REGIONAL CULTURAL DIFFERENCES IN INFLUENER MARKETING

A case study of the experience of influencer marketing among youths from Thisted and Copenhagen

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Abstract

Influencer marketing has become an integrated part of marketing today, and many organizations are using influencers as third party endorses to market their brand to consumers. However, a gab is present in the literature within this field, as the cultural aspect of influencer marketing is missing. Therefore, the present thesis intents to fill this gab by exploring regional cultural differences in Thisted and Copenhagen in relation to influencer marketing and its core values. Furthermore, the findings of the examination will show whether it is beneficial for organizations to adapt or standardize influencer marketing strategies. To accomplish this aim, mixed methods are conducted in the forms of a quantitative online survey and qualitative interviews with student from Thisted and Copenhagen in the age of 16-24-year-olds. The quantitative method is chosen as it provides a general representation of youths' from Thisted and Copenhagen use of social media and influencers. At the same time, the qualitative method provides the opportunity to obtain a thorough understanding of the phenomenon.

The findings of the analysis show that there is not an unambiguous answer to whether organizations should adapt or standardize influencer marketing strategies in Denmark, as youths from Thisted and Copenhagen are similar in some areas and differ in others. First of all, the examination shows that there exist regional cultural differences between Thisted and Copenhagen. For instance, Thisted is described homogenous and community-oriented whereas Copenhagen is described as reserved and manifold.

Some of the similarities that are present in relation to influencer marketing, are that youths from both Thisted and Copenhagen do not want too much advertisements. Furthermore, personal content and the relation between the advertised products and influencers' personal brand are important aspects of influencer marketing as this increases trustworthiness. Aspects where youths from Thisted and Copenhagen differ are also in relation to trustworthiness, as youths from Thisted want transparency and critique from influencers of the products they advertise. Furthermore, to increase trustworthiness of influencer marketing among youths from Copenhagen, content that displays the reality and important subject are important. Youths from Thisted believe that authenticity toward influencers is increased when they have followed them for a long time. Youths from Copenhagen believe authenticity is increased when they have something in common with the influencers. This shows that regional cultural differences in Thisted and Copenhagen, might have an influence on

some areas of influencer marketing. In a global perspective, this might mean that there is a development where sub-cultures in Denmark become more similar.

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Clarifications of concept in influencer marketing

Follow:

On social media, it is called "follow" when you add a person to your social media profile, and then you will be able to see their posts.

Unfollow:

As well as you can follow people on social you can unfollow them again. When you unfollow a social media account, you will no longer be exposed to their content in your social media feed.

Like:

On social media it is possible to click on a 'like'-button as a way of showing your approval of the content.

Story:

A story is a video which is posted on the social media, which will be available for others to see for 24 hours.

Post:

A post is when some content is published on the social media account.

(Stec 2018)

1. Introduction

The goal of present thesis is to contribute to the scientific field of influencer marketing. This is done by looking at influencer marketing through a cultural lens as the literature of influencer marketing lack this aspect. The current literature mostly focuses on a general perception of influencer marketing. Therefore, the aim of this thesis is to explore the experience of influencer marketing among youths in Thisted and Copenhagen. The aim is further to comprehend how regional cultural differences in Thisted and Copenhagen contribute to the understanding of influencer marketing.

Through the last decade there has been a shift in how organizations market themselves; from using traditional marketing activities such as print advertising, to digital marketing activities for instance on social media (Childers, Lemon & Hoy 2018, 1). Common to both, is that organizations are competing for potential and current customers' attention. Through social media, organizations have the ability to communicate and expose their brands in a desired way (Ashley & Tuten 2015, 15). However, as today's globalization and the evolvement of the digital world, some organizations have progressed with this development and thus use social media influencers to market their brand – this is called influencer marketing (Audrezet, Moulard & Kerviler 2018, 2). Social media influencers, or merely influencers, represent a new type of independent third-party endorsers who have the ability to shape their followers' attitudes through blogs, tweets and other social media platforms (Freberg et al. 2011, 90). Core values in influencer marketing such as trustworthiness, credibility and authenticity have been questioned as the influencers get paid with either cash or sponsored products by the organizations (Lim et al. 2017; Djafarova & Trofimenko 2018; Mediakix 2017). This exchange of payment might compromise the influencers' trustworthiness, credibility and authenticity and might therefore compromise the organization's marketing as well.

Using influencer marketing as a marketing strategy is a fairly new concept which opens the opportunity for organizations to promote their brand through new channels and to reach consumers directly through social media. However, as social media reaches a wide variety of different consumers with different cultural backgrounds, it might be necessary for organization to obtain knowledge and to understand a country's national culture, subcultures and lastly to focus on the regional subcultures, as it leads to a more accurate map of culture within a country (Yaprak 2008, 219). However, the question arises whether organizations have to globalize or localize their

marketing strategy in order to be the most effective in their promotion of their brand (Ramarapu, Timmerman & Ramarapu 1999).

The idea of regional subcultures and a divided Denmark has been discussed both academically (Svendsen & Svendsen, 2016; Faber & Pristed, 2016; Sørensen 2012) and by the Danish media (Hauch & Kühl 2018; Nielsen & Roliggaard 2016; Bennlke 2017) in the later years. This especially applies to the differences between the peripheral and urban areas in Denmark.
Denmark has often been described as a homogenic country with a high degree of social cohesion. However, lately the focus has been on Denmark a divided country with peripheral and urban areas (Faber & Pristed, 2016; Svendsen & Svendsen 2016). Some regional cultural differences are for instance geographic economic inequality where families are living geographically in terms of income (Faber & Pristed 2016, 34; Hauch & Kühl 2018) and their media consumption (Nielsen & Roliggaard 2016) Furthermore, educational differences between peripheral and urban areas are creating a greater possibility for higher educated youths to move to bigger cities (Hauch & Kühl 2018).

The above mentioned regional cultural differences in Denmark provide the reason to believe there are more regional cultural differences among peripheral and urban areas in Denmark. Based on this hypothesis, it provides the basis to research how regional cultural differences in peripheral and urban areas in Denmark contribute to the understanding of influencer marketing.

Based on this, the present thesis will contribute with new scientific knowledge in the field of influencer marketing, which will enhance the understanding of culture and globalization in relation to influencer marketing. As it mainly is the younger part of the population who use social media (Harrie 2018; Thomsen & Co. 2018; Mediernes udvikling i Danmark 2018), this thesis will be based on young people's experience of influencer marketing. Furthermore, in order to limit the research, as Thisted and Copenhagen often are described as two contrasts in the debate of peripheral and urban areas in Denmark, youths in these areas will be researched.
Therefore, the overall objective can be expressed in the following research question:

2. Research Question

What is the experience of influencer marketing among youths in Thisted and Copenhagen, and how does an analysis of regional cultural differences contribute to the understanding of influencer marketing?

In addition, this thesis will aim to answer three related sub-research questions in order to provide a comprehensible conclusion. These are:

- What is the prevalence of influencer marketing among youths in Thisted and Copenhagen and how do they use influencers?
- What influence do regional cultural differences in Thisted and Copenhagen have on the core values within influencer marketing?
- What marketing ideas can be generated from knowing cultural differences in relation to influencer marketing?

3. Methodology

This section will provide insight into our methodological considerations. Our methodological choices are made in relation to what would enable us to research the above research question in the best possible way. Therefore, this section will account for choices made regarding the research design, philosophy of science and methods of data collection. Furthermore, the interview design and survey design will be described, and moreover there will be accounted for how the participants and respondents were sampled and how the collected data are analyzed. Finally, validity, reliability, trustworthiness, generalization and limitations of the research will be discussed.

3.1 Research Design

This section will account for the research design of this thesis. There will first be accounted for the use of a case study and thereafter, there will be explained why mixed methods are most suitable for this research.

3.1.1 Case Study

This thesis sets out to research how regional cultural differences in Denmark influence the experience of influencer marketing among youths from Thisted and Copenhagen. In order to examine this, the research will be constructed as a case study. Flyvbjerg (2006) describes a case study as a *detailed examination of a single example* (Flyvbjerg 2006, 220). Similarly, Bryman (2016) states that a case study is a detailed and intensive analysis of a single case associated with a location such as a company or community (Bryman 2016, 60). However, the starting point of this thesis does not act as a single case as we take a starting point in two different areas in Denmark. This is what Flyvbjerg (2006) describes as maximum variation cases which are when it is allowed to explore several cases that are very different in terms of e.g. location (Flyvbjerg 2006, 230). As we have chosen Thisted and Copenhagen as our research areas, these act as maximum variation cases. Thisted and Copenhagen act as maximum variation cases as literature suggests that there exist regional cultural differences in Denmark, and we assume that it may be valid for these two areas as well. A reason for Thisted and Copenhagen to act as maximum variation cases are due to their geographical placement as they are located far from each other, which Flyvbjerg (2006) also described as a criterion of maximum variation.

3.1.2 Mixed Methods

In order to receive a more nuanced picture of how regional cultural differences in Thisted and Copenhagen influence the experience of influencer marketing among youths from Thisted and Copenhagen, and how this may affect organizations' marketing strategies in the future, mixed methods are chosen. Mixed methods allow for finding both patterns in behaviours and the underlying reasons for the youths' experience of influencer marketing.

When conducting mixed methods, strengths from both qualitative and quantitative research are combined. Malina, Nørreklit and Selto (2011) state that *combined quantitative and qualitative methods enable exploring more complex aspects and relations of the human and social world* (Malina, Nørreklit & Selto 2011, 61). Furthermore, Johnson, Onwuegbuzie and Turner (2007) argue that mixed methods can be viewed as the third methodological or research paradigm along with qualitative and quantitative research (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie & Turner 2007, 129). Mixed methods are also defined as triangulation which means that results of the research are associated with one research strategy, e.g. quantitative research, and then are crossed-checked with the results of another research strategy, e.g. qualitative research (Bryman 2016, 643). Bryman (2016) argues that quantitative research tends to be more static whereas qualitative research is more processual. Furthermore, quantitative research is very valuable as it uncovers regularities, which often create basis for a more processual analysis to proceed. This means that whereas the quantitative method provides insight to differences or similarities, the qualitative method explores the process lying behind these differences and similarities (Bryman 2016, 643). This entails that quantitative research typically sets out to answer research questions such as "how often" and "how many", whereas qualitative research typically addresses "how" and "why" research questions (Malina, Nørreklit & Selto 2011, 61). By implementing both quantitative and qualitative methods, it is possible to achieve a more complete answer to the research questions as the gaps left from one research method, can be compensated for by the other (Bryman 2016, 644-645). We have chosen mixed method as the quantitative method allows us to systematize findings regarding social media habits, and the qualitative method provides a more in depth understanding of the youths' experience of influencer marketing and the relation to their cultural background.

There are both disadvantages and advantages when using mixed methods in a research. Analyzing, coding, and integrating unstructured data with structured data is a complex and time-consuming

process (Driscoll et al. 2007, 25). However, mixed methods also provide the opportunity to simultaneously answer confirmatory and exploratory questions (Malina, Nørreklit & Selto 2011, 64). Additionally, Driscoll et al. (2007) explain that the qualitative data provides a profound understanding of survey responses, and a statistical analysis can allow for a more detailed assessment of the patterns of the responses (Driscoll et al. 2007, 26). Furthermore, it is possible to reread quotes of the qualitative data in context of the whole research (Malina, Nørreklit & Selto 2011, 63). Another major advantage is that mixed methods are abductive in nature. It allows addressing the connections between theory and data which entails moving *back and forth between induction and deduction—first converting observations into theories and then assessing those theories through action* (Shannon-Baker 2016, 325-326; Morgan 2007, 71). Denzin and Lincoln (2011) additionally argue that mix methods researchers are encouraged to continuously revisit the results from one method to the results from the other (Denzin & Lincoln 2011, 293). When reviewing the disadvantages and advantages of mixed methods, it is clear that mixed methods were the most suitable methods to answer the research question of this thesis. Furthermore, we had the time and resources to conduct mixed methods as well.

3.2 Philosophy of science

The following section will outline the chosen philosophy of science framework. As the present thesis will be conducted based on mix methods, the framework functions as the foundation of the research, which will be evident below.

3.2.1 Pragmatism

The thesis' philosophical foundation is grounded in a pragmatic framework. Cameron (2011) states that pragmatism has strong associations with mixed methods research (Cameron 2011, 101), which is why it is the best framework for the present thesis. Another researcher who has been involved in researching pragmatism is Creswell (2013). He explains that researchers holding the worldview of pragmatism focus on the outcome of the research rather than the antecedent conditions. This entails that the researchers focus on the actions, situations and consequences of the research (Creswell 2013, 22). Feilzer (2009) states that pragmatism allows the researcher to *be free of mental and practical constraints (...) and researchers do not have to "be the prisoner of a particular [research] method or technique"* (Feilzer 2009, 8). This is in line with that pragmatic researchers have the

freedom of choice to choose methods that they believe that best meet their research (Creswell 2013, 22). Furthermore, pragmatic researchers have the possibility to make use of many approaches when analyzing data as well (Creswell 2013, 22). Subsequently, this entails that researchers using this framework, will use the amount of data collection that best answer their research question. Further, they will use several sources of data collection and place the importance of conducting research that are most suitable for the research question (Creswell 2013, 22-23).

Pragmatism places the importance of communication and shared meaning, which means that pragmatic researchers place importance on intersubjectivity. As the present thesis hold pragmatism as its framework, we are able to *asserting both that there is a single "real world" and that all individualists have their own interpretations of that world* (Morgan 2007, 72). This means that we are treating intersubjectivity as a key central part of social life where it is suggested that there are more attention to the social processes which both produce conflict and consensus (Morgan 2007, 72). Furthermore, Shannon-Baker (2016) expresses that pragmatic researchers have the ability to both be subjective in their own reflections on the research, and at the same time, being objective in the data collection and analysis (Shannon-Baker 2016, 322). When having a pragmatic worldview, transferability is a key word when considering the implications of a research (Shannon-Baker 2016, 326). This means that the outcome of the present thesis can be transferred to other settings. This will be elaborated on in section 3.8.2.1.2.

