

# Using Social Media to brand Northern Jutland for the Middle Atlantic U.S. Tourists



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## Abstract

The purpose of this Master's thesis is to find out how Northern Jutland through social media can create brand equity as a destination for the Middle Atlantic U.S. tourists. Norwegian (Norwegian Air Shuttle ASA) is considering opening a direct flight route from somewhere in the Mid-Atlantic States to Aalborg. A direct flight route would increase the accessibility to Northern Jutland for the Middle Atlantic U.S. tourists. The issue for Northern Jutland is that there is very little to none awareness of Northern Jutland as a destination for the U.S. tourists. The U.S. tourists who travel to Denmark mostly visit Copenhagen. There has been an increase in direct flights from the U.S. to Copenhagen, which has made Copenhagen more accessible for the U.S. tourists. Social media have become an important marketing tool for destination branding. The majority of the U.S. tourists use social media in a travel context. Social media allows tourists to share their own experiences and recommendations to other tourists. Tourists' comments, shares and likes are all influential factors in creating narratives about a destination. The Northern Jutland destination lacks interaction with the tourists on their social media platforms. New innovative campaigns can help to bring life to the Northern Jutland destination brand, and help increase the awareness for the Middle Atlantic U.S. tourists.

The constructivism paradigm was applied in this thesis. It allowed the researcher to identify various constructs and connect them so as to reveal a solution to the problem.

To gain an understanding of Northern Jutland's competitive environment a Porters Five Forces were applied. Furthermore, a survey was created to gain an understanding of the Middle Atlantic U.S. citizens' awareness of Denmark, the importance of accessibility from the U.S. to Denmark and their use of social media in an information search and travel context. The findings from the Porters Five Forces and the survey were used to develop a creative brief, showing the creative tasks for Northern Jutland in terms of using social media to create brand equity as a destination for the Middle Atlantic U.S. tourists.

The results from the Porters Five Forces showed that Copenhagen was the dominant leader and that Sweden and Norway constitutes substitute products (destinations) in terms of offering nature experiences. The results from the survey showed that the Middle Atlantic U.S. tourists had very little awareness of Northern Jutland, but they were inclined to visit peripheral destinations in Denmark if they had a larger awareness of these destinations. Furthermore, the results of the survey provided useful information on the importance of accessibility for the respondents and their use of social media in an information and vacation context. These findings enabled the researcher to suggest brand initiatives through Facebook, Instagram and Travel Blogs which can be used to discuss how Northern Jutland can create brand equity as a destination for the Middle Atlantic U.S. tourists.

**Keywords: Northern Jutland, Destination branding, Brand Equity, Social Media, Middle Atlantic U.S. tourists, Direct flight route**

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## 1. Introduction

For the sixth year in a row the tourism industry has experienced a positive growth. An increase of 52 million international tourist arrivals was measured globally in 2015. In 2015, Europe had a share of 51 percent of the international tourist arrivals globally, which made Europe the fastest growing region with 27 million more tourists than in 2014. The currency of the Euro has weakened; This has been one of the factors to the increase of tourism in Europe (UNWTO, 16).

In 2016, Denmark experienced a record growth in overnight stays with a yearly total of 51,4 million overnight stays where overnight stays done by foreign tourist accounted for over 50 percent of the total overnight stays in Denmark (VisitDenmarkprognose, 2017).

Like every other thriving industry, the tourism industry is highly competitive and tourist destinations must be innovative in order to be able to compete with their competitors. Tourists have the opportunity to choose products, activities and services from countries all over the world (Peter et al. 2006). It is essential for tourism destinations to brand themselves in a way so they both create awareness and enlightens the tourist of the quality of services available in the destination.

According to Buhalist, 2000 and Prideaux & Cooper, 2002:

*“A distinctive brand, it is argued, based on a destination’s “unique” identity, can be a key source of competitive advantage for destinations.”* (Wheeler et al., 2011, p. 14)

Apart from having a unique destination, it is also paramount that the destinations gain an understanding of their tourist target segments’ motivations for traveling to their destination. Social media have become an effective marketing tool for destination branding, the destinations gets access to a potential large amount of tourist segments (Munar & Jacobsen, 2014). Furthermore, tourists have become co-producers of the narratives about destinations. Tourists have an increasingly high trust in other tourists’ recommendations and reviews about destinations on social media, which makes social media strategies highly relevant for destination branding.

The U.S. outbound tourist travelling to Europe are a tourist segment that has adapted social media platforms as valuable tools for finding travel information and sharing their experiences about a destination. Over 80 percent of the U.S. tourists are active users on social media (ETC, 2014).

In 2015, the U.S. citizens were the second largest outbound tourist segment in the world (UNWTO, 2016). Higher salaries, the decline of unemployment and the decrease of oil prices are some of the factors that has made U.S. tourists wealthier and able to travel more since the economic collapse in

2008 (UStravel, 2016).

U.S. tourists are an emerging tourist segment in Europe again after the Euro's value to the Dollar has fallen. In 2015, it was in fact 25 percentages cheaper to travel to Europe for U.S. tourists compared to the year before (the guardian, 2015).

Overnight stays by U.S. tourists in Denmark has experienced an increase by nearly 20 percent in 2015 compared to 2014 (VisitDenmarkUSA, 2016).

Both SAS and Norwegian have opened direct new routes from Miami, Boston, San Francisco to Copenhagen (Visitdenmark, 2016), which has made Copenhagen and Denmark a more accessible destination for U.S. tourists. The CEO of VisitDenmark in the UK/U.S. market Dennis Englund underlines the increased accessibility to Denmark from the U.S. by stating:

*"In the latest couple of years there has been an increased access to Denmark from the U.S., where there has been an up rise in direct flight between the U.S. and Denmark"* (Appendix 2)

All though it is a positive tendency that Denmark has an increase of U.S. tourists, it is also troubling that only 13 percent of the U.S. tourists travelled to Jutland. Furthermore, only two percent of the U.S. tourists in Denmark in 2015 were traveling to Northern Jutland. This could be about to change due to Norwegian's plans of opening a direct flight route between somewhere in the "New York-Boston area" (Mid-Atlantic States) to Aalborg. Norwegian have had these plans since 2015.

Norwegian's CEO Bjørn Kjos stated in 2015 that:

*"Aalborg is a point of origin for passengers, that wants to travel to and from the U.S. They won't have to travel through Copenhagen. They have to travel directly without any layover, because it is a lot cheaper"* (in Nordjyske, 2015).

The CEO of Aalborg airport stated in 2016 that:

*"A potential route would be interesting for both people living in Northern Jutland, but also for incoming traffic in form of U.S. tourist to Northern Jutland"* (Check-in, 2016).

The recent development is that Norwegian are planning to start the direct route between the Mid-Atlantic States and Aalborg in 2019, when their new airplane type Boeing 737MAX have been further tested (businessstraveller, 2017).

Copenhagen has received increased interest from the U.S. tourists due to the increase of direct flight routes from the U.S. to Copenhagen. It has given Copenhagen a major boost. Budget carriers such as Norwegian have made Copenhagen and Denmark more accessible for the U.S. tourists. If Northern Jutland gets a direct flight route it could also increase the interest as a destination for U.S. tourists to visit.

Dennis Englund underlines the importance of the potential direct flight route between Mid-Atlantic States and Aalborg by stating that:

*“I don’t think it is realistic for Northern Jutland to work with the American tourist segment, unless Aalborg get the direct flight route to New York with Norwegian”*

This quotation underlines the premise of this thesis. However, this thesis will be written under the assumption that the direct flight route will definitely be established.

The question is what strategies Northern Jutland (Northern Jutland and VisitNordjylland are used interchangeably in this thesis) must take to increase the awareness for Northern Jutland to be ready for the impact the new potential flight route can have on their share of the U.S. tourist segment in Denmark. The emergence of social media in the tourism industry creates new opportunities for DMOs to reach out to a large potential tourist segment. The DMO responsible for the branding of Northern Jutland is VisitNordjylland (VisitNordjylland, 2017), part of the official tourist promotional offices in Denmark. Social media can be seen as a good starting point for VisitNordjylland to increase the awareness and add value to Northern Jutland as a destination for the Middle Atlantic U.S. tourists.

### **Motivation for selecting this topic**

I have travelled quite a lot in the United States and the American people and culture has always fascinated me. Europe and Denmark are very different from the U.S. and therefore I think it could be an interesting topic. Furthermore, after living in Aalborg for three years I have started to notice that Northern Jutland has a large range of tourism activities and nature experiences. It has also come to my attention when working on previous projects that destinations in especially Jutland are trailing behind compared to Copenhagen in terms of attracting international tourists. I believe social media is the future in destination branding, which is why I think it is a relevant and exciting marketing tool to research in the connection of creating value for Northern Jutland as a destination for the Middle Atlantic U.S. tourist travelling to Denmark.



## 2. Research Question

***“How can Social Media be used to create brand equity to Northern Jutland as a destination for the Middle Atlantic U.S. tourists, considering the potential direct flight route from the Mid-Atlantic States to Aalborg?”***

The potential flight route is an incentive to begin looking at possibilities for the destination Northern Jutland. If and when the direct flight route becomes a reality, it is a huge benefit to have some plans ready, so that the initiating of a branding process will have the momentum, a new flight route creates. If the branding process work phase is initialized only when the flight route is established, weeks will pass without being present on the U.S. market, and meaning will be lost. Therefore, considering possible methods of engaging the U.S. tourist market should take place already. This is why present thesis is relevant now.

Both DMOs and tourists can use social media platforms as sources for gathering, sharing and interacting with content.

**The main concepts used in the research question are defined below:**

**VisitNordjylland:** In this thesis, VisitNordjylland can be defined as the main DMO in relation to the branding of Northern Jutland (VisitNordjylland, 2017). This thesis will elaborate how VisitNordjylland (and other relevant tourism stakeholders in Northern Jutland) can use Social media platforms to create brand equity to Northern Jutland as a destination for the Middle Atlantic U.S. tourists.

**Northern Jutland:** The Northern Jutland region consists of the following 11 municipalities: Hjørring, Frederikshavn, Læsø, Brønderslev, Jammerbugt, Aalborg, Thisted, Rebild, Vesthimmerland, Morsø and Mariager Fjord (rn, 2017).

**Brand equity:** Brand equity can be defined as how a destination can create value to the destination brand. Later in this thesis brand equity will be thoroughly elaborated.

**Middle Atlantic U.S tourist:** U.S. citizens living in the following five states: New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Massachusetts.

**Mid-Atlantic States:** In this thesis, the U.S. States: Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey and Massachusetts comprise the Mid-Atlantic states as it is rumored that the direct flight route with Norwegian from The U.S. to Aalborg will be located in that area.

**Norwegian:** Norwegian Air Shuttle ASA

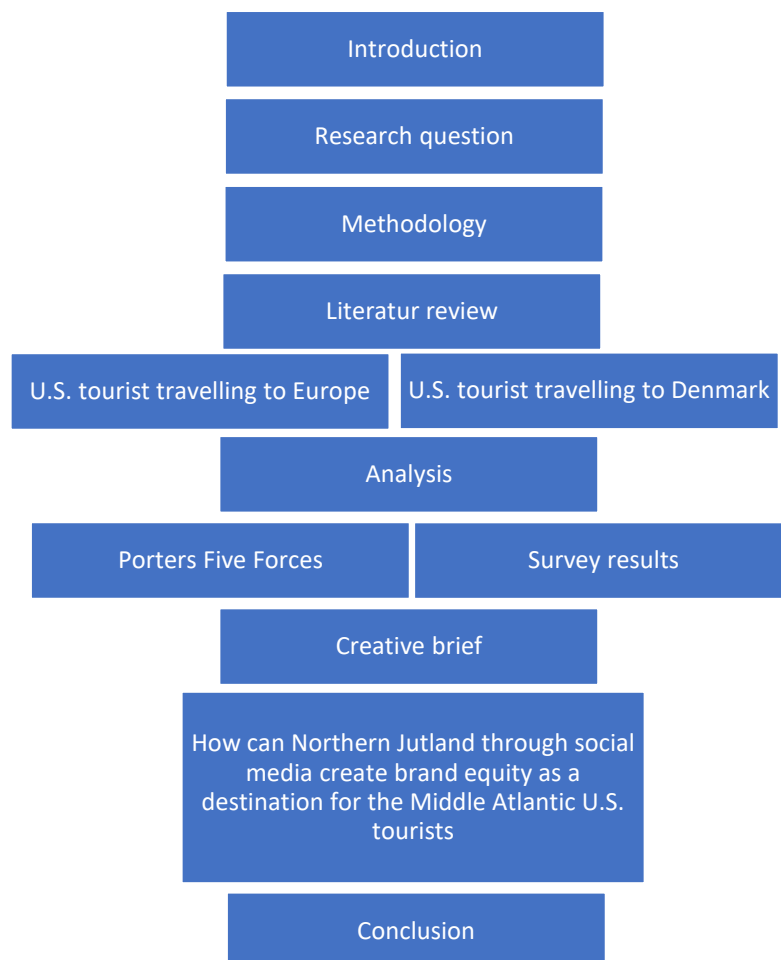
### 3. Methodology

The methodology chapter will consist of the following sections: research design, philosophy of science and data collecting methods. The methodology chapter can be seen as a guideline to the structure of this thesis, how the data of this thesis has been collected and how it will be analyzed.

#### 3.1 Research Design

According to Henn et al., 2005:

*“Research design situates the researcher in the empirical world, and connects the research question into data”* (Henn et al., 2005, p. 57).



*Figure 1: research design*

This thesis aims at finding out how Northern Jutland can create brand equity as a destination for the Middle Atlantic U.S. tourists. The thesis begins with an introduction that highlights the issue of interest as well as presents the research question that will guide the research. In the second chapter the methodology is explained; the world view underpinning the thesis, the data collection tools, as well as how the analysis is undertaken using the materials, is tended to. The literature review provides insight into various concepts of importance regarding the thesis topic. These include branding and social media. Following the literature review is a section that elaborates the U.S. tourists and their travel motivations for going to Europe and Denmark. The analysis begins with a Porters Five Forces elaborated from a Northern Jutland perspective. This analysis demonstrates the competition, Northern Jutland faces in attracting U.S. tourists. The second part of the analysis consists of the survey results that have been collected. This section clarifies the respondents' (a group of Middle Atlantic U.S. citizens) knowledge of Denmark, accessibility issues, and usage of social media in a vacation context. The findings from the above-mentioned sections will be used to elaborate a creative brief. The purpose of the creative brief is to establish an overview of the creative tasks in terms of branding Northern Jutland through social media. A discussion is elaborated. This concern how Northern Jutland can apply different social media to create brand equity as a destination for the Middle Atlantic U.S. tourists. The thesis results are presented in the last chapter; the conclusion.

### 3.2 Philosophy of Science

A paradigm is a basic belief of systems based on ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). In other words, a paradigm can be explained as a worldview, a general perspective and a way of breaking down the complexity of the real world (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, pp. 14-15). A paradigm helps creating a frame understanding of what knowledge can be viewed as acceptable for the researcher when doing research.

The way the research question is formed means that the constructivism paradigm will be applied. This thesis research question is not looking for the one only true answer, because no such answer exists. The research question implies that several solutions might be found. The research undertaken in this thesis is done searching for several constructs of opinion, both of domain experts and U.S. citizens who are the focus tourist segment for this thesis. These constructs provide opportunity to find common grounds amongst various different viewpoints and allows the researcher to present one of the many possible roads to take.

The ontology and epistemology clarifies how research should be conducted. They are different from one paradigm to another.

### 3.2.1 Ontological Considerations

According to Guba & Lincoln, 1994:

*“Ontology concerns how the researcher view the nature of reality”* (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 108).

In this thesis, the aim is to figure out how Northern Jutland can create brand equity through social media as a destination for the Middle Atlantic U.S. tourists. This objective implies that several methods can be used to obtain exactly that, and it also specifies that for Northern Jutland specific solutions should apply compared to other regions. This aim reveals that a belief in multiple realities exist (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003, p. 12): a reality where Northern Jutland is branded in one way, and realities where other regions are branded in other ways. It also implies that various solutions to the branding issue exists. This means that a relativist ontology is applied to this thesis. The research also attempts to gather various constructs of knowledge from different sources, e.g. interviews, survey, market reports, statistics and articles.

### 3.2.2 Epistemological Considerations

According to Guba 1994, the epistemology question is:

*“what is the nature of the relationship between the knower or would-be-knower and what can be known”* (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 108).

In this thesis, a subjectivist epistemology is applied. That the epistemology is subjectivist means that the researcher is deeply involved in the gathering and analysis of the empirical data, and he influences, with his pre-understandings and knowledge, the sources of data and the analysis of data. In this thesis, this is expressed through the interactionist interviews and the researcher's own knowledge of social media. The reason why this thesis cannot be elaborated using a positivist paradigm is that the thesis is dealing with a range of subjective, for the social media, possibilities as well as the thesis elaborating on an opportunity for one specific region; these findings cannot be utilized elsewhere, as they pertain to the area of research in this thesis.

### 3.2.3 Methodological Considerations

The methodological considerations concern the research design and how knowledge is being produced. Underlining the constructivist paradigm, hermeneutical method is imperative in order to

gain knowledge and understandings. The hermeneutical method concerns how understanding is built through a spiral movement where data sources (and new sources) are revisited until the understanding is complete (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). In this thesis, mixed research is applied. This is due to the usage of both survey and interview methods. The usage of diverse data methods means that elaborative understandings are formed (this in line with the hermeneutical considerations).

Johnson & Onwuegbuzie (2004) argues that:

*“today’s academic world is turning into an interdisciplinary and complex one.”* (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 15)

Therefore, mixed methods are increasingly accepted and valid.

Johnson & Onwuegbuzie (2004) defines mixed research as:

*“the class of research where the researcher mixes or combines quantitative and qualitative research techniques into a single study”* (in Leech et al., 2011, pp. 169-170).

This means that a combined research where both quantitative and qualitative attributes are used, is mixed research.

Applying mixed methods allows the researcher to mix and match the different research components that offers the best chance of answering ones’ research question (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

O’cathain et al., (2007) underlines the advantage of using mixed methods by stating that:

*“Mixed methods research is more than mixing different methods; it is a purposeful and powerful blend to increase the yield of empirical research”* (in Kuada, 2012, p. 119).

This quotation underlines the objective of using multiple methods in this thesis; in order to gain an understanding, several sources are tended to.

The possibilities of using multiple methods and combined quantitative and qualitative methods is used to find and elaborate constructs (Bryman, 2016, p. 625).

The data collection provides insights from various people. A survey will be elaborated which highlights some possible roads to take, interviews will be conducted, these illuminate constructs of key knowledge persons. The combination and analysis of different constructs allow the researcher opportunity to deliver a result, namely a common construct presenting a possible solution.

Quantitative research in form of statistics, reports and surveys will be used to understand the characteristics and motivations for U.S. tourists visiting Europe and Denmark. Furthermore, the researcher of this thesis will conduct a survey to gain a understanding of the Middle Atlantic U.S. tourists' knowledge of Denmark (Denmark, Copenhagen and Northern Jutland, and their use of social media in a travel and information search context). Qualitative research will be used in form of in-depth semi-structured interviews with VisitDenmark in New York and VisitNordjylland's marketing department.

### 3.3 Data Collection Methods

In this section, the different data collection methods in form of a survey, market reports and semi-structured interviews will be presented and discussed in relation to answering the research question.

#### 3.3.1 Survey

In this thesis, the researcher will conduct a survey to gain an understanding of the Middle Atlantic U.S. potential tourists' awareness about Denmark, the importance of accessibility from the U.S. and their use of social media in information search (and vacation experience). The findings will be used to analyze and discuss how social media platforms can be used as a marketing tool for Northern Jutland in order to create brand equity as a destination for the Middle Atlantic U.S. tourists. An important feature of this survey is that; according to the paradigm, the findings of the survey cannot be generalized across the entire Mid-Atlantic U.S. population. However, the survey will be used as a collector of constructs. These constructs are used throughout the analysis in order to ascertain possible solutions.

One of the advantages using a survey, is that you get the chance to get a large amount of responses. This survey will be conducted on SurveyMonkey.com and shared on Facebook. The survey results will be analyzed through the analytical program SPSS (IBM, 2017).

When creating a survey, it is important for the researcher to decide which demographical segment that are most suited for the topic (Bryman, 2016). This thesis survey will be directed towards U.S. tourists from the following four states: New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts and Pennsylvania due to the location of the potential direct flight route from the Mid-Atlantic States to Aalborg. Regarding the design of the survey, Dillman et al., 2014 states:

*“an attractive layout is likely to enhance response rates”* (Bryman, 2016, p. 226).

When conducting a survey, it is essential to make the questions easy to understand and well formulated to get as many useful answers from the respondents as possible (Couper, M. P., 2000). The design of the survey must be well structured, as the main channel for conducting this survey will be the internet, where a poor survey design can decrease the chances of getting many respondents.

According to Bryman, 2016:

*“Questionnaire respondents are more likely than respondents in interviews to become tired of answering questions that are not very salient to them and that they perceive as boring.”* (Bryman, 2016, p.223).

In the beginning of the questionnaire a presentation of the objective is made. This should help in getting the respondents to answer all the questions. As earlier mentioned it is assumed that the U.S. tourists have a low awareness of Denmark. The purpose of the survey is to collect constructs of knowledge of Denmark and their use of social media in a travel and information search context.

The survey will firstly consist of demographical and yes and no questions about the U.S respondents' awareness about Denmark, Copenhagen and Northern Jutland and their willingness to visit Denmark. There will be three statements designed to test the respondents' attitudes toward Denmark on social media, the importance of accessibility if travelling to Denmark and their use of social media in a travel and information search context.

The last question will consist of a multiple-choice question regarding the respondents' requirements when visiting a peripheral destination. A 7-point Likert scale will be applied for measuring the three statements. According to Wolfe & Smith, 2007:

*“Each item should be designed to measure one idea and should be written in straightforward, easy-to-understand language so that the meaning of the item is unambiguous to respondents”* (in Nemoto & Beglar, 2014, p. 3).

The statements in this survey will be easy to understand and not present too detailed information about Denmark, due to the U.S. respondents' limited knowledge of Denmark and Northern Jutland.

The Likert scale is defined by Nemoto & Beglar (2014) as a:

*“psychometric scale that has multiple categories from which respondents choose to indicate their opinions, attitudes, or feelings about a particular issue”* (Nemoto & Beglar, 2014, p. 2).



The Likert scale often consists of five to seven answering options based from a scale from 1-7. A common form is an assertion where a respondent must agree or disagree. The reason for choosing seven answering options is that respondents sometimes feel forced to choose the next best alternative if there are not enough answering options, which can affect the validity and reliability of the survey in a negative way (measuringu, 2010). Another factor that affects the outcomes of the survey is the motivation of the respondents. The respondents to this survey are (seemingly) not U.S. tourists on their way to travel to Denmark right now, and therefore they are not expected to have gained any knowledge whatsoever concerning Denmark. Had the survey been presented to tourists in the airport on their way to Denmark, results would most certainly have been different. The reason why the survey is distributed among potential and not actual tourists is due to limitations in the researcher's possibilities. The survey was shared on social media in order to facilitate collection. Because of the distribution form and presumed nature of respondents (not actual tourists to Denmark), the questions asked had to be formulated differently. Questions had to be hypothetical, meaning that they are based on the linguistic term 'if you where in Denmark, would you...' this means that respondents who might never plan to go to Denmark or consider Denmark as a vacation destination are asked to place themselves in roles which they do not necessarily possess. However, the survey could not have been completed if social media distributions was not used and therefore, questions had to be designed as such. The result of this limitation means that the findings from the survey must be considered only as a possible construct – and as a potential 'alternative truth'.

The researcher of this thesis acknowledges that there also are disadvantages in terms of using a survey as a data collecting method. Some respondents will not understand the survey, others will find it too time consuming, while other respondents might even just answer the questions in the survey without thinking about their answers (Malhotra & Birks, 2007).

### 3.3.2 Market Reports

Market reports, scholarly articles and surveys will help the researcher to gain a better understanding of the U.S. tourist segment travelling to Europe and Denmark. The researcher of this thesis has focused on the different market reports and surveys as a primary source of information for characterizing the U.S. tourists. To establish a quick overview of the used market reports and surveys a table is listed below.

Market report	Theme
ETC: Target market: USA (Marketing strategies for tourism destinations, a competitive analysis), 2014	characteristics and motivational factors for outbound U.S. tourists travelling to Europe
VisitDenmark USA market report (2016)	Key numbers and trends of U.S. tourists travelling to Denmark
U.S. visitor survey 2015 (wonderfulCopenhagen)	Survey results from U.S. tourists travelling to Copenhagen
National travel and tourism office: 2015 U.S. resident travel to Europe (NTTO)	Key facts of outbound U.S. tourists travelling to Europe in 2015
National travel and tourism office: 2015 U.S. resident travel to Europe (NTTO1)	Key facts of outbound U.S. tourists travelling overseas in 2015

*Figure 2: Overview of used market reports*

The information obtained from the market reports will be used in the U.S. tourists travelling to Europe and Denmark chapters.

### 3.3.3 Semi-structured Interviews

The semi structured interview is, compared to structured interviews, an approach that is useful for the interviewer to get to know more about the subject. The structured approach calls for a firm set of questions which are defined previously to the interview, where maximizing the reliability and validity is in focus. In semi-structured interviews, there is a larger interest in the interviewees point of view. In qualitative interviews, it is encouraged to go off the specific topic in order to see what the interviewee views as relevant or important (Bryman, 2008, p.437). This approach will therefore be likely to generate knowledge and conversations about a topic which the interviewer might have thought about beforehand.

In this thesis, semi-structured interviews will be used to gain an understanding of the relevant DMOs' social media strategies and their perception of Denmark's (and Northern Jutland) possibilities for attracting U.S. tourists to Denmark and Northern Jutland.

Some of the interviews will be conducted through telephone due to geographical challenges. Telephone interviews provide an opportunity to obtain data from stakeholders that are otherwise difficult to gain access to in person (Sturges & Hanrahan, 2004, p. 109).

According to Sturges & Hanrahan, 2004:

*“researchers generally rely on face-to-face interviewing when conducting semi-structured and in-depth interviews.” (Sturges & Hanrahan, 2004, p. 108)*

The researcher of this thesis will focus on doing face-to-face interviews if it is geographically possible.

Sometimes it can be easier to interview face-to-face as it allows the interviewer to get a sense of the situation and it allows the researcher to direct the interview in the most sensible way. Furthermore, to minimize the chances of misinterpretations all of the conducted interviews will be recorded.

The findings from the semi structured interviews will be used throughout most of the analysis in terms of the discussion on how Northern Jutland can use social media to create brand equity as a destination for the Middle Atlantic U.S. tourists. Below the interview guides are presented and in appendix 2 & 3 the results are presented.

