moderator to assess the correlation between the independent variables and the dependent variable. Nevertheless, to illustrate the relationship, loyalty levels were categorized into three groups based on first quartile (Q1), second quartile (Q2), and upper quartile (Q3): Low loyalty (Category 1) for scores below 0.8434, indifferent loyalty (Category 2) for scores between 0.8434 and 5.3724, and high loyalty (Category 3) for scores above 5.3724. Category 1 and 3 consisted of 24 participants, while Category 2 had 50 participants.

4.2.3 Regression analysis

In order to examine the hypotheses, several regression analyses were conducted to assess the impact of the independent variable (IV) on the dependent variable (DV), altered by brand loyalty, acting as a moderator. The analyses involved conducting four individual simple linear regressions and one multiple linear regression.

Moreover, to elucidate the relationship between the moderator, independent variable IV, and dependent variable DV, a standardized z-score transformation was applied to the relevant independent variable for each regression model. This was done prior to multiplying it with the standardized loyalty score. By implementing this process, the impact of the moderator on the IV and DV can be better understood and explained. A

model summary, including R and R square, and an ANOVA was applied to evaluate the relationship between the variables and the overall fit of the regression models.

Simple linear regression

Prior to conducting simple linear regression analyses, it was established that the dependent variable (DV), referred to as «Unfollow», was determined by respondents' ratings on a Likert scale question (Q29). This question assessed the likelihood of unfollowing a specific brand in the event of experiencing information overload, information irrelevance, value dissimilarity, or a lack of engagement by the firm. The scale range is explained as follows: 1 = extremely unlikely, 2 = unlikely, 3 = neither unlikely nor likely, 4 = likely, and 5 = extremely likely.

In the linear regression models, the DV was examined concerning each variable. For instance, when investigating how information overload influences disengagement and unfollowing, only the data concerning the likelihood of unfollowing based on information overload was utilized. This approach was applied consistently for all other DVs as well.

H1: Information overload has a positive effect on unfollowing behavior, but this effect is weaker for consumers with high levels of brand loyalty.

To examine the relationship between information overload, brand loyalty, and unfollowing behavior, the regression model used in this analysis is as follows:

$$\widehat{Unfollow} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{information overload} + \beta_2 \text{loyalty score} + \beta_3 \text{information overload} * \text{loyalty score}$$

The coefficients of the model are estimated as follows (Table 2):

$$\widehat{Unfollow} = 2.287 + 0.039 * \text{information overload} - 0.055 * \text{loyalty score} - 0.044 * \text{information overload} * \text{loyalty score}$$

	<i>Unstandardised coefficients</i>			<i>95% C.I.</i>	
	<i>B</i>	<i>Std. error</i>	<i>P-value</i>	<i>Lower bound</i>	<i>Upper bound</i>
(Constant)	2.287	0.221	<0.001	1.848-	2.726
Information overload	0.039	0.007	<0.001	0.025	0.053
Loyalty score	-0.055	0.025	0.030	-0.104	-0.005
Moderator	-0.044	0.024	0.075	-0.092	0.005

Table 2: Regression coefficients (H1)

The model summary indicates a moderate positive linear relationship between the variables, with an R-value of 0.543 (Appendix 9). Additionally, the ANOVA on the regression predictors yielded a significant result with a p-value of less than 0.001, indicating that the relationship between the variables is unlikely to be due to chance (Appendix 10). Furthermore, the R-squared value of 0.294 suggests that approximately 29.4% of the variation in the dependent variable can be explained by the model's independent variable(s) (Appendix 9). Moreover, the analysis uncovered significant insights. Firstly, the coefficient estimates for information overload exhibited a statistically significant positive effect on unfollowing behavior, with a p-value of less than 0.001. Secondly, the coefficient estimates for the loyalty score revealed a statistically significant negative effect on unfollowing behavior, with a p-value of 0.030. Conversely, when examining the coefficient estimates for the moderating factor, no statistically significant evidence was observed, with a p-value of 0.075.

H2: Information irrelevance has a positive effect on unfollowing behavior, but this effect is weaker for consumers with high levels of brand loyalty.

To examine the relationship between information irrelevance, brand loyalty, and unfollowing behavior, the regression model used in this analysis is as follows:

$$\widehat{Unfollow} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{information irrelevance} + \beta_2 \text{loyalty score} + \beta_3 \text{information irrelevance} * \text{loyalty score}$$

The coefficients of the model are estimated as follows (Table 3):

$$\widehat{Unfollow} = 3.206 + 0.010 * \text{information irrelevance} + 0.002 * \text{loyalty score} - 0.027 * \text{information irrelevance} * \text{loyalty score}$$

	Unstandardised coefficients			95% C.I.	
	B	Std. error	P-value	Lower bound	Upper bound
(Constant)	3.206	0.254	<0.001	2.703	3.709
Information irrelevance	0.010	0.006	0.109	-0.002	0.023
Loyalty score	0.002	0.027	0.936	-0.051	0.055
Moderator	-0.027	0.024	0.268	-0.076	0.021

Table 3: Regression coefficients (H2)

The regression model revealed a weak positive linear relationship between the variables, as indicated by an R-value of 0.169. (Appendix 11) The ANOVA on the regression predictors yielded a non-significant result, with a p-value of 0.433. This implies that the relationship observed between the variables is likely due to chance rather than a meaningful association. (Appendix 12) Furthermore, the R-squared value of 0.029 indicates that only approximately 2.9% of the variation in the dependent variable can be explained by the independent variables in the model. (Appendix 11) Further analysis unveiled that the coefficient estimates for information irrelevance show no statistically significant impact on unfollowing behavior, with a p-value of 0.109. Likewise, the coefficient estimates for the loyalty score indicate no statistically significant influence on unfollowing behavior, with a p-value of 0.936. Additionally, with a p-value of 0.268, no significant evidence was found for the moderating effect.

H3: Perceived value dissimilarity, arising after an initial choice to follow a firm, has a positive effect on unfollowing behavior, but this effect is weaker for consumers with high levels of brand loyalty.

To examine the relationship between perceived value dissimilarity, brand loyalty, and unfollowing behavior, the regression model used in this analysis is as follows:

$$\widehat{Unfollow} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{perceived value dissimilarity} + \beta_2 \text{loyalty score} + \beta_3 \text{value dissimilarity} * \text{loyalty score}$$

The coefficients of the model are estimated as follows (Table 4):

$$\widehat{Unfollow} = 3.380 - 0.001 * \text{perceived value dissimilarity} - 0.042 * \text{loyalty score} + 0.041 * \text{value dissimilarity} * \text{loyalty score}$$

	<i>Unstandardised coefficients</i>			<i>95% C.I.</i>	
	<i>B</i>	<i>Std. error</i>	<i>P-value</i>	<i>Lower bound</i>	<i>Upper bound</i>
(Constant)	3.380	0.196	<0.001	2.990	3.770
Value dissimilarity	-0.001	0.006	0.920	-0.013	0.012
Loyalty score	-0.042	0.025	0.104	-0.092	0.009
Moderator	0.041	0.025	0.103	-0.008	0.090

Table 4: Regression coefficients (H3)

The findings from the regression model revealed that the R-value = 0.245, indicating a weak positive linear relationship between the variables (Appendix 13).

Additionally, the ANOVA revealed no statistically significant evidence suggesting that the relationship between the predictors may be subject to change, as indicated by a p-value of 0.119 (Appendix 14). Similarly, the R square value of 0.060 signifies a poor model fit, indicating that the independent variables can explain only 6% of the variation in the dependent variable. (Appendix 13) Additional analysis also found that the coefficient estimates for perceived value dissimilarity did not show a statistically significant impact on unfollowing behavior, as indicated by a p-value of 0.920.

Similarly, the coefficient estimates for the loyalty score did not demonstrate a statistically significant effect on unfollowing behavior, with a p-value of 0.104.

Likewise, a p-value of 0.103 indicated that there is no statistically significant effect of the moderator on the relationship between DV and IV's.