3.3 Methods for Data Collection

For answering the research question as thoroughly as possible, mix methods of both online survey and interviews are chosen. When using mixed methods, it is important to consider which questions to ask with what method, meaning what questions are best answered by using a quantitative method and what questions are best answered using a qualitative method (Bryman 2016, 646). In the following section, there will be elaborated on both methods and the considerations of this in relation to the research question.

3.3.1 Quantitative Data Collection

We have chosen to conduct a questionnaire as our quantitative data. The questionnaire will be constructed as an online survey as it is considered to have many strengths. Through the internet, it is

possible to reach respondents that are geographically diverse. Furthermore, online surveys have a huge reach (Evans & Mathur 2005, 197). This notion is an advantage for this thesis as we have to reach respondents living in both Thisted and Copenhagen, which are geographically diverse areas. When conducting online surveys, it eliminates any bias that otherwise might have been present in an interview. However, this can also be a disadvantage as the respondents do not have the ability to elaborate on the questions if they find it necessary. Nevertheless, in online surveys, the respondents might feel freer to answer personal and sensitive questions (Bryman 2016, 222-223; Selm & Jankowski 2006, 438).

Selm and Jankowski (2006) explain that online surveys might be particularly attractive when studying the younger part of a population, as they make more use of the internet (Selm & Jankowski 2006, 437). As our sample group consists of 16-24-year-olds living in Thisted and Copenhagen, online survey is particularly beneficial because we seek to understand a younger part of the population.

Online surveys also have the advantage that they are easy and quick to send out to a wide range of respondents. Furthermore, they also contribute to decreasing the lack of representativeness, as it is possible to reach respondents wherever they are if they just have access to the Internet (Evans & Mathur 2005, 197-198). It is beneficial for us to make use of online surveys as the Internet provides access to a wide range of respondents located in different areas.

As the online survey is self-administrative, it is important to consider how the questions and instructions are formulated, as they need to be clear and easy to follow in order to avoid any misunderstandings (Evans & Mathur 2005, 202; Bryman 2016, 221). There also are other things that are important to consider when constructing an online survey. First, online surveys provide the opportunity to ask questions in different ways such as yes/no-questions, multiple-choice, rank order and open-ended questions. This way, it is possible to adapt the online survey and the questions, so they fit best possible to the research and the respondents (Evans & Mathur 2005, 199). In the present thesis' online survey, we have primarily chosen yes/no questions and multiple-choice questions and omitted open-ended questions as these will be asked during the elaborative interviews, which mix methods allow for. Additionally, people are are less willing to answer open-ended questions in online surveys (Selm & Jankowski 2006, 441; Bryman 2016, 223-224). The length of the online survey is also an important factor, and a general rule of thumb is that the longer the online survey is, the less responses there will be. Therefore, it is important to consider the right amount of questions by formulating the most relevant questions in order to insure higher response

rate and better quality of the answers (Selm & Jankowski 2006, 441; Bryman 2016, 223). The design of the online survey will be elaborated in section 3.5.

3.3.2 Qualitative Data Collection

In addition to the quantitative online survey, qualitative data collection was chosen as well in the form of interviews. Bryman (2016) argues that interviews probably are the most used method in qualitative research, even though they are very time-consuming (Bryman 2016, 466). However, we believed that interviews could contribute to best answer the qualitative part of the research question of the present thesis. The interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner which Kvale and Brinkmann (2015) state as planned yet fixed (Kvale & Brinkmann 2015, 411). Furthermore, semi-structured interviews are what Tuner (2010) referrers to as a general interview guide approach. He argues that the ways the questions are potentially worded depend on the researcher who conducts the interview. General interview guide approach, or just semi-structured interviews, allow the interviewers to depart significantly from the interview guide which means that we can ask new or follow-up questions (Bryman 2016, 467). Therefore, the questions and words used in the conducted interviews may depart from how they are outlined in the interview guide (Appendix E), as it can provide new perspectives by the participants (Bryman 2016, 477-468). As the interviewers have the possibility to depart from the interview guide, Turner (2010) expresses that the lack of consistency in the way the questions are asked, can be seen as an issue because the participants might not answer the same questions (Turner 2010, 755). In order to avoid this notion, Turner (2010) suggests that these follow-up questions should be prepared in a manner to create a form of consistency to which questions are asked as well as keeping the participants' focus. By doing so, the interviewers enable the participants not to get off topic but ensure optimal responses from the participants, and further reduce misunderstandings (Turner 2010, 758). With this in mind, we have, as mentioned, constructed a semi-structured interview guide with prepared follow-up questions as well. This is done as we want to receive the participants' thoughts and perspectives on culture, influencer marketing and its trustworthiness, credibility and authenticity. Through semi-structured interviews, the participants have the possibility and room for contributing with their own opinions and perspective as we do not fully control the interview. However, we still want to keep them within a specific framework. The interview design will be elaborated in section 3.5.2.

Before interviewing the participants, we chose to conduct a pilot interview in terms of the interview design. A pilot interview was done in order to detect possible flaws and ensure credibility and to add value to the entire thesis (Dikko 2016, 521-522).

3.4 Sampling

This section will account for the methods and choices made regarding sampling of the participants. First, we will outline our considerations about the participants and as we make use of mixed methods, there will both be accounted for the sample method in relation to the online survey and the interviews.

3.4.1 Considerations about Participants

As we aim to explore the experiences of influencer marketing among youths from Thisted and Copenhagen, it was crucial for us that the participants were at the age between 16-24-years-old living in Thisted and Copenhagen. Furthermore, the reasoning for the age range is based on data regarding the Danish population's social media habits. Data shows that especially 16-24-years-olds' social media consumption is higher compared to the rest of the Danish population (Harrie 2018; Thomsen & Co. 2018; Mediernes udvikling i Danmark 2018). We believe that when 16-24-years-old spend the most time on social media, the majority of them are aware of the notion of influencer marketing. This is supported by Larsen (2019), who states that the younger part of the generation makes use of influencer marketing more frequently than traditional forms of marketing (Larsen 2019). Based on this, we believe that in order to receive a thorough picture of the experience of influencer marketing among youths from Thisted and Copenhagen and its relation to cultural differences, the age range is the best suitable for the present thesis.

3.4.2 Sampling Online Survey

In order to sample respondents to our online survey, we made use of probability sampling as the respondents are selected randomly. Furthermore, the notion of bias can be reduced using probability sampling as our judgement of the respondents is excluded when selecting the respondents (Bryman 2016, 174).

There are different types of probability sampling, which can be used in quantitative data collection (Bryman 2016, 176). However, as our thesis sets out to research regional cultural differences between two regional areas in Denmark, we made use of random stratified sampling. This method of sampling allows us to create subgroups, which are referred to as stratas. These stratas are based on similarities within the chosen groups (Bryman 2016, 178). This means that the method allows us to create two stratas - the first being the population in Thisted and the second being the population of Copenhagen. Moreover, random stratified sampling allows a strata to have several stratifying criteria such as gender and age (Bryman 2016, 178). Thereby, it was further possible for us to set the criterion of the stratas, and the criteria are that the respondents should be within the age group of 16-24-years-olds and living in Thisted or Copenhagen.

In order to target the sample group more specifically, we chose to share the online survey with nursing students at Københavns Professionshøjskole and nursing students at UCN in Thisted. However, in order to target the younger part of the sample group, we were allowed to share the online survey at Rysensteen high school in Copenhagen and Thisted high school. However, as we did not receive a satisfactory amount of answers from Thisted high school, we contacted Thisted technical high school, which also distributed the online survey.

The online survey was shared through different channels, as Københavns Professionshøjskole was able to share it through e-mail to all nursing students. Rysensteen high school, Thisted high school and UCN in Thisted uploaded it on their Intranet, making it accessible for all students. Thisted technical high school made the online survey accessible for its students in a closed Facebook group, where only the students from the school were able to access it. Our criterion for sharing the online survey was that it should be distributed through channels which only were accessible for the students. This was done in order to only reach respondents who were relevant for our research. All the above channels meet this criterion.

3.4.3 Sampling Interviews

In order to get a more thorough and nuanced answer to our research question, we have conducted interviews as well. To sample participants for the interviews, we made use of purposive sampling with a priori approach (Bryman 2016, 410). More specifically, we used generic purposive sampling, which entails that the selection of participants is guided by the research question (Bryman 2016,

412-414). For this thesis, it means that the criterion for the interview participants was that they either live in Thisted or Copenhagen and are between the age of 16-24-year-old.

A way to sample the participants for interviews can be by implementing a question in the online survey where it is asked if the respondents would like to participate in an interview (Bryman 2016, 414-415). The final question in the online survey had this purpose, as there was asked if the respondents would be interested in participating in an interview as well. The participants who were interested in participating in an elaborative interview, had the opportunity to leave their contact information (Appendix A). This means that the relationship of the quantitative and qualitative research are what Onwuegbuzie and Collins (2007) define as a nested relationship, which implies that respondents selected for the qualitative phase, will represent a subset of the participants chosen for the quantitative phase of the thesis (Onwuegbuzie & Collins 2007, 292). By doing so, 32 out of all of the respondents responded that they were interested in participating in an interview. As some of the sampled respondents from the online survey now represent some of the participants in the interviews, it is what Collins, Onwuegbuzie and Jiao (2007) define as sequential nested sampling (Collins, Onwuegbuzie & Jiao 2007, 276-277). Furthermore, this way eased the selection process of the participants for the interviews because the criteria for participating in the online survey and the interviews, were the same.

3.5 Design of Data Collection

The following section describes the design of both the quantitative and qualitative data collection. First, the design of the online survey will be outlined, where arguments for the design of the questions will be provided. Second, the interview design will be described and further arguments of how to conduct the interviews are provided.

3.5.1 Online Survey Design

An online survey was chosen to explore the experience and prevalence of social media and influencer marketing among youths from Thisted and Copenhagen.

In order to design our online survey questions, we had to consider the construction of each question. According to Sue and Ritter (2007), survey questions are a method which researchers can make use of to discover opinions, knowledge and behavior of the respondents. In order to obtain the best results, it is therefore essential that the questions are properly constructed (Sue & Ritter 2007, 38).

As our thesis has the aim to obtain knowledge about youths' from Thisted and Copenhagen different practices and opinions about influencer marketing and social media behavior, we had to construct questions for the online survey that provided us with that information in the best possible way. Sue and Ritter (2007) argue that it is important to relate all questions to the objectives of the research (Sue & Ritter 2007, 38), and therefore we used our research question as a guideline to formulate the questions. The questions are primarily used to examine the prevalence of influencer marketing among the youths and their perception of trustworthiness, credibility and authenticity in relation to influencer marketing.

We started by asking demographic questions, which had the purpose to categorize the respondents and provide the possibility to compare the characteristics and segments of the sample group after the data was gathered (Sue & Ritter 2007, 53). Sue and Ritter (2007) state that a general rule is to only ask demographic questions that are relevant to the research (Sue & Ritter 2007, 54), which was used as a guideline for the first three questions.

Additionally, the online survey primarily consists of multiple-choice questions which were chosen as they are easy for the respondents to answer (Sue & Ritter 2007, 48). Krosnick (2018) argues that it is beneficial to use questions that can be asked and answered quickly, as it produces the most accurate data (Krosnick 2018, 95). This was therefore the goal for our questions. We further had to consider the possibility of using open-ended questions, as it is argued by Sue and Ritter (2007) that these types of questions create diverse answers which result in more valid responses as the respondents are not forced to select an answer from a list that is designed by the researcher (Sue & Ritter 2007, 43). However, the open-ended questions were deselected for two reasons. The first reason being that it is argued that open-ended questions should be used in interview surveys and not self-administered questionnaires, as respondents find open-ended questions difficult to answer in self-administered questionnaires. Based on that, it might increase non-response (Sue & Ritter 2007, 42). The second reason is that our research design consists of mixed methods and therefore, questions which require more in-depth answers will be asked during the interviews. Thereby, the validity is ensured. Nevertheless, the respondents had the possibility to provide their own answers to some of the questions as an "other"-box was added as an option. This box was provided in questions where the list of possible answers might have been long. Furthermore, it gave the opportunity for the respondents to provide us with new perspectives, which according to Sue and Ritter (2007) are beneficial when new areas or perspectives are researched (Sue & Ritter 2007, 44;48).

In two of the questions (question 10+11, Appendix A), we made use of scales. When using scales in online surveys, there are several factors that need to be taken into consideration, such as how many different scales should be provided and whether to provide a small text of what the scales mean (Sue & Ritter 2007, 50; Korsnick 2018, 99-100). This was taken into consideration. Therefore, we first needed to consider how many numbers on the scale that should be provided in each question, because literature suggests that too many options will confuse the respondents and decrease the reliability of the research (Krosnick 2018, 99-100).

In terms of how many numbers on the scale should be provided, Sue and Ritter 2007 suggest that 4-5 scales in a question is a safe number. Furthermore, Sue and Ritter (2007) argue that it might beneficial to have a midpoint on the scale which is done by having an uneven number of choices. They further believe it is beneficial to have an uneven number of choices on the scale because if the respondents do not have the opportunity to answer that, they often want to be "nice" and they then chose what they perceive as the positive side (Sue & Ritter 2007, 50). Therefore, we chose a scale of 1-5 to avoid it to be too long, which thereby also contained a midpoint to ensure that the respondents were not forced to choose between a more negative or positive side. Moreover, we considered if there should be an explanation associated with every number on the scale or just at the end points. However, Krosnick (2018) argues that vague labels might make it difficult for the respondents to choose one, and overly specific labels might make it hard for the respondents to find their place. Therefore, vague explanations on the scale, which create the opportunity for the respondents to interpret the numbers, might be desirable (Krosnick 2018, 100). Therefore, we ended up choosing to label the end points specifically, which we believed would be sufficient for the respondents as we chose to have scales with 5 choices.