### **Semi structured interview guides**

#### **Interview guide for Dennis Englund, The CEO of VisitDenmark in the UK and U.S. market**

**Date: 08-03-2017**

**Duration: 16:05**

**Type: Phone interview**

The first interview in this thesis was conducted with VisitDenmark’s CEO of the UK and U.S. market Dennis Englund.

The purpose of the interview was to learn more about the different U.S. tourist segments in Denmark. Secondly, the interview was conducted to get some insights in VisitDenmark’s branding approaches in terms of creating awareness about Denmark as a tourist destination. The interview will be used throughout the entire thesis, in order to analyse and discuss the branding initiatives for Northern Jutland.

<b>Research question</b>	<b>Interview question</b>
The U.S. tourists’ awareness about Denmark	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Knowledge of Denmark for the U.S. tourists</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is VisitDenmark doing to make the U.S. tourists stay longer when visiting Denmark?</li> </ul>
Characterization of U.S. tourist travelling to Denmark	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Which U.S. tourist segments are travelling to Denmark?</li> </ul>
Northern Jutland as a destination for the U.S. tourists travelling to Denmark	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What potential does Northern Jutland hold according to VisitDenmark as a destination for the U.S. tourists travelling to Denmark?</li> <li>• Can Northern Jutland work as a transport hub to the rest of Scandinavia for the U.S. tourists?</li> <li>• Would Northern Jutland be an interesting destination for the U.S. tourists if they had a larger awareness of the destination?</li> </ul>

*Figure 3: Interview guide for Dennis Englund*

### **Interview guide for Ann Purkær Plaetner, the CEO of VisitNordjylland's sales and marketing department**

**Date: 22-03-2017**

**Duration: 20:01**

**Type: Face to face (in person interview at the VisitNordjylland office in Aalborg)**

The interview with the CEO of VisitNordjylland's sales and marketing department Ann Purkær Plaetner was conducted to gain an understanding of VisitNordjylland's current social media strategies. Furthermore, the interview was conducted to learn what they view as brand equity for Northern Jutland as a tourist destination and which possibilities they believe Northern Jutland has to attract the Middle Atlantic U.S. tourists.

<b>Research question</b>	<b>Interview question</b>
<b>Brand equity for Northern Jutland as a tourist destination</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If you were to mention top 5 biggest tourist attractions in Northern Jutland?</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What can Aalborg add to the value of the Northern Jutland destination brand?</li> <li>• Cloud City development impact on the Northern Jutland destination brand</li> </ul>
<b>Social media platforms to create value to the Northern Jutland tourist destination brand</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is VisitNordjylland's attitude towards branding Northern Jutland through social media?</li> <li>• How do VisitNordjylland use social media to interact with tourists?</li> </ul>
<b>Direct flight route from the Mid-Atlantic States to Aalborg</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the potential direct flight route interesting for Northern Jutland, and is it something that could increase the branding effort of Northern Jutland in terms of attracting and increasing awareness as a destination for the Middle Atlantic U.S. tourists?</li> </ul>

*Figure 4: interview guide for Ann Purkær Plaetner*

The methodology chapter has revealed the research design and the philosophy of science underpinning this thesis. The methods of data collection and their applicability in the analysis have been elaborated. In the following chapter, a literature review will clarify important concepts of usage in this thesis.

## 4. Literature Review

The researcher of this thesis has chosen to create a literature review in order to acknowledge already existing literature on the market concerning destination branding using social media, as well as the existing theories and concepts pertaining to social media and branding of destinations. The aim of this literature review is to provide an overview of the different branding aspects in a destination branding context and social media's role in destination branding.

The literature review will consist of four sections which all illuminate different concepts that are vital to understand and know about in relation to doing this thesis. The sections are: Branding & brand equity definitions, Creation of brand equity to a destination, social media as a marketing tool for destination branding and narratives' role in destination branding through social media platforms. Before the researcher can understand and utilize the different branding tools, he must know what branding is. The same goes for creating brand equity to a destination, which the researcher must gain an understanding of before being able to explain the narratives and social media's role in branding a destination.

When having concluded the literature review, knowledge of the presented concepts will have been gathered and contextualized in order to answer the research question of this thesis. Furthermore, these concepts are guidelines for doing the analysis, and will therefore aid in the thesis objective as reflected in the research question, namely how Northern Jutland can use social media to create brand equity as a destination for the Middle Atlantic U.S. tourists visiting Denmark.

### 4.1 Branding & Brand Equity Definitions

The relevance of understanding what branding is and how it is possible to create equity for a brand cannot be understated. In this section, different brand definitions will be looked at in order to conceptualize the term in context to this thesis. The branding of destinations is widely used in tourism, and therefore there are many possible roads to take.

#### **Brand definitions**

When searching in the literature about branding it is evident that there are a wide range of definitions. According to the American Marketing Association a brand can be defined as:

*“A name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or a group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors.”*  
(Dahlén et al., 2010, p. 199).

Furthermore, Plummer (1984) stated that definitions of a brand can happen on three dimensions:

*Physical attributes, functional attributes or benefits associated with using the brand; and personality traits associated with the brand”* (Dahlén et al., 2010, p. 199).

A brand must be differentiated from products to get into the consumers’ minds and create bonding relationships. Having a good brand in the tourism industry is essential, as many products in tourism are intangible products, and a brand can help to tell the story that convince the consumers to purchase.

### **Brand equity definition**

In this section, how to create value for a brand will be clarified. Later in the thesis the findings from this review will be used in terms of creating brand equity to the Northern Jutland destination brand. Branding is about creating value to a product. A tourist destination is also a product, this will be elaborated later in this chapter. Creating value to a brand can also be referred to as brand equity. It is important for a destination brand to differentiate themselves from other destinations and clearly state what value the destination brand offers, therefore it is relevant to gain an understanding of the creation of value to a brand.

Keller (2003) defines brand equity as:

*“the differential effect that brand knowledge has on consumer response to the marketing of that brand”* (in Dahlén et al., 2010, p. 206)

To explain brand equity further, Aaker (1991) elaborates by stating that brand equity is:

*“a set of assets and liabilities linked to the brand, its name and symbol, that add value or subtract from the value provided by a product or service to a firm and/or to that firm's customers”* (Dahlén et al., 2010, p. 206).

This means that brand equity is about which features the brand has that bring value to the brand.

There are four key steps in the building brand equity process (CBBE (customer-based brand equity model)). These steps can also be applied to a destination brand.

Firstly, a brand must establish a strong identity that can help to increase the awareness about the brand. Secondly, a brand must create the correct brand meaning through solid, satisfactory and unique associations. Thirdly, a brand must elicit positive and unique brand responses, which in the

end can lead to the final key step; forging brand relationships which can lead to intense active loyalty for the consumers towards the brand (Dahlén et al., 2010, p. 207).

The six building blocks that establish the brand building equity process are: brand salience, brand performance, brand imagery, brand judgement, brand feelings and brand resonance (Dahlén et al., 2010). Keller, 2009 explains the six brand building blocks below:

- *“Brand salience is how easily and often customers think of the brand under various purchase or consumption situations.*
- *Brand performance is how well the product or service meets customers’ functional needs.*
- *Brand imagery describes the extrinsic properties of the product or service, including the ways in which the brand attempts to meet customers’ psychological or social needs.*
- *Brand judgments focus on customers’ own personal opinions and evaluations.*
- *Brand feelings are customers’ emotional responses and reactions with respect to the brand.*
- *Brand resonance refers to the nature of the relationship customers have with the brand and the extent to which they feel they’re ‘in sync’ with the brand.”*

(Dahlén et al., 2010, p. 207).

These six building blocks are used continuously in the elaboration of the analysis of present thesis to evaluate and discuss brand equity for Northern Jutland as a destination for the Middle Atlantic U.S. tourists.

In relation to tourism and this thesis, the Northern Jutland destination will be conceptualized as a product. Some researchers believe that destinations can and should be treated as products which Lichrou et al., 2008 and Ashworth & Voogd, 1990 supports that by stating:

*“Tourism destinations can undoubtedly be treated as products. They are logically the point of consumption of the complex of activities that comprises the tourism experience and are ultimately what is sold by place promotion agencies on the tourism market”* (in Lichrou et al., 2008, pp. 28-29).

Treating destinations like products can make it easier to create and manage brand equity for the destinations. Brand salience will be one of the most important building blocks in this thesis. Managing brand equity is just as important as creating brand equity, especially in a highly competitive environment such as the tourism industry.



Aaker (2000) has identified five elements for managing brand equity: Brand awareness, perceived quality, brand associations, brand loyalty and other proprietary brand assets (in Dahlén et al., 2010, p. 208). A brand is a combination of elements, which has individuality, uniqueness and character. A brand needs to have an identity that provides both the link between and offers value to the company and the consumer.

## 4.2 Creation of Brand Equity to a Destination

Researchers in the different scholarly articles often do not clearly define what they mean when writing about destinations. Sometimes a destination can mean a country, at other times it can be cities and regions (CaldWell & Freire, 2004, p. 53). However, in this thesis, Northern Jutland is defined as a destination.

Buhalis (2000) defines a tourist destinations as:

*“amalgams of tourism products, offering an integrated experience to consumers”* (Buhalis, 2000, p. 97).

Morrison & Anderson (2002) define destination branding as:

*“A way to communicate a destination’s unique identity by differentiating a destination from its competitors”* (in Qu et al., 2011, p. 466).

With the emergence of technology and social media in the tourism industry, tourists have a huge selection of destinations to choose from. Having branding strategies is an imperative in today’s tourism destinations in order to ensure visitors.

Hall 1999; Blain, Levy, and Ritchie 2005 broadens the definition by stating that destination branding:

*“identifies, delineates, and differentiates a destination and communicates its image as part of its appeal to tourists to experience those features and characteristics that make it a distinctive and attractive destination”* (in Campelo et al., 2014, p. 155).

A destination must be branded in a way that conveys meaning and the characteristics of the destination must be presented in a compelling fashion in order to attract tourists. It must be clearly stated what the destination offers and which possibilities there are for experiences.

According to Morgan et al., 2004 & Kavratizis & Ashworth, 2005 destinations are:

*“Multidimensional brands (Morgan et al., 2004): They have multidisciplinary roots, address a complex composite of stakeholders, landscapes, and social processes and thus, they possess multiple identities which may or may not happily coexist”* (in Wheeler et al., 2011, p. 16).

This means that a destination is not made up of one singular attraction but a multiplicity of attractions that have their own agendas for branding and development. Therefore, it is exceedingly important to consider the different stakeholders when creating a destination brand (Wheeler et al., 2011). Unlike product brands, destination brands are consumed by a variety of different stakeholders, in different ways and for different purposes which makes it more challenging for destinations to create brand strategies that attract the tourists (Wheeler et al., 2011). A destination with a warm climate and beaches can for example be attractive to tourists who enjoy a relaxing vacation, where the tourist segment that enjoys active vacations with plenty of sightseeing and cultural experiences might find the destination uninteresting.

Brand equity has been suggested to be a great measuring tool for the effectiveness of destination brands.

Keller (2003) underlines the value of the CBBE model for marketers as:

*“a bridge between understanding the effectiveness of past marketing efforts and predicting future performance; and in measuring the level of congruence between the brand identity and brand image.”* (in Pike et al., 2010, p. 438).

This means that the model provides insight into how the destination is perceived (by the tourists), based on (among others) earlier branding efforts (salience) and how marketers through adjusting perceived quality can gain brand loyalty and change the image. They all affect each other. E.g. if a tourist has a high-quality perception of a destination, the destination image is likely to be positive. If the destination image is negative brand loyalty will not be apparent.

Pike et al., (2010) proposed that the four dimensions of the CBBE model: brand salience, brand image, perceived quality and brand loyalty had associative relationships among each other, which resulted in the following adapted CBBE model for destinations:

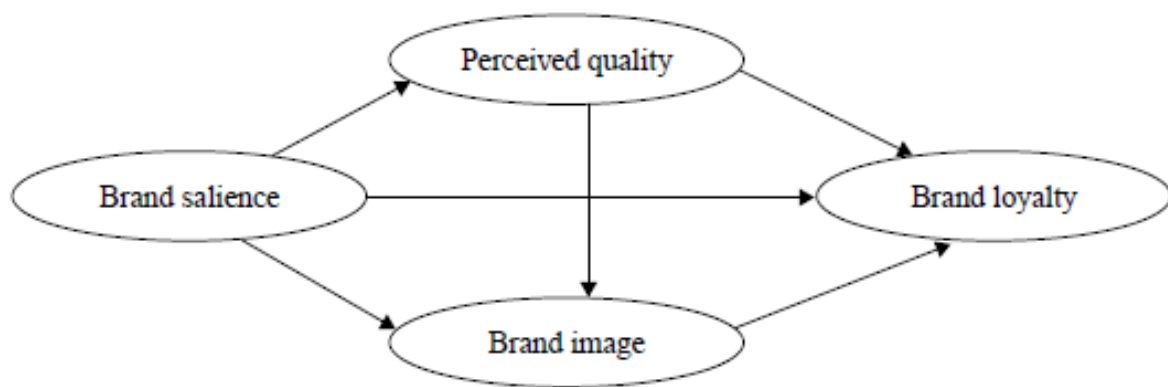


Figure 5: CBBE model for destinations (Pike et al., 2010, p. 444)

The CBBE model can be used as a tool for destinations to identify positioning opportunities that can increase the chances of a competitive advantage.

This CBBE model also exemplifies the locus of this thesis: To figure out how to create awareness about and value to Northern Jutland by means of using social media to brand the destination.

### Brand salience

Brand salience is a key element and first step of creating brand equity. Brand salience refers to the awareness about the brand which is created through the brand identity. Brand salience is the foundation of the CBBE model, which, apart from delivering general awareness, also represents the strength of the destination existing in the mind of the target segment. The brand salience of the destination is paramount, because if the tourists are not aware of the destination, it is impossible for them to know the quality and brand image of the destination.

According to Kapferer (2000):

*“Products are mute; the brand is what gives them meaning and purpose, telling us how a product should be read”* (Dahlén et al., 2010, p.8).

It is the same for a destination brand. If tourists only know the name of the destination and not the identity of the destination, it will be hard to convince the tourists to book a vacation at that destination. Pike 2007 supports that by stating:

*“After all, awareness is simply the ticket to enter the market, with consumers aware of countless destinations.”* (Pike 2007, p. 53).

Bringing attention to the destination is the first step in ensuring a prosperous tourism industry in the area. Creating a destination identity is necessary in order to establish awareness in the tourists mind and ensure that it stays there.

According to Wheeler, Frost and Weiler (2011):

*“Similarly to organizations, also within destinations, the brand identity can guide stakeholders’ behavior, but only if they believe in those brand values. It is important that the brand identity is consistent with the values of the destination and of the local community, thus accounting for the sense of place”* (In Bregoli, 2013, p. 215).

This means that if a destination is being promoted as a friendly destination towards tourists but the reality is that the locals are unfriendly to tourists, the destination identity will lose its ‘sense of place’ and be associated with a poor image.

According to Aaker, 1997:

*“brand personality reflects the “set of human characteristics associated with a brand”* (in Ekici & Hosany, 2006, p. 127).

A destination brand identity helps establishing a relationship between the destination brand and the tourists by creating a value proposition which potentially could involve functional, emotional or self-expressive benefits for the destination’s target audience. A destination brand identity must have personality features that elicit the feelings in tourists.

Plummer (1985) argues that:

*“perceptions of destination personality traits can be formed and influenced by the direct and/or indirect contact that the tourist may have had with the destination”* (in Ekici & Hosany, 2006, pp. 128-129).

Residents’ attitudes towards tourists, hotel employees, restaurants, tourist attractions and EWOM are all elements that can influence the tourists’ perception of a destination’s personality.

### **Perceived quality of the destination**

Keller (2003) defines perceived quality as:

*“The perception of the overall quality or superiority of a product or service relative to relevant alternatives and with respect to its intended purpose”* (in Pike et al., 2010, p. 439).

If the perceived quality is high the consumers are more likely to buy or to communicate the values to others through word of mouth. In a destination branding aspect, the perceived quality of a destination brand has been found to positively relate to brand loyalty (Jayanti and Ghosh, 1996). There have been found strong associations between brand salience of a destination and the perceived quality of a destination brand. If a destination has a strong brand identity that evoke positive feelings for the target segment, it will most likely also evoke positive perceptions of the quality of the destination brand (Pike et al., 2010).

### **Brand image**

According to Aaker (1991) a brand image can be defined as: *“anything linked in memory to a brand”* (Aaker, 1991, p. 109).

These images develop in the consumers' minds and get them to remember the brand, so that when the time comes and the consumer needs the product, the consumer will remember the product of the company with biggest brand image.

Crompton, 1979; Gartner, 1993; Gallarza et al., 2002; Mackay & Fesenmaier defines brand image of a destination as:

*“a compilation of beliefs and impressions based on information processing from a variety of sources over time, resulting in an internally accepted mental construct representing attributes and benefits sought of a product/ destination”* (Choi et al., 2007, p. 119).

This means that the tourists are influenced by a variety of media about the destination, and these influences the reason to choose a particular destination. Social media plays a role here as the sites, potential tourists are confronted with provides information that creates impressions for the viewers. In the next section of the literature review social media will be elaborated further.

Every destination has an image no matter how high or low their brand awareness is. Papadopoulos & Heslop (2002) supports that by stating:

*“whether positive or negative, focused or diffuse, held widely or by only a few, developed deliberately or by default, and formed from education, the media, travel, immigration, product purchases, business experiences or any combination of sources, every place has an image.”* (in Ren & Blichfeldt, 2011, p. 420).

Especially the rapid development in technology makes it possible for tourists to gain information about destination images. Through for example TripAdvisor or Facebook tourists can read thousands of reviews and content about a destination, which will help to get some sort of perceived image about a destination. Friends and relatives can also be actors in shaping a destination image, through their own reproduced narratives from their experiences in destinations.

An increasing number of researchers sees destination image as a multidimensional concept that consists of two primary dimensions: cognitive and affective.

According to Baloglu and McCleary, 1999:

*“The cognitive component can be interpreted as beliefs and knowledge about the physical attributes of a destination, while the affective component refers to the appraisal of the affective quality of feelings towards the attributes and the surrounding environments”* (in Hosany et al., 2006, pp. 638-639).

The destination image is therefore influenced not only by physical attributes and tourists' need for these, but also by the affective emotions connected to vacationing. This means that choosing a vacation destination is effected by what the tourist believes to obtain by going to that exact destination instead of another. Social media is used to explore destination offers and reflect on former tourists' experiences with that particular destination.

In the CBBE model for destinations' brand image is expected to have a positive influence on brand loyalty (Pike et al., 2010). If a destination's brand has a good image it is also likely to receive brand loyalty which can result in repeat purchase, but also to positive word of mouth which can help increase the brand salience and loyalty of the tourists towards the destination.

### **Brand loyalty**

Brand loyalty has become an important part of destination branding in terms of the emergence of Sin the tourism industry. Aaker (2000) defines brand loyalty as:

*“The qualitative customer loyalty which underpins the brand’s value”* (in Dahlén et al., 2010, p. 208).

Tourists share their experiences more than ever before, and EWOM has become one of the primary sources of information for tourists (Litvin et al., 2008, p. 1).

The highest level of the CBBE hierarchy is brand loyalty. Brand loyalty of a destination can be represented by repeat visitation and word of mouth recommendations, which is of high value for a destination (Pike, 2007, p. 54).

#### 4.3 The Role of Social Media in Destination Branding

The connection between U.S. tourists and their usage of social media is the focus of this thesis in terms of creating brand equity for Northern Jutland as a destination for the Middle Atlantic U.S. tourists. In this section, it will be clarified how social media can be used in a destination branding context and how narratives’ role has evolved due to the emergence of social media in the tourism industry.

According to Kaplan & Haenlein (2010) social media can be defined as

*“a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content”* (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010, p. 61).

Social media platforms facilitate communication between users. This provides the users with vast amounts of possibilities for exchanging experiences and knowledge. The factors that are interesting to look at in a decision-making process for tourists are therefore influenced by the possibilities the tourists have in Web 2.0.

The decision-making-process in tourism is complex and hard to define as products in tourism often are intangible. According to Smallman & Moore (2010) the tourist decision making process involves: *“many sub-decisions, occurring continuously from prior to deciding ‘where to go’ through to ‘what are we going to do now we’re here’ and beyond.”* (Smallman & Moore, 2010, p. 399).

This means that the tourist is evaluating the vacation even before it begins, during and in particular after. Essentially, tourists cannot know how good their vacation is until they have experienced it themselves and created their own impressions and experiences at the tourist destination.

Mangold and Faulds (2009) states that:

*“media landscape has undergone an immense transformation over the past decade (social media, i.e. social networks or microblogs, are increasingly replacing traditional media, and the buzz about these new marketing opportunities seems unlimited” (Mangold & Faulds, 2009, p. 770).*

The consumers are turning away from traditional media such as TV, radio and magazines, and instead turn towards social media for their information search. In general, the consumers view social media as a more trustworthy source of information than the traditional above mentioned media (Foux, 2006 in Mangold & Faulds, 2009, p. 771).

The consumers have become cocreators of building equity to a brand. Bruhn et al., 2012 have proposed a conceptual framework for brand equity applied to social media:

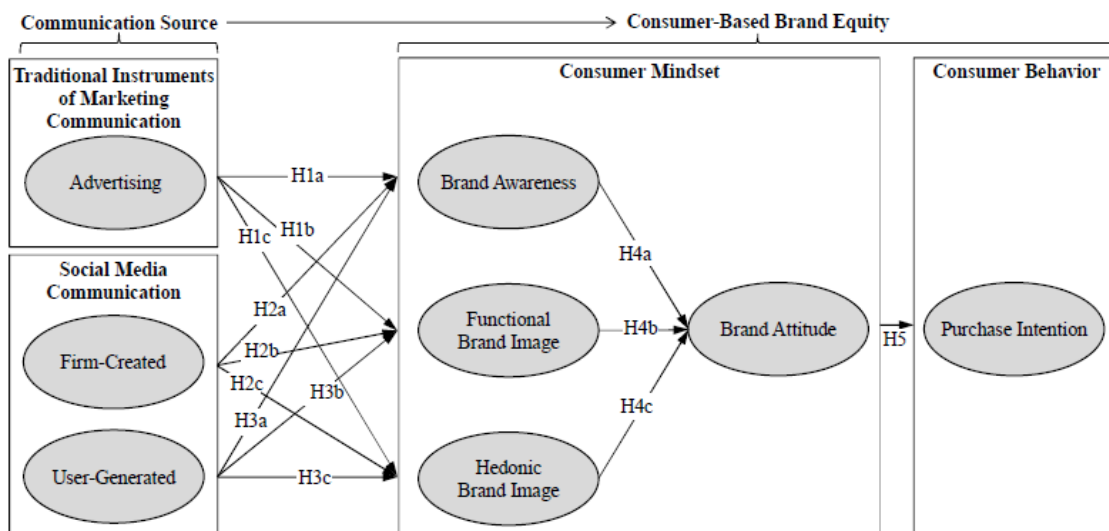


Figure 6: conceptual framework for brand equity applied to social media (Bruhn et al., 2012, p. 774).

The model can be applied in a tourism context where Firms represent destination marketers and users represent tourists (Firm-created= Destination marketers & User-Generated= tourists). It is no longer only the firms that communicate the brand values. The consumers (tourists) have become co-creators through brand web-blogs (travel blogs) and brand communities on the different social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, TripAdvisor and Instagram.

The modified CBBE model for social media strategies consists of three elements: Brand awareness, functional brand image, and hedonic brand image. These three elements effect the consumers overall attitude towards the brand, which in the end effect the consumers’ purchase decision. Social



media platforms allow the firms and consumers to share information and recommendations to global market segments, which especially creates awareness about a brand. Firm-created content on social media positively influences the awareness about a brand and image (functionally and hedonic).

User-generated social media communication effects awareness. The image cannot only be expected to be positive, which also makes it harder for the firms to retain control. Both positive or negative user-generated content will have an impact on the awareness of the brand (Bruhn et al., 2009).

### **Social media in destination branding:**

According to Hipperson, 2010:

*“Social media has made a two-way conversation possible with the consumer participating in the development of a destination-brand identity/image”* (in Lim et al., 2012, p. 198).

Through shares, likes and comments the tourists have become co-creators of the destination brand. Social media platforms such as Facebook enables the DMOs to interact with the tourists at a lower cost and with higher efficiency (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010 in Kiráľová & Pavlíčka, 2015, p. 359). User-generated reviews about destinations have become reliable sources of information that affects the destination brand image and identity.

According to Xiang & Gretzel, 2010:

*“Social media are playing an increasingly important role as information sources for travelers”* (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010, p. 179).

Through social media platforms tourists have access to a vast amount of information about destinations. It can be content created by destination marketers or user generated content in form of tourist reviews or locals' own statements about the destination.

Xiang, Pan, Law and Fesenmaier (2010), explain that search engines such as social media plays a critical role in bringing together the tourists and the tourism suppliers which they elaborate by stating that:

*“DMOs need to understand how visitors use search engines in order to increase visibility through higher search engine rankings. They must meet the needs of travellers by providing value added information and services that differentiate themselves from travel agencies and other tourism portals.”* (in Lange-Faria & Elliot, 2012 p. 196).

Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, travel blogs and YouTube contains large amounts of possibilities for DMOs' campaigns and tourists' recommendations and reviews about destinations.

With the emergence of social media in the tourism industry, user-generated content is rapidly becoming a trusted source of travel information (Lange-Faria & Elliot, 2012). Tourists engage in social media to satisfy their functional, social, hedonic or psychological needs. Destination marketers must be ready to engage and provide relevant information that can satisfy the needs of the tourists.

In addition to the DMOs, tourists have become co-creators of the destination brand. Tourists use social media to share their knowledge and experiences about tourist destinations they have visited (Munar & Jacobsen, 2014).

According to Buhalis & Law, 2008; Volo, 2010 and Jacobsen & Munar, 2012:

*“Social media platforms permit tourists to digitize and share online knowledge (emotions and experiential moments far more widely than in the past.”* (in Munar & Jacobsen, 2014 p. 46).

Instagram, travel blogs or Facebook are some examples of social media platforms that allows tourists to share their knowledge about destinations online. Tourists both share recommendations about destinations but also their experiences in the destinations. Especially travel blogs have emerged and become a popular social media platform for tourists to share and write about their experiences in a destination (Oliveira & Panyik, 2015).

Tham et al., (2013) states that:

*“The change to electronic information channels has also introduced decision makers to a much broader and easy-to-access collection of “friends” that may potentially influence decision making”* (in Xiang & Gretzel, 2010 p. 145).