H4: Lack of firm engagement on social media has a positive effect on unfollowing behavior, but this effect is weaker for consumers with high levels of brand loyalty.

To examine the relationship between lack of firm engagement, brand loyalty, and unfollowing behavior, the regression model used in this analysis is as follows:

$$\widehat{Unfollow} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{lack of engagement} + \beta_2 \text{loyalty score} + \beta_3 \text{value dissimilarity} * \text{loyalty score}$$

The coefficients of the model are estimated as follows (Table 5):

$$\widehat{Unfollow} = 3.008 + 0.010 * \text{lack of engagement} - 0.040 * \text{loyalty score} + 0.054 * \text{value dissimilarity} * \text{loyalty score}$$

	Unstandardised coefficients			95% C.I.	
	B	Std. error	P-value	Lower bound	Upper bound
(Constant)	3.008	0.191	<0.001	2.628	3.388
Lack of engagement	0.010	0.009	0.275	-0.008	0.029
Loyalty score	-0.040	0.025	0.115	-0.090	0.010
Moderator	0.054	0.030	0.078	-0.006	0.113

Table 5: Regression coefficients (H4)

The results obtained from the regression model indicate a weak positive linear relationship between the predictors, with an R-value of 0.345 (Appendix 15). Additionally, the ANOVA test conducted on the predictors presents statistically significant evidence (p-value = 0.007) supporting the existence of a positive linear relationship. This implies that the variables demonstrate no substantial changes. (Appendix 16) However, the R square value of 0.119 reveals that only 11.9% of the variation can account for the dependent variable, suggesting a modest model fit. (Appendix 15) Moreover, the analysis revealed that the coefficient estimates for lack of engagement did not demonstrate a statistically significant impact on unfollowing behavior, as indicated by a p-value of 0.275. Similarly, the coefficient estimates for the loyalty score exhibited no statistically significant effect on unfollowing behavior, with a p-value of 0.115. Lastly, the moderator effect yielded a p-value of 0.078, suggesting no statistically significant impact.

Multiple linear regression

Similar to the simple linear regression, it was established that the DV, referred to as «Unfollow», was determined by respondents' ratings on a Likert scale question (Q29). However, for this particular analysis, the mean likelihood of unfollowing a specific brand in the presence of information overload, information irrelevance, value dissimilarity, or a lack of engagement by the firm was calculated by summing the respective ratings. In simpler terms, the dependent variable used in the analysis represents the average probability of a consumer unfollowing a brand or company, taking into account the influence of four independent variables.

In order to examine the overall relationship between the IV's, brand loyalty, and unfollowing behavior, the regression model used in this analysis is as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} \widehat{Unfollow} = & \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{information overload} + \beta_2 \text{information irrelevance} \\ & + \beta_3 \text{lack of engagement} + \beta_4 \text{loyalty score} \\ & + \beta_5 \text{information overload} * \text{loyalty score} \\ & + \beta_6 \text{information irrelevance} * \text{loyalty score} \\ & + \beta_7 \text{value dissimilarity} * \text{loyalty score} \end{aligned}$$

The coefficients of the model are estimated as follows (Table 6):

$$\begin{aligned} \widehat{Unfollow} = & 2.443 + 0.023 * \text{information overload} + 0.009 \\ & * \text{information irrelevance} + 0.000 * \text{lack of engagement} \\ & - 0.034 * \text{loyalty score} - 0.076 * \text{information overload} \\ & * \text{loyalty score} - 0.076 * \text{information irrelevance} \\ & * \text{loyalty score} - 0.055 * \text{value dissimilarity} * \text{loyalty score} \end{aligned}$$

	<i>Unstandardised coefficients</i>			<i>95% C.I.</i>	
	<i>B</i>	<i>Std. error</i>	<i>P-value</i>	<i>Lower bound</i>	<i>Upper bound</i>
(Constant)	2.443	0.377	<0.001	1.695	3.192
Information overload	0.023	0.006	<0.001	0.011	0.036
Information irrelevance	0.009	0.005	0.090	-0.001	0.019
Lack of engagement	0.000	0.008	0.978	-0.017	0.016
Loyalty score	-0.034	0.019	0.069	-0.071	0.003
Moderator (information overload)	-0.076	0.032	0.019	-0.140	-0.013
Moderator (information irrelevance)	-0.076	0.033	0.025	-0.142	-0.010
Moderator (value dissimilarity)	-0.055	0.037	0.140	-0.128	-0.018

Table 6: Regression coefficients (overall relationship)

The results of the ANOVA test indicated a p-value below 0.001 for the given model, which falls below the conventional significance level of 0.05. Thus, the relationship between the model's coefficients is unlikely to be due to chance. (Appendix 17) Moreover, the R-value of 0.490 indicates a significant positive relationship between the variables. Nevertheless, R square indicated that only 24% of the variation in DV can be explained by the IV's. (Appendix 18) Further analysis revealed that the coefficient estimates for information overload and moderating effect of loyalty for information overload and information irrelevance indicated a statistically significant positive and negative effect on unfollowing behavior, with a p-value < 0.001 of 0.019 and 0.025. Additionally, the coefficient estimates for information irrelevance, lack of engagement, and loyalty score, and the moderating effect of loyalty for value dissimilarity indicated no statistically significant effect on unfollowing behavior, with a p-value of 0.090, 0.978, 0.069, and 0.140.

4.2.4 Descriptive analysis

A constant sum bar was utilized to assess the frequencies of critical factors influencing disengagement on Instagram. A total of 100 points were assigned to evaluate each option's relative weight and importance when compared to one another. These factors were measured based on participants' prior exposure to various scenarios depicting a firm's behavior on the platform.

The findings indicated that information irrelevance ($\bar{X}=33.98$ with a 95% confidence interval= 33.98 ± 4.12) emerges as the most influential factor when deciding to unfollow a company or brand on Instagram. Information overload ($\bar{X}=25.96$ with a 95% confidence interval= 25.96 ± 3.86) and value dissimilarity ($\bar{X}=22.65$ with a 95% confidence interval= 22.65 ± 3.78) exhibit comparable levels of importance. On the other hand, a firm's lack of engagement ($\bar{X}=17.41$ with a 95% confidence interval= 17.41 ± 2.92) is identified as the least significant factor. Additionally, it is worth noting that this particular factor has a maximum score of 61 points. In contrast, the other three factors have been allocated a maximum of 100 points at some point during the assessment. There is a relatively low variation in the data set.

	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. deviation</i>
Information overload	0	100	25.96	19.482
Information irrelevance	0	100	33.98	20.810
Value dissimilarity	0	100	22.65	19.083
Lack of engagement	0	61	17.41	14.735

Table 7: Independent variables: descriptives

Furthermore, determining the relative importance assigned by respondents to different factors within the independent variables was analyzed. Results indicated that posting content too frequently was the most significant factor influencing unfollowing behavior from information overload ($\bar{X}=37.74$). The factor with the least influence was found to be visually heavy content.

	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. deviation</i>
Too frequent content	0	100	37.74	23.462
Text heavy content	0	57	23.88	15.436
Visually heavy content	0	61	17.11	15.162
Non-personal content	0	100	21.27	20.158

Table 8: Descriptives: underlying factors (information overload)

For information irrelevance, the most influential factor for unfollowing a company or brand on Instagram is content that no longer aligns with the followers' interests and preferences (\bar{X} =36.02). Posting about current topics beyond the usual focus and core business also demonstrates a relatively high mean score of 28.09. At the same time, transparency regarding internal operations and processes does not significantly impact unfollowing behavior related to information irrelevance (\bar{X} =13.01).

	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. deviation</i>
Promotional content	0	100	22.88	22.495
Content beyond usual focus / core business	0	100	28.09	22.471
Content misaligned with preferences and needs	0	100	36.02	24.615
Content demonstrating internal transparency	0	74	13.01	16.219

Table 9: Descriptives: underlying factors (information irrelevance)

Companies or brands engaging in actions conflicting with the followers' values or providing products or services that contradict their needs or preferences exhibited the highest mean scores within the information irrelevance factor (\bar{X} =27.90 and \bar{X} =28.65). The remaining two factors exhibited similar levels of influence, with mean scores of 22.49 and 20.96.