It is argued by Sue and Ritter (2007) that online surveys have the ability to ensure honest answers which were a priority for the present thesis. Sue and Ritter (2007) argue that respondents tend to give more honest answers when they sit behind a computer screen (Sue & Ritter 2007, 39). Nevertheless, we ensured anonymity and confidentiality in the online survey, as this also is ways to obtain more honest answers (Sue & Ritter 2007, 39). In addition to Sue and Ritter's (2017) suggestions on how to ask questions in online surveys, Krosnick (2018) also provided suggestions in order to obtain the best results. His suggestions are: specific questions, no jargon, avoid leading questions, easy to read, avoid ambiguity and negations and allow for all possible answers (Krosnick 2018, 100-101).

When constructing our online survey questions, the suggestions from Sue and Ritter (2007) and Krosnick (2018) served as guidelines. The questions were asked in Danish which were done in order to ensure that the respondents understood the questions in the best possible way. In appendix B, there is provided a table that represents the questions asked in the online survey. Furthermore, the table outlines reasons why each question was asked and what the questions answer in relation to our research question. The table is created to provide an overview of our considerations behind all of the questions in the online survey. The questions are translated into English for the sake of the present thesis. The original survey formulation can be found in appendix A.

Before distributing the online survey to possible respondents, we conducted a pilot run. This is defined by defined Dikko (2016) as (...) *a mini version of a research or a trial run conducted in preparation of a full scale study and may be conducted specifically to pre-test a research instrument (...)* (Dikko 2016, 221). When conducting a pilot run, we were able to detect possible flaws in the online survey design which furthermore it added value and credibility to the entire thesis (Dikko 2016, 521-522). The online survey was distributed through the aforementioned channels (cf. 3.4.2) on March 22, 2019 and closed on April 10, 2019. During that time, we were able to receive 221 responses which were unequally divided between Thisted and Copenhagen. Respondents representing Thisted account for 22 % where respondents representing Copenhagen account for 78 %. A reason for the differences in the number of respondents, might be due to the fact that Copenhagen is larger populated than Thisted.

3.5.2 Interview design

This section will first entail an account for the interview design and later an outline and appurtenant considerations about the questions asked in the interviews.

We chose to conduct 5 interviews in Thisted and 6 interviews in Copenhagen in order to discover the meaning of regional cultural differences' impact on influencer marketing. The reason for the difference in the numbers of interviews conducted in Thisted and Copenhagen, was that we were unable to find an additional participant in Thisted despite many attempts. The participants were chosen based on the findings from the online survey regarding age and gender. This ensured that the participants in the interviews reflected the respondents in the online survey in the best possible way. As the online survey mainly represents women in Copenhagen, we have chosen to only interview

women from Copenhagen. In Thisted the online survey represented 45 % men and 55 % women, therefore two men and three women were interviewed.

We chose to conduct the interviews in Danish due to the interviewees' origin, namely Denmark. However, for the sake of the present thesis, we have translated the questions and quotations into English which will be evident in a table regarding considerations of the interview questions (Appendix F) as well as in the analysis. In appendix F there is provided a table of the interview guide with appurtenant considerations of the questions, where there is outlined what the different questions are asked and what they answer.

3.5.3 Skype interviews

In order to conduct the interviews, we had to consider how to do it in practical terms as we are not located close to the participants, which live in Thisted and Copenhagen. Therefore, we had to review alternatives to the traditional face-to-face interview. Hanna (2012) argues that the Internet has created feasible alternatives to the traditional interviews. Through Skype, it is possible to talk and see the participant while doing the interview. Furthermore, the interview is easily recorded (Hanna 2012, 241). Seitz (2016) agrees on this fact and further states that Skype interviews bring along the benefit of the possibility to interview anyone anywhere (Seitz 2016, 230).

Even though, there are benefits of doing interviews through Skype, there are also obstacles which we needed to take into consideration. Skype interviews can for instance have delays on the sound and picture. However, this can mainly be overcome by conducting the interviews in places where a steady internet connection is provided. Moreover, it is argued by Seitz (2016) that it is important to talk clear and a little slower than usual, in order to make sure the questions are heard correctly (Seitz 2016, 230-231). These suggestions were followed as we wanted to avoid misunderstandings and too many repetitions of questions and answers. Furthermore, we also conducted the interviews in quiet locations so unnecessary distractions were eliminated (Seitz 2016, 231). Another disadvantage of using Skype, is according to Seitz (2016) that it can be difficult to read body language even though, the interview is done through video. Seitz (2016) argues that it is important to pay extra good attention to the interviewees tone of voice and body language (Seitz 2016, 232). We attempted to overcome this disadvantage by both interviewers being present doing the interviews. That way, one interviewer could ask the majority of the questions and the other one acted as an observant. Despite the fact that Seitz (2016) argues that when the interviewers and

interviewee are in different places doing the interview can be a disadvantage, Hanna (2012) argues that it also can be beneficial. When allowing the interviewee to be at home or in another "safe place", the interviewee might be more comfortable and thereby more informative (Hanna 2012, 241).

Additionally, Seitz (2016) found that the younger part of the generation, who have grown up with technologies, are comfortable using computers, smartphones etc. and are therefore very comfortable with interviews through Skype (Seitz 2016, 233). As we only have participants within the age group of 16-24-years-old, we assume that they are familiar with a service such as Skype, and do not see this as an obstacle for conducting the interviews through the platform.

3.6 Data Analysis

This section will account for the analysis of the conducted data. First, the method used to transcribe the data will be outlined and second, a description of the method used to code our interviews is provided.

3.6.1 Transcribing Data

In order to transcribe our interviews, we audio-recorded all the interviews, and according to Bryman (2016), most social researchers agree that interviews should be recorded (Bryman 2016, 479-480). By audio-recording the interviews, it was possible for us to transcribe the data as correctly as possible. However, Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) argue that it is important to agree on how to transcribe the data when several researchers are involved in the transcription (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009, 180). As we are two researchers who conducted and transcribed the interviews, we found it necessary to agree on an approach to transcribe the interviews in order to do it as similar as possible. We first needed to consider what method of transcription was the most suitable for this research. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) state that there are no specific rules when it comes to transcribing data, but it is important to consider whether the interviews should be transcribed word-by-word, including all pauses and interjections, or if it should be transcribed in a more written style. According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), this depends on how the interviews are used (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009, 181). We do not make a detailed linguistic or conversational analysis, therefore, we agreed to transcribe the interviews in a more written style. The reason for this is because we

seek to obtain knowledge about influencer marketing on a general level instead of an linguistic analysis.

In order to ensure similarity between the transcriptions, we started by transcribing five minutes of the same interview each and used these different transcriptions to decide on a similar way to transcribe. Furthermore, we wanted to limit mistakes and therefore, we heard the interviews while reading through each other's transcriptions in order to limit possible mistakes.

3.6.2 Coding Qualitative Data

Coding qualitative data is a way of interacting with and thinking about data. It is further a process of reflection, which allows the researcher to simplify specific characteristics of the data (Nowell et al. 2017, 5).

In order to process our qualitative data, we have chosen to code the interviews which is the basis for qualitative data analysis (Bryman 2016, 581; Nowell et al 2017, 2). There are several ways to code the data and we have chosen to analyze the transcriptions of the interviews through a thematic analysis, which is one of the most common approaches to qualitative data analysis (Bryman 2016, 584). Thematic analysis is a highly flexible approach which can provide rich and detailed, yet complex accounts of data (Nowell et al. 2017, 2). The method of data analysis entails identifying themes which is built on codes based on the interview transcriptions (Bryman 2016, 584). Nowell et al. (2017) argue that it is a method for identifying, analyzing, organizing, describing and reporting themes which are found within the data (Nowell et al. 2017, 2). As the themes are built on codes identified on the basis of the interview transcriptions and not pre-existing theories, the codes of the transcriptions are developed through data-driving coding (Gibbs 2007, 45). Nowell et al. (2017) state that a "good code" is one that captures the qualitative richness of the phenomenon (Nowell et al. 2017, 6). In order to identify codes from the chosen themes, we have chosen to look for repetitions. Ryan and Bernard (2003) explain that looking for repetition is useful in qualitative transcriptions (Ryan & Bernard 2003, 89). When using thematic analysis, it is possible to code hierarchically which allows the researchers to have codes at varying levels (Nowell et al. 2017, 6). We have used this hierarchical coding method as we believed that it would provide more nuanced codes.

Nowell et al. (2017) have set out 6 phases of thematic analysis which are: *Phase 1: Familiarizing yourself with your data*, *Phase 2: Generating initial codes*, *Phase 3: Searching for themes*, *Phase 4: Reviewing themes*, *Phase 5: Defining and naming themes* and *Phase 6: Producing the report*

(Nowell et al. 2017, 4). The first 5 phases will be evident in our coding process (Appendix I) and the last phase will be outlined in the analysis (cf. 5).

3.7 Quality Assessment

In the following section, the quality of the thesis will be discussed. Making a quality assessment of both the quantitative data and qualitative data is important to determine and to ensure the applicability of the thesis.

First, the quality of the quantitative research is discussed through reliability and validity. Second, trustworthiness and ethics are used to assess the quality of the qualitative research.

3.7.1 Reliability and Validity

The believability of a quantitative research can be determined through reliability and validity. The reliability and validity of this research will be discussed in this following section.

3.7.1.1 Reliability

Reliability describes *the extent to which results are consistent over time and an accurate representation of the total population* (Golafshani 2003, 598). Furthermore, if the results of a study are able to be repeated under similar methodology, meaning if other researchers are able to follow the same methodology and arrive at the same results, the study is also considered to reliable (Golafshani 2003, 598). Amaratunga et al. (2002) state that the main goal of reliability is to minimize both errors and researcher biases in a research (Amaratunga 2002, 29) and a way to this, is through, among other things, stability (Golasfshani 2003, 599; Heale & Twycross 2015, 67). Stability can be tested by using test-retest which is where the instrument of data collection is provided to the same participants several times under similar circumstances. When there is a high degree of stability, it means that the results are repeatable, meaning a high degree of stability is reached (Golasfshani 2003, 599; Heale & Twycross 2015, 67). For the sake of this thesis, we have not tested the stability as we are limited on time. However, as we use mixed methods, we are able to cross-check the quantitative data with the qualitative data, and thereby ensure that there are stability between our results. As we have used online survey as a method, we have been unable to manage the respondents. The online survey might have excluded some respondents as perhaps only people

who find influencer marketing interesting have responded. This might have created a possibility that not all views of influencer marketing have been presented.

3.7.1.2 Validity

It is further important to ensure the validity of a quantitative research as well. According to Sue and Ritter (2007), validity can be evaluated by examining the connection between the research and if the research measures what it is supposed to measure (Sue & Ritter 2007, 2-3). Amaratunga (2002) describes internal and external validity. Amaratunga (2002) states that internal validity refers to whether the research allows the researchers to choose between different explanations of the studied phenomenon. If the research has high validity, the researcher can choose one explanation over another because there is high consistency between the research and the explanation (Amaratunga 2002, 29).

External validity refers to the extent to which the research can be generalized beyond the sample group. High external validity means that the research can be applicable to other groups or settings (Amaratunga 2002, 29). In the present thesis, we have attempted to increase the validity through our research design, as Golafshani (2003) argues that triangulation is a strategy which can increase the validity of the research, as it can limit bias and establish valid propositions (Golafshani 2003, 603). As our research is conducted through mixed methods, we are able to cross check the quantitative data from the online survey with the qualitative data from the interviews. Thereby, it increases the possibility of finding an explanation or an understanding of influencer marketing among youths from Thisted and Copenhagen. A comparison of the results from both the online survey and interviews can provide consistency between the findings. Furthermore, the use of quantitative online survey provides the opportunity to generalize the results. Generalization will be discussed in more depth in section 3.8.

3.7.2 Trustworthiness and Ethics

In this section, there will be accounted for the considerations about trustworthiness and ethics in relation to the qualitative data of this thesis. First, considerations about trustworthiness are outlined, and thereafter the ethical considerations will be discussed.

3.8.2.1 Trustworthiness

According to Nowell et al. (2017), trustworthiness is a way to persuade readers to believe the research findings are believable and worthy of attention in qualitative research (Nowell et al. 2017, 3). A way to ensure trustworthiness is through credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Nowell et al. 2017, 3; Bryman 2016, 384). These aspects of trustworthiness are considered a parallel to validity and reliability in quantitative research and will be considered more thoroughly in the following in relation to the qualitative data of this thesis.

3.7.2.1.1 Credibility

According to Nowell et al. (2017), *Credibility addresses the "fit" between respondents' views and the researcher's representation of them* (Nowell et al. 2017, 3). This is important in order for the findings to be perceived as believable (Nowell et al. 2017, 3). This can be ensured if the research is carried out to the principles of good practice (Bryman 2016, 384-386). Furthermore, the use of triangulation can enhance the credibility of a research (Bryman 2016, 653), as more than one method or source of data can create confidence in the findings and provide the possibility of cross checking the data (Bryman 2016, 384-386; Nowell et al. 2017, 3).

As the data of this thesis are obtained through online surveys and interviews, it is possible to cross check the answers from both data collection methods in order to determine whether there is consistency between the two. Through the use of mixed methods, the credibility of this thesis is thereby enhanced.