This means that EWOM increasingly impacts on the potential tourists' motivation to go to a certain destination, and that the internet, especially social media, facilitates information search and knowledge gathering.

#### 4.4 Narratives' Role in Destination Branding on Social Media

Social media has changed the role of narratives in tourism. Tourists and DMOs have become co-producers of destination narratives, and social media have become one of the main platforms for sharing information and experiences about tourist destinations (Yoo & Gretzel, 2016).

Dahlén et al., (2010) defines a brand narrative as:

*“The story that is negotiated for the brand and the life experience of the consumer”* (Dahlén et al., 2010 p. 237)

This means that a narrative can be created on the basis of a group of recommendations; reviews; blogs; and the like (Instagram /snapchat/ Facebook posts). An organization or company can attempt to create a brand, but it will always be the customers who decided whether a brand comes alive or not (Dahlén et al., 2010). The notions of brand narrative are key to this thesis as narratives are what tourists create when talking about a destination online, which is also connected to WOM. DMOs can attempt at creating a brand narrative and try to get tourists on board, e.g. through hashtag campaigns (#) or posts on Facebook.

According to Framke, 2002:

*“marketing creates narratives, images and brands that mediate a place to the potential tourist in the traveller-generating regions”* (in Lichrou et al., 2008).

Furthermore, Meethan (1996), Voase (1999) and Stokowski (2002) states that:

*“Tourism destinations can be conceived as texts and sets of spatial narratives, which involve not only written media such as documents, books, and brochures, but also spoken, visual and non-verbal media”* (in Lichrou et al., 2008, pp. 34-35).

The concept of a destination as a narrative can be a useful tool for branding a destination and helps highlighting the intangible elements and creates symbolic meanings for a destination (Lichrou et al., 2008). This will be discussed in relation to EWOM further down in this section.

Kyle & Chick (2007) argue that narratives:

*“perpetuate meanings and reinforce habitus, by confirming and validating symbolic meanings, refreshing memories, renewing rituals, and reinforcing myths and traditions”* (in Campelo et al., 2014, p. 156).

This means that in the process of consuming a narrative, the tourist will feel a connection to the subject of the narrative.

There has been a strong tradition for tourism research to gain an understanding of the representations of destinations and people that are associated with the destinations (Mercille, 2005 in Moscardo 2010, pp. 45-46). The representations deliver stories about the destinations with the aim to attract more tourists and to provide meaning for the tourists' experiences. The typical narratives about destinations can be seen in promotional material such as guide books, destination brochures or websites, presentations given by tour guides, media portrayals of destinations published in magazines, social media platforms, movies, and finally in the descriptions given by tourists (Bhattacharyya (1997), Doorne (2002) Choi et al., (2008), Lugosi & Bray (2008) and Mercille (2005) (in Moscardo, 2010, p. 46).

Jenkins (2003) describes a: *"circle of representation that links these various sources of narratives about destinations"* (Moscardo, 2010 p. 46).

The destination marketers produce representations of destinations that encompass narratives about the significance of the place or people that live there. These are stories that support narratives and icons that mark key elements of the narratives (Jenkins, 2003 in Moscardo). These representations can also be described in different media materials about destinations such as literature, movies, the news media and social media platforms.

Chronis (2005) argues that:

*"Tourists select destinations based on these representations, and often organize their behavior in the destination to match the narratives and to collect the icons in some way"* (in Moscardo, 2010, p. 46).

Finally, the tourist will reproduce the narratives in the stories they tell their friends, family, etc. about their experiences in the destination. It is important to emphasize that the circle is not a closed circle which Jenkins (2003) and Mercille (2005) supports by arguing that:

*"There may be multiple and conflicting representations of destinations and tourists' own experiences can create changes in the representations they on to other in their travel stories"* (in Moscardo, 2010, p. 46).

Either the tourists support the narrative that is already built or they create a new one.

With the emergence of social media, tourists have become co-creators of destination narratives. According to Fotis et al., 2012:

*“online travel reviews and user-generated content are often perceived as more likely to provide reliable information than content posted by tourism organizations”* (in Munar, 2012, p. 104).

Tourists’ own narratives can provide authentic and new dimensions to destination brands. Social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, travel blogs etc. have become intermediaries for tourists to share their knowledge and experiences about tourist destinations.

Bowman (2011) and Miller & Lammas (2010) explains that:

*“In social media, consumers do not passively receive marketers’ intended messages, but instead act as active co-producers of marketing messages”* (in Blichfeldt & Smed, 2015, p. 2).

Through sharing, liking and commenting marketing messages on social media, the tourists actively participate in conveying the message.

WOM and narratives created by tourists are intrinsically correlated. When a tourist creates a narrative on social media, this narrative will be shared with other people (possibly other tourists). Therefore, a narrative is in fact online WOM which is known as EWOM.

EWOM can be defined as:

*“any positive or negative statement made by potential, actual, or former customers about a product or company which is made available to multitude of the people and institutes via the Internet”* (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004 in Jalilvand & Sameiei, 2012, p. 592).

According to Bronner and de Hoog (2011)

*“EWOM may in fact be even more influential than WOM given its characteristics of global reach, the speed with which it travels, ease of use, and anonymity, absent of direct face-to-face pressure.”* (In Lange-Faria & Elliot, 2012, p. 198)

An example could be TripAdvisor. Every tourist with an internet connection can within minutes find thousands of reviews about destinations that are located far away from their homes. The social media platforms provide yet an opportunity for people who may or may not know each other, to

learn about each other's experiences and by talking about these experiences perhaps even create a new narrative.

Schmallegger & Carson (2008) explains that:

*"Tourist-generated content competes with the destination management organizations (DMOs) that have traditionally been providers of destination-related information and knowledge"*

(in Munar, 2012, p. 102).

Tourism organizations need to be aware of this challenge and be ready to seize the opportunities that tourist-user generated content creates, and use it for their own purposes and their own destination brands (Munar, 2012). Tourism organizations could take advantage of the challenge by actively involving the tourist in creating the narratives.

Social media platforms allow EWOM to travel fast and reach a large number of people. Destination marketers can use social media platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, SnapChat and Twitter as communication platforms for their marketing campaigns to create a buzz about the destinations.

Ahuja et al. (2007) defines buzz marketing as:

*"a multi-dimensional communication process that involves sending persuasive messages out via buzz agents (senders) to buzz targets (receivers) in the form of WOM (offline and online) conversations, and retrieving market research information from buzz agents on the particulars of these buzz marketing experiences"* (Ahuja et al., 2007, p. 151).

If a marketing message has enough buzz and is shared a large of amount of times, it will have the chance to go viral. social media platforms create opportunities for DMO's and tourists to post exciting and sometimes controversial content. WestJet marketing campaign "Christmas miracle" is a great example of viral marketing's effect. They surprised their passenger in the Christmas holiday season, by giving presents that were waiting for them on the luggage belts in their arriving destinations. Everything was filmed and posted on YouTube and now have over 47 million views on YouTube (YouTube "Christmas miracle", 2017). It was picked up by all the major news media around the world, and Forbes stated that:

*"Christmas Miracle is not just YouTube's feel-good holiday sensation of 2013, but the kind of branding that normally only Santa can deliver"* (Forbes, 2013).

Viral marketing can also be negative as it can be hard to control for marketers which Dobeles, et al., (2005), Helm (2000), Kaikati & Kaikati (2004) and Welker (2002) supports by stating that:

*“Probably the biggest risk is the lack of control associated with viral marketing campaigns: organisations have no means of controlling the spread of the message and the content of the transmission”* (Worndl et al., 2008, p. 36).

Many social media platforms exist and a large number of them can be useful tools for destination branding. What social media platform is most relevant for one marketing campaign, may not be relevant for another one. Social media platforms provide different opportunities. As will be later demonstrated some are good for pictures or videos and other are good for text, and others even combined. It is useful to get an overview of the different social media platforms that are used in this thesis for destination branding. But before looking into this, market reports and survey will be used to characterize the U.S. tourists and their motivations for travelling to Europe and Denmark.

## 5. U.S. Tourists Travelling to Europe and Denmark

In this chapter, key facts and statistics about U.S. tourists travelling to Europe and Denmark will be illuminated. Furthermore, the main motivational factors for U.S. tourists in terms of travelling to Europe and Denmark will be described. The U.S tourists' use of social media in a travel context will also be described as this is a main focus in the thesis. To characterize the U.S. tourists and their motivations for travelling to Europe and Denmark the following survey and reports will be used:

NTTO (2015) National travel and tourism office: 2015 U.S. resident travel to Europe  
(ETC 2014) Marketing strategies for tourist destinations; A competitive analysis – Target Market USA, USA market profile 2016 (VisitDenmark) and Wonderful Copenhagen's American visitor survey 2015. A conducted interview with VisitDenmark's CEO of the U.S. market Dennis Englund will be used as a supplement to the VisitDenmark USA market report.

## 5.1 Outbound U.S. tourists Travelling to Europe in 2015

In 2015, there were 73,5 million outbound travelers from the United States, which made the U.S. tourists the second largest outbound travel segment in the World (UNWTO, 2016). There was a total of 32.789.000 US travelers overseas; Europe accounted for 35 percentages of the US overseas travelers' destination (NTTO1, 2015).

The main purposes for travelling to Europe for the U.S. travelers in 2015 were vacation (52,8%), Visit friends/relatives (24,4%), business (10,4%) or education (6,9%). Conventions, religion and health treatments accounted for the last seven percentages. The average length of stay for the U.S. travelers in Europe was 10.8 nights in 2015. California and New York were the top two states from which U.S. tourists travelled to Europe (NTTO, 2015).

Activity Participation While in Other Countries (multiple responses)	2014 (Percent)	2015 (Percent)	Point Change <sup>(2)</sup>
Sightseeing	87.6	88.1	0.5
Shopping	80.3	81.0	0.7
Historical Locations	60.7	60.7	0.0
Art Galleries/Museums	57.6	58.1	0.5
Small Towns/Countryside	57.7	57.2	-0.5
Guided Tours	45.5	45.5	0.0
Experience Fine Dining	45.9	45.3	-0.6
Cultural/Ethnic Heritage Sites	43.7	42.8	-0.9
National Parks/Monuments	36.2	38.4	2.2
Concert/Play/Musical	21.1	20.9	-0.2
Nightclubbing	19.8	20.8	1.0
Amusement/Theme Parks	9.6	9.0	-0.6
Camping/Hiking	7.5	8.6	1.1
Sporting Event	7.6	8.6	1.0
Water Sports	4.4	5.0	0.6
Environ./Eco. Excursions	3.5	4.3	0.8
Casino/Gamble	3.7	3.3	-0.4
Golfing/Tennis	1.9	1.9	0.0
Snow Sports	1.8	1.8	0.0
Hunting/Fishing	1.1	1.2	0.1
Other	0.7	0.4	-0.3

Figure 7: U.S. tourists in Europe Top activities in 2015 (NTTO, 2015, p. 3).

The U.S. tourists top activities in 2015 were sightseeing, shopping, visiting historical locations, museums, small towns/countryside, guided tours and fine dining. When looking at the U.S. tourists preferred vacation activities, Copenhagen seems to be the obvious Danish destination for the U.S. tourists. Over 57 percentages of the U.S. tourists visited small towns or the countryside while being in Europe. Furthermore, it is also worth mentioning the U.S. tourists preferred activities such as visiting national parks, camping and hiking. It is understandable that Copenhagen is the destination



that the majority of U.S. tourists travel to when visiting Denmark. Copenhagen has plenty of sightseeing opportunities combined with a large amount of shopping areas and world class cuisine. The main branding activity of Denmark in the U.S. considers Copenhagen and not the surrounding areas or peripheral regions, according to research findings.

This thesis works to change exactly that: similarly to Copenhagen, a region such as Northern Jutland provides opportunities for the U.S. tourists according to their preferred activities in 2015. Therefore, this thesis works towards facilitating a proposition as to how Northern Jutland could be branded. Northern Jutland consist of many smaller towns and large areas of countryside and nature, with many campsites, hiking trails and one of the largest national parks in Denmark (VisitNordjylland, 2017), which could all be potentially interesting places to visit for the U.S. tourists.

## 5.2 Motivational Factors for U.S. Tourists Travelling to Europe

After having described the key numbers and facts about the U.S. tourists travelling to Europe, it is relevant to gain an understanding of the motivational factors of the U.S tourists travelling to Europe. The findings will help the researcher analyze and discuss how Northern Jutland can use social media to create brand equity to Northern Jutland as a destination for the Middle Atlantic U.S. tourists.

A limited amount of studies has been done on the motivations and travel behavior of the U.S. tourists that travel to Europe, even though they are one of Europe's largest outbound tourist segments. Most of the reports consist of different DMOs' market reports with limited information on the motivational factors for the U.S. tourists for going on a vacation in Europe.

### **ETC: Target Market- USA, Marketing strategies for tourist destinations – A competitive analysis**

Europe has a competitive advantage through its image among the U.S. tourists. From the U.S. tourists' point of view, Europe is a destination that is known for its heritage, friendly people and cultural diversity. Europe allows the U.S. tourists to immerse themselves' in the European way-of-life (ETC, 2014, p. 27).

The findings from the ETC report showed that the Mid-Atlantic States: New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania had the largest share of outbound U.S. tourists travelling to Europe with 26 percent of the total market share of outbound U.S. tourists travelling to Europe in 2012 (ETC, 2014).

The preferred time for the U.S. tourists in terms of visiting Europe is between May and September.

The top five most important motivational factors for choosing a vacation for the U.S. outbound tourists in 2013 were: 1. The right destination, 2. value for money paid, 3. once-in-a-lifetime experiences, 4. The activities available, 5. Price. The U.S. outbound tourists invest a large amount of time to find the right destination for a vacation. In 2015, the U.S. tourists traveling to Europe spent an average of 117 days to plan their trip (TNNO, 2015). This correlates with the fact that findings such as the right destination and once-in-a-lifetime experiences are among the U.S. tourists most important decision-making factors when choosing a destination for their vacation.

The distribution in the U.S.' travel market is driven by four major channels, which includes two offline and two online channels. The two offline channels are central reservation and walk-in agencies while the two online channels are supplier-direct websites and online travel agencies. The citizens of the United States' use of the Internet and mobile phone are among the highest in the World, with more than one phone per citizen and 81 percent of the population are active internet users (254 million users) (ETC, 2014) .

According to the ETC report it is paramount for destination marketers to do an:

*“extensive investment in, and highly effective use of, online/digital and mobile technology, online advertising and social media marketing as strategies to attract American tourists”* (ETC, 2014, p. 27).

A shift from offline to online booking channels has occurred over the past years in the United States. The decision-making process in tourism has changed, especially in terms of the impact of social media as a tool for information search. As mentioned earlier, the U.S. tourists are heavy users of the internet. Over 80 percent of the United States travelers are active on social media. Facebook is the most popular social networking site followed by YouTube and Twitter. The outbound U.S. tourists mostly use online searches for the planning of their trip. Their choice of destination is heavily influenced by their perceptions built from their own personal experiences, recommendations of friends and relatives and finally how highly the destinations are rated on the different social media platforms and travel sites such as TripAdvisor, travel blogs, Facebook etc. (ETC, 2014). It can be a destination they have visited before where they have found new opportunities for tourist experiences. It can also be a new destination that has created awareness for the U.S. tourists through different social media platforms.

Some of the factors that the U.S. tourists evaluate a destination from are: authentic experiences in new destinations, rest and relaxation, desire to spend time /reconnecting with loved ones, personal enrichment e.g. voluntourism, cultural experience, learning, discovering new experiences in previously visited destinations and adventure (ETC, 2014).

Findings from statistical reports demonstrate an increase in the amount of U.S. tourists travelling to Scandinavia. This works in Northern Jutland's favor, as a higher number of tourists travelling to neighboring regions might increase awareness of the Northern Jutland destination. Scandinavia's share of U.S. arrivals on direct flights between the U.S. and Scandinavia has increased by more than 35 percent (VisitFinland, 2016).

Over 50 percent of the U.S. tourists that travelled to Europe in 2015 look for information at airline companies' online platforms. The Scandinavian countries' increased accessibility due to the increase of direct flight routes can be used as an advantage.

### 5.3 U.S. Tourists Traveling to Denmark

In this section sources from VisitDenmark and Wonderful Copenhagen's American Visitor Survey 2015 will be used. In 2015, there were a total of 575.000 overnight stays by U.S. tourists in Denmark, which made them the fifth largest outbound tourist segment in Denmark. The top three destinations for U.S. tourists travelling to Denmark in 2015 were Copenhagen, Aarhus and Billund (VisitDenmarkUSA, 2016).

One out of three U.S. tourists were affected by the internet in their decision to travel to Denmark. 27 percent of the U.S. tourists used VisitDenmark's website (VisitDenmark, 2017) in their planning for a vacation to Denmark.

Facebook and Twitter are the most used social media platforms in the U.S. tourists' information search.

U.S. tourists are an emerging tourist segment in Denmark, but it is still a relatively unknown segment for DMOs in Denmark. VisitDenmark is currently in the middle of doing surveys and further research to learn more about the U.S. tourists' motivations for travelling to Denmark. From the conducted interview with VisitDenmark's CEO of the UK and US market Dennis Englund, it was explained that there are three main U.S. tourist segments that travel to Denmark. The first segment is Cruise ship tourists, which are typically 65+ and have retired from the work market. The second U.S. tourists segment in Denmark are the ones who are visiting Denmark as a part of their European or Scandinavian roundtrip. These two segments often book their trips through travel

agencies. The third segment is the younger segment (also referred to as millennials) which VisitDenmark have a limited amount of knowledge on, but are working on gathering data through surveys and market reports. Dennis Englund further explains that Denmark has become more accessible for the U.S. tourists during the last years. There has been an increased amount of direct flights between Denmark and the U.S., which have made Denmark a more accessible destination for the U.S. tourists. VisitDenmark's goal is to increase the amount of overnight stays, where the U.S. tourists currently are spending between one and two day in Denmark. VisitDenmark would like to increase the amount of days to three or four days (Appendix 2).

The next section will consist of the findings in the Wonderful Copenhagen United States visitors survey from 2015.

### **American visitor survey Copenhagen (Wonderful Copenhagen, 2015)**

The survey was conducted in 2015 in CPH airport and had a total of 783 respondents. 376 of the respondents were only in transit via the CPH airport, which means that it was only 402 of the respondents that answered the questions regarding Copenhagen as a tourist destination. The respondents travelled to Denmark from the following three U.S. airports: Orlando, New York and Los Angeles.

#### **Key findings:**

There has been an increase of over 18 percent in the amount of plane tickets bought in The United States with an arrival at a Danish airport.

The 25-34 years old tourist segment were dominant, which also correlates with VisitDenmark's focus on learning more about the younger U.S. tourist segment.

62 percent of the respondents were on vacation in Copenhagen. 27 percent of the respondents were in Copenhagen to visit friends and family. 72 percent of the U.S. tourists were first time visitors in Copenhagen. They spend an average of 4.3 nights in Copenhagen, and their preferred type of accommodation is hotels. Their main motivations for travelling to Copenhagen are attractive prices on flights and experiencing cultural life and historical sites. Meeting the locals were also mentioned as a positive experience for the U.S. respondents.

The best experiences for U.S. tourists in Copenhagen were:

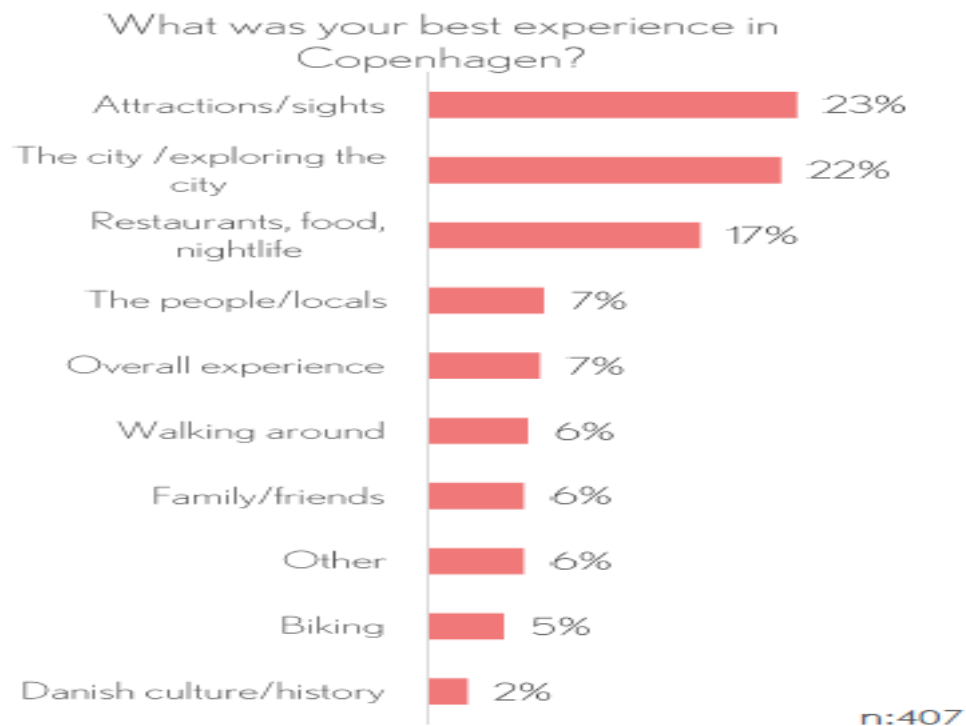


Figure 8: U.S. tourists' best experiences in Copenhagen (WonderfulCopenhagen, 2015, p. 22).

Tivoli and Nyhavn were highlighted as the best tourist attractions and places in Copenhagen. 46 percent of the respondents expressed that they did not have any bad experiences in Copenhagen, however there were some factors that had a negative impact on the U.S. tourists' visit in Copenhagen.

Especially the value for money, weather and public transportation were mentioned as negative experience for the respondents, which correlates with the findings from the ETC market report that showed that price was an important factor in the U.S. tourists' decision making process.

The top sources in the U.S. respondents' information search were:

Friends and relatives (40%), the internet (primarily google & social media), travel books and TripAdvisor.

## **Summary of U.S. tourists travelling to Europe and Denmark**

Most of the U.S. respondents were also active on at least one type of social media, which correlates with the findings from the other reports (ETC, 2014 & VisitDenmarkUSA, 2016). Facebook and Instagram were the dominant social media platforms. More than 75 percent of the respondents used a social media platform when visiting Copenhagen (WonderfulCopenhagen, 2011).

It is evident that the U.S. tourists are well informed tourists that spend a large amount of time choosing the right destination. It must be a destination with plenty of tourist attractions, and at the same time a destination that can offer experiences that shows them cultural diversity and once-in-a-lifetime opportunities. The U.S. tourists' main motivations are sightseeing, cultural and tourist attractions. They also show interest in experiencing nature and the countryside. The U.S. tourists use online information searches, where social media plays a large role in their decision-making process. Findings from the different reports and survey showed that U.S. tourists are heavy internet users, over 80 percent are active on users on social media. Facebook, Twitter and Instagram are the most used social media platforms for the U.S. tourists.

### **5.4 Characterization of Five United States Outbound Tourist Segments**

The outbound U.S. tourists travelling to Europe can be divided into five segments: Baby boomers, Generation X, The “creative” class, Echo boomers and Seniors (66+) (ETC Target market USA, 2013, p. 30).

Below, the different U.S. segments are described. These five types are necessary to consider in a branding process, as tourists with these different characteristics are motivated by different things. These different segments must be tended to in a destination branding process to ensure a large pool of potential visitors. Only tending to one or few of the segments would mean fewer potential and actual tourists, and a lower degree of awareness. Therefore, the brand and the narratives must contain motivational factors useful for all the segments.

#### **Baby Boomers**

Baby boomers are the generation born between 1945 and 1964, and they account for roughly 26% percent of the total population of the U.S. (stridetravel, 2016). In terms of the tourism industry, this segment accounts for approximately 38 percent of all U.S. online leisure travelers.

They are described as older, richer, more confident and more experienced travelers. In general, baby boomers are showing an increased tendency of being bored by mass tourism and being a passive

sightseer in tourist destinations (Pattersen & Pigg, 2009). Findings from the conducted survey “2015 boomer trends” showed that Europe was the preferred region as a holiday destination for the American baby boomers (Aarp, 2014).

### **Generation X**

The American generation X segment are people between the ages of 31 to 44 and they account for roughly 30 percent of all U.S. online leisure travelers. They have grown up with the 24-hour media and they prefer unconventional things. They are described as creative and open to learning new things. They prefer destinations that offer sustainable tourism and destinations that offer an opportunity to discover new cultures and experiences (ETC, 2014). They are seeking tourist destinations and experiences that are not commercialized, where nature and the possibilities for outdoor activities play an important role in their choice of vacation destination (Statista, 2016).

### **The Creative class**

The creative class are a mix between the babyboomers and generation x. They are very engaged when visiting a destination, and they seek tourism activities that are intriguing, fulfilling and personally enriching. They are interested in visiting destinations that can enhance their social status and self-improvement (ETC, 2014).

### **Echo boomers**

The echo boomers are between the age of 18-30 years, and they account for around 22 percent of all the United States online leisure tourists. For a younger U.S. tourist segment such as the Echo boomers, Europe is viewed as a distinctive destination. They see Europe as a destination with vibrant and living culture that presents possibilities to engage with local people. They live in the digital world where the different social media platforms are perceived as a highly-trusted source of information when choosing a vacation destination (ETC, 2014). The echo boomers are influenced by viral and electronic media and word of mouth, and their friends are a main influence in their decision-making process (McGrindle, 2006). They can be a rather lucrative market, but at the same time they are also very demanding. The Echo boomers tend to choose independent travel over packages tours.

### **Seniors**

The seniors are 66+ years old and account for 10 percent of all U.S. online leisure tourists. They represent a strong segment for destinations that attracts the mature tourist segment, where they tend

to visit destinations that they have ancestral links with. They have a strong affinity to Europe (ETC, 2014).

The findings from both the NTTO report and the ETC market report showed that the largest share of outbound travel from the U.S. to Europe came from the Middle Atlantic states: New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania. Due to these findings and the fact that the potential Norwegian flight route from Aalborg will be located in the Mid-Atlantic States in the U.S, the researcher of this thesis has decided to focus on the U.S. tourists segment coming from New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts and Pennsylvania (Middle Atlantic U.S. tourists). However, in this thesis there is not made any rendering of differences between Middle Atlantic U.S. tourists and other U.S. tourists. The usage of the east coast U.S segment is made only to facilitate the research and due to the potential direct flight route. A large catchment area would mean that more funding for marketing would be needed, therefore it seems beneficial to start with a smaller target group at pre-chosen regions from where the Middle Atlantic U.S. tourists would have easier access to Northern Jutland.