	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. deviation</i>
Engages in actions conflicting your values	0	100	27.90	22.264
Expresses opinions misaligned with yours	0	100	22.49	17.433
Provides products or services contradicting your needs / preferences	0	100	28.65	24.594
Post content that you find triggering or offensive	0	55	20.96	16.059

Table 10: Descriptives: underlying factors (perceived value dissimilarity)

In the case of the «lack of engagement» variable, content posted with low engagement that is poorly written, researched, edited, or produced emerged as the most significant influence on unfollowing behavior ($\bar{X}=31.70$). The second most important influence was content with low variation ($\bar{X}=22.88$), followed by not responding to comments or messages ($\bar{X}=18.04$). In this regard, encouragement to interact and infrequent posting were identified as the least influential factors.

	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. deviation</i>
Does not respond to comments or DMs	0	100	18.04	22.768
Does not encourage interaction	0	100	13.58	16.488
Post infrequently	0	77	13.80	15.127
Post low-quality content	0	100	31.70	24.905
Post content with low variation	0	100	22.88	18.943

Table 11: Descriptives: underlying factors (lack of engagement)

4.2.5 Explorative analysis

In order to delve deeper into potential consumer variations regarding their loyalty category, it is relevant to examine their preferences regarding the frequency of posts they would like to see from their favored brand. This information can provide significant insights. In the exploratory analysis conducted, the preferred number of posts from a chosen brand or company was examined within distinct loyalty scores: low loyalty (category 1), indifferent loyalty (category 2), and high loyalty (category 3). The analysis focused on determining the average preferred post counts per group weekly.

	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>	<i>Mean</i>
Category 1	0	7	2.46
Category 2	0.5	14	4.070
Category 3	1	10	5

Table 12: Preferred number of posts by loyalty categories

The findings suggested that consumers in the low category preferred seeing 2.467 posts per week. Moreover, consumers with indifferent loyalty preferred 4.070 posts per week, while consumers with high loyalty indicated an average preference of 5 posts per week. (Table 12) Further, correlation analyses were performed to investigate the relationship between the loyalty score and the preferred number of weekly posts. The results revealed the following findings:

	<i>Value</i>	<i>P-value (two-tailed)</i>	<i>95% C.I.</i>	
			<i>Lower bound</i>	<i>Upper bound</i>
Pearson's R	0.342	<0.001	0.152	0.505
Spearman's rho	0.357	<0.001	0.165	0.532

Table 13: Correlations between the loyalty categories

Pearson's correlation coefficient (R) was calculated as 0.342, indicating a positive correlation between the variables. Likewise, the associated p-value was less than 0.001, indicating statistical significance. Furthermore, Spearman's correlation coefficient (rho) yielded a value of 0.357, suggesting a positive correlation. Moreover, the corresponding p-value was less than 0.001, further supporting the statistical significance of the relationship. (Table 13)

This exploratory analysis provides insights into the preferred number of weekly posts within different loyalty groups and highlights the positive correlations between loyalty scores and post preferences.

4.2.6 Non-parametric test

Moreover, we aimed to examine whether there were variations in the mean ratings of factors' influence on the decision to unfollow a company on Instagram based on the level of respondent loyalty.

To conduct t-tests and one-way ANOVA for mean comparisons, it is necessary for the data to follow a normal distribution (Saunders et al., 2016). After performing a test of normality, the Shapiro-Wilk and Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, we could see that a significant portion of the data deviated from the assumed distribution or model. (Appendix 19) Consequently, the null hypothesis was rejected, indicating a significant deviation from normality.

In light of this, we proceeded to perform a non-parametric independent sample test to analyze the non-normally distributed data. However, the results of this test did not yield any statistically significant outcomes. As a result, we cannot reject the null hypothesis, which suggests that the distribution of the independent variables remains consistent across the three levels of loyalty.

<i>Null hypothesis</i>	<i>P-value</i>
The distribution of information overload is the same across the loyalty categories.	0.331
The distribution of information irrelevance is the same across the loyalty categories.	0.718
The distribution of value dissimilarity is the same across the loyalty categories.	0.145
The distribution of lack of engagement is the same across the loyalty categories.	0.437

Table 14: Non-parametric independent sample test

Resultingly, there is insufficient evidence to support the existence of differences in means regarding the factors influencing disengagement among different levels of loyalty, both among and within groups.

5. Discussion

This section will present the integrated findings derived from interviews, surveys, and analysis in combination with existing literature and theories. Through this discussion, we aim to elucidate the results and offer potential managerial implications of the framework. In addition, this section will also address the limitations of the research paper, as well as outline avenues for further exploration by researchers seeking to deepen their understanding of disengagement behavior in social media.

5.1 Discussion of findings and theoretical implications

5.1.1 H1 - Information overload

With billions of users on social media, these platforms serve as natural channels for information sharing and communication. However, the amount of information can overwhelm users, leading to what is known as information overload (Lee et al., 2016). One possible strategy to effectively cope with this overload is for consumers to unfollow brands or companies, thereby reducing exposure to excessive information (Fu et al., 2020; Schiffman et al., 2012). Therefore, this study hypothesized that information overload could result in disengagement, hence unfollowing behavior. Also, loyalty theories suggest that consumers who strongly connect with a brand or company are more inclined to overlook information overload. Consequently, they are less likely to disengage or unfollow the brand's or company's social media accounts (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Based on a comprehensive review of the literature, the following hypothesis has been developed: *Information overload has a positive impact on unfollowing behavior, but this effect is weaker for consumers with high levels of brand loyalty.*

The hypothesis is supported by the regression analysis findings suggesting that unfollowing behavior can be treated as a consequence of information overload (p-value < 0.001). Moreover, the results suggest that the likelihood of unfollowing behavior increases when information overload increases (p-value < 0.001). (Liang & Fu, 2017) According to the literature review, the content on Instagram has primarily been dominated by friends and family. However, recent trends show a shift in this

pattern, with brands and companies playing a more prominent role due to the increasing number of business accounts on the platform. The interview and survey result indicates that consumers still have an Instagram feed primarily dominated by content from friends, with brands and companies representing a smaller portion.

The distribution of account types that consumers follow suggests that the risk of information overload is reduced because personally relevant information, such as information from friends, helps prevent users from feeling overwhelmed by information (Matthes et al., 2020; Beaudoin, 2008). Consequently, business profiles of brands and companies are more likely to be noticed in users' feeds due to their different content and target audience (Appel et al., 2020). Therefore, when brands or companies post content too frequently, it becomes the primary factor leading to unfollowing behavior. In other words, the sheer volume of content increases the visibility of a brand and company, which in turn raises the likelihood of unfollowing. The survey results suggested that the more loyal customers are, the more posts they are willing to accept during a week. For example, category 3, comprising loyal customers, accepted 2.5 more weekly posts than category 1, consisting of non-loyal consumers.

Regarding the types of accounts consumers choose to follow, business accounts, in contrast, primarily share non-personal content rather than personal content (Appel et al., 2020). This suggests that approximately 21% of consumers would unfollow a company solely because of the inclusion of non-personal content. Additionally, on Instagram, text-heavy content appears to be a crucial factor in determining whether information is perceived as overwhelming. Since Instagram's design and objective revolve around visual content rather than text, it is not surprising that consumers are less receptive to text-heavy posts. (Matthes et al., 2020; Rayner et al., 2001). Consequently, visually appealing posts have a lower impact on whether consumers unfollow a brand. A previous study by Matthes et al. (2020) also indicated that Instagram is not associated with information overload, as it is considered an image-based platform.