3.7.2.1.2 Transferability

Transferability involves whether it is possible to transfer the findings from one case to another case (Nowell et al. 2017, 3). Qualitative research is often made by empirical data from a small number of individuals. Therefore, it is important to provide a thick description of the research, so it is possible for other researchers to make judgements on whether it is possible to transfer the findings onto their own research (Bryman 2016, 384; Nowell et al. 2017, 3).

Transferability is shown throughout this thesis, as there are provided reasons and arguments for the choices made. Furthermore, there is also provided a thorough description of the research in relation to why it is relevant to research and how it is done.

3.7.2.1.3 Dependability

Another aspect of trustworthiness is dependability. According to Nowell et al. (2017) dependability can be achieved by documenting the research process. This can be done by for instance auditing relevant parts of the research. By obtaining records such as field notes, transcripts and other raw data can help researchers systemize and relate data. Other researchers with the same data should be able to come to the same conclusions, in order for the research to be perceived as dependable (Nowell et al. 2017, 3).

In this thesis, we conducted qualitative interviews, and to enhance the dependability, there are provided transcriptions of the interviews in appendix G and H. Thereby, it is possible to see what the participants stated before it was analyzed.

3.7.2.1.4 Confirmability

According to Bryman (2016) objectivity is impossible in qualitative research. However, the researcher can act in good faith, meaning that the researcher has not allowed personal values or theoretical inclinations to affect the research (Bryman 2016, 386).

Nowell et al. (2017) further state that the researcher should include reasons for theoretical, methodological and analytical choices. Furthermore, they argue that confirmability is established when credibility, transferability and dependability are achieved (Nowell et al. 2017, 3).

We have attempted, in the best possible way, to enhance credibility, transferability and dependability of this research and thereby reached confirmability. We have provided transcriptions, arguments, descriptions and explanations of the choices made throughout the whole research process. Therefore, we believe that we have taken the necessary steps to increase the trustworthiness of this thesis.

3.7.2.2 Ethical Considerations

In social research, there also are ethical considerations which should be taken into account. According to Bryman (2016), one way to do this, is by informing the participants about the subject of the interviews (Bryman 2016, 129-130). As the majority of our participants in the interviews are sampled through the online survey, they received the information which was provided before they answered the online survey. This information stated that we wanted to research their social media

habits. The reason for not going more into detail with the description, was that we did not want to lead them in a certain direction. Even though, we did not provide much details in the description, there is no reason to believe that the participants feel that they were tricked into answering something else than what we led on.

Furthermore, Bryman (2016) mentions that a written agreement might be beneficial for both the participant and the researcher (Bryman 2016, 13). Therefore, the interview participants were encouraged to sign a declaration of consent. This stated that the participants were willing to participate in the interview, we were allowed to audio record the participants and that we further were allowed to make use of the participants' interviews in this thesis. Furthermore, we promised to ensure anonymity in the case that some of the questions might be sensitive to the participants.

3.8 Generalization

This section will be an account for why the present thesis will contribute to the scientific development of influencer marketing and how the findings of the thesis can be generalized.

The present thesis sets out to generalize its findings to different settings and thereby contributing to the scientific development in influencer marketing. As the thesis acts as a case study, it is according to Flyvbjerg (2006), possible to generalize findings, which is one of Flyvbjerg's (2006) five misunderstandings about case studies (Flyvbjerg 2006, 221).

Even though, generalization is mostly valid in quantitative research, Polit and Beck (2010) argue that qualitative research can be generalized as well. However, the issue of generalization in qualitative research, is more complicated and controversial compared to quantitative research (Polit & Beck 2010, 1452). As it is possible to generalize in both quantitative research and qualitative research, it is inevitably also possible to generalize in mixed methods (Polit & Beck 2010). The present thesis will allow for case-to-case translation, which is more often referred to as transferability, where findings of an examination are able to be transferred to other people or settings. Even though, transferability mostly is used in qualitative research, Polit and Beck (2010) argue that it can be used in quantitative research as well (Polit & Beck 2010, 1453). This type of generalization is enhanced by thick description which refers to rich and thorough descriptive information about the processes, participants and the setting of the thesis (Polit & Beck 2010, 1453), which is evident throughout the whole thesis as we have provided arguments for the choices made. Thereby, the findings of this thesis can be transferred onto similar cases.

3.9 Limitations

This section will contain a review of the limitations of this research. First, social conditions that are excluded from the research will be reviewed, thereafter unequal response rates in the data will be reviewed. Finally, there will also be accounted for the considerations in relation to the number of interviews made.

3.9.1 Social Conditions

This research seeks to examine the experience of influencer marketing among youths from Thisted and Copenhagen. For this reason, the criteria for participating in this research have been that the participants were from one of these two areas and that they represented the wanted age-group. Thereby, geographical location and age were the two criteria which the participants were chosen from. This means that social conditions such as economy, gender and other background information about the participants, were not taken into account. Including such factors in the research might have provided a more nuanced picture on differences. However, the purpose of this research is not to shed light on differences between social conditions but to reach a broader understanding of how youths from Thisted and Copenhagen experience influencer marketing, in order to get a more general view of whether culture influence this experience.

3.9.2 Unequal Response Rate

In the online survey, there is a difference in the obtained number of responses from Thisted and Copenhagen, as we received 170 responses from Copenhagen and 49 responses from Thisted. The difference in numbers might suggest that the results are unequal and thereby less reliable. However, Hogg, Tanis and Zimmerman suggest that 30 responses with a normal variation are statistically reliable (Hogg, Tanis and Zimmerman 2015, 202). Therefore, we believe that the numbers in the response rate can show reliable tendencies for the findings of the present thesis. Furthermore, there live an unequal number in the two cities as Copenhagen is larger populated than Thisted, and therefore a difference in numbers is expected (Danmarks Statistik (b)).

There is also a difference in the number of conducted interviews. There are conducted six interviews from Copenhagen, and despite several efforts to find the same number of participants from Thisted, we were only able to find five people who were willing to participate in the

interviews. However, we do not believe that this will have an effect on the research results, as five interviews from Thisted still can provide us with the information needed. Furthermore, this still can show whether there are tendencies when comparing the findings from Thisted.

3.9.3 Total Number of Interviews

In this research, we have conducted an total amount of 11 qualitative interviews, and even though it is argued that it is difficult to determine a satisfying number of interviews in qualitative research (Bryman 2016, 416), it is still a rather low amount. The reason for this is due to limited time and resources. However, researchers such as Adler and Adler (2012) are cited by Bryman (2016) and they suggest a range between 12 and 60 interviews are satisfying (Bryman 2016, 416). Furthermore, Bryman (2016) argues that if there is a small number of different groups that should be compared in the research, a smaller number of interviews are sufficient (Bryman 2016, 416). As we only compare the participants by and age geography and not include other factors, we believe that a small number of interviews will be sufficient to examine the experience of influencer marketing between youths in Thisted and Copenhagen. Furthermore, as we make use of mixed methods, we are able to cross check findings from the interviews with the findings from the online survey, and thereby a smaller number of interviews is sufficient.

4. Literature review

This thesis has the aim to research the field of influencer marketing and how regional cultural differences are an aspect of this relatively new marketing tool. There is a research gap in the literature, as the literature have not yet engaged in the relation between influencer marketing and regional cultures. Therefore, the literature outlined in the following section, will provide knowledge about influencer marketing, culture and globalization.

In order to review these different perspectives, the literature review is divided into different sections. The first section will involve literature regarding digital marketing and influencer marketing in order to understand influencer marketing and its core values. As the before mentioned literature is not concerned with globalization and culture, this will be the focus of the second section. Here, there will be provided literature which is concerned with national culture, subcultures and globalization's impact on culture. The third section will provide different perspectives on globalization and how it affects marketing efforts. As this thesis sets out to research the cultural

aspect of influencer marketing in two areas in Denmark, the final section will be focused on literature regarding peripheral and urban areas and whether these are present in Denmark.

4.1 Digital Marketing and Influencer Marketing

In the following section there will be discussed literature regarding digital and influencer marketing. First, the literature will illustrate the existing research within this field, which will provide a general view of what researchers have already discovered. Second, the literature provides knowledge about the concept behind influencer marketing, what its' purpose is and how it can be used in future marketing efforts.

4.1.1 Digital marketing

The traditional marketing mix has changed throughout the years as social media and digitized marketing have emerged. Through social media and digitized marketing, consumers are able to create content that educate other consumers about products, brands, personalities and issues (Mangold & Faulds 2009, 357-358). Furthermore, Mangold and Faulds (2009) express that consumers feel more engaged with products and organizations when they are able to submit feedback which can be done through e.g. company blogs. Beyond that, people are more appealed to communicate through word-of-mouth and social media when they are engaged with the product or service and are emotionally connected to the product (Mangold & Faulds 2009, 361-363). The above mentioned literature argue that through digital marketing efforts, it is possible to engage consumers more with a brand. However, in order to understand in what ways this can be done, it is relevant to look further into literature concerning digital marketing and social media.

Bala and Verma (2018) have researched the understanding of the digital marketing and its techniques. Digital marketing is described as *achieving marketing objectives through applying digital technologies* (Bala & Verma 2018, 323). The researchers argue that traditional marketing has lost its power because consumers have become less trusting toward corporate messages and brands (Bala & Verma 2018, 325). Bala and Verma (2018) argue that this can be a reason for why organizations have realized the importance of digital marketing. Furthermore, they argue that organizations have also realized the importance of keeping up with the developing world and the rapid growth in technology. Therefore, organizations have to merge traditional marketing methods

with online methods in order for targeting the consumers more precisely (Bala & Verma 2018, 323-324).

Tiago and Veríssimo (2014) have also researched the use of digital marketing but in relation to social media. They argue that one of the biggest changes in human interaction came with the development of online social networks. They further state that online social networks enhance the benefits of the consumers, as it is easier to seek out others' opinions about specific products and consumers' value judgements from peers more than from organizational promotions (Tiago and Veríssimo 2014, 703-704). Therefore, Tiago and Veríssimo (2014) suggest that organizations should develop digital relationships with consumers through a web-based marketing strategy as it is important to be present where the consumers are. Tiago and Veríssimo (2014) further argue that through social media, it is possible to provide information, connect with stakeholders and ultimately generate sales. Furthermore, the usage of social media can lead to increased consumer engagement and stronger relationships with the consumers (Tiago and Veríssimo 2014, 704-708).

4.1.2 Influencer Marketing

Taking the above literature into account, it is possible to notice an increase in digital marketing through the later years. Therefore, we will look further into a relatively new concept of digital marketing, namely influencer marketing. Influencer marketing can provide some insights into what is in evidence when organizations are using influencer marketing to promote their brands. A broad and thorough understanding of this concept can provide a basis for researching youths' in Thisted and Copenhagen experience of influencer marketing.

Shareef et al. (2017) state that social media and the power of word-of-mouth have created a new type of consumers who have the ability to enhance brands' images in which consumers can influence other consumers. This type of new consumers become opinion leaders that organizations can use as a marketing tool to promote their brand (Shareef et al. 2017, 59-60). Shareef et al. (2017) state that entertainment and informativeness are essential factors in order for consumers to be persuaded by an advertising message. They further found that advertisements approved by peers have a positive effect on developing opinions among the consumers. In addition, there is a high level of irritation among consumers when an advertising message is passed along by an external formal source (Shareef et al. 2017, 60-65). A way to develop opinions among consumers on social media is through social media influencers (hereinafter influencers). Veirman, Cauberghe & Hudders

(2017) define influencers as *people who have built a sizeable social network of people following them* (Veirman, Cauberghe & Hudders 2017, 798). These researchers further state that influencers are seen as trusted tastemakers in one or several niche products (Veirman, Cauberghe & Hudders 2017, 798). According to Veirman, Cauberghe & Hudders (2017), influencers have many options when it comes to methods and platforms, they can be present on. Through blogging, vlogging and content in a short form, they are able to expose their followers with an insight into their experiences and opinions toward a brand, or even expose their personal and everyday life (Veirman, Cauberghe & Hudders 2017, 801). Additionally, Veirman, Cauberghe & Hudders (2017) state it is important that the organizations are choosing the right influencer to endorse their brand, as the influencer's image affects the image of the organization. When organizations are choosing influencers to endorse their brand, the aim is to build a positive image among the influencers' followers (Veirman, Cauberghe & Hudders 2017, 801). In order to do so, it is necessary to create a relationship between the influencer and the consumer. This relationship is examined more thoroughly by Lee and Watkins (2016). Their research is based on "YouTube-celebrities" and how they connect with the consumers and thereby influence their consumer behavior (Lee & Watkins 2016). Even though, their research is made in relation to consumers relationship with "YouTube-celebrities", it can also be useful when researching the relationship between consumers and all other types of influencers, as it can shed light on the relationship between youths from Thisted and Copenhagen and their experience of influencers. Lee and Watkins (2016) explain the relationship between consumers and "YouTube-celebrities" as para-social interaction (PSI). PSI can contribute to explain and understand the one-way relationship between the consumers and the "YouTube-celebrity". PSI is defined as: *interpersonal involvement of the media user with what he or she consumes* (Lee & Watkins 2016, 5754). Lee and Watkins (2016) state that this, among other things, involve seeking guidance from the media persona and viewing them as friends. PSI is therefore considered a friendship with the media personality, as the consumer feels like he or she knows and understands the media personality (Lee & Watkins 2016, 5753-5754). Furthermore, due to social media there is the possibility of two-way communication as well. This provides the opportunity for a more balanced relationship between the consumer and 'YouTube-celebrity'. However, the relationship still mainly consists of one-way communication (Lee & Watkins 2016, 5754). Furthermore, Lee and Watkins (2016) state that people who have similar beliefs, education and social status are more likely to interact with one another. Lee and Watkin's (2016) literature contributes with a knowledge that consumers feel as there are similarities between them and the "YouTube-celebrity", which

thereby might cause the consumers to interact with the "YouTube-celebrity". Because of this, Lee and Watkins (2016) believe that it is important that the "YouTube-celebrity" have similar values, beliefs and desires as the consumers in order to be most sufficient in their marketing message. This is because a feeling of connection with the "YouTube-celebrities" is important for the consumer. "YouTube-celebrities" are therefore, a useful tool when creating relationships with the consumers (Lee & Watkins 2016, 5754-5759).