## 6. Analysis

The findings from the characterization of U.S. tourists showed that social media is used as one of their primary sources of travel information. Furthermore, findings from the literature review revealed that social media is an emerging marketing tool for destination branding. Social media allows user-generated content in form of different narratives about the destinations to travel fast globally, where tourists are increasingly sharing their experiences and recommendations about destinations on social media.

The analysis chapter will consist of the following sections: applying Porters Five Forces, analyzing the Survey results, presenting a Creative Brief exemplifying options for Northern Jutland and lastly a discussion on how social media can be used to create brand equity to Northern Jutland as a destination for the Middle Atlantic U.S. tourists is made. The competitors' analysis (Porters Five Forces) is the first building block of the analysis, as a look into the competition reveals options for the destination as well as strengthens chosen strategies. The answers obtained from the survey combined with the findings from the U.S. tourists travelling to Europe/Denmark and from the interview with the CEO of VisitNordjylland's marketing and sales department Ann Purkær Plaetner & VisitDenmark's CEO of the UK/U.S. market Dennis Englund, will provide the researcher with the opportunity to create a creative brief. The Creative brief describes the potential options for



Northern Jutland. Conclusively, a profound section on chosen social media platforms and their usefulness to Northern Jutland will be presented.

VisitNordjylland's Facebook and Instagram page will be used to analyze Northern Jutland's current method of using these social media platforms.

In order to clarify Northern Jutland's potential options for branding the destination to the Middle Atlantic U.S. tourists, the following social media Platforms will be used in the analysis: Facebook, Instagram and Travel Blogs. This will be elaborated further down in this chapter.

## 6.1 Porters Five forces

It is beneficial to conduct a competitor analysis in order to be able to differentiate the narrative from other destination narratives and brand values. The immediate competitors to Northern Jutland are other Danish destinations such as Copenhagen and Aarhus and secondly other Scandinavian destinations who put emphasis on unique nature. In the following section an attempt will be made to conduct a competitors' analysis using Porters Five Forces to analyze Northern Jutland's competitive environment in terms of being a destination that can attract the Middle Atlantic U.S. tourists. This should not be seen as a thoroughly investigated competitor analysis, but as a proposal to how it can be conducted.

Porter's Five Forces consist of five elements:

*"The threat of new entrants, the bargaining power of buyers, the bargaining power of suppliers, the threat of substitutes and the degree of rivalry between competitors."* (Tribe, 2010, p. 89).

According to Porter (1998), the purpose of the five forces analysis of the competitive environment is to help the corporate strategist to:

*"Find a position in the industry where his or her company can best defend itself against these forces or can influence them in its favour."* (in Tribe, 2010, p. 89).

In relation to a destination it is relevant to have knowledge of the competitive environment as the tourism industry is highly competitive and the tourists have a wide range of destinations to choose from. Social media allows tourists to find wide amounts of information about a destination, where reviews and recommendations influence destination images.

### **The threat of new entrants**

The threat of new entrants help new companies to determine how difficult it will be to enter an industry (Tribe, 2010, p. 90).

According to Tribe (2010), the threat of new entrants depends on the existence of barriers to entry which is:

*“Economics of scale, Capital requirements of entry, availability of supply and distribution channels, expected retaliation: price and advertising barriers, product differentiation and government policy” (Tribe, 2010, p. 90).*

In terms of Northern Jutland, relevant barriers to look at are capital requirements of entry, availability of distribution channels and product differentiation.

### **Capital requirements of entry**

According to the CEO of VisitNordjylland sales and marketing department Ann Purkær Plaetner Northern Jutland's challenge is that:

*“Americans don't know what Denmark is. When/if the direct flight route between the U.S and Aalborg are established, we/you need to get American travel agencies to brand Northern Jutland” (Appendix 3).*

It will be time consuming and take a lot of resources for The DMOs (VisitNordjylland, VisitAalborg etc.) and other tourist organizations in Northern Jutland, as they have to ‘almost start from scratch’ just to create awareness of what Northern Jutland can offer as a tourist destination for the Middle Atlantic U.S. tourists.

VisitDenmark offer U.S. campaign packages which DMOs or other tourism stakeholders can purchase. Interesting packages to purchase for Northern Jutland could be the “PR og presseomtale i Nordamerika (PR and press coverage in North America)” or the “Synlighed på VisitDanmarks digitale platforme (Visibility on VisitDenmark's digital platforms)” (VisitDenmark: U.S. salgsaktiviteter, 2017). However, these packages come with a price that can be an obstacle for many tourist organizations in Northern Jutland.

Based on these findings the capital of entry can be determined as high.

### **Availability of distribution channels**

With the increased decline in airline prices and larger accessibility from the U.S. to Europe, the U.S. tourists have a large selection of destinations to choose from in Europe (Expedia, 2016). There are already several direct daily routes from big U.S. cities such as New York, Boston, San Francisco and Chicago to Copenhagen (visitDenmark, 2017). Northern Jutland must recognize that the potential flight route they will get to Aalborg will be in a less central area in the one of the Mid-Atlantic States than the Copenhagen routes.

### **Product differentiation**

According to Porter, 1996:

*“If the destination wants to enforce on the highly competitive global tourism market, it must be distinguishable from the competition”* (in Királ'ová & Pavlíčka, 2015, pp. 359-360).

Northern Jutland must put a lot of effort into differentiating themselves from their competitors in Denmark and Scandinavia. It will be very difficult for Northern Jutland to compete with Copenhagen or Aarhus in terms of being a destination for City Break tourists. Copenhagen offer the city break experiences with world famous cultural sites, many shopping possibilities and high class cuisine (VisitCopenhagen, 2017). Aarhus are the capitol of culture in 2017 and it was placed number 13 in NYtimes list of places to go in 2016 (Nytimes, 2016). With new contemporary buildings like DOKK1 and 'the iceberg' combined with several Michelin restaurants, Aarhus has emerged as an attractive city break destination which has gotten attention in large U.S newspapers such as *The Guardian* (TheGuardian,2017). Aarhus can be a great inspiration of how a destination such as Aalborg (in Northern Jutland) could be branded and developed to increase their competitive level with Copenhagen.

The unique nature of Northern Jutland present an opportunity for Northern Jutland to differentiate themselves with Copenhagen and Aarhus. Cultural icons of Denmark such as Skagen, Nationalpark Thy and the North-Western coastlines all present opportunities for product differentiation. Northern Jutland is surrounded by two oceans and 'Limfjorden', which gives the region exceptional light (Visitnordjylland, 2017).

According to Tribe, 2010:

*“New firms must incur marketing costs to overcome existing brand loyalties”* (Tribe, 2010, p. 91).

Findings from the survey and the market reports mentioned earlier in this thesis showed that U.S. tourists use social media in their travel information search.

Northern Jutland can use social media to increase their awareness as a destination for the Middle Atlantic U.S. tourists. The most important step for Northern Jutland is to create brand awareness for the Middle Atlantic U.S. tourists and social media can be an opportunity to increase the awareness and interest about Northern Jutland for the Middle Atlantic U.S. tourists.

### **The bargaining power of buyers**

Tribe (2010) defines the bargaining power of buyers as a tool for measuring the:

*“relative power of customers in relation to the producers in a particular market”* (Tribe, 2010, p. 92).

The buyer bargaining power can be affected by: switching costs, large volume purchasers, homogenous products and buyer knowledge of competition. Homogenous products and buyer knowledge of competition are factors that can affect the bargaining power of Middle Atlantic U.S. tourists travelling to Northern Jutland.

### **Homogenous products**

Tribe (2010) states that:

*“If the good or services on offer in a particular market are very similar then buyers are able to easily shop around from one supplier to the next.”* (Tribe, 2010, p. 93).

As mentioned, earlier the U.S. tourists have little awareness of Denmark as a tourist destination, and even lower awareness about Northern Jutland. Perhaps some U.S. tourists even perceive the whole of Scandinavia as countries with the similar offerings in terms of culture, city breaks and nature experiences.

Denmark is a small country. That can make it difficult to persuade an U.S. tourist that Denmark offer different nature, different cities and different cultural experiences than its competitors such as other Scandinavian destinations.

### **Knowledge of competition**

Findings from the U.S. tourists travelling to Europe chapter revealed that the U.S. tourists are well informed and use a large amount of time in their travel information search. Copenhagen has received more PR in the U.S. than any other destination in Denmark the last couple of years. Large

news sites such as CNN have described Copenhagen as being a cultural hub and home of Michelin restaurants, high class Danish design and a green capitol (CNN, 2017).

In the interview with the CEO of VisitDenmark in the UK/U.S. market, Dennis Englund stated that:

*“For an American who never have travelled to Denmark, Copenhagen will have much more to offer and easier to be branded”* (Appendix 2).

Copenhagen has the competitive advantage of being the most known destination in Denmark for the U.S. tourists. Their knowledge of Copenhagen will naturally be higher than other destinations in Denmark, especially considering VisitDenmark’s increased efforts to brand Copenhagen to the U.S. tourists (VisitDenmarkUSA, 2016 & Appendix 2).

The fact that VisitCopenhagen (VisitCopenhagenFacebook, 2017) has over 100.000 followers more than VisitNordjylland (VisitNordjyllandFacebook, 2017) on Facebook also highlights the dominance of Copenhagen on social media.

Due to the fact that Denmark is viewed as very homogenous for the U.S. tourists, and that they have higher knowledge of the competing destinations in Denmark such Aarhus and Copenhagen, the bargaining power of the U.S. tourists can be determined as high.

### **The bargaining power of suppliers**

According to Tribe, 2010:

*“Bargaining power of suppliers is the relative power of suppliers in relation to producers”* (Tribe, 2010, p. 93).

In terms of Northern Jutland, the suppliers are accommodation and transportation. The producers are the Middle Atlantic U.S. tourists.

Factors that affect the bargaining power of suppliers are identified as:

*“supplier size and concentration, switching costs and uniqueness of the supplied resource”* (Tribe, 2010 p. 93).

Supplier size and concentration are a factor that can affect Northern Jutland as a tourist destination for the Middle Atlantic U.S. tourists.

Tribe (2010) states that:

*“Where there are only a few large producers which dominate the supply in a particular market supplier bargaining power over buyers will be high” (Tribe, 2010, p. 93).*

Aalborg has an airport with daily direct routes to Copenhagen (VisitAalborg, 2017).

Denmark has a very accessible train and highway system where it is possible to travel to Northern Jutland directly from the large cities in Denmark such as Aarhus and Copenhagen. However, DSB have monopoly on the train (travel/transportation), which allows them to control and adjust the transportation prices in terms of train travel in Denmark.

In terms of accommodation, there is a total of 68 hotels in Northern Jutland (allhotelsinDenmark, 2017). There are only nine hotels located in the Aalborg city Centre. Aalborg is the regional capitol of Northern Jutland (VisitNordjylland, 2017) and the location of the potential arrival airport from the Mid-Atlantic U.S. states. If the U.S. tourists that are travelling to Northern Jutland choose to stay in a hotel, it can present as a problem with a lack of different hotels to choose from for the Middle Atlantic U.S. tourists. The CEO of VisitNordjylland’s sales and marketing department Ann Purkær Plaetner also emphasized the need for more hotels in Aalborg (Appendix 3).

Furthermore, If the direct flight route from the Mid-Atlantic U.S. states to Aalborg is launched, Norwegian will have a high bargaining power as they will be the only airline company who fly this route. Due to the limited amount of transportation and accommodation suppliers in Northern Jutland, the bargaining power of suppliers is high.

### **The threat of substitutes**

Tribe (2010), describes the threat of substitutes as:

*“The likelihood of other services or products being used in place of any existing product or service” (Tribe, 2010, p. 94).*

This means that substitute products in relation to Northern Jutland can be seen as other destinations that offer similar experiences with a focus on nature tourism.

Price/performance ratio and extra industry are two factors that affects the threat of substitutes (Tribe, 2010, p. 94). In the case of Northern Jutland price/performance ratio can affect the threat of substitutes. Sweden and Norway can be seen as similar destinations to Denmark and they are especially a competitor in terms of offering nature experiences for the U.S. tourists. Especially in Norway, Accommodation, dining and transport are more expensive than in Denmark (Eurostat, 2016).

As mentioned earlier in this thesis, price was the 5<sup>th</sup> highest motivational factor for outbound U.S. tourists travelling to Europe. The U.S. tourists have a lot of destinations to choose from in Europe, where many of the destinations are cheaper to travel to than Denmark. In fact Denmark is only ranked as 135<sup>th</sup> in the ‘world economic forum’s price competitiveness index (WEF, 2015). This means that the threat of substitute products can be considered as high.

However, if the direct flight route is established it will be in Northern Jutland the U.S. tourists will arrive at, which makes the threat of substitutes decrease unless Northern Jutland is used as a transport hub to the rest of Denmark or Scandinavia.

### **The degree of rivalry between competitors**

The degree of competitive rivalry is defined as:

*“An overall measure of the intensity of competition in an industry and is broadly determined by the competitive conditions evident in the four forces analysed”* (Tribe, 2010, p. 95).

In terms of the degree of leadership, Copenhagen is the obvious leader and Aarhus on a second place. Copenhagen (and somewhat Aarhus) has the advantage of having a higher awareness of the U.S. tourists. Copenhagen is the leader where it has the advantage of offering several direct flights from destinations around the U.S. Aarhus has the advantage of being the cultural capitol of Europe 2017 which also is bound to create international awareness. Furthermore, Sweden and Norway offer nature experiences that can match or exceed what Northern Jutland can offer in terms of nature.

Based on the four analyzed forces the degree of rivalry for Northern Jutland is considered high. WonderfulCopenhagen has already developed a social media campaign directed towards the U.S. tourists. Northern Jutland needs to increase their efforts; social media is seen as an opportunity for creating awareness and equity to Northern Jutland in terms of being a destination for the Middle Atlantic U.S. tourists. Northern Jutland has the possibility to differentiate themselves from Copenhagen by emphasizing the possibilities for nature experiences when visiting Northern Jutland.

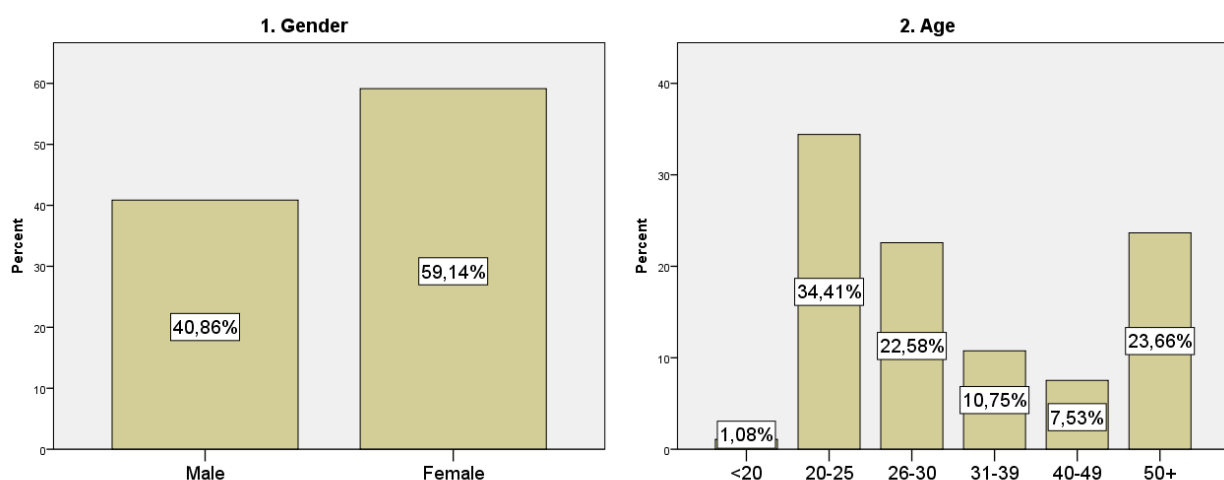
In the following section of the analysis chapter, the findings from the survey conducted in this thesis will be presented.

## 6.2 Survey Results

The survey of this thesis consists of 24 questions which have been divided into demographical, yes & no and multiple questions. Additionally, three statements have been created to test the respondents' attitudes towards the awareness of Denmark on social media, the importance of accessibility from the U.S. to Denmark and the respondents' use of social media in a travel and information search context. Findings from the conducted interviews with the CEO of VisitDenmark in the UK/U.S. market, Dennis Englund, will also be included in the presentation of this thesis survey results.

This survey was shared through Facebook and it was directed towards U.S. citizens living in the following four states: New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts and Pennsylvania. The survey was online between the 17/03/2017 to the 04/04/2017 and it had a total of 93 respondents. The analytic program SPSS will be applied to analyze the results.

### 6.2.1 Demographics



### Gender and age

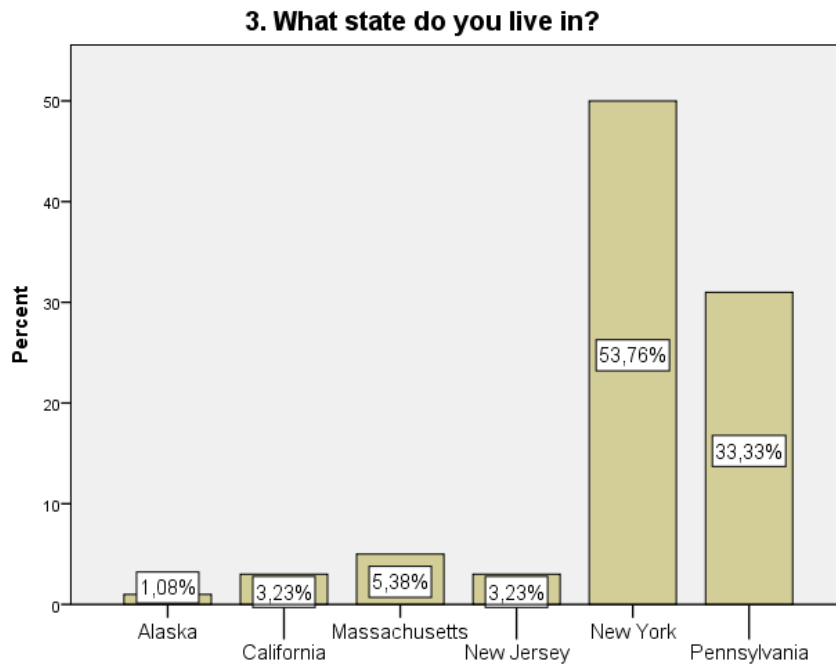
Findings showed that the respondents are 40.86 percent males and 59.14 percent females. The three dominant age groups of the respondents are 20-25, 26-30 and 50+. A reason for these three dominant age groups can be explained with the fact, that the survey was shared with the researcher's American contacts who are in the 20-30 age group and they have then asked their parents to share and participate in this survey too.

It is interesting that two of the dominant age groups fall into the category of baby boomer and echo boomers. Especially the echo boomers (18-30 years) perceive social media as a trusted source of



information. They are influenced by EWOM and they are described as experienced social media users (ETC, 2014).

### 3. State of residence

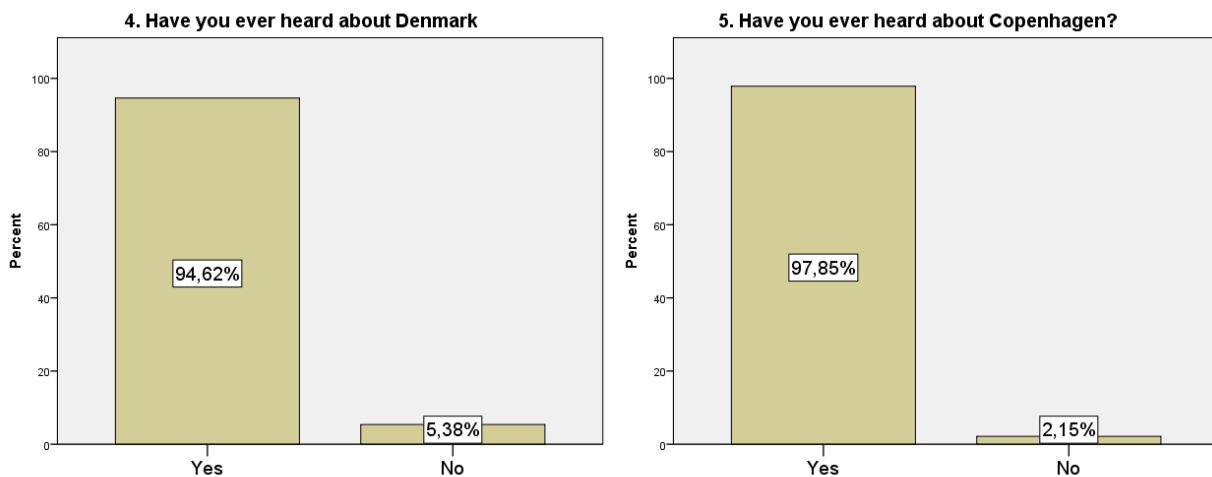


The primary targeted segment for this survey was U.S. citizens living in New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Massachusetts due to the location of the potential direct airline route from the Mid-Atlantic States to Aalborg. New York and Pennsylvania were the states with the highest number of respondents. The reason for these two states being dominant can be explained by the fact that the researcher of this thesis shared the survey to his American contacts living in these two States.

#### 6.2.2 Yes & No question (4,5,7)

Through a conducted interview with Dennis Englund it was explained that the U.S. tourists had a low awareness about Denmark and no knowledge of Northern Jutland (Appendix 2). His statements led to questions being asked in the survey concerning the degree of awareness of Denmark.

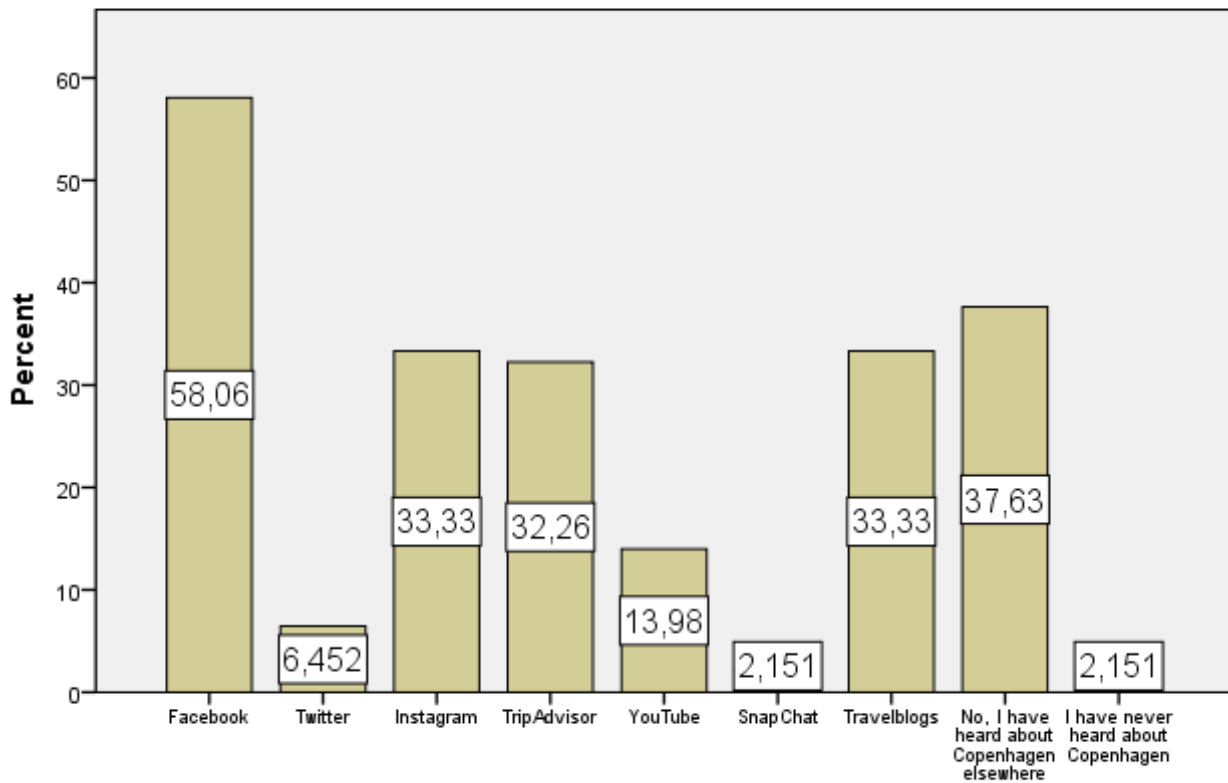
Question 4,5,6,7 and 8 were created to get an indication of the respondents' awareness about Denmark, Copenhagen and Northern Jutland. The researcher of this thesis acknowledges that the U.S. population in general have low awareness of DK. However, the survey results (even though not being representative of the entire U.S. population) shows that it is not as substantially low as Dennis Englund suggests.



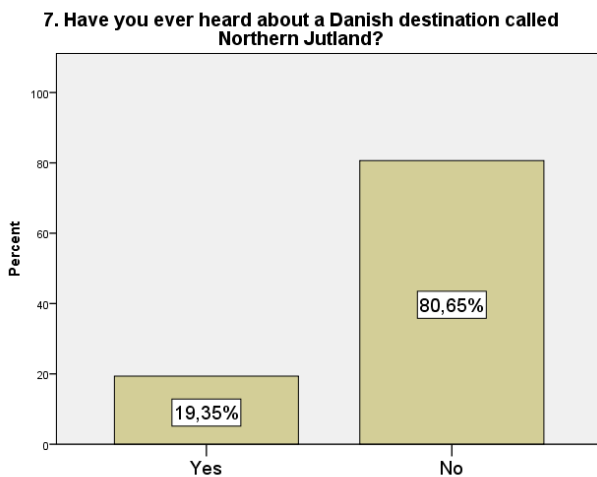
The results from the survey demonstrates a rather different picture than painted by Dennis Englund (Appendix 2). Findings in question 4 (have you heard about Denmark) showed that 94,62 percent of the respondents had heard about Denmark. Furthermore, findings in question 5 (have you ever heard of Copenhagen) 97,85 percent of the respondents had heard of Copenhagen. Though, it should be noted that the survey as before mentioned does not constitute a correct picture of the reality. VisitDenmark has increased the branding efforts, where especially Copenhagen have been branded to increase the awareness about Denmark for the U.S tourists. (VisitDenmarkUSA, 2016 & Appendix 2)

## Question 6.

### 6. Have you heard about Copenhagen on one of the following Social Media platforms?



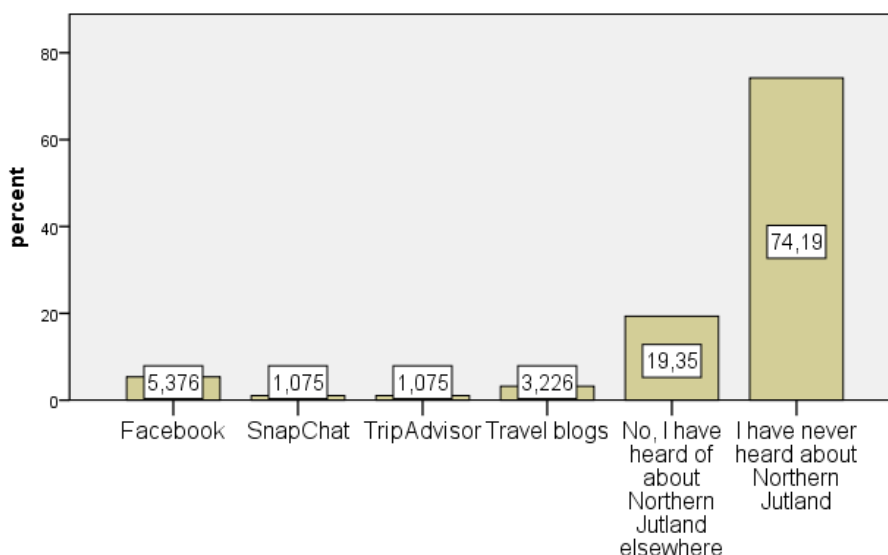
Facebook, Instagram, travelblogs and TripAdvisor were the dominant social media platforms in terms of where the respondents had heard of Copenhagen. It is interesting that only 6 percent of the respondents chose Twitter, since Twitter is the second most used social media platform for U.S. citizens (VisitDenmarkUSA, 2016).