Furthermore, the results from the survey suggest, in line with loyalty theory, that the higher the loyalty or stronger the relationship the consumer has with a brand, the lower the probability it is for the consumers to unfollow the company (p-value = 0.030). However, there is no evidence that brand loyalty works as a moderating factor for the relationship between information overload and disengagement and unfollowing behavior (p-value = 0.075). In other words, regardless of whether users experience information overload, their loyalty level does not significantly impact unfollowing behavior. Thus, contrary to self-concept theory (Cheng et al., 2012; Fournier, 1998), there is no evidence that loyal customers are more likely to overlook information overload.

5.1.2 H2 - Information irrelevance

As the usefulness or accessibility of information decreases for a user, the information communicated to a consumer loses its relevance (Zhang et al., 2022; Guo et al., 2020). Thus, when consumers are exposed to content that is no longer relevant, they tend to avoid such information actively (Guo et al., 2020). Based on this understanding, the hypothesis of this study suggested that when consumers are exposed to irrelevant information content, they are more likely to unfollow the brand or company responsible for it. Nevertheless, brand loyalty theories suggest that consumers more loyal to brands are more likely to be more forgiving and less likely to replace the brand or a company with others (Knox & Walker, 2001). Based on the assumption that loyal consumers are less likely to respond to irrelevant information and adopt an indifferent stance towards following or unfollowing, we proposed the following hypothesis to explore this relationship: Information irrelevance has a positive effect on unfollowing behavior, but this effect is weaker for consumers with high levels of brand loyalty.

Consumer lifecycles are characterized by fluctuating patterns and temporary changes as individuals progress through life. Hence, it is unsurprising that consumers alter their behavior and interests, resulting in a shift in their preferences (Fernanded & Castro, 2020; Kassarian, 1971). Following the literature on information irrelevance,

the study findings suggest that information irrelevance was the most determinant factor influencing consumers to unfollow a brand. Additionally, the in-depth interviews provided further support for the existing literature and findings. Participants expressed sentiments such as "not relevant," "no longer interesting content," "no longer a customer of the brand," and "perceived as disturbing in feed because of irrelevance," aligning with the previous research. Rather than avoiding the shared information on Instagram, consumers, in line with the principles of the exposure theory and the theory of attention economics, tend to actively unfollow as the appropriate course of action. This decision helps consumers to avoid irrelevant content and prioritize the most relevant information (Mintzer, 2020; Sears & Freedman, 1967).

As the existing literature has yet to extensively explore the specific dimensions of information irrelevance, the in-depth interviews' insights shed light on this topic. Thus, this revealed that promotional content, content unrelated to a firm's core business or usual focus, and content demonstrating internal transparency were potential examples of information irrelevance. Based on these insights, the quantitative study's findings suggest that content that fails to align with consumer preferences and address their needs is the most influential factor contributing to the perception of information irrelevance. Additionally, content that focuses on irrelevant information to the firm and promotional content were identified as other potential drivers of information irrelevance. Interestingly, it was observed that content demonstrating internal transparency did not substantially impact the perceived information irrelevance.

Despite the findings suggesting that information irrelevance has the most decisive influence on the decision to unfollow a firm on Instagram and that several dimensions can influence the perception of information irrelevance, the statistical evidence regarding the relationship between information overload and unfollowing behavior surprisingly indicates no significant correlation between these variables. In other words, experiencing information irrelevance alone does not necessarily lead

consumers to unfollow a firm (p-value = 0.109). This finding could be explained by Instagram's current algorithm, which exposes users to the most interesting content. Nevertheless, one must be aware that these data are based on consumers' past behavior on the platform and that how frequently this data is obtained and updated needs to be clarified. (Mosseri, 2023) If the algorithm is continuously functioning, it may explain why consumers do not disengage due to irrelevant content, even though they perceive it as the most influential factor for unfollowing a firm on Instagram. Furthermore, despite perceiving information as irrelevant, the initial reasons that led a consumer to follow the brand in the first place can influence their decision not to unfollow the firm. The relationship between the consumer and the brand, as well as the consumer's motivation, may explain this behavior.

Exploring how the customer-brand relationship is affecting unfollowing behavior and the relationship between information irrelevance and disengagement, the results from the quantitative data indicate that consumers' loyalty level has neither a direct impact if consumers choose to unfollow the firm (p-value = 0.936) nor a controlling factor on the relationship between information irrelevance and unfollowing behavior (p-value = 0.268). Considering the brand loyalty theory, the level of loyalty exhibited by consumers, whether high or non-existent, did not influence their acceptance of irrelevant information. This can be attributed to the fact that irrelevant content is not perceived as a failure on the part of the firm or as having a negative impact on the overall brand experience (Fournier, 1998).

5.1.3 H3 - Perceived value dissimilarity

Creating a brand identity is an essential aspect of brand building. (Keller & Swaminathan, 2020). A brand's identity involves communicating its values, motives, and opinions, which may occasionally contradict or be incongruent with those of consumers. This state of mind is known as value dissimilarity, which ought to affect disengagement behavior, such as unfollowing positively. (Zhang et al., 2022) However, findings suggested that consumers with a stronger self-concept connection with a brand or develop attitudinal attachment exhibit greater brand loyalty, which

helps counteract the potential negative effects of diverse brand experiences (Fournier, 1998) (Keller & Swaminathan, 2020). Based on the existing literature, we formulated the following hypotheses: *Perceived value dissimilarity, arising after an initial choice to follow a firm, has a positive effect on unfollowing behavior, but this effect is weaker for consumers with high levels of brand loyalty.*

Previous research and empirical evidence suggest that consumers are more likely to disengage from a brand when they encounter value dissimilarity. Underlying factors such as brands engaging in actions or expressing opinions that conflict with consumers' values, offering products or services that contradict their needs or preferences, or sharing triggering or offensive content is believed to strengthen this relationship. Surprisingly, upon examining the analysis results, it became evident that the regression model displayed a poor fit and did not provide statistical support for the association between "perceived value dissimilarity" and "unfollowing behavior," nor for the presence of a moderating effect of brand loyalty. Nevertheless, the regression model did indicate a slight positive linear relationship between the variables, even though with a weak correlation (R-value = 0.245).

This finding contradicts previous research suggesting that when experiencing conflicting values, consumers will likely return to the search phase of their buying process (Sharma, 2014) and consider switching to an alternative brand (Appiah et al., 2019). However, it is important to note that following or unfollowing a brand on Instagram requires significantly less effort and involvement than buying or switching brands, which may explain this discrepancy. This would also indicate that consumer actions on social media may not necessarily align with activities associated with the purchase journey. Furthermore, neither the qualitative interviews provided support for perceived value dissimilarity as a driver for unfollowing a company or brand on Instagram. Although most participants mentioned that they mostly follow firms that align with their interests, incongruence with these interests or values does not appear to directly impact unfollowing behavior. However, whether this conflict affects purchasing intention falls outside the scope of this research.

Finally, consistent with the findings presented above, the descriptive analysis revealed that when participants in the survey were asked to evaluate the relative importance of the four variables, perceived value dissimilarity was ranked as the least influential factor for unfollowing ($\bar{X}=22.65$), following lack of firm engagement. In addition, the evaluation of the underlying factors of the variable reveals a relatively even distribution. This suggests that these factors hold relatively equal significance – or non-significance – for the respondents, which again aligns with previous findings indicating that value dissimilarity may not be highly important when unfollowing firms on Instagram.

The moderating effect of loyalty was not found to have a statistically significant impact on the relationship between the variables. This raises questions about the theory's applicability regarding consumers developing an attitudinal attachment to a brand, which involves personal identification and self-expression. These factors may not appear as prominent in an online consumer-brand relationship on social media platforms as in other settings. (Keller & Swaminathan, 2020)

5.1.4 H4 - Lack of firm engagement

Fostering positive relationships and ensuring maintained consumer engagement on social media requires companies and brands to create a sense of belonging and identity. Achieving this objective necessitates active engagement and interaction with consumers. (Appel et al., 2020; Peters et al., 2013) Accordingly, we hypothesized that a firm's lack of engagement would influence disengagement behavior. Furthermore, several researches suggest, amongst others, that consumers who have invested more time in a relationship are less likely to disengage from this (Liang & Fu, 2017; Kwak et al., 2011). Therefore, from the current body of literature, we developed the following hypotheses: Lack of firm engagement on social media positively affects unfollowing behavior, but this effect is weaker for consumers with high levels of brand loyalty.