Lee and Watkins' (2016) research can shed light on youths' from Thisted and Copenhagen experience of the relationship between the influencers and youths and what effect this might have.

Also, Childers, Lemon and Hoy (2018) argue that people today spend a lot of time on social media and therefore advertisers need to meet consumers where it is possible to connect with them. Influencer marketing has the advantages that it offers connectivity and engagement between consumers and brands in a new way (Childers, Lemon & Hoy 2018, 1). Childers, Lemon & Hoy (2018) argue that word-of-mouth and receiving recommendations from trusted sources are more important than ever for consumers in this digital world. Therefore, influencer marketing has gained popularity as it has the benefit of creating authentic content and driving brand engagement (Childers, Lemon & Hoy 2018, 2-3). Childers, Lemon and Hoy (2018) also found that influencer marketing provides an approach which builds trust and credibility with new potential consumers. A reason for this, is that influencer marketing is much more effective than for instance a banner because the users make a conscious choice to follow the specific influencer (Childers, Lemon & Hoy 2018, 3-8). Furthermore, Childers, Lemon and Hoy (2018) express that it is important for organizations to find the right influencer to brand a product/service in order to be perceived as credible. If the followers do not associate the influencer with the advertised product, they will not be persuaded by it. Therefore, it is more important that the influencer chose to market products/services which align with their own brand (Childers, Lemon & Hoy 2018, 12-13).

Reviewing the literature above, it is clear that influencer marketing is found to be an authentic and credible marketing method. Nonetheless, influencer marketing is a marketing tool which has the same purpose as traditional marketing, namely, to increase awareness of a brand and generate sales. Furthermore, influencers often get paid or receive other benefits for promoting brands/services. It strikes us that this form of marketing is perceived as credible and authentic when it mostly has the

same purpose as traditional marketing. Therefore, we find it necessary to explore credibility and authenticity more thoroughly in order to understand how this is involved in influencer marketing.

4.1.3 Credibility and Authenticity in Influencer Marketing

As touched upon in the above section, credibility and authenticity are major parts in influencer marketing that recur as core values in influencer marketing. Therefore, this section will focus on credibility and authenticity and what part they have on influencer marketing today, as it can help understand the experience of influencers among youths in Thisted and Copenhagen.

Molleda (2010) describes that today's technological changes and commercialism are creating a confusion among consumers which also undermine consumers ability to tell the difference of what is real and what is fake. However, it is the consumers who have the ability to grant validity and acceptance to the organization's identity through their personal judgement and life experiences (Molleda 2010, 226-228). Molleda (2010) believes that *We're at the start of an era where people want authentic stories about authentic people* (Molleda 2010, 224). Molleda (2010) uses the following words to describe authenticity; e.g. being reliable, trustworthy, original, real, genuine and being exactly what is claimed (Molleda 2010, 224). An important finding in Molleda's (2016) research is that authenticity is subjective and is perceived differently due to cultural differences, values and beliefs. Furthermore, he found that there has been a greater demand for transparency for organizations, and what they communicate is a reflection of their values and tradition. Furthermore, organizations capture the experiences, aspirations and expectations of their target segment (Molleda 2010, 229-234). This indicates that organizations have to consider the values and characteristics of the target segment they want to reach which might provide credibility and authenticity to the organizations.

Whereas Molleda's (2010) research focuses on the organizational aspects of credibility and authenticity, Wathen and Burkell (2002) researched this in relation to the consumers. This research is relevant to examine further, as this thesis researches the perception of credibility and authenticity in influencer marketing from a consumer perspective. Wathen and Burkell (2002) argue that people are exposed to a lot of information on the Internet on a daily basis and they are using the assessment of credibility to sort out the information they are exposed to (Wathen & Burkell 2002, 134-135). To decide which information should be filtered out, Wathen and Burkell (2002) argue that people make use of credibility and believability. The source of the information wants its messages to be attended

to, recalled and acted upon. If the receiver of the message does not find it credible, the message will be rejected and thereby, it does not have an impact. Wathen and Burkell (2002) state that credibility is generally made of source characteristics such as expertise and trustworthiness. Credibility also involves receiver characteristics such as cultural background and previous beliefs (Wathen & Burkell 2002, 134-135). In relation to credibility on the Internet, Wathen and Burkell (2002) argue that information hereon is judged through perceived credibility of the source. Therefore, expertise, knowledge and trustworthiness are key words in relation to the source's credibility, as receivers react directly to these qualities. Furthermore, it is important that the source information takes the values and characteristics of the receiver into account in order for their message to be perceived as credible (Wathen & Burkell 2002, 136-140). Additionally, Wathen and Burkell (2002) argue that the receivers' attitudes toward the source information also influence the judgement of the credibility of the message. A way to increase the credibility of the source and the message, is by tailoring the message to the beliefs and needs of the receiver (Wathen & Burkell 2002, 140-143). Similar to Wathen and Burkell (2002), Li and Suh (2015) also researched credibility on the Internet. However, their research is specific to social media platforms and they researched people below 30 years old. They express that a way to filter information out is through credibility and believability as well. According to Li and Suh (2015), the credibility of the information on social media platforms is decided by to which extend a person perceives the information to be believable (Li & Suh 2015, 315). Through their research, they discovered several factors which influence the perception of credibility. Li and Suh (2015) argue that transparency is an important factor when it comes to the credibility of the information. Furthermore, the possibility of interaction with the source of information has a positive effect on the perception of credibility. Another important discovery of their research was that young people, who are exposed to user-generated content, often find persuasive arguments in the content and based on this, they place trust in the source of the information. However, Li and Suh (2015) also found that personal expertise related to the content is not a requirement for credibility (Li & Suh 2015, 324). Additionally, to the above researchers who research credibility, Eisend (2004) also argues that credibility is a major part of persuasion (Eisend 2004, 352). Eisend (2004) define credibility as *a person's perception of the truth of a piece of information* (Eisend 2004, 352). As a communication process is present between at least two parties, the receiver of the information uses credibility to rate the source of the communication in relation to the information (Eisend 2004, 352).

As seen in the above literature about digital marketing and influencer marketing, it is noticeable that these are fields that are under development. The literature regarding influencer marketing revolves around what the concept is and how it is used in practice. It is clear that the phenomenon is not researched with different and nuanced aspects. Among other things, globalization and culture are not mentioned in the literature regarding influencers. When mentioning credibility and authenticity in relation to influencer marketing, it is difficult to disregard the notion of cultural values which possibly are an important part of influencer marketing as well. Therefore, the cultural aspect of influencer marketing cannot be ignored as we assume that it might have an impact on how youths from Thisted and Copenhagen perceive influencers. Hence, it is necessary to review literature about the cultural aspect in marketing.

4.2 Culture and Marketing

This section will entail a review of literature within the field of culture and marketing. There will first be addressed national cultures in marketing. Next, subcultures and marketing, will be reviewed. Last, literature within culture and globalization will be outlined.

4.2.1 National Culture in Marketing

Several researchers (Kale 1991; Nakata & Sivakumar 2001) have researched the role and relevance of national culture in marketing. Kale (1991) places the importance on understanding the underlying dimensions of culture which should increase the effectiveness of the promotional appeals across cultures. The underlying dimensions of culture are, according to Kale (1991), symbols which are shared among members who belong to the same culture. This sharing enables communication among individuals in a given culture (Kale 1991, 18-19). Kale (1991) further states that organizations need a framework which conceptualize the national culture of the markets they operate in. Kale (1991) states that it is important that the organizations understand the consumers' culture in order to make the communication process more effective. Both the content and the style of the organizations' communication are culture-based. As well are the information that are processed by the consumers and their decision making (Kale 1991, 18-22). Nakata and Sivakumar (2001) also argue that each culture has its own cognitive styles, which affect the individual's perception of marketing. The culture influences the consumers' thinking patterns and thereby, it also influences the individuals' view on organizational issues and concepts. Therefore, Nakata and

Sivakumar (2001) state that marketing concepts have to differ from one culture to another. The more the values of a culture group align with the marketing concept, the more likely the culture group is to adopt the marketing concept (Nakata & Sivakumar 2001, 258-271). Furthermore, Briley and Aaker (2006) argue that culture has an influence on the persuasiveness of a marketing message. Briley and Aaker (2006) also state that in general, marketing messages which are compatible with the receiver's cultural values are more likely to be viewed as appealing. In a persuasion context, the marketing material is often assessed on the basis of whether the concept aligns with a person's culture-based knowledge (Briley & Aaker 2006, 395-396). Briley and Aaker's (2006) research found that culture-based knowledge is most effective in a marketing manner when the information can be decoded in an easy and spontaneous way, and if the marketing vehicle does not invite the receiver to engage in a deliberate way (Briley & Aaker, 396-407). This shows that culture might influence the perception of the persuasiveness of marketing efforts.

Both Kale (1992), Nakata and Sivakumar (2001) and Briley and Aaker (2006) argue that national culture is important to consider in marketing perspectives. However, their research describes national culture as the only aspect organizations need to take into account when promoting their brands to different markets. We are wondering about this view on culture and marketing as it is presented very rigid, and therefore we will look further into whether other researchers have discovered a more nuanced view on national culture.

4.2.2 Subcultures and Marketing

According to Yaprak (2008), culture can range from a macro level to a micro level. This means that cultures can be found on national, organizational and industrial levels and down to smaller groups or on an individual level as well (Yaprak 2008, 216-217). Yaprak (2008) argues that developing an understanding of the complex phenomenon of culture, can create an effective marketing strategy which increases the marketing performance. A deeper understanding of national subcultures leads to a more focused marketing strategy. Yaprak (2008) suggests that a way to do this, is by focusing on regional subcultures as it leads to a more accurate map of a culture (Yaprak 2008, 218-226). Minkov and Hofstede (2012) also share this view of culture as they have studied the concept of national culture and whether there only exists national culture, or if a culture is built from smaller regional subcultures. They found that countries consist of multiple regional subcultures which can be similar to each other. However, the regional subcultures might also differ when it comes to

beliefs, behaviors etc. of the people living there (Minkov & Hofstede 2012, 134-154). Similar to Minkov & Hofstede (2012), Tung (2008) also argues that it is a mistake to assume that there only is one national culture within a country, as the number of subcultures within a country can vary. Some countries might have many different subcultures whereas others might have fewer. According to Tung (2008), culture is multi-layered and therefore organizations should avoid treating management practices in a culture, including marketing practices, as homogeneous. Therefore, it is important for organizations to consider differences between regional subcultures in order to achieve the most effective marketing results (Tung 2008, 41-45). Oyserman (2017) has researched differences in regional subcultures more in depth and she argues that people might act differently in different places because every culture and subculture have a particular set of practices, which structures what seems obvious, normative and real. Culture is always experienced as a basis for choice and action both consciously and subconsciously (Oyserman 2017, 443-446). Oyserman (2017) further argues that countries with less inequality will experience less hardening of subcultures. Therefore, inequalities and differences within a country can create subcultures (Oyserman 2017, 448).

The above literature within the field of subcultures have a more constructivist approach compared to the literature of national culture. This entails that subcultures are described as more dimensional and organic. However, the literature does not take into account potential changes and developments in the world which might have an impact on the different cultures. It puzzles us that the notion of globalization does not act a bigger part in the above literature, as we believe that it might influence the development of cultures both on a supranational and a intranational level. Therefore, we will look further into research regarding culture and globalization.

4.2.3 Globalization's Impact on Culture

Some research (Greig 2002; Ladhari, Souiden & Choi 2015; Jensen, Arnett & McKenzie 2011) shows that globalization contributes to reduce cultural differences across countries, which leads to a certain level of homogeneity across cultures. Ladhari, Souiden & Choi (2015) argue that *cultures are increasingly connected by "global flows diffusing ideas, products and images across the world"* (Ladhari, Souiden & Choi 2015, 236). This entails that consumer segments no longer can be defined by national borders as consumers more and more share similar cultural orientations (Ladhari, Souiden & Choi 2015, 236). Greig (2002) argues that these cultural orientations are easily shared as globalization brought along the technological development such as phones, television, air

travel and the Internet. Greig (2002) researched how globalization and communication affect culture in the international system (Greig 2002, 225-227). Even though, Greig's (2002) research is based on an international level, the findings can contribute to shed light on how globalization impact different cultures within countries as well.

According to Greig (2002), the expanded possibilities of communication have created a broader range of interaction between local groups and across cultural groups. The opportunity for more global communication offers the possibility for people to interact with and adopt new cultural values (Greig 2002, 229-231). Furthermore Greig (2002) expresses that the communication channels contribute to decrease the number of unique cultural traits and thereby increasing a higher degree of homogeneity among cultures in the world. Greig (2002) argues that this is due to the two-way communication where people from different cultures have a back-and-forth nature of interaction which means that cultures influence each other (Greig 2002, 234-242). Furthermore, he states that it is easier to maintain cultural values in areas that are more disconnected from different communication channels (Greig 2002, 234-237). Greig's (2002) final argument in his research is that as globalization impacts cultures and contributes to more similarities in the world, it makes communication efforts less difficult to manage (Greig 2002, 242-243).

Also, Jensen, Arnett and McKenzie (2011) argue that the impact of globalization happens across the whole world. However, they state that the experience with globalization can vary from location to location. They further state that globalization for instance is more evident in urban areas than in peripheral areas (Jensen, Arnett & McKenzie 2011, 286-287).