Over 80 percent of the respondents had not heard about Northern Jutland before. It emphasizes the importance of brand salience as the first and most important step for creating brand equity for Northern Jutland as a destination for the Middle Atlantic U.S. tourists. It also correlates with the finding from the interview with Dennis Englund who explained that there would be a little to none knowledge of Northern Jutland in the U.S. (Appendix 2).

### Question 8.

**8. Have you heard about Northern Jutland on one of the following social media platforms?**



Facebook, SnapChat, TripAdvisor and travel blogs were the social media platforms from where the respondents had heard of Northern Jutland. Twitter, Instagram and YouTube were also part of the

choices in question 8, but they all got zero answers, which is why they are missing in the table above. It can be argued that the results from question 8 cannot really be used because of the very low answer rate on other choices than “*I have never heard about Northern Jutland*”. A discrepancy in the answers to the question of whether they have heard of Northern Jutland before exist between question 7 and 8. 80,56 percent reveal in question 7 that they have never heard of Northern Jutland before, whereas in question 8, the number for the same question is 74,19. This might be due to a change of heart in one of the respondents.

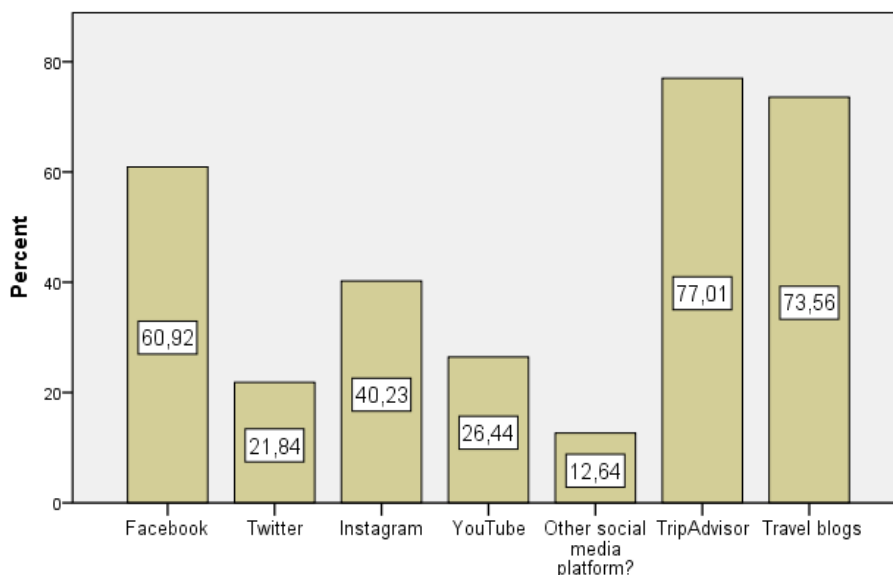
### 6.2.3 Question 9 (Multiple-choice)

#### **Which of the following social media platforms do you view as trustworthy sources of information**

In VisitDenmark’s USA market report and the WonderfulCopenhagen American visitor survey it was found that Facebook and Twitter were the most used social media platforms for the U.S. tourists in their travel information search (VisitDenmarkUSA, 2016 & WonderfulCopenhagen, 2015).

Question 9 was created to get further insights to which social media platforms that were perceived most trustworthy for the respondents.

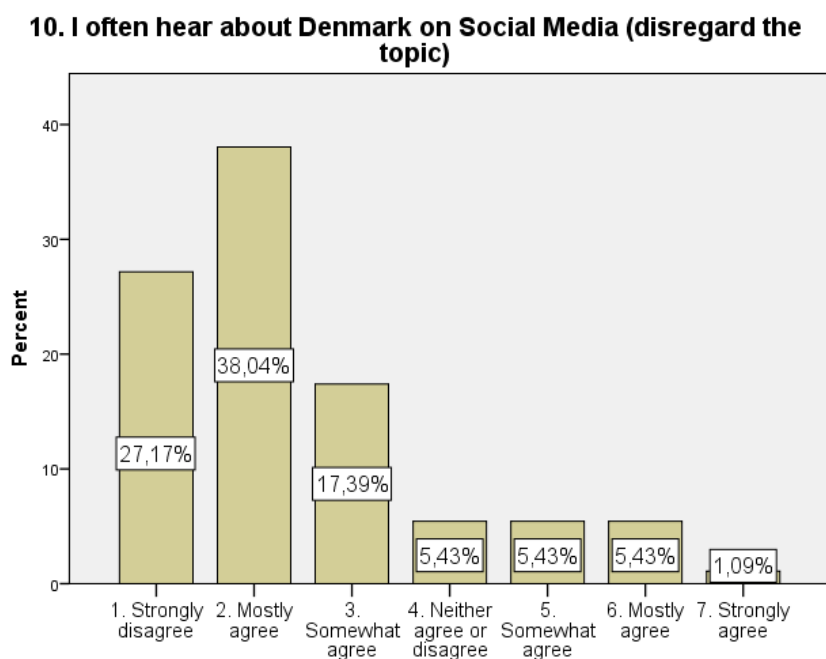
#### **9. Which of the following social media platforms do you view as trustworthy sources of information about a destination?**



The findings showed that Facebook (60,92), Instagram (40,23), TripAdvisor (77,01) and travel blogs (73,56) were the most trusted social media platforms for the respondents. It is relevant findings to this thesis since the other market reports used in this thesis, only showed the U.S. tourists' most used but not necessarily trusted social media platforms for the U.S tourists.

#### 6.2.4 Statement 1: Awareness of Denmark on Social Media

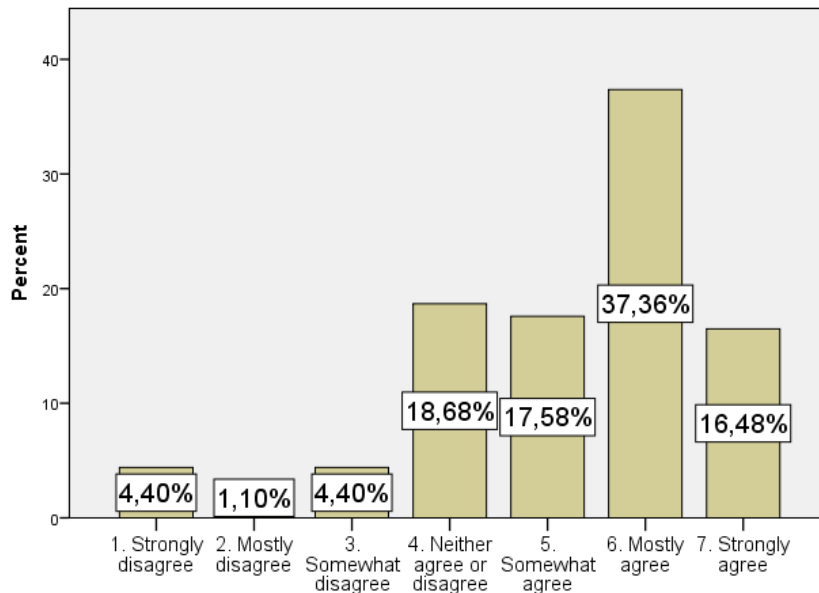
Denmark has received increased awareness on social media through DMOs and travel agencies' online campaigns. VisitDenmark's marketing campaign 'Karen' and Spies' campaign 'Do it for Denmark' can be mentioned as examples for marketing campaigns about Denmark that have received international awareness for Denmark as a tourist destination (The Guardian, 2014 & MX, 2013). Knowing some Danish commercials go viral as well as news concerning Denmark such as the jewelry law, Muhammad drawings, royal family etc. are broadcasted in the entire world, a question in the survey investigates whether the respondents often hear about Denmark on social media.



The average rating for question 10 (I often hear about Denmark on social media platforms) was 2.45 (Appendix 1), which means that the respondents does not often hear about Denmark on social media platforms. These findings correlate with the fact that the U.S. market is difficult to penetrate which VisitDenmark underlines by stating that:

*“The biggest challenge in the U.S. is that the knowledge of Denmark is relatively low and the advertising market is enormous” (VisitDenmark, 2016).*

**11. It is mostly Copenhagen that comes up on Social Media posts about Denmark**



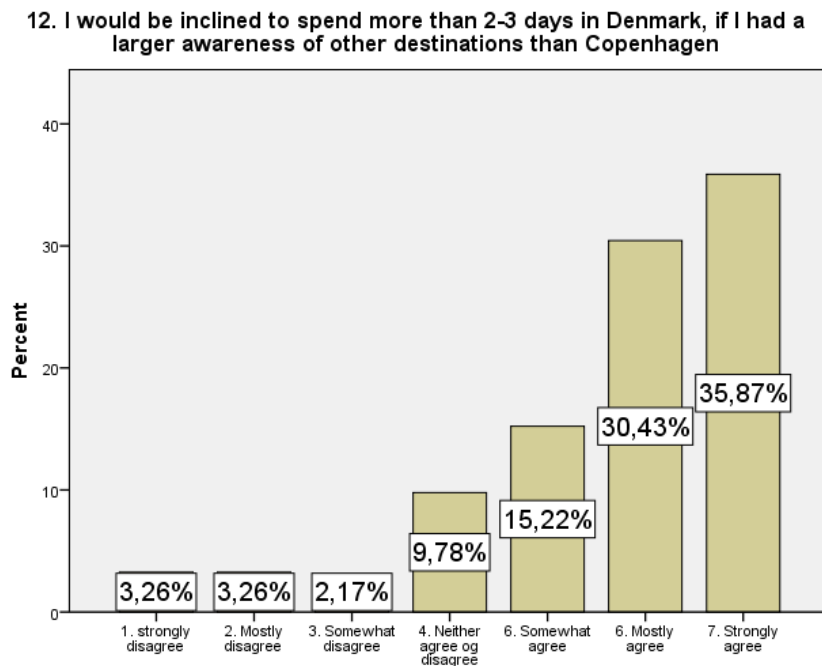
Question 11 was created to see if Copenhagen would be dominating the Middle Atlantic U.S. respondents’ news feeds regarding Denmark on the different social media platforms.

Copenhagen is the number one destination in Denmark in terms of amount of overnight stays by international and U.S tourists in Denmark (VisitDenmarkUSA, 2016). There has been some critique of VisitDenmark’s branding strategies, some tourism stakeholders believe that they focus too much on Copenhagen. According to the world renowned Danish investor Martin Ole Nielsen:

*“VisitDenmark is in reality Visit Copenhagen. The tourists are only being sent to Copenhagen, and that is a shame for both Copenhagen and Denmark and the tourists”* (In Politiken, 2016).

71,42 percent of the respondents answered between 5-7 in question 11 (it is mostly Copenhagen that comes up on social media posts about Denmark). With an average rating of 5.22 (Appendix 1) it can be assumed that Copenhagen is the dominant Danish destination on the U.S. respondents’ social media platforms. These findings also correlate with Copenhagen’s increased marketing campaigns on social media directed towards U.S citizens. An example of this is WonderfulCopenhagen’s ‘joint campaign’ directed towards U.S. citizens interested in travelling to Denmark. It was launched in February 2015 on Facebook and TripAdvisor. The U.S. visitors to the site were given the option to

press on different themes such as gastronomy, nightlife, architecture etc. Once they pressed one of the themes they got redirected to the campaign site “thisisCPH.com”. On the campaign site, they got the opportunity to create their own video about Copenhagen showing places they found interesting (ThisisCPH, 2017).



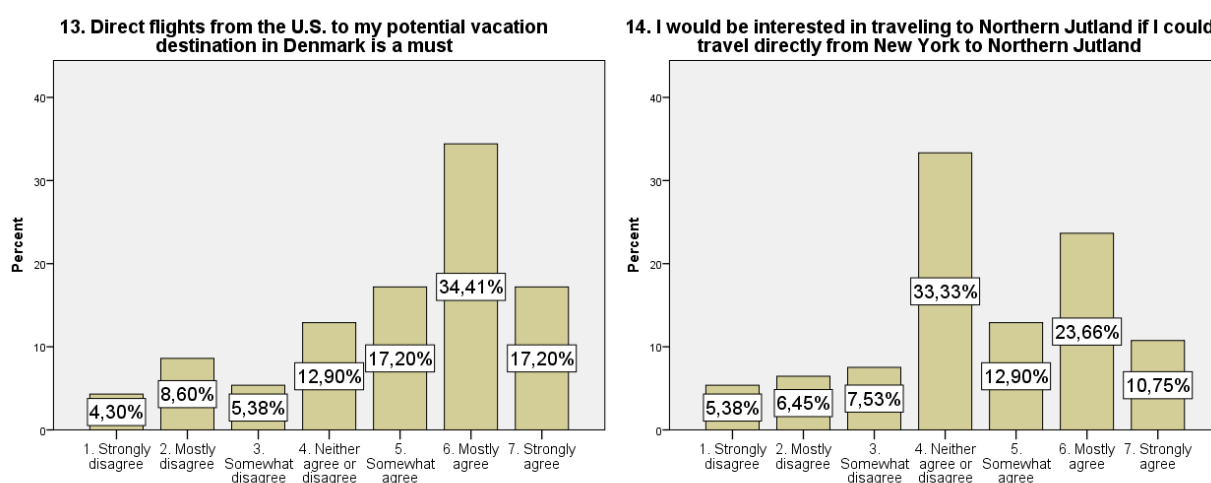
When U.S. tourists are travelling to Europe they are searching for authentic experiences in new (more unknown) destinations (ETC, 2014). Question 12 has been created to get an indication of the respondents’ attitudes towards travelling to other Danish destinations than Copenhagen.

Findings in question 12 (I would be inclined to spend more than 2-3 days in Denmark, if I had a larger awareness of other(Danish) destinations than Copenhagen) showed that 81,52 percent of the respondents answered between 5-7. With an average rating of 5.65 (Appendix 1) the results show that the respondents are interested in increasing their length of stay when visiting Denmark. These are relevant findings as they create opportunities for other Danish destinations such as Northern Jutland for attracting U.S. tourists. These finding also indicates that it is relevant to increase the awareness of other Danish destinations than Copenhagen towards the U.S. tourists.



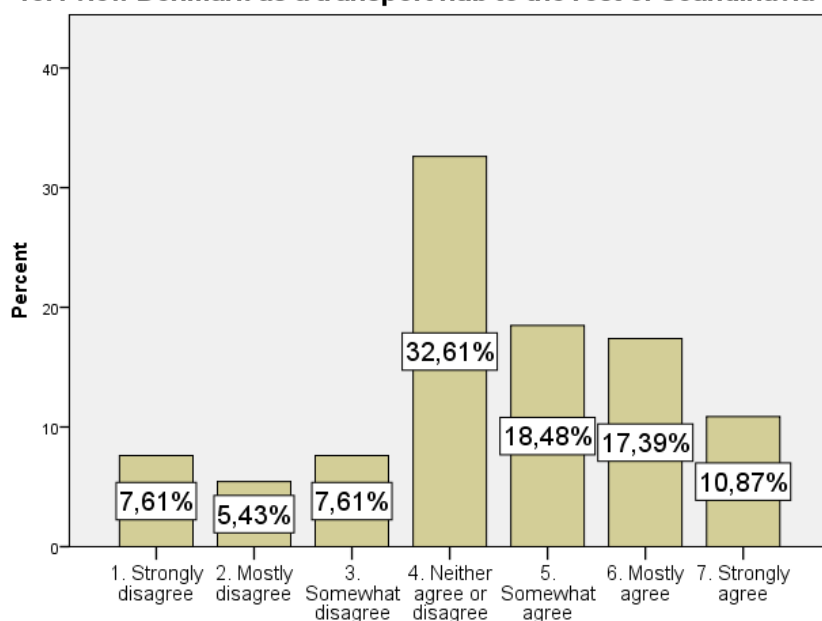
### 6.2.5 Statement 2: Accessibility from the U.S. to Denmark is important

A decline in fuel prices and new airline types have made long-haul travel more accessible. Budget airline companies such as Condor, Eurowings and Norwegian are connecting Europe with a large amount of long-haul destinations for a relatively low price (CBI, 2016). Europe has become more accessible to U.S. tourists, where there are a large range of direct flights from the U.S. to destinations around Europe. Due to the emergence of discount airlines there has been an increase of 25 percent direct flights from North America to Europe in the last five years (Forbes, 2017).



To test the importance that direct flights from the U.S. to Denmark has on the respondents, the questions 13 and 14 was created to get an indication of how important the accessibility to Denmark from the U.S. is. 68,81 percent of the respondents answered between 5-7 in question 13 (direct flights from the U.S. to my potential vacation destination in Denmark is a must). With an average rating of 5,02 (Appendix 1) it can be argued that direct connections between Denmark and the U.S. are somewhat important for the respondents. In question 14 (I would be interested in travelling to Northern Jutland if I could travel directly from New York to Northern Jutland) the respondents were a bit more reluctant, which might be explained with the fact that most of the respondents did not know Northern Jutland. However, with an average of 4,56 in question 14 (Appendix 1), the respondents are leaning towards agreeing. The reason for the high number of neutral respondents in question 14 (33,33 percent), might be found in the fact that several respondents have never heard of Northern Jutland before.

#### 15. I view Denmark as a transport hub to the rest of Scandinavia

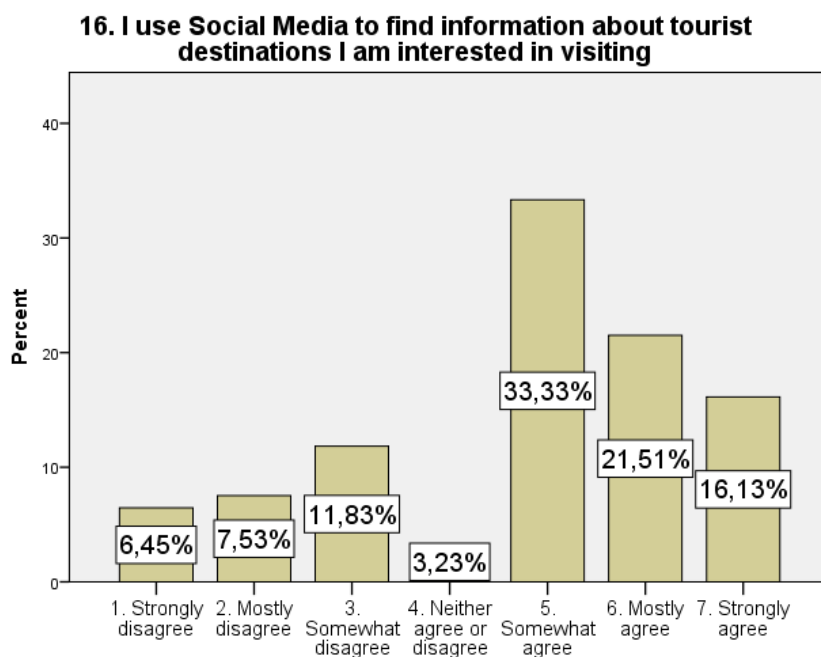


According to Dennis Englund, many of the U.S. tourists in Denmark are on a roundtrip to Scandinavia (Appendix 2). There are several direct transportation options from Northern Jutland to Sweden and Norway, where airlines, bus, train routes and ferry ports are located in different cities of Northern Jutland. This makes Northern Jutland a potential transport hub to the rest of Scandinavia. Question 15 was created to test the U.S. respondents' point of view in terms of Denmark being a transport hub for the rest of Scandinavia. Findings showed that question 15 had an average rating of 4,45 (Appendix 1), which means that the respondents are rather neutral in terms of Denmark being a transport hub for visiting other Scandinavian countries. A reason for the high amount of neutral answers in question 15 might be that the respondents are not keen on travelling to other Scandinavian destinations. However, VisitDenmark reports that U.S. tourists often are on a roundtrip to Scandinavia when visiting Denmark (Appendix 2). For the U.S. tourists travelling further into Scandinavia, Northern Jutland can be used as a gateway to the rest of Scandinavia due to its strong geographical location, using either ferry or plane.

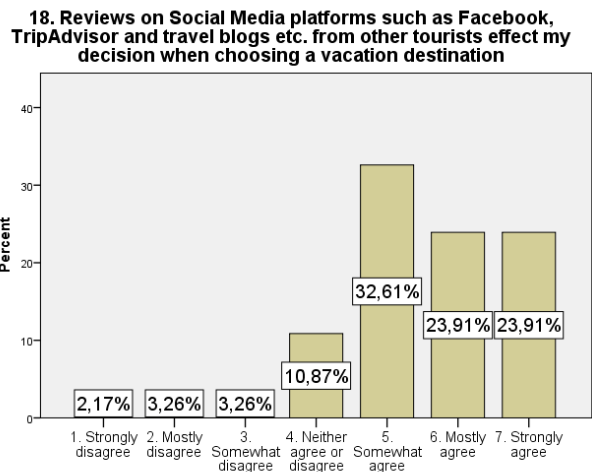
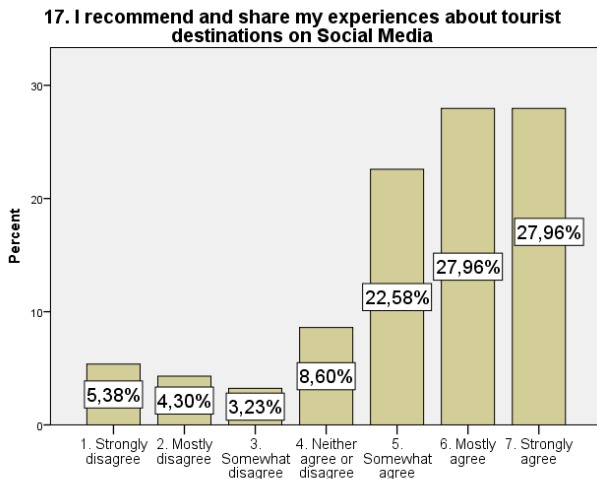
### 6.2.6 Statement 3: Use of Social Media in a Travel and Information Search Context

As mentioned earlier in this thesis, the U.S. tourists are heavy users of the internet and social media in information search.

Statement 3 was created to test the U.S. respondents' use of social media in their decision-making process for going on a vacation. Furthermore, it was created to test how active the U.S. tourists are on social media in terms of posting their own user-generated content. It is relevant for this thesis in terms of the analysis and discussion of social media as a marketing tool for Northern Jutland.

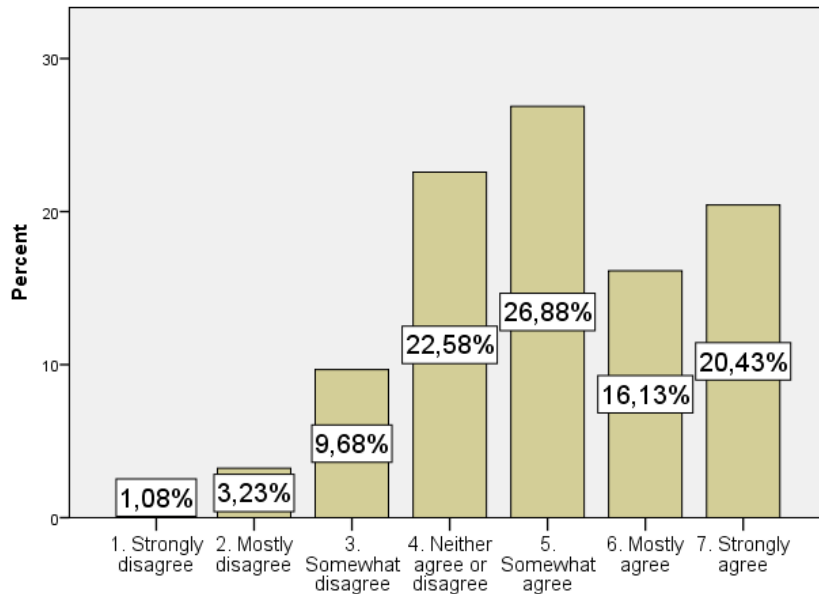


In question 16 (I use social media to find information about tourist destinations I am interested in visiting) 70,97 percent of the respondents answered between 5 and 7. These findings support the researcher of this thesis choice of using social media platforms to create brand equity for the Middle Atlantic U.S. tourists. It also correlates with previous findings from other reports and surveys used earlier in this thesis.



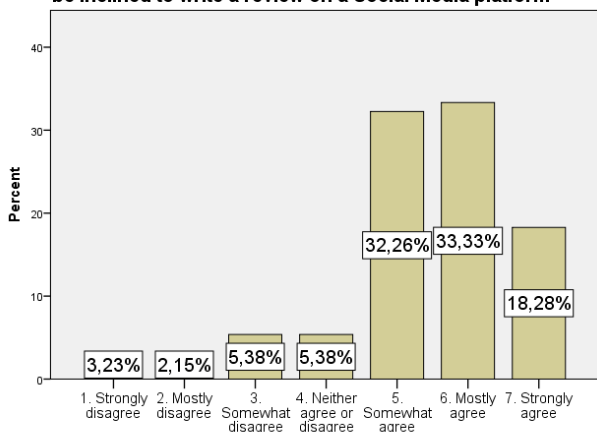
In question 17 (I recommend and share my experiences about tourist destinations on social media) 78,5 percent of the respondents answered between 5 and 7. The rating average is on 5,34 (Appendix 1) and therefore it can be assumed that the U.S. respondents are inclined to share their experiences about tourist destinations on social media. These findings make the U.S. Middle Atlantic citizens an interesting segment to target in terms of creating social media campaigns. Furthermore, it creates opportunities to interact with the U.S. tourists on social media while they are at the destination. Findings in question 18 (reviews on social media platforms such as Facebook, TripAdvisor, Travelblogs etc. from other tourist effect my decision when choosing a vacation destination) showed that 80,63 of the respondents answered between 5 and 7. With an average rating of 5,36 (Appendix 1) it can be assumed that reviews on social media is an influential factor in the respondents' decision making process.