As discussed in the literature review, previous research and findings indicate that consumers tend to disengage from a brand when they encounter factors related to the firm's lack of engagement. These factors include posting frequency, content with slight variation or quality, or low versus high media richness levels. (Thomas, 2023; Li et al., 2021; Shahbaznezhad et al., 2021; Juntunen et al., 2020; Ashley & Tuten, 2015) The qualitative analysis partially supports these findings, as several participants mentioned inactivity and excessive posting as driving factors for unfollowing a brand on Instagram. Moreover, participants expressed a desire for enjoyable and engaging content where the company listens to and understands its followers. (See 4.1.2) This aligns with the hypothesis that followers disengage from brands that fail to deliver these aspects to their consumers. However, the findings from the simple regression analysis did not provide evidence of a significant impact between the independent variable of «lack of engagement» and the dependent variable of «unfollowing behavior.»

However, it is important to note that despite the lack of statistical significance for the hypothesis, the overall model remained significant ($p < 0.007$). This suggests the presence of a weak positive linear relationship between the variables, which could potentially become more significant with a larger sample size. Nevertheless, it is also worth noting that when comparing the different drivers, the descriptive analysis provides support for «lack of engagement» being the least influential factor ($\bar{X}=17.4$). One possible explanation for this observation could be the influence of Instagram algorithms, which prioritize content deemed relevant to individual users based on previous interactions. Consequently, the impact of «lack of engagement» on users' decision to unfollow a company may be diminished due to algorithms that have already personalized the content users are exposed to. Resultingly, users may not perceive the company's account and content as disruptive or bothersome, as the algorithms have tailored their experience. (Pariser, 2011; Instagram, 2023) Interestingly, this observation also aligns with the habituation process that might occur when followers are repeatedly exposed to content of low richness or variety. Over time, followers may become accustomed to such content and pay less attention

to it. (Klemens Knöferle, personal communication, 11th of November 2022; Solomon, 2003) Further supporting this argument is the finding that low-quality content and content with low variation are the most significant factors influencing the decision to unfollow a brand due to its lack of engagement ($\bar{X}=31.70$ & $\bar{X}=22.8$).

Lack of a firm's engagement might affect whether consumers choose to unfollow a company on Instagram. However, actual firm-to-consumer interactions' overall importance (responding to comments/messages= $\bar{X}=18.04$ or encouraging the followers to interact= $\bar{X}=13.58$) is the least significant when discussing the concept of firm engagement for this study. Nevertheless, the practice of building relationships with consumers through such one-to-one interaction has long been recognized and implemented in marketing strategies for B2B firms (Decker, 2023; Hadjikhani & LaPlaca, 2013; Gummesson, 2004; Harrison-Walker & Neeley, 2004). Therefore, it is not that surprising that these findings did not yield substantial evidence supporting the relationship within the context of a B2C firm.

Similar to the relationship between lack of engagement and unfollowing behavior, brand loyalty as a moderator did not significantly impact the relationship. One potential explanation for this is that the theory suggesting a deeper commitment and stronger relationship with the brand through invested time and effort may be challenged when firms lack engagement. It becomes more difficult to establish a meaningful connection with a brand that does not actively engage with its audience. (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Consequently, it can be inferred that if a firm does not deliver captivating content and actively engage with its followers, establishing a base of loyal consumers through their Instagram channel would prove to be challenging.

5.1.5 Overall relationship

Through the individual examination of information overload, information irrelevance, perceived value dissimilarity, and the firm's lack of engagement as distinct factors, the previous paragraphs provide insights into how each independent variable impacts

disengagement and, subsequently, unfollowing behavior. Nevertheless, exploring the overall relationship between the IVs and the DV will provide further insights into why consumers unfollow a firm on Instagram. Furthermore, considering the significant relationship and mutual impact of the independent variables on the variation of the dependent variable, it is worthwhile to delve deeper into this matter.

In accordance with the simple linear regression, information overload is the only factor that is suggested to significantly impact whether the consumer chooses to unfollow a firm or not. When examining the overall evolution of factors influencing a consumer's decision to unfollow a brand, information overload emerges as the second most influential factor among the four considered. Even though the three remaining IVs are suggested not to impact unfollowing behavior, the information irrelevance has 91% (p-value = 0.090) support that this factor influences the overall evaluation. Moreover, this factor was also evaluated as the most influential factor when consumers considered all factors against each other. Although the results did not reach statistical significance, the insights from the in-depth interviews provide compelling reasons to believe that information irrelevant content is a significant driver of disengagement and unfollowing behavior. This belief is reinforced by all participants' recurrent expression of this sentiment throughout the interviews. Moreover, perceived value dissimilarity and a firm's lack of engagement are anticipated to have the least influence on unfollowing behavior. Considering previous literature and research on this topic, as well as the individual discussions regarding each factor, a plausible explanation for these findings could be that these factors are not perceived as highly relevant within the context of social media. Another possible explanation is that information overload and information irrelevance are more prevalent phenomena, hence having a stronger current impact as the two primary drivers.

Further investigating the connection between brand loyalty and unfollowing behavior, the overall findings indicate that no statistical evidence supports the notion that loyalty directly influences the decision to unfollow a brand (p-value = 0.069). Simply

put, a consumer's loyalty level alone does not determine whether they stop following a brand. Moreover, these findings are supported by insights from the in-depth interviews suggesting that consumers do unfollow firms even though they liked, were satisfied or still interested in the brand. In light of the CBBE model, it can be believed that the brand-customer relationship involves no deep emotional connection and therefore has no crucial impact on disengagement (Keller & Swaminathan, 2020). Furthermore, when considering the three distinct loyalty categories, there is no sufficient support for the presence of mean differences in the factors influencing disengagement across various levels of loyalty, both within and between groups. In simpler terms, regardless of whether a consumer exhibits high, indifferent, or low loyalty, the likelihood of them unfollowing a company due to factors such as information overload, information irrelevance, perceived value dissimilarity, or lack of engagement remains essentially the same.

While the qualitative analysis offers support for all factors except value dissimilarity, it does not explore the moderating effect of brand loyalty on the relationship. This limitation arises from the fact that all participants in the study had already unfollowed a specific brand, thus inhibiting the examination of brand loyalty as a moderating factor. Nevertheless, the quantitative data suggest that loyalty plays a significant role in moderating the relationship between information overload and unfollowing behavior (p-value = 0.019) and between information irrelevance and unfollowing behavior (p-value = 0.025). In other words, loyal consumers are less likely to unfollow a brand, even when they experience information overload or irrelevance. This indicates that consumers are more forgiving or accepting when it comes to a firm they have a strong connection with or feel more loyal to (Cheng et al., 2012; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Fournier, 1989).

5.2 Managerial implications

In light of our findings, we will now present practical implications that can be derived from this study. These implications are intended to provide actionable insights for

B2C firms seeking to enhance their social media marketing strategies and effectively sustain customer engagement.

While the absence of active involvement from a firm may not directly cause users to unfollow on Instagram, failing to engage the audience could potentially lead to being deprioritized by algorithms. When it comes to disengaging content, however, unfollowing behavior is likely more prone to coincide with uninteresting and no longer enjoyable content, resulting in an overlap with irrelevant information. Thus, marketers should gain a deep understanding of their followers' needs and preferences and maintain consistency with their core business to minimize the perception of irrelevance and, consequently, prevent the loss of followers.

Moreover, having a comprehensive understanding of your audience can also decrease the probability of consumers encountering information overload, which was identified as a significant issue due to excessive posting. Loyal consumers are more receptive to frequent postings, such as five posts per week, whereas less loyal consumers prefer as few as two posts per week. Consequently, it is crucial for business accounts to research the characteristics of their followers to adjust the frequency of their posts accordingly.