4.2.4 Globalization and Youths

Jensen, Arnett and McKenzie's (2011) research also focuses on the influence of globalization towards adolescence (10-18 years old) and emerging adults (18-29 years old). Their research is relevant to look further into, as it might shed light on how globalization affects the younger generation, which is the focus of the present thesis. Jensen, Arnett and McKenzie (2011) argue that adolescence and emerging adults are growing up in one culture and at the same time living in a globalized world where they are increasingly being exposed to and in interaction with people from various cultures. This can both be first-hand but also indirectly through media platforms. As adolescence and emerging adults are increasingly exposed to and in interaction with people from various cultures, Jensen, Arnett and McKenzie (2011) argue that it is complex to develop a cultural identity as it is might be necessary to comprise several cultures. Developing a cultural identity

means adopting beliefs and practices from one or more cultural communities (Jensen, Arnett & McKenzie 2011, 286-287). Moreover, Jensen, Arnett and McKenzie (2011) argue that adolescents and emerging adults are more influenced by globalization than children and adults because they are more exposed to things such as the Internet. Furthermore, they have a larger interest in the new and popular media culture (Jensen, Arnett & McKenzie 2011, 286-287). Jensen, Arnett and McKenzie (2011) state that a part of this media culture is social networks, such as Facebook, which provides connectivity and overcome geographical boundaries. It is easier to connect with other people because of such networks. This also means that adolescence and emerging adults have better opportunities to create interactions with people from different cultures. These interactions further influence the everyday lives of the young people, which also provide the chance that the interactions will influence cultural practices such as habits, behaviors and decisions (Jensen, Arnett & McKenzie 2011, 289).

Jensen, Arnett and McKenzie (2011) conclude that globalization's influence on adolescents and emerging adults, result in the cultural identity of the individual become more and more intertwined. This additionally means that the assumption that people are born into one culture, which is the only basis for the creation of cultural identity, is no longer a valid argument (Jensen, Arnett & McKenzie 2011, 290).

The above literature about culture and globalization suggests that cultures across the world become more and more similar. Even though, the literature is based on international research, we believe that it can be applied to national cultures as well as people living within a certain country are, to some degree, exposed to the same level of globalization through the possibility of using the internet, phones, television and social networks etc. Although, the above literature suggests that there are similarities between cultures due globalization, there are still a disagreement among some researchers if this is the case when it comes to globalization and marketing. This will be reviewed in the following section.

4.3 Global Marketing Strategy

This section will account for literature which entails the discussion of standardization and adaption in marketing strategies

4.3.1 Globalization and Standardization

Madhavaram, Badrinarayanan and McDonald (2005) researched integrated marketing communication and brand identity. They argue that the brand identity helps the brand build high equity, and therefore an organization should develop one well-communicated brand identity as it positively influences integrated marketing communication (Madhavaram, Badrinarayanan & McDonald 2005, 76). They further state that a fundamental finding in their research is that a brand identity will lead to a more synergistic and effective integrated marketing communication (Madhavaram, Badrinarayanan & McDonald 2005, 77). These findings indicate that an organization should identify a clear image for the organization, which should be communicated throughout all the marketing efforts. However, this research does not consider this notion in relation to globalization. One of the first researchers to shed light on marketing efforts in a globalized context, was Levitt (1983). He is one of the most cited and recognized researchers within this research field (Medina & Duffy 1998, 230). Levitt (1983) argues that the powerful force of technology is driving the world today and has made the world's cultures less isolated from each other. This means that the global market has emerged and with this, the term standardization has become a factor to consider, as national and regional preferences are gone (Levitt 1983, 92). According to Levitt (1983) organizations have the opportunity to sell the same items in the same way across the world, as people's needs and desires have become more homogenized (Levitt 1983, 93). Levitt (1983) further describes that national differences of taste and doing business have disappeared which leads to standardization of products, manufacturing and marketing. Moreover, he argues that small local segments have access to technology which make them a part of the global competition, and global competition erases domestic territories (Levitt 1983, 93-94). A research which is more contemporary within this field, is made by Hussain and Khan (2013). In their research they also state some of the same advantages of standardization of marketing as Levitt (1983). They for instance mention that the global market is becoming more homogeneous and can allow organizations to develop standardized strategies. They further describe a number of positive effects of standardization such as it helps organizations in the achievement of economic scales, faster learning experience and increase competitive advantages. Furthermore, they state that developing more innovative products can be a positive effect on standardization as the organizations' resources can be used in the development of products rather than using the resources to adapt to each market (Hussain & Khan 2013, 354-355). However, Hussain and Khan (2013) also find it necessary to

consider the advantages of adaptation of marketing strategies. They state that adaptation allows the organizations to understand the needs and wants of each consumer. This is an advantage as there are differences such as culture, rules, lifestyles, values and belief systems across the world, and understanding these differences might create a competitive advantage (Hussain & Khan 2013, 356). Therefore, Hussain and Khan (2013) argue that organizations need to balance the marketing strategy between standardization and adaptation in order to gain the most positive effects (Hussain & Khan 2013, 357). Hereby, this research by Hussain and Khan (2013) contributes with another perspective than Levitt (1983), which entails that standardization might not be the best possible way to develop a marketing strategy in this globalized world. This might be due to the fact that the research is made with a 30 years difference, and the world develops. This might show that it is valuable for organizations to consider the characteristics of the specific markets they brand themselves in. This perspective on standardization in marketing is also shared by Viswanathan and Dickson (2007). However, they have a different angle in their research, as they attempt to provide a framework of how to decide if standardization or adaptation of a marketing strategy are the best possible choice. Viswanathan and Dickson (2007) have researched what role competition plays in the development of a marketing strategy and how this affects the choice of standardization of marketing strategies. They found this important as globalization might have an effect on the decision of whether to standardize or adapt marketing strategies to a specific market (Viswanathan & Dickson 2007, 46-47). Viswanathan and Dickson's (2007) framework is focused on the homogeneity of consumers' response to the marketing mix. They argue that homogeneous consumers might have heterogeneous wants and vice versa. However, if consumers' respond similarly to the marketing mix, it is beneficial to make use of a standardized marketing strategy. Therefore, homogeneity of the consumers' response to the marketing mix rather than homogeneity of consumers themselves, are relevant to examine in the discussion of whether to standardize or adapt marketing strategies (Viswanathan & Dickson 2007, 50). Viswanathan and Dickson (2007) further state that the environment of the markets should be considered as different sets of constraints in the markets, might suggest that it is difficult to implement a standardized marketing strategy. However, if the constraints are similar across markets, a standardized marketing strategy is the most effective choice. If two markets are similar, Viswanathan and Dickson (2007) suggest that the marketing strategy and the competitive advantages are transferable to other markets and thereby a standardization of a marketing is possible (Viswanathan & Dickson 2007, 50-53).

Viswanathan and Dickson (2007) argue that the consumers' response to the marketing mix is an important factor to consider when developing marketing strategies. In order to identify homogeneity or heterogeneity among consumers' perception of the marketing mix, there are several factors to look at such as demographic, geographic, benefits and usage situation (Viswanathan & Dickson 2007, 54). Furthermore, Viswanathan and Dickson (2007) state that consumers' response to the marketing mix can be examined through their response to product, promotion, price and place (Viswanathan & Dickson 2007, 54). Thereby, it is possible to use the consumers' response to the marketing mix to discover the degree of homogeneity or heterogeneity within a certain market. This can further shed light on whether to standardize or adapt a marketing strategy. This is also useful when generating marketing ideas within influencer marketing, as it can shed light on whether to use the same influencers in the same way regardless of which market the organization brands to.

4.3.2 Globalization and Adaption

Even though, some of the above literature suggests that it is beneficial to consider standardization in marketing strategies, there are also literature which points towards adaptation of marketing strategies. For instance, Quelch and Hoff (1993) have researched whether to tailor marketing strategies to different markets or not. Quelch and Hoff (1993) argue that it would be ideal if organizations could develop one marketing strategy which would work worldwide. However, this assumption might be too extreme in this globalized world. They state that consumers differ across markets which make it difficult to anticipate and conceptualize all the consumers' needs into one marketing strategy. Therefore, they argue that flexibility is an important factor when tailoring marketing to different markets (Quelch & Hoff 1993, 267). According to Quelch and Hoff (1993), organizations need to find a way to tailor the same products or services to different markets and at the same time make the marketing efforts fit to both the organization's identity and the markets (Quelch & Hoff 1993, 267). Additionally, Ren and Blichfeldt (2011) support Quelch and Hoff's (1993) findings when they researched whether an organization should have one clear image, or it is beneficial to tailor it to different markets. Their research is made in relation to place branding or destination branding in tourism, nevertheless their findings might suggest or shed light on branding perspectives which can be useful in other areas beside tourism.

Ren and Blichfeldt (2011) argue that the traditional way of marketing is comprised of the notion that 'one clear image' is the best way to communicate, because a clear image can reach consumers better in this globalized world that is filled with different types of commutation possibilities.

According to this view, one clear image might be more effective than several images (Ren & Blichfeldt 2011, 419). However, it is argued by Ren and Blichfeldt (2011) that there has been an increase in interpretive and semiotic approaches as these assumptions challenge the 'one clear image' view, as image formation can be related to subjective and cultural translations (Ren & Blichfeldt 2011, 421). Ren and Blichfeldt's (2011) research contributes with the perspective that branding and cultural communication should represent the place, the people and the activities in a certain place. Ren and Blichfeldt (2011) further state that it is important to understand a place as a specific area or market because it does not contain pre-given qualities which just can be extracted from it (Ren & Blichfeldt 2011, 430).

When reviewing the above literature about globalization and marketing, it is possible notice that there are different perspectives of whether organizations have to adapt or standardize their marketing efforts to different markets. As mentioned earlier, there are a discussion of the creation of peripheral and urban areas in Denmark which might determine whether organizations have to adapt or standardize their marketing efforts. Therefore, it is relevant to review literature regarding peripheral and urban areas, as this may shed light on how organizations can utilize influencer marketing in Denmark. Therefore, the following section will entail a review of this.

4.4 Differences between Peripheral and Urban Areas

The following section will entail a review of literature of peripheral and urban areas. The review will be narrowed down into literature regarding peripheral and urban areas in Denmark.

According to Dinis (2006), people living in peripheral areas are no more isolated from the global trends than other areas. However, Dinis (2006) also argues that people living in peripheral areas are more connected to "tradition" and "conservative" practices than people in urban areas. This might suggest that people in peripheral areas are more prone to be persuaded by traditional ways of marketing (Dinis 2006, 10-11). Therefore, organizations have to have knowledge about the peripheral areas in order to create the most effective marketing strategy (Dinis 2006, 11-14). We wonder that Dinis (2006) states that organizations only have to have knowledge about the peripheral areas as we believe that regardless of which market organizations market to, it is important to have knowledge about the markets in order to use marketing efforts most effective in

the specific area. As this thesis sets out to explore cultural differences in Denmark, it is pertinent to review literature regarding peripheral and urban areas in Denmark.

Similar to Dinis (2006), Svendsen and Svendsen (2016) also argue that the peripheral lifestyle is based on more traditions and positive values which involves strong intra-group ties and local embeddedness. On the other hand, they state that there are more division, anonymity and impersonal relationships between people in larger populated areas. According to Svendsen and Svendsen (2016) people living in peripheral areas in Denmark have higher levels of life satisfaction and mutual trust, personal acquaintances and solidarity than people in urban areas (Svendsen & Svendsen 2016, 56-68). Also, Sørensen (2012) researched differences among peripheral and urban areas in Denmark but focuses his research on Western Jutland and Copenhagen. He had the assumption that people from Western Jutland in Denmark are more reliable and trustworthy than people living in Copenhagen. Therefore, he studied whether there is a higher social capital, including trust, among people living in peripheral areas in Denmark (Sørensen 2012, 874-875). He found that there is not a higher social trust in peripheral areas than in urban areas in Denmark, which might be due to the size of the country as general norms converge between regions in such a small country as Denmark (Sørensen 2012, 876-886).

When looking at both Sørensen (2012) and Svendsen and Svendsen (2016), it is noticeable that there is a four-year gap between their research, which might be a reason for the differences in their findings in regard to peripheral and urban areas in Denmark. This might indicate that there has been a cultural development in Denmark throughout the four years that might explain the differences in their findings. This suggests that the Danish population becomes more heterogeneous.

Reviewing all the above literature, have enabled us to discover that the notions of culture and globalization are areas that not have been researched in relation to influencer marketing. Therefore, the present thesis main goal is to contribute with a new perspective within the field of influencer marketing. This is done by examining how regional cultural differences among youths in two specific areas in Denmark, Thisted and Copenhagen, influence the experience of influencer marketing. Furthermore, investigating regional cultural differences in relation to influencer marketing might generate marketing ideas for organizations to take into consideration when they market their brand to different cultures and subcultures.

5. Analysis

This section will consist of an analysis of the obtained data. The analysis will be divided into two main sections, which will each have additional subsections. The first section of the analysis will be an overview of regional differences between a peripheral and an urban area in Denmark, which is comprised of external sources. The following section will be an analysis of the empirical data obtained from the online survey and the interviews. This section will account for the prevalence of influencer marketing and how youths from Thisted and Copenhagen make use of influencers. Each section will provide different perspectives to how youths experience influencer marketing.

5.1 Background of Regional Differences between Thisted and Copenhagen

Based on the literature about the differences between peripheral and urban areas (cf. 4.4), we have the conception that there are exist regional cultural differences between the peripheral and urban Denmark. These differences might influence the experience of influencer marketing among youths from Thisted and Copenhagen. Therefore, we will examine these further in the following section. There will first be outlined the common differences between the two cities.