**19. Online reviews on Social Media platforms are trustworthy sources of information**

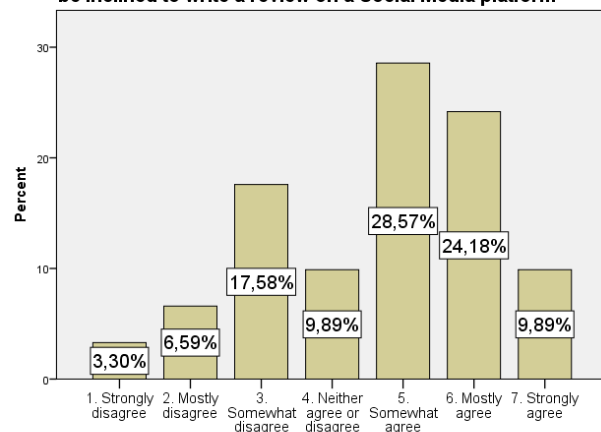


63,44 percent of the respondents answered between 5-7 in question 19 (online reviews on social media platforms are trustworthy sources of information), and with an average rating of 5,01 (Appendix 1) it can be assumed that the respondents tend to view reviews on social media as trustworthy sources of information. The findings correlate with the general increased trust for tourists in user-generated content as a reliable source of information (Munar, 2012, p. 104).

**20. If I had a positive experience in a tourist destination I would be inclined to write a review on a Social Media platform**

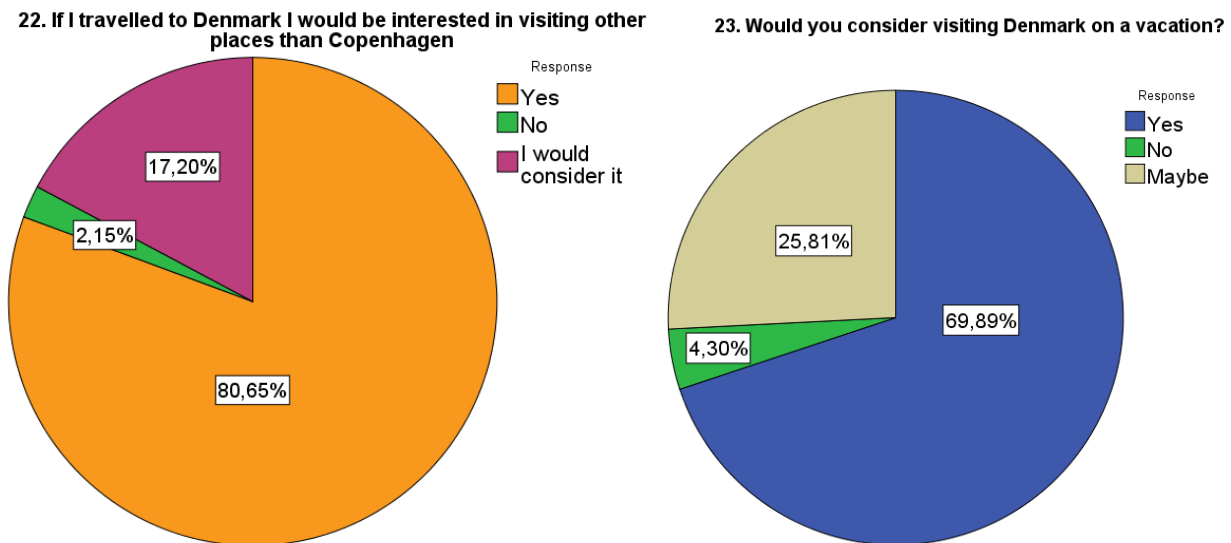


**21. If I had a negative experience in a tourist destination I would be inclined to write a review on a Social Media platform**



Findings in question 20 (if I had a positive experience in a tourist destination I would be inclined to write a review on a social media platform) showed that 83,87 percent of the respondents answered between 5 and 7. With an average rating of 5,34 (Appendix 1), it can be implied that the respondents would be inclined to write reviews on social media if they had a positive experience in a destination. In question 21, 62,64 percent of the respondents answered between 5 and 7. With an average rating of 4,66 (appendix 1), it is demonstrated that the respondents are a bit more reluctant to write reviews if they have had a bad experience. That the respondents are more inclined to share positive experiences does not correspond to reality. Most often people are more inclined to share bad experiences on social media (Pfeffer et al., 2014). However, in the tourism industry this might not be the case, as tourists increasingly tend to share good experiences, to prove to their friends that they have a meaningful life full of positive experiences. This relates to the notions of self-actualization which means that people travel in order to fulfil higher needs (Hudson, 1943, in Chon 1989).

### Question 22 & 23 (willingness to travel to Denmark)



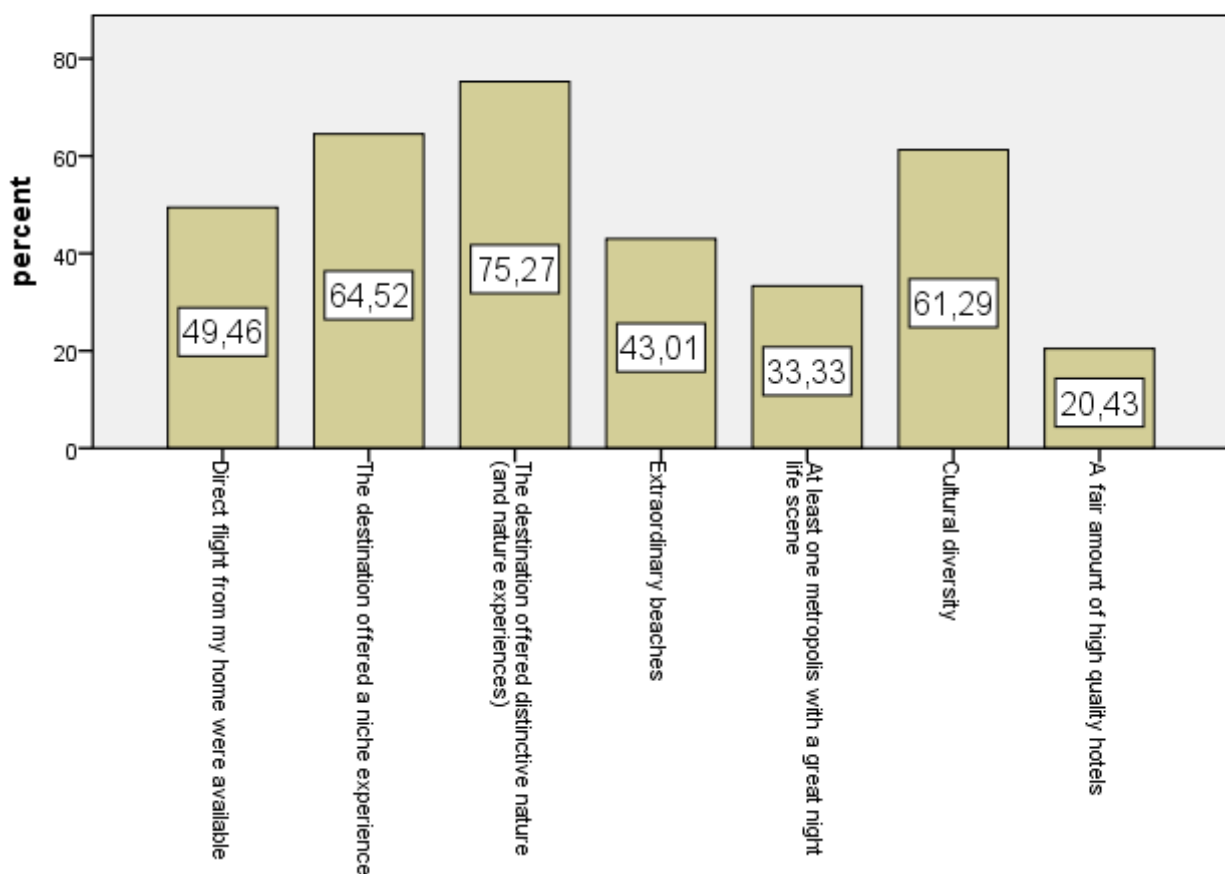
In question 22 (if I travelled to Denmark I would be interested in visiting other places than Copenhagen) 80,65 percent of the respondents answered yes. The findings in question 22 illuminates the opportunities for other Danish destinations such as Northern Jutland to develop

brand initiatives that can increase the awareness and show the U.S. tourists what Northern Jutland has to offer.

Finding from question 23 showed that 69,89 percent of the respondents would consider visiting Denmark in a vacation. These findings correlate with the increased interest of Scandinavia for U.S. tourists (travelmarketreport, 2015).

#### 6.2.7 Question 24 (multiple-choice)

##### 24. I would be inclined to visit peripheral destinations if (choose several):



To test factors that would influence the respondents' willingness for travelling to peripheral destinations, question 24 was created. In question 24 (I would be inclined to visit peripheral destination if (choose several)) the most important factors for the respondents were: The destination offered a niche experience 64,52 percent, the destination offered distinctive nature (and nature experiences) 75,27 percent and cultural diversity 61,29 percent.

Northern Jutland is a peripheral destination which offers cultural and nature experiences for tourists (VisitNorthernJutland, 2017). The results present opportunities for Northern Jutland to use the nature experiences the region has to offer as a key pull factor for Northern Jutland to focus on when using social media to create brand equity as a destination for the Middle Atlantic U.S. tourists. It is also relevant to mention that almost 50 percent of the respondents answered that they would be inclined to visit a peripheral destination if a direct flight from their home were available, considering the potential direct flight route from the Mid-Atlantic States to Aalborg.

The respondents also got the choice to write their own factors that would influence their choice of a peripheral destination (Appendix 1). One of the respondents explained that “nice scenery, architecture, food, markets, biking opportunities would be influencing factors. Another respondent explained that he/she would not be likely to visit because Northern Jutland had no personal appeal and that he liked sun and beaches. That answer also highlight the lack of awareness Northern Jutland has in the U.S. respondents, as Northern Jutland consists of large coastal areas.

#### 6.2.8 Survey Summary

From the survey results it can be concluded that there amongst the respondents is a high awareness of Denmark, (and the respondents would be inclined to visit Denmark on a vacation (question 23), and Copenhagen, but a rather low awareness of Northern Jutland for the Middle Atlantic U.S. respondents. These results were expected considering the increased efforts for branding Copenhagen and the lack of branding Northern Jutland from VisitDenmark. However, most respondents would be inclined to visit other destinations in Denmark than Copenhagen (question 22). The majority of the respondents chose Facebook, Instagram, travel blogs and TripAdvisor as social media platforms where their knowledge of Copenhagen stem from. Question 9 illuminated which social media platforms the respondents consider most trustworthy to use in their search for travel information. These were Facebook, Instagram TripAdvisor, and travel blogs. That Twitter scored low in the survey was a surprise, as previous findings from other reports and surveys found that Twitter was the second most used social media platform among U.S. tourists.

The results from statement 1 revealed that respondents are eager to spend more time in other Danish destinations, if they are made aware of its existence. However, the survey results also clarified that the respondents, when confronted with news of Denmark, most often the topic is Copenhagen.



Statement 2 concerns the accessibility to Denmark. Among the respondents, direct flight routes are appealing. This is important as a direct flight route between Aalborg and the Mid-Atlantic U.S. are considered being established by Norwegian.

Statement 3 revealed that the respondents use social media in a vacation context, both for sharing own experiences as well as being influenced by other people sharing experiences on social media platforms. This means that there is potential for Northern Jutland to use social media to create brand equity for the U.S. tourists, if you consider the survey results as valid for the entire population of the Mid-Atlantic States (New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts and Pennsylvania).

Conclusively, that the respondents put emphasis on peripheral travel destinations' offer of nature experiences is a plus for Northern Jutland, as this destination offers great experiences in diverse landscapes (VisitNordjylland, 2017)

### 6.3 Creative brief

A creative brief is a document that provides a summary/framework of the creative task (Dählen et al., 2010, p. 505). The purpose of the creative brief is to be a guideline on the how the creative team should develop their solutions.

Findings from the chapters: U.S tourists to Europe/Denmark, Porters Five Forces and survey results will be used to create an overview of how Northern Jutland can use social media to create brand equity as a destination for the Middle Atlantic U.S. tourists.

The creative brief helps identifying important elements for a marketing campaign. It tells the story and explains why it is important for the target audience. It can be seen as a simplified guide to the creation of new initiatives, which in this thesis is branding initiatives for Northern Jutland through social media directed towards the Middle Atlantic U.S. tourists.

## **Background**

The U.S. is an important market for VisitDenmark. VisitDenmark wants to increase the awareness of Denmark for the U.S. tourists and they want them to increase their length of stay in Denmark. However, it is almost only Copenhagen that is being marketed to them. Norwegian is considering to open a direct flight route from the Mid-Atlantic U.S. to Aalborg. The U.S. tourists have very little or no awareness of Northern Jutland. Actions must be taken to prepare them for the potential impact that a direct flight route will have on the amount of U.S. tourists travelling to Northern Jutland.

### **What is the objective?**

The objective for Northern Jutland is to create brand equity to the Northern Jutland destination brand using the social media platforms Facebook, Instagram and travelblogs in innovative ways. This is done in order to develop Northern Jutland as an attractive destination to travel to for the Middle Atlantic U.S. tourists.

### **Focus: what the most important thing to say?**

Northern Jutland must through social media platforms utilize their unique selection of nature experiences as a key pull factor to attract the Middle Atlantic U.S. tourists as well as opportunities for sightseeing in Aalborg to add the City break element to the region.

### **Who is the target audience?**

The target audience is the Middle Atlantic U.S. tourists. They are experienced users on social media. They present as an ideal segment to brand a destination to through social media platforms.

### **What are the supporting rational and emotional reasons to believe and buy?**

The potential direct flight route from the Mid-Atlantic States to Aalborg will make Northern Jutland a more accessible destination for the Middle Atlantic U.S. tourists. The Middle Atlantic U.S. tourists need to learn that Denmark is more than Copenhagen. Northern Jutland offers a large variety of nature experiences which the U.S. tourists deeply value. Furthermore, Aalborg is a cultural hub that offers a vibrant and friendly environment that adds the city break element to the Northern Jutland destination brand. Innovative campaigns on Facebook, Instagram and travelblogs can help to increase the awareness of Northern Jutland and create new useful narratives for the Northern Jutland destination brand directed towards the Middle Atlantic U.S. tourists.

## 6.4 How Can Northern Jutland Through Social Media Create Brand Equity as a Destination for the Middle Atlantic U.S. Tourists

The previous findings from this thesis will be used to analyze and discuss how Northern Jutland can be branded through Facebook, Instagram and Travelblogs to create brand equity as a destination for the Middle Atlantic U.S. tourists. The findings from the survey showed that these three social media platforms were amongst the most trustworthy social media platforms for the Middle Atlantic U.S. respondents. (Appendix 1) Furthermore, these three social media platforms have been chosen because of the researcher's knowledge and preunderstanding of them.

In the process of working with TripAdvisor it was discovered that it is more a review site than a social media site. This means that the destinations cannot influence to the same degree as the other chosen social media platforms, what is posted. Therefore, TripAdvisor have been deselected from the discussion of how Northern Jutland can create brand equity as a destination for the Middle Atlantic U.S. tourists.

The six brand building blocks: Salience, Performance, Judgements, Feelings, Imagery and Resonance will in the following section be used to analyze and discuss Facebook, Instagram and travelblogs' possibilities for creating brand equity to the Northern Jutland destination brand. Not all six building blocks are equally relevant for all the social media platforms. Therefore, particular brand building blocks will be used to discuss particular social media platforms.

Based on the findings from the conducted surveys and interviews it is evident that brand salience is the first and most important step for Northern Jutland in terms of creating brand equity as a destination for the Middle Atlantic U.S. tourists. The findings showed that the Middle Atlantic U.S. tourists have little to none awareness of Northern Jutland

According to Ann Purkær Plaetner:

*“Social media is the only way to go in terms of branding Northern Jutland”* (Appendix 3).

This provides additional evidence for choosing social media as a marketing tool for Northern Jutland. It also correlates with previous findings that have shown the importance of social media for destination branding.

According to the ETC market report:

*“It will be vital for destination marketing agencies to bring the destination to life”* (ETC, 2014, p. 27).

This quotation highlights the importance of interaction between the destination and tourists. This interaction takes place and can be developed on social media platforms.

VisitDenmark is currently focusing on City Break tourism to attract U.S. tourists to Denmark (VisitDenmark, 2016). Northern Jutland cannot compete with Copenhagen in terms of City Break tourism, however, Aalborg has evolved into an attractive City Break destination worth mentioning when branding Northern Jutland (VisitAalborg, 2017 & Appendix 3). Aalborg is especially interesting to discuss in terms of travelblogs. This will be elaborated in the travelblogs section further down in this chapter.

Northern Jutland’s main feature as a tourist destination is its unique nature. The nature element is paramount in the branding of Northern Jutland to the Middle Atlantic U.S. tourists, considering that the survey findings showed that the respondents chose nature as the most important factor for travelling to a peripheral destination. In general, nature is one of the main motivational factors for the U.S. outbound tourists travelling to Europe (ETC, 2014).

Facebook, Instagram and travel blogs will be used in this order to analyze and discuss how Northern Jutland can create brand equity and life to their destination brand.

#### 6.4.1 Facebook



Findings from the Social, Digital & Mobile Worldwide report (SDMW, 2014), showed that 52 percent of Facebook users said their travel plans were affected by seeing pictures of trips posted by friends (SDMW, 2014). Facebook is the U.S. tourists’ most used social media platform (ETC, 2014 & VisitDenmark, 2016)

(Facebookbrand, 2017). In the survey conducted for this thesis, Facebook was found as the third most trusted social media platform. Facebook can be an effective marketing tool for destinations in terms of creating brand salience and brand resonance, as will be elaborated in this section.

Facebook can be used for facilitating interaction between DMOs and tourists. Through the DMOs’ Facebook pages, relevant information about events or competitions for the visitors can be posted. Users on Facebook spend a large amount of time looking through content (Munar Jacobsen, 2012, p. 44). Even though they are not searching for destination content, destinations’ content in form of

photos and videos will be passively consumed by the users, which can result in increased awareness for the destination. This is due to the fact that travel information or pictures and the like are re-shared by private persons who are connected on Facebook.

VisitNordjylland will benefit from working together with U.S. travel agencies located in the Mid-Atlantic States to create brand equity for Northern Jutland to the Middle Atlantic U.S. tourists. According to VisitNordjylland's CEO of the sales and marketing department Ann Purkær Plaetner:

*"When the direct flight route is established there is access. Then you need to find American travel agencies to brand/market Northern Jutland"* (Appendix 3).

By cobranding with U.S. travel agencies on Facebook, VisitNordjylland can gain access to a large potential tourist segment where they can get help to post events and information about Northern Jutland in the relevant Facebook communities, where the Middle Atlantic U.S. tourists are active.

The majority of the U.S. tourists book their vacation through airlines or travel agencies. Northern Jutland could benefit from creating a joint campaign with Norwegian, considering that they will be the airline who will host the potential direct route from the Mid-Atlantic States to Aalborg. Norwegian has already made a joint campaign with WonderfulCopenhagen (VisitCopenhagen, 2015), which could indicate that they also are interested in cobranding with visit organizations, such as VisitNordjylland.

According to Mikke Aarø-Hansen, the head of the tourism board WonderfulCopenhagen:

*"Direct routes from strategically important markets are essential for continued tourism growth,(...) We can see that in the number of tourists coming from the U.S., where we have marketed ourselves as a destination in connection with the new routes,"* (in TheLocal, 2016).

The quote above underlines the advantages of branding a destination in connection with a new flight route. If the direct flight route from the Mid-Atlantic States to Aalborg becomes a reality it is essential for visit-organizations such as VisitNordjylland to co-brand with Norwegian, in order to create interest about Northern Jutland and to increase the U.S. tourists' awareness of the improved accessibility from the U.S. to Northern Jutland, and elaborate Northern Jutland as a vacation destination.

Another possibility for VisitNordjylland is VisitDenmark's social media packages where tourist stakeholders can purchase different branding activities such as visibility on VisitDenmark's social

media platforms, press coverage in Northern America, YouTube brand lift etc. (VisitDenmark, 2017). Especially visibility on VisitDenmark's social media platforms directed to the U.S. market could be beneficial for Northern Jutland. Both findings from the interviews with Dennis Englund and Ann Purkær Plaetner and the conducted survey showed that the U.S. tourists has little to no knowledge of Northern Jutland. Therefore, a basic social media package could generate some knowledge about Northern Jutland. The social media campaign should be initialized some time before the flight route start up, as the U.S. tourists then have a chance to familiarize themselves with the opportunities of vacationing in Northern Jutland. This would also mean that VisitNordjylland can focus on the experiences, tourists have when they get here, as the 'how' to get here is already established.

When and if Northern Jutland has U.S. tourists visiting, it is important to get them to be as involved and participating on social media channels as possible in terms of generating awareness of Northern Jutland. VisitNordjylland currently use Facebook to interact with the tourists and locals with for example a 'Sunday quiz'. According to Ann Purkær Plaetner:

*"Competitions on Facebook are used as to pique" peoples' curiosity through cool pictures of Northern Jutland. There has to be some form of interaction in order for the users to find it interesting"* (Appendix 3).

This means that using pictures and competitions on social media are great tools to get the tourists to interact with the destination brand. The 'Check-in' function on Facebook presents a good opportunity for destinations to interact with the tourists (Phelan et al., 2013). The check-in function (Facebook, 2017) allows tourists to check-in at airports, tourist attractions, restaurants, hotels etc. and these checkpoints are then shared to their followers. DMOs and other tourist destinations can offer rewards for checking in at tourist attractions. This can also be referred to as gamification, which is a strategy that is increasingly being used by DMOs (Gyimothy et al., 2014, p. 10). This strategy transforms tourist in to players where they can participate in the DMOs' advertising campaigns on social media and win prizes. An example of this is the VisitBritain check-in game (Tnooz, 2010). In this game, followers of the 'Love UK' Facebook page were asked to check-in through Facebook at different places in Britain. Once the tourists had completed the check-in they would have the chance of winning a vacation. Northern Jutland could do the same. In the interview with Ann Purkær Plaetner, five tourist attractions in Northern Jutland were highlighted: Skagen (Grenen), Rubjerg Knude Fyr, the West coast, harbors in Sæby, Løgstør and art museums such as for example Kunsten in Aalborg (Appendix 3). By encouraging tourists to check-in at these

top attractions of Northern Jutland, the awareness of what Northern Jutland has to offer could increase, as well as their brand image and the perceived quality of the destination. VisitNordjylland has several business partners that could fund the rewards in exchange for ads in the campaign.

Another social media strategy for Northern Jutland could be video campaigns shared on Facebook, which can be effective in terms of creating awareness of the Northern Jutland destination brand. VisitDenmark is currently working on getting more user-generated content and engagement through social media platforms and an increase of production of videos (Appendix 4).

WonderfulCopenhagen have already launched an Instagram video campaign directed towards U.S. tourists. Wonderful Copenhagen has used pictures and videos taken by people living in Copenhagen. The user-generated pictures and videos were then shared through Facebook. The point of the campaign was to make it possible for the U.S. tourists to create their own videos by using the pictures and videos already posted by people living in Copenhagen.

According to WonderfulCopenhagen, sharing the advertisement for the content on Facebook was significantly more effective than on other social media platforms. When the U.S. tourists clicked on the Facebook content, they were re-directed to the campaign site. Cookies on Facebook allows WonderfulCopenhagen to retarget in form of banner advertising, which the Facebook users will be exposed to on U.S. travel agencies and news sites on Facebook. As a part of the campaign, the U.S. tourists could win tickets to Copenhagen with Norwegian's direct flight routes. This campaign is an example of how you get tourists to interact with the brand in an exciting way (gamification strategy). Additionally, it provides WonderfulCopenhagen access to valuable data in terms of their targeted U.S. tourist segments (VisitCopenhagen, 2015).

VisitNordjylland (and other Visit organizations in Northern Jutland or other tourist stakeholders in Northern Jutland) could get inspiration from WonderfulCopenhagen. Norwegian can be used as a partner to create a video campaign featuring what Northern Jutland has to offer and to create awareness of the potential direct flight route from the Mid-Atlantic States to Aalborg. Findings from the chapter concerning the U.S. tourists travelling to Europe showed that U.S. tourists use airlines as one of their primary sources of travel information. Furthermore, findings from this thesis survey showed that the U.S. respondents see direct flight routes from their home to their vacation destination as an important decision making factor (Appendix 1).

As Ann Purkær Plaetner elaborated in the interview, Denmark is a safe destination, and more frequently, tourists look for destinations which seem safer than others, due to the prevalent terror

threats in Europe and elsewhere. Through a video, the safety of the region would be illuminated, therefore, a video would be beneficial. The collaboration between VisitNordjylland and Norwegian makes great sense as the airline provides a larger follower group on social media than VisitNordjylland (Facebook Norwegian, 2017 & Facebook VisitNordjylland, 2017). Findings from the survey showed that a major pull factor for the Middle Atlantic U.S. respondents is nature; the peculiar areas of Northern Jutland are easily and beautifully captured in a video. The video should be shared across a wide variety of social media; Facebook, YouTube and so on. Using Facebook to share the video encourage fans to interact; a narrative can be build based on the video and subsequent posts. Re-shares, likes and comments from fans can help to provide EWOM and higher brand recognition of Northern Jutland for the Middle Atlantic U.S. tourists.

Findings from the survey revealed that the U.S. respondents were inclined to share their experiences on Facebook and they perceive Facebook as a trustworthy source of travel information. A sense of Community and engagement are key factors that influence brand resonance (Keller, 2001).

VisitNordjylland primarily use their Facebook page to share relevant information from their partners in Northern Jutland. Ann Purkær Plaetner explained that VisitNordjylland use Facebook to:

*”Create campaigns and boost posts and events that happens around Northern Jutland”* (Appendix 3).