Additionally, whether the content is text-heavy or image-heavy, information overload can significantly impact our ability to process information effectively. As such, content creators and marketers need to be mindful of the amount and type of content they produce and share. In addition, it is crucial for brands to prioritize maintaining high quality and incorporating variety in their Instagram content. By also customizing information to consumers' specific needs and interests, brands can provide personalized and targeted content. Marketers should carefully integrate these considerations into their strategy to ensure sustained engagement. Moreover, by implementing these implications on Instagram, firms can effectively retain their followers and fortify their relationships, thereby facilitating the acquisition of loyal customers in the long run.

5.3 Limitations

Our overall research aimed to explore users' perceptions regarding the factors that drive them to unfollow a company on Instagram. However, several limitations were raised during the data collection and analysis.

For the qualitative interviews, we selected six participants with prior experience unfollowing a firm on Instagram. This provided realistic insights and valuable input on disengaging from a brand and the influence of loyalty on this decision. However, some interviewees faced challenges recalling specific thoughts and circumstances related to their unfollowing decisions, which somewhat limited the quantity and depth of the data. A potential solution to this concern could have been to impose a more rigid time frame for determining the duration since the interviewees unfollowed the company.

Furthermore, to examine the research question with quantitative data collection, it was essential to devise a testing approach that closely reflected real-world scenarios. Initially, we considered using examples from specific companies that matched the content, frequency, and opinions discussed. However, we realized this approach could raise privacy concerns for the companies involved. To overcome this challenge, an alternative approach could have been to establish a collaboration with a specific company, gaining access to their data and strategy. This would have provided more precise results, nevertheless limited to that particular firm. Consequently, we opted to use fictitious examples, which introduced an additional limitation by making the data collection highly hypothetical. To mitigate this, we allowed participants to select a brand they actually follow on Instagram to evaluate the examples/scenarios, thereby enhancing the realism and nuance of the data collection and analysis.

Nonetheless, this study's most notable limitation is the relatively small sample size, which can be attributed to multiple factors.

1. The requirement for participants to follow at least one company on Instagram limited the pool of potential participants.

2. Using convenience sampling as the distribution method further reduced the sample.
3. The limited sample size also became a significant concern as it yielded several non-significant models during the analysis.
4. The survey's length surpassing the recommended guidelines (ref. Qualtrics) may have led to participant dropouts, further diminishing the sample size.

5.4 Further research

Further research in this field is necessary to gain a deeper understanding of disengagement on social media platforms and its relationship with loyalty. The current study examined loyalty at a general level and found both significant and non-significant results regarding its impact on unfollowing behavior. It would be beneficial to investigate the different dimensions of loyalty (e.g., affective, behavioral, cognitive) to determine their specific influence on unfollowing behavior. By exploring these subcategories, one can gain deeper insights into the factors that drive follower disengagement.

Additionally, the study indicated that various independent variables (IVs) influenced unfollowing behavior. To better understand how these dimensions operate and gain a more comprehensive understanding of their impact, experimental designs can be employed to test strategies to minimize follower disengagement. Variables such as content types, posting frequency, and personalized interactions can be manipulated to identify the most effective techniques for retaining followers. This practical approach will offer valuable insights for B2C firms looking to optimize their social media marketing strategies and enhance customer engagement.

Furthermore, variables such as information overload, information irrelevance, value dissimilarity, firm engagement, and loyalty are likely to change over shorter or longer periods. This study only captured participants' current thoughts, which may already have evolved one year from now. Therefore, a study should be conducted to examine the temporal nature of disengagement on social media platforms. By exploring triggers and patterns that lead to follower disengagement over time, it can give valuable insights into the lifecycle of follower engagement and disengagement. This

research will enable B2C businesses to anticipate and address potential points of disengagement, allowing them to adapt their social media strategies accordingly.

Moreover, while the current study focused solely on consumers' thoughts and opinions, it would be interesting to explore the same dynamics from a brand-follower perspective. Investigating interactions between specific brands or companies and their social media followers can help us understand the factors contributing to disengagement. Analyzing data on consumer interactions with a company's posts and content can reveal insights into the drivers of disengagement and patterns of follower engagement.

By pursuing these research avenues, scholars and managers can deepen their understanding of the drivers of disengagement, loyalty dimensions, and provide practical recommendations for B2C firms. This collective knowledge will contribute to the development of effective strategies for managing and retaining followers on social media platforms.

6. Conclusion

The main objective of this study was to investigate the factors influencing disengagement on social media platforms and examine the potential influence of brand loyalty on this phenomenon. The study aimed to explore the motivations and experiences of both past and current Instagram followers, intending to develop a guided framework that can assist B2C firms in optimizing their social media marketing strategies and effectively maintaining customer engagement. This research generated several compelling findings and valuable insights by adopting a mixed methods approach that combined in-depth interviews with a quantitative survey.

To be able to provide an answer to the research question and understand the factors influencing unfollowing behavior on Instagram, four hypotheses were examined. Only the relationship between unfollowing behavior and information overload initially yielded statistically significant evidence. Similarly, a significant negative

relationship was observed when examining the impact of loyalty scores on unfollowing behavior specifically related to information overload. However, no significant evidence was found to support the association between the three remaining IV's, information irrelevance, perceived value dissimilarity, or the firm's lack of engagement with disengagement or unfollowing behavior. Moreover, when exploring loyalty as a moderating factor in the relationship between information overload, information irrelevance, perceived value dissimilarity, and the firm's lack of engagement, evidence emerged for the moderating effect of loyalty on both information overload and information irrelevance in relation to unfollowing behavior.

Consequently, unfollowing behavior is mainly driven by the experience of information overload, with brand loyalty regulating the effect of the outcome. Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of this study, such as the relatively small sample size. These limitations could have potentially influenced the results and prevented stronger relationships from being observed. Thus, the qualitative data provided evidence suggesting that unfollowing behavior was not only influenced by information overload but also by information irrelevance and the firm's lack of engagement.

In accordance with the study's findings, effective management of a business account on Instagram requires considering several key factors. Lack of engagement may lead to deprioritization by algorithms, while uninteresting content increases the likelihood of unfollowing. Understanding followers' preferences, maintaining consistency, and adjusting posting frequency is crucial to prevent information overload. Content creators should be mindful of the quantity and type of content they share while sustaining engagement through high-quality, varied, and personalized content is essential. By implementing these considerations, B2C businesses can optimize their Instagram presence and foster meaningful audience engagement, thereby avoiding user disengagement - hence unfollowing behavior.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: In-depth interview guide

Introduksjon

Innledning

1. Presentere oss selv.
2. Informere om prosjektet, hvilke temaer vi kommer til å berøre og om varigheten. Samt si litt om betydningen av at intervjuobjektet er med på undersøkelsen, og hva vi håper å få ut av dette.
3. Forklare hvordan intervjuet blir dokumentert, og forsikre intervjuobjektet om at gjennomførelsen er fullstendig anonym.

Faktaspørsmål

4. Hvor ofte bruker du Instagram?
5. Hvor mange bedrifter følger du på Instagram?
6. Hvor mange følger du totalt på Instagram?

Introduksjonsspørsmål

7. Kan du fortelle om firmaet du nylig har valgt å avfølge på Instagram?

Overgangsspørsmål

8. Hva motiverte deg til å følge bedriften på Instagram?
Oppfølgingsspørsmål kan inkludere: Hva gjorde at du bestemte deg for å følge akkurat denne bedriften? Var det spesifikke typer innhold eller kampanjer som påvirket ditt valg?
9. Hva var dine forventninger til bedriften før du begynte å følge dem på Instagram?
Oppfølgingsspørsmål kan inkludere: Hvilke forventninger hadde du til bedriften før du begynte å følge dem på Instagram? Var det bestemte forventninger som ikke ble oppfylt?