Denmark is a relatively small country with 5,806,081 inhabitants. Compared to its neighbor-countries, Sweden and Germany, which are respectively ten and eight times larger (Danmarks Statistik (a), 2, 4). In spite of the small size of Denmark, there are a lot of differences in how Danish people are living. This has for instance become visible in the public debate the later years, where the discussion of regional cultural differences has been conspicuous. Especially, the differences between the peripheral and urban areas in Denmark have been of attention in the Danish media. In the following, a description of Northern Jutland and Copenhagen and some of their differences will be elaborated. Because Thisted is a part of Northern Jutland, we must assume that the facts about Northern Jutland apply to Thisted as well.

First of all, there are a distinct difference in the size of the two parts of Denmark under investigation. The population of the municipality of Thisted is 43,660 inhabitants and there live 623,404 in Copenhagen (Danmarks Statistik (b)). In addition to this, people living in and around Copenhagen have easier access to jobs than people living in the Western part of Jutland. Statistics of Denmark states that people with a higher accessibility to jobs, have a higher income (Christensen et al. 2018, 1). This is shown as people living in Thisted have an average yearly income of 289,210

DKK, and people living in Copenhagen, have an average yearly income of 319,745 DKK (Appendix J). Secondly, Skov (2012) have argued that it is difficult to retain the younger part of the population in peripheral areas, e.g. Thisted, due to the decrease in public institutions and because of the poor employment opportunities (Skov 2012, 12). Contrary, skilled workers and people without a formal education are decreasing in Copenhagen, and people with a bachelor- or a master's degree are increasing (Bennlke 2017). Lastly, when looking at the broad cultural habits in Thisted and Copenhagen, there are differences as well. According to Nielsen & Roliggaard (2016), individualists are mainly living in urban areas, e.g. Copenhagen, whereas community-oriented people primarily are living in peripheral areas, e.g. Thisted (Nielsen & Roliggaard 2016). Furthermore, people living in Copenhagen have more cultural interests as they more frequently are going to museums, theaters, ballet performances etc. compared to people living in Northern Jutland. On the other hand, people living in Northern Jutland are more engaged in community-oriented sports such as soccer and handball, whereas people living in Copenhagen are joining a fitness center more often (Nielsen & Roliggaard 2016). Also, when it comes to the use of technology, there are differences between the two areas. When looking at Northern Jutlanders and Copenhageners and their online media consumption and flow TV consumption, there are some differences as well. According to the Statistics of Denmark, 62 % of people living in Copenhagen use streaming services whereas only 50 % of Northern Jutlanders do the same (Appendix K). However, people living in Northern Jutland watch more flow TV (Nielsen & Roliggaard 2016).

The above shows that there are many differences to be found between Thisted and Copenhagen. These differences might also be evident in the culture, including subcultures, in the two cities. Therefore, the following will consist of an analysis of youths' from Thisted and Copenhagen social behavior, their perception of the society they live in and their use of social media. This is done in order to obtain knowledge about the differences among youths from Thisted and Copenhagen.

5.2 Findings of Empirical Data

This section will consist of an analysis of the empirical data. The section will first examine the quantitative data which will focus on the prevalence of influencer marketing and hereafter the qualitative data will be analyzed. The qualitative analysis will show how the youths use influencer marketing and what it is used for. Different perspectives will be provided through additional subsections.

5.2.1 The Prevalence of Influencer Marketing

The following section will be an analysis based of the quantitative data and entails the prevalence of social media and influencer usage among youths from Thisted and Copenhagen.

As it is argued that social media and influencer marketing have gained a lot of popularity and further that young people spend much time on social media (cf. 4.1.2), it is important to establish the youths' from Thisted and Copenhagen social media usage and if and what they use of influencers for.

When looking at the online survey at first glance, it is possible to notice that the respondents from both Thisted and Copenhagen are more or less similar in their responses. However, when looking closer, it is possible to discover differences between the responses among the respondents from both cities as well. Both the differences and similarities will be outlined in the following.

One response that all the respondents agree on, is that everyone use social media and the most used platforms among youths from both Thisted and Copenhagen are Facebook, Instagram, SnapChat and YouTube (Appendix C+D, question 4). Furthermore, the majority of the respondents from both Thisted and Copenhagen spend between one hour and three hours a day on social media. However, 33 % of the respondents from Thisted spend more than three hours on social media a day whereas the only 21 % of the respondents from Copenhagen spend more than three hours a day on social media (Appendix C+D, question 5). This might indicate that youths from Thisted have more free time to be active on social media compared to youths from Copenhagen. This could be linked to that Copenhagen might offer more activities that provide the youths to be more social.

Having established that, all of the respondents from both Thisted and Copenhagen are active on social media on a daily basis, it is further relevant to determine if they follow influencers on social media. It was found that 67 % of the respondents from Thisted and 75 % of the respondents from Copenhagen follow influencers on social media (Appendix C+D, question 6). This shows that the majority of youths in both Thisted and Copenhagen are familiar with influencers which makes it relevant to examine how influencers are used by youths from Thisted and Copenhagen.

The type of influencers that the respondents from Thisted follow are most influencers that are involved with diet and workout. This is evident as 56 % have answered that. Subsequently, 53 % of

the respondents from Thisted follow influencers that are involved with fashion, 44 % follow influencers that are involved with beauty, 25 % follow influencers that are involved with food and 19 % have responded 'other' which e.g. are influencers that are involved in lifestyle, idols, interior design and humor (Appendix C, question 7). Similar to the respondents from Thisted, the majority (69 %) of the respondents from Copenhagen follow influencers that are involved with diet and workout as well. Furthermore, following influencers that are involved with fashion represent 63 % of the respondents from Copenhagen. The same percentage (63 %) is evident in the respondents who follow influencers that are involved with beauty. Furthermore, 60 % of the respondents from Copenhagen follow influencers that are involved with food (Appendix D, question 7). Similar to the respondents from Thisted, the respondents from Copenhagen have also added supplementary comments to which types of influencers they follow. In addition to the other types of influencers the respondents from Thisted follow, the respondents from Copenhagen also added e.g. influencers that represent politics, feminists, artists and Christians (Appendix D, question 7).

The above numbers indicate that youths in Thisted and Copenhagen primarily follow the same types of influencers. However, as it is visible that the percentage is higher from the answers by the respondents from Copenhagen, it might suggest that youths from Copenhagen follow a wider variety of influencers compared to youths from Thisted. This can entail that youths from Copenhagen are exposed to a wider variety of content from influencers.

Having established what type of influencers youths from both Thisted and Copenhagen follow, it is pertinent to determine why they follow the influencers they do. The online survey shows that the majority of the respondents from both Thisted and Copenhagen follow influencers because they find them interesting to follow. In accordance with this, it is noticeable that the respondents' answers to the question *Why do you follow influencers?* (Appendix C+D, question 8) are quite similar. For instance, 44 % of the respondents from Thisted follow influencers to seek advice from them, where 40 % of the respondents from Copenhagen follow influencers for the same reason. The online survey correspondingly shows that 33 % of the respondents from Copenhagen answered that they follow influencers because they want to get an insight into their personal life, and 36 % of the respondents from Thisted answered the same. However, looking closer at the other possible options, there are some greater differences in why the respondents follow influencers. Almost a fifth of the participants from Copenhagen follow influencers because they share similar views with the influencer (18 %) whereas it is over a third of the participants from Thisted who follow influencers

due to similar views with the influencer (33 %). This might indicate that youths from Thisted, to a greater extent, seek influencers that resemble themselves as they might be more comfortable to follow influencers, they feel that they know.

It is further possible to establish that the respondents from Copenhagen are more varied in their responses as they have added supplementary reasons for why they follow influencers, which the respondents from Thisted have not. This shows, as mentioned, that youths from Copenhagen, follow influencers for more varied reasons, which might indicate that they have given the notion of why they follow influencers more thoughts.

Another diversion in the answers toward why the respondents follow influencers, is that 44 % of the respondents from Copenhagen follow influencers because they want recommendations of products or services, whereas only 36 % of the respondents from Thisted want the same. The difference in the responses could suggest that youths living in Copenhagen have more access to offers that are worth seeking recommendations to. This could be because Copenhagen presumably offers more restaurants, shopping opportunities, hairdressers etc. to its citizens. An additional reason for this, could be that there assumable live more influencers in Copenhagen than in Thisted.

It is further interesting to look further into if any of the respondents from Thisted and Copenhagen actually have bought products that were recommended or advertised by influencers. This will show the effect of influencer marketing among youths from Thisted and Copenhagen.

When looking at the answers from the respondents from Thisted, it is possible to notice that 33 % have bought a product that was recommended by an influencer, which means that 67 % have not. However, looking at the responses from Copenhagen, a total of 41 % have bought an influencer recommended product which means that 59 % have not (Appendix C+D, question 9). Here, it is suggested that the majority of the respondents have not bought a product based on a recommendation by an influencer. However, it is also evident that more respondents from Copenhagen have bought an influencer recommended product. This could indicate that influencer marketing might be more effective in Copenhagen than in Thisted.

A reason why some of the respondents from both Thisted and Copenhagen have bought an influencer recommended product, might be discovered when looking into if the respondents trust a recommendation made by an influencer. It could further show why there is a difference between how many of the respondents from Thisted and Copenhagen have bought a product recommended

by an influencer. In order to determine the level of trust the respondents have in a recommendation made by an influencer, they were asked to rate their trust on a scale from 1-5 where 1 being 'not at all' and 5 being 'very' (Appendix C+D, question 10). When comparing the scales from Thisted and Copenhagen, it displays that 31 % of the respondents from Thisted rated 1, which entails that they do not trust recommendations made by influencers at all, and only 22 % of the respondents from Copenhagen rated the same. Furthermore, 22 % of the respondents from Thisted rated their trust at a 2 whereas 28 % of the participants from Copenhagen rated the same. As 1 and 2 on the scale represent low trust in influencer recommendations, it is noticeable that combined, approximately 50 % from each city have no or low trust in recommendations made by influencers. In both Thisted and Copenhagen, one of the highest ratings were 3 on the scale as 31 % of the respondents from Thisted and 37 % of the respondents from Copenhagen rated it on the scale. This might suggest that the respondents place their trust to influencer recommendations in between, meaning that they do not trust, nor do they distrust recommendations made by influencers. Furthermore, the scale also displays that even though the respondents from Thisted have the least trust in recommendations made by influencers, it is also indicates that they have the highest trust as well, as 18 % of the respondents from Thisted rated their trust at a 4 whereas only 12 % of the participants from Copenhagen rated the same. The interesting part here is that the respondents from Thisted have the least trust in recommendations made by influencers and at the same time, they have the highest trust as well. This might indicate that youths from Thisted are more polarized as they have different positions toward their trust in influencer recommendations.

In addition to the findings above, it is noticeable that the majority of the respondents from both Thisted and Copenhagen view influencers as somebody who provide, recommendations, inputs, advise etc. (Appendix C+D, question 14). This might be linked with that 40 % of the respondents from Thisted view influencers as strangers, whereas 49 % of the respondents from Copenhagen believe the same (Appendix C+D, question 14). However, there are several more respondents from Thisted, 19 %, who view influencers as someone who they have a relation with. Comparing this with Copenhagen, only 8 % of the respondents have responded that. This indicates that youths from Thisted are more likely to feel that they have relation with influencers compared to youth living in Copenhagen. This aligns with that 12 % of the respondents from Thisted believe that they know the influencers on a more personal level whereas only 6 % of the respondents from Copenhagen believe they do the same (Appendix C+D, question 14). This might indicate that youths from Copenhagen

are more prone to view their relationship with influencers as distant. Thereby, they might be more distrusting toward influencer marketing, compared to youths from Thisted, who feel that they know and have a relation with the influencers. Even though, it was found that youths from Copenhagen have the least trust in influencers, they still buy influencer recommended products to a greater extent compared to youths from Thisted, who feel that they have a relation with influencers. It might therefore indicate that youths from Copenhagen are viewing influencers in a more business-related context where they receive recommendations from the influencers. This might further indicate that youths from Thisted view influencers through a more personal lens that suggest that they do not use influencers for the sake of the product recommendations.

Based on the above, it is relevant to look further into whether the respondents from Thisted and Copenhagen have similar or different views when it comes to trustworthiness or untrustworthiness toward influencers. This can be viewed when looking to what extent the respondents chose to unfollow influencers. The majority of the respondents from both Thisted and Copenhagen have chosen to unfollow an influencer due to too much advertisement. This is shown as 67 % of the respondents from Thisted and 80 % of the respondents from Copenhagen have unfollowed an influencer due to too much advertisement (Appendix C+D, question 13). This might suggest that youths from Copenhagen have less trust in influencers when they advertise. This aligns with when 77 % of the respondents from Copenhagen have unfollowed an influencer because he or she seemed untrustworthy (Appendix D, question 13). On the contrary, 60 % of the respondents from Thisted have unfollowed an influencer because they thought he or she seemed untrustworthy. Additionally, 'the content is no longer relevant to me' and 'they are no longer interesting to follow' are reasons why the participants from both Thisted and Copenhagen unfollow influencers (Appendix C+D, question 13).

The aforementioned division in percentage between Thisted and Copenhagen, might indicate that youths from Thisted are more loyal toward the influencers they follow and find these influencers more trustworthy, as less of the respondents from Thisted have unfollowed influencers due to too much advertisement. However, it is still the majority of youths from both Thisted and Copenhagen who have unfollowed an influencer due to too much advertisement. This might indicate that they prefer content other than advertisement.