This can also be referred to as an advertising strategy. An advertising strategy is when DMOs re-direct advertisements, campaigns and news to social media sites with the largest traffic of users, which increases the volume of target audience that the promotion material reaches (Gyimothy et al., 2014, p. 6). In this connection, VisitNordjylland’s Facebook page has more followers than the Northern Jutland attractions who form partnerships with VisitNordjylland. This means that when one of the attractions post relevant news to their Facebook page, VisitNordjylland share these news and thereby increases the potential target audience the news will reach out to.

According to Gyimothy et al., 2014:

*“A common weakness of this strategy is a dominant use of a broadcast style of communication on posts and information pushed to the tourists”* (Gyimothy et al., 2014, p. 6)

A quick rundown through the VisitNordjylland Facebook wall and what they post reveal that interaction takes place on a very low level. Examples include sharing of links to competitions at partners’ websites, promoting partner events. The most interactive posts on their sites are evidently the Sunday competitions (FacebookVisitNordjylland, 2017).



Instead of just boosting posts on VistNordjylland's Facebook page they should attempt at interacting more with the tourists and encourage them to write feedback to increase the brand resonance of Northern Jutland and generate more EWOM.

*"Networked travelers are thought to be more empowered and sophisticated than before, and online consumer communities emerge as important agents of shaping new market offerings and meanings"* (Gyimothy et al., 2014, p. 2).

The survey findings showed that the U.S. respondents use social media in a vacation context, both for sharing own experiences as well as being influenced by other people sharing experiences on social media platforms. Facebook is an effective social media platform to use for destinations in order to encourage tourists to share their experiences. The sharing of experiences are made by sharing posts, commenting and writing reviews on Facebook. One way to go about ensuring the U.S. tourists' reviews of Northern Jutland could be the creation of a campaign with Norwegian. The U.S. tourists returning from Aalborg and back to the U.S. could be encouraged to write a review on Facebook.

In the following sections, the usage of Instagram and travel blogs for creating brand equity to the Northern Jutland destination will be elaborated.

#### 6.4.2 Instagram



Instagram has become an effective tool for destinations to share images and get the consumers involved in sharing content in form of hashtags and images (Instagram, 2017). Instagram was the U.S. tourists' second most used social media platform (Instagram 2017) while staying in Copenhagen (Wonderful Copenhagen, 2015). Findings from this thesis survey showed that Instagram is the fourth most trusted social media platform for the Middle Atlantic U.S. respondents (Appendix 1).

According to Katsoni (2015), Instagram is:

*"Stronger than other social media applications since photographs worths so many words and expressions"* (Katsoni, 2015, p. 248).

Strong visual images help creating attraction and awareness about destinations. Through hashtags, destinations and tourists can share contents and narratives in an exciting way.

*“Instagram is present as a medium that has a lot of personal facility that allows users to upload what is seen in the tourist sites so that it becomes attractive to be shared” (Fatanti et al., 2015, p. 1094).*

Instagram is a social media platform that is ‘suited- for user generated content. It allows tourists to share their own pictures to friends and family. DMOs’ hashtags provide opportunities for user-generated content, and tourists can link their own private photos to the destination hashtag. The hashtag functions enable destination marketers to repost the pictures taken by tourists to their own Instagram pages (Instagram, 2017).

The VisitNordjylland hashtag currently has over 47.000 posts (VisitNordjyllandInstagram, 2017). Most of the photos and content on the VisitNordjylland Instagram page is user-generated content in form of locals and tourists’ photos of tourist attractions and landscapes in Northern Jutland. The photos have then been re-shared to VisitNordjylland’s Instagram page through the hashtag function.

Ann Purkær Plaetner explained that Instagram presents good opportunities for increasing the awareness of Northern Jutland by stating that:

*“It is authentic and real people who have taken the pictures. The authentic part is important and not just planned pictures” (Appendix 3).*

Through the VisitNordjylland hashtag tourists or locals can post their own photos at different destinations in Northern Jutland. This strategy can be referred to as an immersion strategy (Gyimothy et al., 2014, p. 10). Immersion occurs when DMOs take the initiative to develop a social network site or a web community that is based on the users’ contributions, where transparency, participation and trust are the focus of the community and the strategy as well. The only thing the DMOs does is that they facilitate the hashtag and the administration of the social media platform (Gyimothy et al., 2014, p. 10).

Findings from the survey showed that over 75 percent of the Middle Atlantic U.S. respondents would be inclined to visit a peripheral destination if it offered distinctive nature and nature experiences (Appendix 1). On the VisitNordjylland webpage it is stated that nature is the main attraction in Northern Jutland. Destinations and tourist attractions such as Skagen (Grenen), Rubjerg Knude Fyr, Nationalpark Thy and Råbjerg Mile are highlighted and featured on their webpage (VisitNordjylland, 2017).

It is evident to see that pictures of the nature of Northern Jutland are the dominant content on the VisitNordjylland Instagram page (VisitNordjyllandInstagram, 2017).

Figure 9 below is an example of how VisitNordjylland use user-generated content in form of a nature picture to brand Rubjerg Knude lighthouse in Northern Jutland.



*Figure 9: Rubjerg Knude lighthouse on VisitNordjylland's Instagram (VisitNordjyllandInstagram, 2015)*

The photo was taken by '@takeithigher' and with the help of the hashtag function it was re-shared by VisitNordjylland and featured on their Instagram page. In that way, the tourist has become a co-producer of branding Northern Jutland and telling the narrative, although VisitNordjylland has a say in what they re-share from the tourists photos.

Positive EWOM in form of comments such as "love this place" or "så smukt" (so beautiful) can help increase the perceived quality of Northern Jutland. Concerning brand equity, comments such as the ones pertaining to the above Instagram photo display which feelings and judgements the commenters have towards that place in Northern Jutland. Re-sharing a photo like this on VisitNordjylland's Instagram page can also help to elicit feelings and judgements of the Northern Jutland destination brand in general.

In figure 10, Nationalpark Thy is featured.

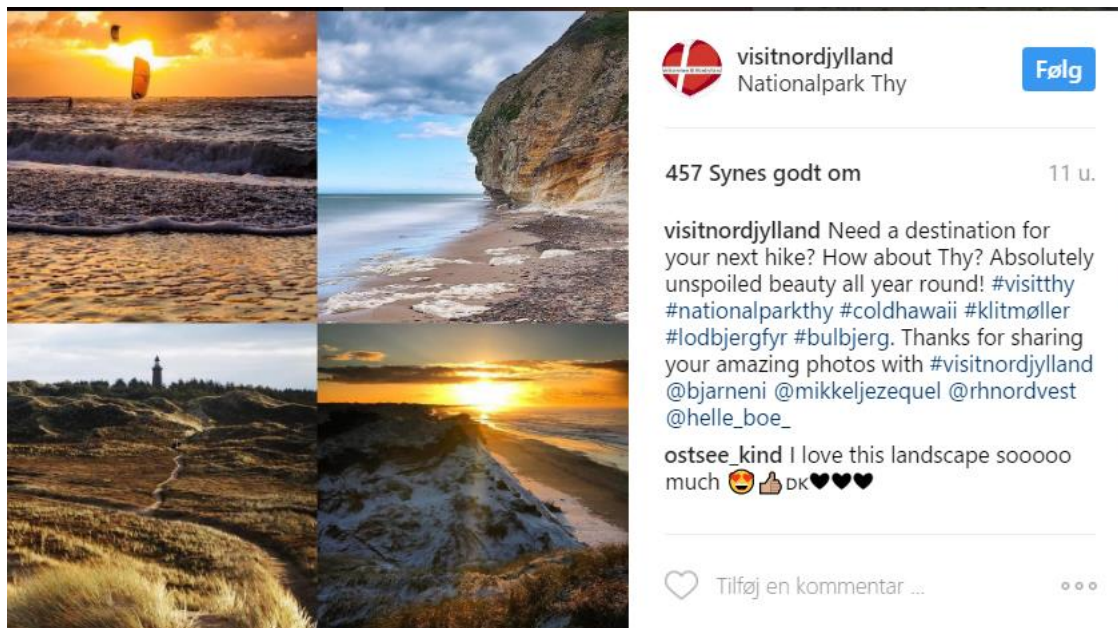


Figure 10: Nationalpark Thy on VisitNordjylland Instagram (VisitNordjylland instagram, 2017)

This photo was taken by the Instagram users: ‘@Bjarneni’, ‘@Mikkeljezequel’, ‘@rhnordvest’ and ‘@helle\_boe’, and then re-shared by VisitNordjylland on their Instagram page. As it is described in the post, it shows the unspoiled beauty of Northern Jutland. It describes the brand imagery of Northern Jutland, where history and heritage are important elements in the Northern Jutland narrative. History and heritage are one of the top motivational factors for the outbound U.S. tourists travelling to Europe, which creates opportunities for Northern Jutland to use Nationalpark Thy in their branding, as it is one of the landmarks of Denmark’s nature and heritage.

The Instagram photo above also highlights one of VisitNordjylland’s challenges on social media, which is the lack of interaction with the tourists. The photo had only one comment by the user ‘@ostsee\_kind’: “I love this landscape sooooo much”. Even though it is a positive comment it also highlights a problem for VisitNordjylland. There is a lack of comments and interactions in the majority of the pictures on VisitNordjylland’s Instagram page. This could be explained by the fact that VisitNordjylland have under 10.000 followers (VisitNordjyllandInstagram, 2017). It is very unlikely that Middle Atlantic U.S. tourists will be presented with pictures from the Instagram page unless mediators or relatives to potential tourists like and/or share posts.

VisitNordjylland could again benefit from creating a combined hashtag campaign with Norwegian. Norwegian’s Instagram page “flyNorwegian” has over 80.000 followers and thereby a much

broader target audience (FlyNorwegianInstagram, 2017). When and if the direct fly route becomes a reality, Norwegian would most likely be interested in cobranding Northern Jutland to increase the interest for the direct flight route. VisitNordjylland and Norwegian could also partner with the ‘departing’ airports in the Mid-Atlantic States and Aalborg airport.

According to VanAuken, 2015:

*“Many airports understand the value of customer engagement and have active social media programmes. They truly are the perfect facilitator for such conversations. Airports that are not branding their ‘place’ and getting to know their customers better will be at a competitive disadvantage compared to those who are fully invested in their social strategy.”* (VanAuken, 2015, p. 116).

Findings show that the outbound U.S. tourists travelling to Europe use airlines in their information search about vacation destinations (ETC, 2014). A possibility for Northern Jutland could be to create an Instagram campaign that would be visible in Aalborg airport and the airport that get chosen to be the departing airport in the Mid-Atlantic States. Another possibility could be to create an Instagram campaign where the focus was to gain the attention of the U.S. passengers while they are in the air. VisitNordjylland could create a brochure in cooperation with Norwegian featuring tourist attractions in Northern Jutland. In the brochure, the U.S. tourists could be encouraged to use the VisitNordjylland hashtag or a combined Norwegian and VisitNordjylland hashtag when they post pictures on their Instagram page while visiting Northern Jutland.

VisitNordjylland could also get inspiration from the MTLmoments campaign in order to elicit feelings for the tourists/Middle Atlantic U.S. tourists for the Northern Jutland destination brand. The Montreal tourism team placed picture frames at interesting tourist attractions around the city to encourage locals or tourists to share photos on Instagram by using the MTLmoments hashtag (Blogseenmoment, 2015). The frames located around the city simplified the content sharing and increased the personality and authenticity of the shared photos. The MTLmoments campaign has generated over 800.000 posts on Instagram (MTLmomentsinstagram, 2017).





Figure 11: MTLmoments Instagram campaign (tourisme-montreal, 2014)



Figure 12: Blokhuis strand on VisitNordjylland's Instagram (VisitNordjylland Instagram, 2016)

MTL moments shows actual people in different places of Montreal. Looking at the posts from VisitNordjylland, people are lacking in front of the camera. In VisitNordjylland's Instagram the emphasis is on the unspoiled nature where you can experience complete and utter silence and quiet time. When looking at the MTLmoments campaign, locals and tourists in pictures provide authenticity and life, and demonstrates a situation that the tourists can identify with.

*"Visitors require a personal approach, intelligent, creative, interactive, communication and messages including empathy and emotions. They want to participate in the creation of tourism products and want to buy based on relationship."* (Kiráľová & Pavlíčka, 2015, p. 364).

Innovative social media campaigns such as the MTLmoments Instagram campaign can encourage the tourists to engage with the destination. Based on the quotation it would be beneficial to allow tourists to interact with the places in front of cameras as they did in the Montreal campaign.

*"The more an advertisement encourages narrative processing and therefore becomes linked to the consumer's self-concept, the more meaningful a brand becomes"* (Dahlén et al., 2010, p. 13).

A meaningful brand is one to be remembered and therefore it is important to establish meaning to the Northern Jutland brand. This run through of sources has demonstrated how the usage of interactive measures are positive in terms of elevating tourist experiences of the destination brand. Concretely based on the above, VisitNordjylland could benefit from using advertising strategies to elicit more feelings and interaction towards the Northern Jutland destination brand.

There is a large selection of beautiful nature and urban spaces around Northern Jutland (VisitAalborg, 2017), where frames could be put up. It would help elicit feelings such as warmth, excitement and fun for the Northern Jutland destination image. VisitNordjylland could use their business partners and Norwegian to help fund the campaign by adding commercials for their business partners and Norwegian on the picture frames that would be located around Northern Jutland.

Northern Jutland could also put up a picture frame describing the Instagram campaign and locate it in the exits of Aalborg airport, in order to make sure it was one of the first things the Middle Atlantic U.S. tourists would see when arriving to Northern Jutland. Aalborg airport has already received international attention on social media through another sign placed right outside the airport front doors, which is referred to as the ‘Kiss and goodbye’. In the summer of 2013 a photo of the sign was posted on social media and within 48 hours it went viral and got half a million views (VisitDenmark, 2013). In the same way, a picture frame with inspiration from the MTL campaign could be placed right outside Aalborg airport and with some luck go viral like the ‘kiss and goodbye’ sign.

An Instagram campaign like this could also benefit the general awareness of Northern Jutland, as other tourists or locals also would be able to participate. In that way, VisitNordjylland could create a buzz about Northern Jutland and at the same time increase their chances of receiving user-generated content on Instagram.

#### 6.4.3 Travel Blogs



According to Királ'ová, A., & Pavlíčka, A, 2015:

*“The content of blogs, stories, etc. is generated mainly by visitors who have experienced the destination, so that the information is based on opinion and perceived authentic experience”*

(Wetravelandblog, 2017)

Travel blogs have become popular and appreciated sources for searching information and to compare tourist experiences about a tourist destination (Volo 2012). This thesis survey findings showed that travel blogs were the second most trusted social media platform for the Middle Atlantic U.S. respondents (Appendix 1).

According to Armstrong & McAdams (2009), Brown, Broderick & Lee (2007):

*“Consumers read blogs for entertainment and information because bloggers are perceived as trustworthy”* (In Sepp et al., 2011, p. 1480).

The content of stories and experiences in travel blogs is mostly generated by tourists who have experienced the destination, which increases the trustworthiness of travelblogs as a source for information when deciding a vacation destination (Kiráľová, A., & Pavlíček, A, 2015).

It correlates with the findings from the survey, where online reviews on social media platforms were perceived as somewhat trustworthy sources of information for the Middle Atlantic U.S. tourists.

VisitNordjylland (or other Visit organizations and tourist stakeholders in Northern Jutland) can invite Middle Atlantic U.S. journalist, bloggers, tour operators and travel agents (mediators) to the region, in order for them to get their own first hand impressions and insights of Northern Jutland as a tourist destination. These first-hand experiences will then, through the mediators' own medias, be conveyed to their readers and followers, which in turn will provide awareness of the destination. The usage of travel journalist and bloggers as mediators provides credibility and quality to the narrative being built about the Northern Jutland destination brand. It would help increase the perceived quality and brand performance of the Northern Jutland destination brand for the Middle Atlantic U.S. tourists, or in general followers and readers of the visitors mentioned here.

In the interview with Ann Purkær Plaetner she explained that:

*“We most likely get an incoming bureau here in Northern Jutland. An incoming bureau is where a tour operator/travel agencies can turn to, in order to create a customized trip for tourist that shows the nature and culture of Northern Jutland (for example American tourists)”* (Appendix 3).

An incoming bureau as such would be part of VisitNordjylland and deal with U.S. travel agencies and the planning of vacation in Northern Jutland for tourists who buy vacation through U.S. travel agencies.

The knowledge of the destination that the incoming bureau possess might be helpful in creating a trip for the U.S. journalist, bloggers, travel agents and tour operators to show them the potential of Northern Jutland as a destination for the Middle Atlantic U.S. tourists. Apart from showing them the nature in Northern Jutland, it could also be interesting to show them what potential Aalborg has



as a City Break destination. Aalborg can bring additional value to the Northern Jutland destination brand, and show that Northern Jutland also has something to offer in terms of City Break tourism.

Ann Purkær Plaetner explains that:

*“Aalborg has evolved from being too little to not being too little. The good thing about Aalborg as a city break destination is that you have the metropolitan, you get the shopping environment. Aalborg has furthermore seen an up rise in new restaurants. Musikkens hus, Nordkraft and Aalborg congress center presents three poles within Aalborg”* (Appendix 3).

In the U.S. tourists travelling to Europe section, Sightseeing was the largest motivational factor for U.S. tourists travelling to Europe. During the mediators’ trip to Northern Jutland, a sightseeing tour to Aalborg should be arranged. The scenic waterfront, ‘Aalborgtårnet’, the murals in ‘Vestbyen’, ‘Nordkraft’ and ‘Musikkens hus’ (VisitAalborg, 2017) could be interesting sights to visit in order to grasp the cultural elements of the city. A collaboration with the blogger society ‘migogaalborg’ (migogaalborg, 2017) in order to present some of the most popular food spots and cultural sites of the city and in order to build awareness from one blogger community to another should be elaborated. Using “migogaalborg” could also evoke a feeling of authenticity as they are front runners and know what is going on Aalborg.

An interesting project which is planned to take place in Aalborg the forthcoming years is the project ‘Cloud City’ that will be located at ‘Spritzen’ in Aalborg. The main feature of Cloud City will be a 30 meters high glass sculpture designed by the world-renowned artist Tómas Saraceno (Nordjyske, 2016). Its vision is to be a cultural hub with a food market, a hotel, and direct access to Limfjorden.

According to one of the investors and developers of Cloud City, Martin Nielsen:

*“Cloud City will be an important grip, not just for Aalborg and North Jutland, but for the whole of Denmark. Cloud City will give Aalborg what the city lacks, namely a living link between the center and west of the city which will attract tourists to Northern Jutland”* (in Tv2Nord, 2016).

The construction of Cloud City can be used as an incentive for the architecture and culturally interested Middle Atlantic U.S. tourists to travel to Aalborg. The project provides not only distinctive architecture and artistic expression to the area, but also encourages interaction with the surroundings (Limfjorden). Lastly, the project contains the vision of building a hotel, which allows visitors (U.S. tourists) to interact even more with the place.

VisitNordjylland also acknowledges Cloud City as an interesting project in terms of increasing the number of tourists visiting Northern Jutland by stating:

*“It is a really interesting project. There are going to be a four-star hotel, where there will everything from backpacker to luxury hotel rooms. There will also be a Food market. There will be access directly to the Fjord in Aalborg. It could give Northern Jutland a lift.”* (Ann Purkær Platner, Appendix 3).

A prestige project such as Cloud City could create a buzz about Northern Jutland as a tourist destination and increase the international awareness of Aalborg as a City Break destination.

It is interesting to write about for travel bloggers or for PR in form of U.S. journalists, and indeed a place to visit on a tour for mediators in Aalborg. Mediators who are authors on online travel blogs can help increase the awareness of Northern Jutland for the U.S. tourists. It could help illuminate the quality of Northern Jutland as a tourist destination for the Middle Atlantic U.S. tourists. The tourists could be convinced and enlightened in the brand performance for Northern Jutland where the functional needs such as hotels, restaurants, tourist attractions, shopping possibilities etc. would be elaborated. The bloggers and journalists can work as promoters of Northern Jutland. If they get a good impression of Northern Jutland and write good reviews, it could help increase awareness and interest of Northern Jutland as a tourist destination for the Middle Atlantic U.S. tourists. Having reviews on U.S. travel blogs would increase the credibility for Northern Jutland and thus increase the chances of how the Middle Atlantic U.S. tourists perceive the quality of Northern Jutland as a vacation destination.

The foregoing discussion has revealed that Facebook is a useful tool for interacting with posts, comments, likes and shares. Northern Jutland must interact more with the tourists and locals on Facebook to get more presence and not just use Facebook for boosting posts from their business partners. When the U.S. tourists visit Northern Jutland DMOs such as VisitNordjylland should encourage the Middle Atlantic U.S. tourists to write reviews on Facebook. It could help increase the awareness for the Middle Atlantic U.S. tourists and create a positive (or just a) destination image for Northern Jutland. Additionally, video campaigns showcasing the unique nature of Northern Jutland would help showing what the destination actually has to offer. Through a collaboration with Middle Atlantic U.S. tourist agencies, VisitNordjylland can make sure that their content is shared through the correct channels in terms of their content reaching out to as many Middle Atlantic U.S. tourists as possible.

It can be beneficial for Northern Jutland to involve the tourists in the pictures they share on Instagram. A combined hashtag with Norwegian could broaden VisitNordjylland's target audience, and increase the chances for generating awareness as a destination for the Middle Atlantic U.S. tourists. Additionally, the campaigns should be interactive and include people in the pictures in order to heighten the authenticity. Lastly, travel blogs provide potential tourists with information from peers about the Northern Jutland destination. Northern Jutland can add the City break element to the mix, by inviting bloggers and journalists to Aalborg. A collaboration with the blogger society 'migogaaalborg' can increase the sense of authenticity and feeling of experiencing the real Aalborg and Northern Jutland.

## 7. Conclusion

Europe has seen an increase in outbound U.S. tourists after the Euro's value to the Dollar has fallen. There has also been a positive development in Denmark, where an increase of almost 20 percentages in overnight stays by U.S. tourists in 2015 has happened. Denmark has become more accessible for the U.S. tourists due to newly opened direct flight routes between the U.S. and Denmark. The majority of the U.S. tourists travelling to Denmark only visit Copenhagen, which has left Jutland and especially Northern Jutland trailing behind. Norwegian is considering to open a direct flight route between somewhere in the Mid-Atlantic States and Aalborg. A direct flight route will increase the accessibility for U.S. tourists living in the east coast of the U.S. The perception before writing this thesis was that the awareness of Denmark for the U.S. tourist would be low and especially the U.S. tourists' knowledge about Northern Jutland as a tourist destination was considered as low to non-existing.

The emergence of social media as a marketing tool for destinations allow destination marketers to reach out to a vast potential tourist segment. Social media has become a trusted platform for travel information and for tourists to share their experiences of destinations. These findings lead to this thesis research question:

***“How can Social Media be used to create brand equity to Northern Jutland as a destination for the Middle Atlantic U.S. tourists, considering the potential direct flight route from the Mid-Atlantic States to Aalborg?”***

The constructivism paradigm applied in this thesis has meant that solutions have been presented on the basis of various different constructs stemming from different sources. It has allowed the researcher to dig deep in options for Northern Jutland to be branded for the U.S. tourists. The investigation has revealed one of probable many methods of creating brand equity to Northern Jutland – namely through social media. The usage of the different constructs (survey, Porters Five Forces, interviews with key knowledge persons and literature review) has enabled the research and provided a rounded and certainly doable proposal for Northern Jutland in terms of using social media as a marketing tool. The researcher's own influence in the research has also been underlined; through conducting the interviews and finding sources, the pre-knowledge of the researcher has effected the thesis.

Findings from the literature review showed that destinations must manage their brand equity; brand salience, perceived quality, brand image and brand loyalty are all elements that affect one another.

The emergence of social media in the tourism industry has provided destinations with new opportunities for creating and managing their brand equity. Through shares, likes and comments, tourists and locals have become co-producers of destination brands and narratives. Through EWOM on social media, tourists gain access to a large amount of user-generated content.

The most popular activities for U.S. tourists travelling to Europe are sightseeing, shopping, visiting historical locations and museums and visiting the nature and countryside. The U.S. tourists view Europe as a region that has a lot of heritage, friendly people and cultural diversity. Over 80 percent of the U.S. tourists are active on social media. Their choice of destinations is heavily influenced by social media.

Due to the fact that the largest share of outbound U.S. tourists travel from the Middle Atlantic States and the location of the potential direct flight from the Mid-Atlantic States to Aalborg, the Middle Atlantic U.S. tourist was chosen as the target group in this thesis.

The Porters Five Forces showed that the degree of rivalry is high in terms of attracting the Middle Atlantic U.S. tourists to Northern Jutland. Copenhagen is the leading destination in Denmark and has the advantage of offering several direct flights from destinations around the U.S.. Furthermore, Scandinavian countries such as Norway and Sweden present as a threat as they also offer unique nature experiences and represent substitute products. When looking solely at the competition in Denmark, Northern Jutland has the possibility to differentiate themselves from Copenhagen by emphasizing the possibilities for nature experiences when visiting Northern Jutland.

The survey results revealed that the Middle Atlantic U.S. respondents had a much larger awareness of Copenhagen than Northern Jutland. The respondents considered Facebook, Instagram, TripAdvisor and Travel Blogs as the most trustworthy sources of information in terms of social media platforms. The results from the three statements in the survey revealed that the respondents are inclined to spend time at other Danish destinations than Copenhagen, if they got more aware of other Danish destinations. Direct flight routes were considered as an important decision making factor when travelling to Denmark, which emphasizes the importance of establishing the direct flight from the Mid-Atlantic States to Aalborg. Lastly, the results of the survey showed that the respondents use social media in a vacation context in terms of both sharing their own experiences, as well as being influenced by other peoples' sharing of experiences on social media. Conclusively, the results revealed that the respondents were willing to visit a peripheral destination

if it offers nature experiences, which can be determined as an opportunity for Northern Jutland to create brand equity as a destination for the Middle Atlantic U.S. tourists.

A creative brief was established based on the findings from the U.S. tourists travelling to Europe and Denmark, Porters Five Forces and survey results in order to create a quick overview of Visit Northern Jutland's creative tasks in terms of creating brand equity for Northern Jutland as a destination for the Middle Atlantic U.S. tourists.

As it is VisitNordjylland who are responsible for the branding of Northern Jutland, their social media pages on Facebook and Instagram were included in the discussion.