Nøkkelspørsmål

Del 1 - Innhold og mengde

10. Hva slags innhold liker du best å se fra bedrifter på Instagram?
Oppfølgingsspørsmål kan inkludere: Hva er det med denne typen innhold som appellerer til deg? Er det spesielle temaer eller formater som du liker spesielt godt?
11. Hvilke typer innhold fra bedrifter på Instagram synes du er mest irriterende eller irrelevant?
Oppfølgingsspørsmål kan inkludere: Er det noen spesielle innholdstyper eller temaer som du helst vil unngå på Instagram? Hvorfor synes du disse er irriterende eller irrelevante?
12. Hvor ofte ønsker du å se oppdateringer fra bedrifter du følger på Instagram?
Oppfølgingsspørsmål kan inkludere: Hvorfor tror du at denne frekvensen er passende? Hva ville vært for mye eller for lite?

Del 2. - "Unfollowing behavior"

13. Hva gjør at du bestemmer deg for å slutte å følge en bedrift på Instagram?
Oppfølgingsspørsmål kan inkludere: Er det spesielle egenskaper ved innholdet eller merkevaren som påvirker beslutningen din? Har du noen gang prøvd å kommunisere med bedriften om dine bekymringer før du sluttet å følge dem?
14. Har du noen gang blitt kontaktet av en bedrift etter at du sluttet å følge dem på Instagram?
Oppfølgingsspørsmål kan inkludere: Hva var din reaksjon på denne kontakten? Fikk det deg til å vurdere å følge bedriften igjen, eller forsterket det beslutningen din om å ikke følge dem?
15. Hva synes du er de viktigste faktorene som påvirker hvor lenge du følger en bedrift på Instagram?
Oppfølgingsspørsmål kan inkludere: Hva gjør at du forblir engasjert med en bedrift over tid? Er det spesielle egenskaper ved innholdet, eller er det merkevarebygging og engasjement fra bedriften som spiller en større rolle?
16. Hvorfor tror du at du slutter å følge en bedrift på Instagram i stedet for å ignorere innholdet deres?
Oppfølgingsspørsmål kan inkludere: Har du noen gang vurdert å ignorere innholdet i stedet for å slutte å følge bedriften? Hvorfor eller hvorfor ikke?

Del 3 - Påvirkning av bedrifters Instagram-tilstedeværelse på kundelojalitet

17. Hva tror du er konsekvensene av å følge en bedrift på Instagram, både positive og negative?
Oppfølgingsspørsmål kan inkludere: Har du noen gang kjøpt noe fra en bedrift på Instagram? Hvorfor eller hvorfor ikke? Tror du at følging av bedrifter på Instagram kan påvirke humøret ditt eller mentale helse på noen måte?
18. Er det noen spesifikke typer innhold som du tror er spesielt effektive på Instagram?
Oppfølgingsspørsmål kan inkludere: Hvor viktig tror du visuell estetikk og merkevarebygging er for en bedrifts tilstedeværelse på Instagram? Hva tror du er de største feilene bedrifter gjør på Instagram, og hvordan kan de unngås?
19. I din mening, hva er de viktigste faktorene som påvirker kundelojalitet på sosiale medieplattformer som Instagram?
Oppfølgingsspørsmål kan inkludere: Hvordan skiller disse faktorene seg fra de som påvirker lojalitet til en merkevare i andre sammenhenger (som ved kjøp i butikk eller på nettet)? Er det noen spesielle funksjoner på Instagram eller andre sosiale medieplattformer som gjør dem spesielt egnet til å bygge og opprettholde kundelojalitet?

Avslutning

Avslutningsvis, ønsker vi å spørre deg om du har du noen andre kommentarer eller tilbakemeldinger om dine erfaringer med å følge bedrifter på Instagram?

Er det noe annet du vil legge til om dine erfaringer med å følge bedrifter på Instagram? Eller om du opplever noen andre bekymringer eller utfordringer knyttet til å følge bedrifter på Instagram som du vil diskutere?

Tusen takk for at du tok deg tid til å være med på dette dybdeintervjuet!

Appendix 2: Survey in Qualtrics

Dear Respondent,

Thank you for taking the time to participate in our research study. Your contribution is greatly appreciated.

This study is part of our Master Thesis in Strategic Marketing Management at BI Norwegian Business School. The purpose of this study is to identify determinant drivers of disengagement on social media platforms and explore the motivations and experiences of former followers. We will ask you to use your previous experience with a firm or a brand to answer the questions. The survey will take approximately 5-10 minutes to complete, and you can withdraw from the questionnaire at any time.

We guarantee complete anonymity and will not collect any personally identifiable information. Once the project is completed, all responses will be deleted. Please review the following statements and indicate your consent:

- I have read and understood the general purpose of this project
- I voluntarily take part in this study
- I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time without any penalty
- I understand that my responses are anonymous

If you have any questions regarding this survey or the data we collect, please contact Hilde Sæstad Bakken at s1617006@bi.no or Josefine Danell at s1817381@bi.no

I agree with the statement of informed consent listed above

- Yes, I agree
- No, I do not agree

I am 18 years or older

- Yes
- No

I am from Scandinavia

- Yes
- No

I use the platform Instagram

- Yes
- No

I follow at least one company or brand* on Instagram

**Public figures such as celebrities/influencers do not count as a company or brand*

- Yes
- No

From which of the Scandinavian countries do you originate from?

- Denmark
- Norway
- Sweden

How old are you? (in digits)

What gender do you identify as?

- Male
- Female
- Non-binary / third gender
- Prefer not to say

For approximately how many years have you been using Instagram? (in digits)

How many hours on average do you spend weekly on Instagram?

0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35 40 45 50

of hours

How would you describe the main type of accounts you follow on Instagram?

- Family
- Friends
- Public figures
- Companies and brands
- Other

We would now like you to choose a company or brand account of your choice that you follow on Instagram. Please write the name of the company or brand*.

**Example "Gina Tricot"*

Now that you have selected a company or brand, you will be presented with a series of questions related to your chosen brand or company.

For how long have you been following *chosen brand* on Instagram?

- Less than 2 years
- 2-4 years
- 5-7 years
- 8-10 years
- More than 10 years

How many posts per week do you prefer to see from *chosen brand* on Instagram? (in digits)

How familiar are you with *chosen brand* and their products/services?

- Not familiar at all Slightly familiar Moderately familiar Very familiar Extremely familiar
-

How long have you been a customer of *chosen brand*?

- Less than 6 months
- 6 months - 1 year
- 2-4 years
- 5+ years
- I am not a customer

How often do you check for new products/services from *chosen brand*?

- Daily
- A few times a week
- A few times a month
- Rarely
- Never

How frequently do you use *chosen brand*'s products/services?

- Daily
- A few times a week
- A few times a month
- Rarely
- Never

How many times have you purchased from *chosen brand* in the last 12 months? (in digits)

How likely are you to recommend *chosen brand* to a family member, friend or colleague?

- | | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Extremely unlikely | Somewhat unlikely | Neither likely nor unlikely | Somewhat likely | Extremely likely |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

How likely are you to pay more for products/services from *chosen brand* compared to products/services with similar attributes from its competitors?

- | | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Extremely unlikely | Somewhat unlikely | Neither likely nor unlikely | Somewhat likely | Extremely likely |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

How decisive is *chosen brand* to you when making a purchase decision within its specific product/service category?

- | | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Not at all decisive | Slightly decisive | Moderately decisive | Very decisive | Extremely decisive |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

How satisfied are you overall with the products/services from *chosen brand*?

- | | | | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Extremely dissatisfied | Somewhat dissatisfied | Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied | Somewhat satisfied | Extremely satisfied |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

What is 3+4?

- 10
- 2
- 7

We will now provide several statements regarding information load and relevance, value similarity and engagement, that require you to distribute 100 points according to the degree to which each statement affects your decision to unfollow *chosen brand* on Instagram.

The frequency of *chosen brand*'s Instagram posts, the design of their content, and whether the posts are personal or non-personal can all influence whether and how you experience information overload.

Please allocate a total of 100 points across these factors to indicate the level of impact each one has on your decision to unfollow *chosen brand*, given that *chosen brand* post content...