One of the challenges for VisitNordjylland is the lack of interaction with the locals and tourists on their social media sites. VisitNordjylland primary use Facebook to boost posts from tourist attractions and their business partners. As travel agencies and airlines are the U.S. tourists' most used channels for booking their vacations, it makes sense for VisitNordjylland to partner up with U.S. travel agencies on Facebook and make them share the branding material of Northern Jutland through the relevant channels on Facebook. By co-branding with Norwegian, VisitNordjylland can create brand equity to the Northern Jutland destination by creating video campaigns capturing the beautiful nature of Northern Jutland or check-in competitions on Facebook. Through combined efforts with Norwegian, VisitNordjylland could increase the amount of people that the campaigns reach on Facebook, due to Norwegian's much larger target audience on Facebook. VisitNordjylland should additionally use more effort into interacting with locals and tourists on their Facebook page.

Through the 'VisitNordjylland' hashtag, locals and tourists can share their own pictures of Northern Jutland on Instagram and get them featured on VisitNordjylland's Instagram page. VisitNordjylland can collect inspiration from the MTLmoments campaign, and establish picture frames around tourist attractions of Northern Jutland to encourage both tourists and locals to share their experiences in order to create a buzz and bring life to the Northern Jutland destination. A combined hashtag with Norwegian could furthermore have a positive influence in terms of broadening Northern Jutland's target audience.

Interesting projects such as Cloud City can convince the Middle Atlantic U.S. bloggers, tour operators, travel agents and journalist to visit Aalborg and get their own first hand impressions and insights of what Northern Jutland has to offer as a tourist destination.

VisitNordjylland should utilize the blogger society in Aalborg 'migogAalborg' to show the U.S.

press the authentic Aalborg and Northern Jutland. Having travel blogs written by U.S. citizens who have experienced Northern Jutland first hand can help to increase the awareness of the brand performance of Northern Jutland for the Middle Atlantic U.S. tourists. Furthermore, by adding Aalborg as a City Break destination to the mix, further value and diversity to the Northern Jutland destination brand is added.

The conclusion is that social media is a highly relevant tool for Northern Jutland to use in the process of creating brand equity for the Middle Atlantic U.S. tourists. By utilizing Facebook, Instagram and travel blogs, Northern Jutland can take advantage of already existing communication channels and facilitate the process of interaction and increasing awareness among the potential Middle Atlantic U.S. tourists.

## 8. Suggestions for Further Research

- The U.S. tourist segment travelling to Denmark is a segment that still needs to be investigated further from VisitDenmark.
- Interviews with Norwegian marketing officials could also be relevant for future research in order to gain an understanding of their branding strategies for newly opened flight routes in peripheral destinations such as Northern Jutland, and reveal their openness towards collaborating on social media.
- Inputs from other DMOs and tourist organizations in Northern Jutland could be beneficial in order to learn more about Northern Jutland's potential as a tourist destination for the Middle Atlantic U.S. tourists.
- Interviews with U.S. citizens who have visited Northern Jutland could help gain further understanding of what U.S. tourists think of Northern Jutland.
- The researcher of this thesis chose to focus on three social media platforms; Facebook, Instagram and travel blogs. Other social media platforms could also have been applied in this thesis.
- SnapChat could be interesting to look at in terms of what possibilities it can create to Northern Jutland as a tool for communicating live with tourists.

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## 10. Appendices

### 10.1 Appendix 1

#### Survey results:

#### Descriptive statistics:

**Descriptive Statistics Statement 1**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
I often hear about Denmark on Social Media (disregard the topic)	93	1	7	2,45	1,455
It is mostly Copenhagen that comes up on social media posts about Denmark	93	1	7	5,22	1,474
I would be inclined to spend more than 2-3 days in Denmark, if I had a larger awareness of other destinations than Copenhagen	93	1	7	5,65	1,529
Valid N (listwise)	93				

**Descriptive Statistics Statement 2**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Direct flights from the US to my potential vacation destination in Denmark is a must	93	1	7	5,02	1,694
I would be interested in traveling to Northern Jutland if I could travel directly from New York to Northern Jutland	93	1	7	4,56	1,605
I view Denmark as a transport hub to the rest of Scandinavia	93	1	7	4,45	1,633
Valid N (listwise)	93				

### Descriptive Statistics Statement 3

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
I use social media to find information about tourist destinations I am interested in visiting	93	1	7	4,78	1,750
I recommend and share my experiences about tourist destinations on social media	93	1	7	5,34	1,665
Reviews on social media platforms such as Facebook, TripAdvisor and travel blogs etc. from other tourists effect my decision when choosing a vacation destination	93	1	7	5,36	1,403
Online reviews on social media platforms are trustworthy sources of information	93	1	7	5,01	1,441
If I had a positive experience in a tourist destination I would be inclined to write a review on a social media platform	93	1	7	5,34	1,395
If I had a negative experience in a tourist destination I would be inclined to write a review on a social media platform	93	1	7	4,66	1,572
Valid N (listwise)	93				

## Frequencies

### 1. Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	38	40,9	40,9	40,9
	Female	55	59,1	59,1	100,0
	Total	93	100,0	100,0	

### 2. Age

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Below 20	1	1,1	1,1	1,1
	20-25	32	34,4	34,4	35,5
	26-30	21	22,6	22,6	58,1
	31-39	10	10,8	10,8	68,8
	40-49	7	7,5	7,5	76,3
	50+	22	23,7	23,7	100,0
	Total	93	100,0	100,0	

### 3. What State do you live in?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Alaska	1	1,1	1,1	1,1
	California	3	3,2	3,2	4,3
	Massachusetts	5	5,4	5,4	9,7
	New Jersey	3	3,2	3,2	12,9
	New York	50	53,8	53,8	66,7
	Pennsylvania	31	33,3	33,3	100,0
	Total	93	100,0	100,0	

### 4. Have you ever heard about Denmark?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	88	94,6	94,6	94,6
	No	5	5,4	5,4	100,0
	Total	93	100,0	100,0	

### 5. Have you ever heard about Copenhagen?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	91	97,8	97,8	97,8
	No	2	2,2	2,2	100,0
	Total	93	100,0	100,0	

**6. Have you heard about Copenhagen on one of the following social media platforms?**

**Facebook**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	54	58,1	100,0	100,0
	No	39	41,9		
Total		93	100,0		

**Twitter**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	6	6,5	100,0	100,0
	No	87	93,5		
Total		93	100,0		

**Instagram**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	31	33,3	100,0	100,0
	No	62	66,7		
Total		93	100,0		

**Tripadvisor**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	yes	30	32,3	100,0	100,0
	No	63	67,7		
Total		93	100,0		



### YouTube

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	13	14,0	100,0	100,0
	No	80	86,0		
Total		93	100,0		

### SnapChat

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	2	2,2	100,0	100,0
	No	91	97,8		
Total		93	100,0		

### Travel blogs

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	31	33,3	100,0	100,0
	No	62	66,7		
Total		93	100,0		

### No, I have heard about Copenhagen elsewhere

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	35	37,6	100,0	100,0
	No	58	62,4		
Total		93	100,0		

### I have never heard of Copenhagen

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	2	2,2	100,0	100,0
Missing	No	91	97,8		

Total	93	100,0		
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**7. Have you ever heard about a danish destination called Northern Jutland?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	18	19,4	19,4	19,4
	No	75	80,6	80,6	100,0
	Total	93	100,0	100,0	

**8. Have you heard about Northern Jutland on one of the following social media platforms?**

**Facebook**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	5	5,4	100,0	100,0
	No	88	94,6		
	Total	93	100,0		

(These three had zero respondents)

**Twitter**

		Frequency	Percent
Missing	System	93	100,0

**Instagram**

		Frequency	Percent
Missing	System	93	100,0

**YouTube**

		Frequency	Percent
Missing	System	93	100,0

**SnapChat**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	1	1,1	100,0	100,0
	No	92	98,9		
Total		93	100,0		

### **Tripadvisor**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	1	1,1	100,0	100,0
	No	92	98,9		
Total		93	100,0		

### **Travel blogs**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	3	3,2	100,0	100,0
	No	90	96,8		
Total		93	100,0		

### **No, I have heard about Northern Jutland elsewhere**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	18	19,4	100,0	100,0
	No	75	80,6		
Total		93	100,0		

### **I have never heard about Northern Jutland**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	69	74,2	100,0	100,0
	No	24	25,8		
Total		93	100,0		

**9. Which of the following social media platforms do you view as trustworthy sources of information about a destination?**

**Facebook**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	53	57,0	100,0	100,0
	No	40	43,0		
Total		93	100,0		

**Twitter**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	19	20,4	100,0	100,0
	No	74	79,6		
Total		93	100,0		

**Instagram**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	35	37,6	100,0	100,0
	No	58	62,4		
Total		93	100,0		

**YouTube**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	23	24,7	100,0	100,0
	No	70	75,3		
Total		93	100,0		

### SnapChat

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	11	11,8	100,0	100,0
	No	82	88,2		
Total		93	100,0		

### TripAdvisor

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	yes	67	72,0	100,0	100,0
	no	26	28,0		
Total		93	100,0		

### Travel blogs

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	yes	64	68,8	100,0	100,0
	no	29	31,2		
Total		93	100,0		

### Other social media platform?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid		80	86,0	86,0	86,0
	Friends who have been there.	1	1,1	1,1	87,1
	I mostly trust people I know personally who've traveled to the place in question, if I use other people's opinions.	1	1,1	1,1	88,2
	Internet	1	1,1	1,1	89,2
	Lonely planet blogs	1	1,1	1,1	90,3
	No I always fact-check	1	1,1	1,1	91,4
	None	1	1,1	1,1	92,5
	None really	1	1,1	1,1	93,5

Not sure	1	1,1	1,1	94,6
other	1	1,1	1,1	95,7
Rick Steves, etc.	1	1,1	1,1	96,8
travel blogs	1	1,1	1,1	97,8
Travel sites	1	1,1	1,1	98,9
Yelp	1	1,1	1,1	100,0
Total	93	100,0	100,0	

#### 10. I often hear about Denmark on Social Media (disregard the topic)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1. Strongly disagree	25	26,9	27,2	27,2
	2. Mostly Disagree	35	37,6	38,0	65,2
	3. Somewhat Disagree	16	17,2	17,4	82,6
	4. Neither agree nor Disagree	5	5,4	5,4	88,0
	5. Somewhat agree	5	5,4	5,4	93,5
	6. Mostly agree	5	5,4	5,4	98,9
	7. Strongly agree	1	1,1	1,1	100,0
	Total	92	98,9	100,0	
Missing	System	1	1,1		
Total		93	100,0		

#### 11. It is mostly Copenhagen that comes up on social media posts about Denmark

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	4	4,3	4,4	4,4
	2	1	1,1	1,1	5,5
	3	4	4,3	4,4	9,9
	4	17	18,3	18,7	28,6
	5	16	17,2	17,6	46,2
	6	34	36,6	37,4	83,5
	7	15	16,1	16,5	100,0
	Total	91	97,8	100,0	
Missing	System	2	2,2		
Total		93	100,0		

**12. I would be inclined to spend more than 2-3 days in Denmark, if I had a larger awareness of other destinations than Copenhagen**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	3	3,2	3,3	3,3
	2	3	3,2	3,3	6,5
	3	2	2,2	2,2	8,7
	4	9	9,7	9,8	18,5
	5	14	15,1	15,2	33,7
	6	28	30,1	30,4	64,1
	7	33	35,5	35,9	100,0
	Total	92	98,9	100,0	
Missing	System	1	1,1		
Total		93	100,0		

**13. Direct flights from the US to my potential vacation destination in Denmark is a must**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	4	4,3	4,3	4,3
	2	8	8,6	8,6	12,9
	3	5	5,4	5,4	18,3
	4	12	12,9	12,9	31,2
	5	16	17,2	17,2	48,4
	6	32	34,4	34,4	82,8
	7	16	17,2	17,2	100,0
	Total	93	100,0	100,0	

**14. I would be interested in traveling to Northern Jutland if I could travel directly from New York to Northern Jutland**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	5	5,4	5,4	5,4
	2	6	6,5	6,5	11,8
	3	7	7,5	7,5	19,4
	4	31	33,3	33,3	52,7

5	12	12,9	12,9	65,6
6	22	23,7	23,7	89,2
7	10	10,8	10,8	100,0
Total	93	100,0	100,0	

### 15. I view Denmark as a transport hub to the rest of Scandinavia

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	7	7,5	7,6	7,6
	2	5	5,4	5,4	13,0
	3	7	7,5	7,6	20,7
	4	30	32,3	32,6	53,3
	5	17	18,3	18,5	71,7
	6	16	17,2	17,4	89,1
	7	10	10,8	10,9	100,0
	Total	92	98,9	100,0	
Missing	System	1	1,1		
Total		93	100,0		

### 16. I use social media to find information about tourist destinations I am interested in visiting

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	6	6,5	6,5	6,5
	2	7	7,5	7,5	14,0
	3	11	11,8	11,8	25,8
	4	3	3,2	3,2	29,0
	5	31	33,3	33,3	62,4
	6	20	21,5	21,5	83,9
	7	15	16,1	16,1	100,0
	Total	93	100,0	100,0	



**17. I recommend and share my experiences about tourist destinations on social media**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	5	5,4	5,4	5,4
	2	4	4,3	4,3	9,7
	3	3	3,2	3,2	12,9
	4	8	8,6	8,6	21,5
	5	21	22,6	22,6	44,1
	6	26	28,0	28,0	72,0
	7	26	28,0	28,0	100,0
	Total	93	100,0	100,0	

**18. Reviews on social media platforms such as Facebook, TripAdvisor and travel blogs etc. from other tourists effect my decision when choosing a vacation destination**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	2	2,2	2,2	2,2
	2	3	3,2	3,3	5,4
	3	3	3,2	3,3	8,7
	4	10	10,8	10,9	19,6
	5	30	32,3	32,6	52,2
	6	22	23,7	23,9	76,1
	7	22	23,7	23,9	100,0
	Total	92	98,9	100,0	
Missing	System	1	1,1		
Total		93	100,0		

**19. Online reviews on social media platforms are trustworthy sources of information**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	1	1,1	1,1	1,1
	2	3	3,2	3,2	4,3
	3	9	9,7	9,7	14,0
	4	21	22,6	22,6	36,6

5	25	26,9	26,9	63,4
6	15	16,1	16,1	79,6
7	19	20,4	20,4	100,0
Total	93	100,0	100,0	

**20. If I had a negative experience in a tourist destination I would be inclined to write a review on a social media platform**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	3	3,2	3,3	3,3
	2	6	6,5	6,6	9,9
	3	16	17,2	17,6	27,5
	4	9	9,7	9,9	37,4
	5	26	28,0	28,6	65,9
	6	22	23,7	24,2	90,1
	7	9	9,7	9,9	100,0
	Total	91	97,8	100,0	
Missing	System	2	2,2		
Total		93	100,0		

**21. If I had a positive experience in a tourist destination I would be inclined to write a review on a social media platform**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	3	3,2	3,2	3,2
	2	2	2,2	2,2	5,4
	3	5	5,4	5,4	10,8
	4	5	5,4	5,4	16,1
	5	30	32,3	32,3	48,4
	6	31	33,3	33,3	81,7
	7	17	18,3	18,3	100,0
	Total	93	100,0	100,0	

**22. If I travelled to Denmark I would be interested in visiting other places than Copenhagen**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	75	80,6	80,6	80,6
	No	2	2,2	2,2	82,8
	I would consider it	16	17,2	17,2	100,0
	Total	93	100,0	100,0	

### 23. Would you consider visiting Denmark on a vacation?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	65	69,9	69,9	69,9
	No	4	4,3	4,3	74,2
	Maybe	24	25,8	25,8	100,0
	Total	93	100,0	100,0	

### 24. I would be inclined to visit peripheral destinations if (choose several):

#### Direct flight from my home were available

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	46	49,5	100,0	100,0
Missing	System	47	50,5		
Total		93	100,0		

#### The destination offered a niche experience

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	2	60	64,5	100,0	100,0
Missing	System	33	35,5		
Total		93	100,0		

**The destination offered distinctive nature (and nature experiences)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	3	70	75,3	100,0	100,0
Missing	System	23	24,7		
Total		93	100,0		

**Extraordinary beaches**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	4	40	43,0	100,0	100,0
Missing	System	53	57,0		
Total		93	100,0		

**At least one metropolis with a great night life scene**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	5	31	33,3	100,0	100,0
Missing	System	62	66,7		
Total		93	100,0		

**Cultural diversity**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	6	57	61,3	100,0	100,0
Missing	System	36	38,7		
Total		93	100,0		

### A fair amount of high quality hotels

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	7	19	20,4	100,0	100,0
Missing	System	74	79,6		
Total		93	100,0		

### Feel free to add other reasons:

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid		83	89,2	89,2	89,2
	Breweries for great beer	1	1,1	1,1	90,3
	Cheap travel from hub city such as Copenhagen. Price is most important to me	1	1,1	1,1	91,4
	Food. Regional dishes?	1	1,1	1,1	92,5
	Have you controlled for family in Denmark? I've been there to visit family. It could skew your results without a control. You're welcome :)	1	1,1	1,1	93,5
	I study constructed wetlands as wastewater treatment mechanisms and Denmark is a hub for that research!	1	1,1	1,1	94,6
	I would not likely visit-- no personal appeal to me. I like sun and beaches.	1	1,1	1,1	95,7
	If tour guides were available. I used Gate1 Tours for 3 cities in Italy. It was great to get local flavor while on tour.	1	1,1	1,1	96,8
	nice scenery, architecture, food, markets, biking opportunities	1	1,1	1,1	97,8
	Scenery and architecture	1	1,1	1,1	98,9

Very interested in seeing the Northern Lights someday and would consider a Denmark + Northern Lights trip	1	1,1	1,1	100,0
Total	93	100,0	100,0	

## 10.2 Appendix 2

### Transcription of interview with VisitDenmark's CEO of the UK/U.S. market Dennis Englund

#### A: Which American tourist segments are travelling to Denmark?

##### Dennis:

Cruise guests typically 65 plus, the second segment is tourists who are on a round trip. It is typically a round trip around Europe or Scandinavia. It can be both. They are typically plus 50 years old. There are also a younger segment called "millennials" that we don't know so much about yet. We don't know how they book and travel. The first two segments typically book through travel agencies.

That is typically the three groups we are targeting.

In the latest couple of years there has been an increased access to Denmark from the U.S, where there has been an up rise in direct flight between the U.S and Denmark. It is of course a positive tendency, but it also opens up to whole new travel patterns, where it is much easier to book by yourself.

Our biggest assignment as a tourist organizations is to get the tourists stay longer.

#### A: The U.S. tourist awareness of Denmark?

##### Dennis:

There is a very low knowledge of Denmark. We have huge assignment just to create a knowledge about Denmark for the U.S tourists. When the U.S tourists come to Denmark it is the target to get them to stay a night or too more. If they have 10 days in the North, we typically try to make them stay one or two days more in Denmark.

**A: How do you see Northern Jutland's possibilities to attract U.S tourists?**

**Dennis:**

I don't think it is realistic for Northern Jutland to work with the American tourist segment, unless Aalborg get the direct flight route to New York with Norwegian. But before that is established I don't think it is realistic for Northern Jutland.

If the knowledge of Denmark is low the knowledge of Aalborg is really low

**A: Northern Jutland can also work as a transport hub for the U.S tourists who travel further into Sweden and Norway (to make the U.S tourist stay longer?)**

**Dennis:**

it is a possibility, but it is a really long story to be told. But it is probably one of the ways to go if you are going to get U.S tourists to Northern Jutland. But for an American who never have travelled to Denmark, Copenhagen will have much more to offer and easier to be branded.

**A: if the US tourists got knowledge of Northern Jutland what possibilities do you think Northern Jutland has in terms of branding nature experiences?**

**Dennis:**

Yes it could. If we had unlimited resources we could, but at the moment it is too hard. I think Northern Jutland has a lot of nice elements to offer the tourists. But there is someone who has to tell the story of Northern Jutland first. At the moment, Copenhagen are the beacon in terms of how we brand Denmark to America. The accessibility is limited in terms of traveling to and from Jutland

**A. How do you see Jutlands possibilities in general to attract American tourists?**

**Dennis:**

Aarhus is European capital of culture city and European region gastronomy

There is better accessibility from Billund Airport compared to Aalborg airport. We will not brand Northern Jutland before/if it happens that there comes a direct flight from Northern Jutland to New York. I like your (resonant) it is and I am "med på hvad du gerne vil" just complicated.

The structure in Northern Jutland is really complicated. In Danish tourism there three groups: there are "erhvervs turisme" kyst og natur" and City break tourism: The four biggest city break cities in

Denmark are: Copenhagen, Aarhus, Odense and Aalborg. Aalborg are finding it difficult to attract city break tourists and in general how you brand Aalborg as a city break destination

### 10.3 Appendix 3

#### **Transcription of Interview with VisitNordjylland's CEO of the sales and marketing department Ann Purkær Plaetner**

**If you were to mention top 5 biggest tourist attractions in Northern Jutland in terms of attracting international tourists (such as U.S. tourists), which ones would you choose?**

Ann:

Skagen (the branch), the lighthouse, the west coast (Fårup Sommerland etc. not relevant to Americans), havens environments (the intimate in the small harbour fronts in Sæby and Løgstør, art museums (Americans like Danish stories)

**What is your attitude towards using social media to brand Northern Jutland**

*“social media is the only way to go in terms of branding Northern jutland!!* We are not a big organization so at the moment we have to target segments that have shown interest (limited budget)

**What social media do you use to brand Northern Jutland and why these platforms?**

Ann:

We use Facebook to make campaigns and boost posts and activities that take place in Northern Jutland. Instagram hashtags, online magasing sells to 51,000 recipients.

**How do you use Facebook to interact with tourists and potential tourists in Northern Jutland?**

We use it best to beat up competitions. Right now we have a Sunday quiz. We use it as a teaser to irritate their curiosity with bold pictures of North Jutland. There must be some form of interaction before people think it's interesting

**How do you see Instagram's possibilities of creating awareness of Northern Jutland through pictures and hashtags through local and tourist's own pictures and hashtags of Northern Jutland?**



Ann:

I see that as a great opportunity. It's authentic and real people who have taken the pictures. The authentic is important, do not post pictures.

**Do you boost posts from your business partners?**

Ann:

Yes we do

**Have you taken any steps towards getting more user-generated content of North Jutland as a tourist attraction? ♦ or something in the drawing board? (X a viral hashtag)**

Ann:

We have talked about it, but we have not done anything yet. It has been done several years ago. This year we doing a Denmark campaign for the 4 year in a row. Two years ago we made a campaign where we used pictures with tourists' opinions of Northern Jutland.

**How do you use social media to create awareness of major events / tourist events in Northern Jutland (for example, what have you done to promote Copencold Hawaii, which also comes to Klitmøller?)**

Copencold Hawaii works with Thy. We're boosting their posts so they reach out to a broader target audience.

**What possibilities do you see in Aalborg as a city break destination (is Aalborg big enough to be interesting?)**

Ann:

"Aalborg has evolved from being too little to not being too little. The good thing about Aalborg as a city break destination is that you the metropolitan, you get the shopping environment. Aalborg has furthermore seen an up rise in new restaurants. Musikkens hus, Nordkraft and Aalborg congress center presents three poles within Aalborg. We lack hotels in Aalborg, I know that it's something man working to change.

**What do you think about the development project at Spritten, aalborg called “Cloud City”?**

**Ann:**

.It is a really interesting project. There are going to be a four-star hotel, where there will everything from backpacker to luxury hotel rooms. There will also be a Food market. There will be access directly to the Fjord in Aalborg. It could really give Northern Jutland a lift.

Nordjylland is not bigger than everything is in driving distance so there is still the opportunity to see the rest of Jutland ... the seed is it for the Americans

**What do you think the impact of a potential direct flight between New York and Aalborg can have for Northern Jutland's tourist organizations and attractions in terms of attracting more U.S. tourists to Northern Jutland?**

(What effect would it have on North Jutland tourism if the direct flight route was established between Aalborg and the United States east coast?)

**Ann:**

Our challenge is that Americans do not know what Denmark is. The americans who knows of Denmark only know the little mermaid and Legoland. We have cruise tourists. "We most likely get an incoming bureau here in Northern Jutland. An incoming bureau is where a tour operator / travel agencies can turn to, to create a custom trip for tourists that for example shows the nature and culture of Northern Jutland.

When the direct flight is established, there is access. Then you need to get American travel agents to market Northern Jutland. Terror causes people to start choosing safe destinations. Denmark is safe, the world's happiest country. It's safe and secure and now we can fly directly.

**Do you think there will be a significant increase in the number of American tourists in the region, or do you think they will use Aalborg airport as a transit spot to other European / Nordic destinations?**

**Ann:**

no, I do not think that. There has just been established a new route from Aalborg to Oslo which flies 5-7 times a week. There is an even better knot point for Amsterdam or Copenhagen. People who fly here to Northern Jutland will probably stay here and in the rest of Jutland

**Could you turn it into an advantage that Northern Jutland is a transport hub:**

**Ann:**

Yes, that's also an option. What's happening at the moment, is that Americans do not leave Copenhagen. If we could make them stand here in Aalborg it would be gold.

**There has been a 98 percent growth in US overnight stays in Northern Jutland in 2015, how can that be explained?**

**Ann:**

That because there is so little in advance. Possibly because of cruise tourists. May be a company that has had Americans over during a period of time.

**Do you see some opportunities in SnapChat to raise awareness of North Jutland by encouraging tourists to use SnapChat while in North Jutland?**

**Ann:**

I could see a potential in SnapChat, but our challenge is that we do not have anyone who is watching 24/7. Our big dream is that we get even more online. We would like to have an interaction with the tourists. We would like to chat with some live, for example to see/show what opportunities there are if the weather is making it hard to experience Northern Jutland outside.

But snapchat is also a little daring at the moment.

#### [10.4 Appendix 4](#)

**Email interview with VisitDenmark's content manager in the UK/U.S. market**

**Andreas:**

Hello Clay.

I am from Aalborg university where i am on my final year of my masters degree in tourism. I am currently writing my master thesis, which is about how Northern Jutland can be branded, in order to attract more American tourists to Denmark and making them stay longer.

I was wondering if you could tell me about VisitDenmark's online strategies (especially on social media) in terms of creating more awareness about Denmark as a tourist destination for the American tourists?

Thanks in advance.

Kind regards

**Clay:**

Hey Andreas,

Thanks for the email.

We are growing our social audience in these markets and posting related content, but it's not a strategic focus for our US campaigns, so there is not much I can add, I'm afraid.

All the best,

**Andreas:**

Okay, i am actually also interested in learning more about which tools visitDenmark uses when making social media strategies. If you have some information about that I would be very interested to make a telephone interview if you have time for that?

**Clay:**

Right now we using native insights/analytics and ads to drive our social strategy and are looking into programmatic. We're also about to integrate social content on our websites. We're focused on engagement in our platforms right now, so user-generated content is a focus as is increasing our production of videos.

Hope that is helpful!

Good luck.