	0	20	40	60	80	100	
too frequently?							0
that is text heavy?							0
that is visually heavy?							0
that is non-personal?							0
Total:							0

The content and context of *chosen brand*'s Instagram posts can all influence whether and how you experience information irrelevance.

Please allocate a total of 100 points across these factors to indicate the level of impact each one has on your decision to unfollow *chosen brand*, given that *chosen brand* post content...

	0	20	40	60	80	100	
that is promotional?							0
about current topics beyond their usual focus or core business?							0
that no longer matches your interest and preferences?							0
that demonstrates transparency by revealing internal operations and process related to their product or services?							0
Total:							0

How *chosen brand* behave and express themselves can influence whether and how you experience value dissimilarity.

Please allocate a total of 100 points across these factors to indicate the level of impact each one has on your decision to unfollow *chosen brand*, given that *chosen brand*...

	0	20	40	60	80	100	
engages in actions that conflict with your values?							0
express opinions that do not align with yours?							0
provide products/services that contradict with your needs or preferences?							0
post content that are triggering or offensive to you?							0
Total:							0

How *chosen brand* behave and perform on Instagram can influence whether and how you experience a firm's lack of engagement.

Please allocate a total of 100 points across these factors to indicate the level of impact each one has on your decision to unfollow *chosen brand*, given that *chosen brand*...

	0	20	40	60	80	100	
does not respond to your comments or direct messages?							0
does not encourage you to interact with them?							0
post content infrequently?							0
post content that is poorly written, researched, edited or produced?							0
post content with low content-wise variation?							0
Total:							0

Based on the statements you have just reviewed regarding information overload and irrelevance, value dissimilarity, and lack of engagement, please allocate a total of 100 points across these factors to indicate the level of impact each one influences your decision to unfollow *chosen brand* on Instagram.

	0	20	40	60	80	100	
information overload							0
information irrelevance							0
value dissimilarity							0
lack of engagement							0
Total:							0

Conclusively, in relation to prior statements, please rate your likelihood of unfollowing *chosen brand* on Instagram based on

	Extremely unlikely	Somewhat unlikely	Neither likely nor unlikely	Somewhat likely	Extremely likely
information overload	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
information irrelevance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
value dissimilarity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
lack of engagement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Appendix 3: Reliability Statistics

<i>Cronbach's Alpha</i>	<i>Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items</i>	<i>N of Items</i>
0.800	0.830	2

Appendix 4: Inter-Item Correlation Matrix

	<i>Q20: How likely are you to recommend (chosen brand) to a family member, friend or colleague?</i>	<i>Q23: How satisfied are you overall with the products/services from (chosen brand)?</i>
<i>Q20: How likely are you to recommend (chosen brand) to a family member, friend or colleague?</i>	1.000	0.709
<i>Q23: How satisfied are you overall with the products/services from (chosen brand)?</i>	0.709	1.000

Appendix 5: Descriptive Statistic of sample

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative Percent</i>
Norway	77	78.6	78.6	78.6
Sweden	21	21.4	21.4	100.00
Total	98	100.0	100.0	

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative Percent</i>
Male	27	27.6	27.6	27.6
Female	71	72.4	72.4	100.0
Total	98	100.0	100.0	

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative Percent</i>
Family	5	5.1	5.1	5.1
Friends	84	85.7	85.7	90.8
Public figures	6	6.1	6.1	96.9
Brands and companies	3	3.1	3.1	100.0
Total	98	100.0	100.0	

Appendix 6: Descriptive Statistic of sample

	<i>N</i>	<i>Min.</i>	<i>Max.</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. dev.</i>
Age	98	20	64	29.73	9.876
Years of Instagram use	98	5	13	10.19	1.610
Weekly hours spend on Instagram	98	1	25	7.99	5.656
Instagram accounts followed	98	5	2600	548.27	376.355

Appendix 7: Rotated Factor Loading

	<i>Factor 1</i>
Q20: How likely are you to recommend (chosen brand) to a family member, friend or colleague?	0.805294
Q22: How decisive is (chosen brand) to you when making a purchase decision within its specific product/service category?	0.793863
Q23: How satisfied are you overall with the products/services from (chosen brand)?	0.768938
Q21: How likely are you to pay more for products/services from (chosen brand) compared to products/services with similar attributes from its competitors?	0.671298
Q15: How familiar are you with (chosen brand) and their products/services?	0.584835
Q19: How many times have you purchased from (chosen brand) in the last 12 months? (in digits)	0.173511
Q13: For how long have you been following (chosen brand) on Instagram?	0.149678
Q16: How long have you been a customer of (chosen brand)?	-0.242558
Q17: How often do you check for new products/services from (chosen brand)?	-0.374328
Q18: How frequently do you use (chosen brand) products/services?	-0.452819

Appendix 8: Descriptive Statistics for loyalty score

	<i>N</i>	<i>Min.</i>	<i>Max.</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. dev.</i>	<i>Variance</i>
Loyalty Score	98	-9.52	10.76	2.3867	4.3518	18.939

Appendix 9: Model Summary (H1)

<i>R</i>	<i>R Square</i>	<i>Adjusted R Square</i>	<i>Std. Error of the Estimate</i>
0.543	0.294	0.272	1.068

Appendix 10: ANOVA (H1)

	<i>Sum of Squares</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Mean Square</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>P-value</i>
Regression	44.768	3	14.923	13.075	<0.001
Residual	107.283	94	1.141		

Appendix 11: Model Summary (H2)

<i>R</i>	<i>R Square</i>	<i>Adjusted R Square</i>	<i>Std. Error of the Estimate</i>
0.169	0.029	-0.002	1.151

Appendix 12: ANOVA (H2)

	<i>Sum of Squares</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Mean Square</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>P-value</i>
Regression	3.664	3	1.221	0.922	0.433
Residual	124.469	94	1.324		

Appendix 13: Model Summary (H3)

<i>R</i>	<i>R Square</i>	<i>Adjusted R Square</i>	<i>Std. Error of the Estimate</i>
0.245	0.060	0.030	1.078

Appendix 14: ANOVA (H3)

	<i>Sum of Squares</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Mean Square</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>P-value</i>
Regression	6.984	3	2.328	2.005	0.119
Residual	109.138	94	1.161		

Appendix 15: Model Summary (H4)

<i>R</i>	<i>R Square</i>	<i>Adjusted R Square</i>	<i>Std. Error of the Estimate</i>
0.345	0.119	0.091	1.068

Appendix 16: ANOVA (H4)

	<i>Sum of Squares</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Mean Square</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>P-value</i>
Regression	14.522	3	4.841	4.243	0.007
Residual	107.243	94	1.141		

Appendix 17: Model Summary (Overall relationship)

<i>R</i>	<i>R Square</i>	<i>Adjusted R Square</i>	<i>Std. Error of the Estimate</i>
0.490	0.240	0.181	0.78928

Appendix 18: ANOVA (Overall relationship)

	<i>Sum of Squares</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Mean Square</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>P-value</i>
Regression	17.693	7	2.528	4.057	<0.001
Residual	50.067	90	0.623		

Appendix 19: Test of Normality

	<i>Loyalty category</i>	<i>Kolmogorov-Smirnov</i>			<i>Shapiro-Wilk</i>		
		<i>Statisite</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>P-value</i>	<i>Statisite</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>P-value</i>
Information overload	1	0.137	24	0.200	0.947	24	0.228
	2	0.100	50	0.200	0.897	50	<0.001
	3	0.203	24	0.012	0.757	24	<0.001
Information irrelevance	1	0.172	24	0.066	0.874	24	0.006
	2	0.105	50	0.200	0.983	50	0.677
	3	0.215	24	0.006	0.845	24	0.002
Value dissimilarity	1	0.166	24	0.086	0.859	24	0.003
	2	0.106	50	0.200	0.951	50	0.037
	3	0.218	24	0.005	0.690	24	<0.001
Lack of engagement	1	0.158	24	0.125	0.900	24	0.022
	2	0.141	50	0.014	0.909	50	<0.001
	3	0.201	24	0.013	0.885	24	0.011