Another aspect that can affect the trustworthiness towards influencers is that the influencers advertise products and services that relate to their personal brand. In order to determine the level of importance of this connection, the respondents were asked to rate their trust on a scale from 1-5 where 1 being 'not important' and 5 being 'very important' (Appendix C+D, question 11). The majority of the respondents from Thisted believe that it is important that influencers advertise products and services that relate to their personal brand. This is shown as 22 % rated the importance at a 4 on the scale and 22 % rated the importance at a 5 on the scale. Comparing this with the respondents from Copenhagen, 19 % rated the importance at a 4 on the scale and only 15 % rated the importance at a 5 on the scale. However, 39 % of the respondents from Thisted rated the importance at a 1 on the scale and 36 % of the respondents from Copenhagen rated the same. This shows that there are not major differences in how important youths from Thisted and Copenhagen find that influencers advertise products and services that relate to their personal brand. Furthermore, 18 % of the respondents from Thisted and only 6 % of the respondents from Copenhagen have placed the importance at a 3 on the scale which might suggest that more respondents from Thisted do not find it important that there are a relation between what influencers advertise and their personal brand, nor do they find it unimportant. The respondents from Thisted and Copenhagen are similar in their opinions on this matter. Furthermore, they are mixed in how they perceive the importance of the relation between the advertised products and the influencer's personal brand, and thereby it is difficult to determine a conclusive answer to what this might indicate.

5.2.1.1 Sub Conclusion: The Prevalence of Influencer Marketing

Viewing the above analysis of the prevalence of influencer marketing among youths from Thisted and Copenhagen, it is possible to establish that youths from both Thisted and Copenhagen are active on social media. The most used platforms among the youths are Facebook, Instagram, SnapChat and YouTube. The majority of youths from both cities spend between 1-3 hours a day. However, more youths from Thisted compared to youths from Copenhagen spend more than 3 hours a day on social media. This might indicate that youths from Thisted have more free time to be active on social media than youths from Copenhagen.

It is further possible to determine that the majority of youths from both Thisted and Copenhagen follow influencers on social media. They primarily follow the same type of influencer. However, the findings suggest that youths from Copenhagen follow a wider variety of influencers which might entail that they are being exposed to a wider variety of content from influencers. Youths from

both Thisted and Copenhagen have similar reasons to why they follow influencers. They primarily follow influencers to receive inspiration, recommendations etc. and to get an insight into their personal lives. However, youths from Copenhagen follow influencers to receive recommendations, inspiration etc. to a greater extent compared to youths from Thisted. On the other hand, youths from Thisted follow influencers who have a resemblance to themselves to a greater extent than youths from Copenhagen. This might indicate that youths from Thisted prefer to follow influencers they are familiar with as they have a resemblance with them.

When looking at the trustworthiness toward influencers among youths from Thisted and Copenhagen, it is possible to notice that youths from both Thisted and Copenhagen lack trust in influencer recommendations. This might be because youths from both Thisted and Copenhagen view influencers with a critical lens. Despite the lack of trust, youths from Copenhagen buy influencer recommended products more frequently than youths from Thisted. Nonetheless, a reason for this might be that the youths from Copenhagen actively seek out recommendation to specific products and thereby they might be more prone to buy products or services based on influencer recommendations.

It was further found that youths from Thisted are more likely to feel that they have a relation with influencers whereas youths from Copenhagen are more prone to view their relationship with influencers as distant. Furthermore, there is a tendency among youths from both Thisted and Copenhagen where they unfollow influencers due to too much advertisement. However, this is not as widespread among youths from Thisted which might be evidence of more loyalty toward influencers.

Lastly, the above analysis shows that youths from both Thisted and Copenhagen find it important that influencers advertise for products and services that relate to their personal brand.

In the examination of the prevalence of influencer marketing among youths from Thisted and Copenhagen, it is evident that there both are similarities and differences to be found. Therefore, it is relevant to examine the phenomenon of influencer marketing and youths from Thisted and Copenhagen experience of this more in depth. This will be done in the following, where the qualitative data will be analyzed.

5.2.2 The Use of Influencers

In order to determine youths' from Thisted and Copenhagen experience with influencers, it is necessary to examine different aspects of the experience of influencer marketing among youths

from Thisted and Copenhagen. In order to discover this, the section will be comprised of four additional subsections. The first subsection will examine how influencers are used, and what they are used for. Second, youths' level of general trust will be examined. Thereafter, the last two sections will look at some of the core values of influencer marketing. Here, trustworthiness and authenticity will be reviewed.

5.2.2.1 Use of Influencers

This section will focus on what youths from Thisted and Copenhagen use influencers for and how they make use of them. This can shed light on what their experience of influencer marketing are and whether youths make use of influencers in the same way or not. This section will be divided into four subsections which will provide different perspectives to the experience of influencer marketing. First, there will be looked into youths' spare time activities and second, their use of social media and influencers will be examined. After this, an analysis of youths' attitudes toward influencers will be examined and lastly, the level of interaction between youths and influencers will be reviewed. This will provide an overall picture of what youths use influencers for and how they make use of them.

5.2.2.1.1 Spare Time Activities

In order to understand how youths from Thisted and Copenhagen experience influencer marketing, it is first relevant to examine their interests through their spare time activities. These might show what youths from Thisted and Copenhagen are interested in, and this might further reflect upon their use of social media.

When reviewing the interviews, it became clear that there are some similarities in their spare time activities. This is evident as the participants from both Thisted and Copenhagen have after school jobs and spend time with their friends in their spare time. Some of the participants from Thisted state the following when asked what they do in their spare time:

I go to school, business college. And then I work at a restaurant and then I play handball too (Appendix G4, Thisted, 00.04).

(…) *When I am home in the weekends, I spend much time with my friends and play volleyball which I care much about* (Appendix G2, Thisted, 00.06).

This is similar to the participants from Copenhagen, and an example hereof is shown in the following:

In my spare time I work. I am also together with my friends and family (…) (Appendix H2, CPH, 00.06).

This shows that working an after-school job and spending time with friends are something which youths from both Thisted and Copenhagen do in their spare time. In order to determine if they do the same activities with their friends in their spare time, the participants were asked what activities they do with their friends. Also, here there are some similarities as participants from both cities eat with their friends, drink drinks and go out and shop together. Some participants from Thisted state the following:

(…) *or go out to eat or the movies, the town, shopping. All kinds of stuff girls do* (Appendix G3, Thisted, 00.38).

They often stop by for a beer or something. Sometimes we go to the movies or party Saturday night (…) (Appendix G1, Thisted, 00.45).

This shows that the participants from Thisted do stuff as going to the movies, eat together, shop and party together. The participants from Copenhagen also do similar activities with their friends:

(…) *Three of my friends live together, so I often visit them where we cook dinner, I have a good time (...) maybe I meet them on Strøget and then we spend time there (...)* (Appendix H6, CPH, 00.51)

(…) *We sometimes go out, go to a bar or somewhere where we get a drink or two* (…) (Appendix H5, CPH, 01.49).

The above suggests that there are some similarities between youths from Thisted and Copenhagen when looking at their spare time activities. However, there also are some differences to be found as well. The first difference to be found is how many times the participants are together with their friends on average during a week. For the participants from Thisted, it is on average two times a week and for the participants from Copenhagen, it is on average three times a week (Appendix G + H). This indicates that youths from Copenhagen spend more time with their friends, and thereby it seems they might be more social. However, when looking at the activities the participants do in their spare time, it is noticeable that the participants from Thisted all somehow engage in team sports, whereas this is not mentioned once by the participants from Copenhagen. This is visible as participant 2 and 4 from Thisted both mention in the statements above that team sports are something they do in their spare time (Appendix G2, Thisted, 00.06, Appendix G4, Thisted, 00.04). Additionally, another example hereof is provided by participant 5 from Thisted:

*In my spare time I work, and sometimes I go the gym and play handball and soccer (*Appendix G5, Thisted, 00.05).

Whereas the participants from Thisted spend time on team sports, the participants from Copenhagen seem to be more cultural oriented in their spare time activities. This is for example shown as several of the participants mentioned activities such as going to museums as a spare time activity:

And sometimes going to museums (...) it depends on whether there is something interesting (Appendix H3, CPH, 01.53)
(...) We are also cultural once in a while. Then we sometimes go to a museum together, if there is something interesting displayed (Appendix H5, CPH, 01.49).

Activities such as taking a walk together is also something the participants from Copenhagen mention as an activity they do with their friends:

(...) then we go for a walk (Appendix H3, CPH, 00.48).

I try to be as much outside as possible and seeing things. Walking. (Appendix H1, CPH, 00.26).

All the above indicates that youths from both Thisted and Copenhagen have a spare time jobs and spend times with their friends, where they eat together or grab a drink. However, youths from Thisted engage more in team sports whereas youths from Copenhagen are more cultural and take walks together with their friends. Even though, youths from Thisted and Copenhagen share some similar activities, these activities seem rather usual and assumable that most youths do in their spare time with their friends. The interesting part is the differences as none of the participants from Copenhagen mention they participate in team sports and none of youths from Thisted mention cultural activities. Thereby, it seems that there is a difference in the youth culture when it comes to spare time activities. It is therefore relevant to examine whether these different interests also are shown through the usage of social media and influencers.

5.2.2.1.2 Usage of Social Media and Influencers

In this section, the use of social media and influencers among youths from Thisted and Copenhagen will be examined. This examination will show in more detail how they use social media and influencers and what they use them for. This may reveal details about differences and similarities in the experience of influencer marketing.

Looking over the similarities in the use of social media between the participants from Thisted and Copenhagen, it is visible that participants from both Thisted and Copenhagen mostly use social media in the afternoon and in the night (Appendix G+H). During the interviews, the participants were asked to elaborate on what they use social media for. The participants from Thisted mainly answers that they use social media to past time, maintain a connection with friends and updates. For instance, participant 5 from Thisted states:

I use it to catch up on what friends and celebrities post (...) (Appendix G5, Thisted, 04.32).

Another participant from Thisted mentions social media as a way to past time:

In one way, it is just pastime (Appendix G4, Thisted, 02.51).

Also, the participants from Copenhagen use social media to past time and as a way to stay connected with friends:

Mostly pastime (…) and to keep up with my friends' life and everyday (…) For instance, I have a friend who is travelling. I follow her and friends I do not often see because of distance (Appendix H1, CPH, 04.10).

Past time. And keep up with friends and family's life. Most of my family lives in Jutland, so it is an easy way to keep up and still be a part of it even though I moved far away (Appendix H4, CPH, 02.55).

This shows that the main reason that the participants from both Thisted and Copenhagen use social media, is to past time and as a way to stay connected with friends. However, the participants from Copenhagen also mention social media as a way to receive recommendations and inspiration:

I communicate with my friends. And I often use it to find inspiration for where to eat and what kind of clothes are in and so on, yes (Appendix H2, CPH, 03.50).

Also, participant 3 from Copenhagen states the same:

(…) And then I primarily use Instagram to yes, just look and get inspiration for clothes and travels and make-up and restaurants (…) (Appendix H3, CPH, 05.13).

This difference between youths' from Thisted and Copenhagen usage of social media may be connected to the fact that it seems as youths from Copenhagen go more out and are more cultural, and therefore spend more time looking for inspiration to new places and activities compared to the youths from Thisted. Another reason might also simply be that there are more activities in Copenhagen than Thisted.

However, this picture is not entirely accurate when looking into why the participants follow influencers. Here, the majority of all the participant state that it is to receive inspiration which thereby is possible to conclude that the participants from Thisted also use social media as a way to get recommendations and inspiration. This is shown in the following statement when the participants from Thisted were asked why they follow influencers:

It is just as much to get inspiration (...) (Appendix G1, Thisted, 03.20).

Another participant from Thisted also states that inspiration is a reason why she follows influencers as well and explains that she receives inspiration to e.g. vacations:

Also, different places they go on vacation where you might think: Okay, this could be a possibility to go there. So actually, it affects me pretty much if I see something and then I wonder: Okay, this actually look really nice. This hotel and spa resort (...). Then I go in and check it out (Appendix G4, Thisted, 04.52).

This shows that the participants from Thisted use influencers as a channel where they can receive inspiration. Also, among the participants from Copenhagen, influencers are used as a way to get inspiration and recommendations:

(...) because they can give me inspiration to different things (Appendix H2, CPH, 04.24).
I do it because they inspire me (Appendix H5, CPH 16.45).

These statements show that the participants from Copenhagen use influencers as a way to get inspiration and recommendations.

The above shows that even though, the participants from Thisted do not mention social media as a way to get inspiration, they do use influencers to receive inspiration or recommendations for different things. The participants from Copenhagen state that they both use social media and influencers as a way to receive inspiration and recommendations. This might indicate that they seek inspiration from sources beyond influencers and thereby, it may sustain the reason to believe that youths from Copenhagen have more opportunities to do different activities such as going out and being cultural, and therefore seek inspiration and recommendations to a greater extent.

Additionally, when asked about why the participants from Thisted and Copenhagen follow influencers, they state it is because of the content the influencers' posts on their social media platforms:

Many of those I follow, some of them, I follow because I think they are funny to watch and they provide good content (Appendix G2, Thisted, 04.45).

Even though, this in broad is a reason for why all the participants follow influencers, the participants' perception of 'good content' is a little different. The participants from Thisted mention funny or humor as a reason to why they follow influencers. This is evident both in the statement above and in the following:

(...) and then I think she is pretty funny (Appendix G5, Thisted, 05.04).

One of the participants from Thisted also mentions influencers as a way to receive advice and experience something beyond Thisted:

I sometimes use them as a way to get advice (...) But I also think it is funny to hear about others' lives. Thisted is such a small area and then it is entertaining to hear what happens in Copenhagen and something. You feel like you get around (Appendix G4, Thisted, 04.21).

This statement shows that the participant from Thisted also uses influencers as a way of entertainment and to experience other things than Thisted. Thereby, good content in form of inspiration, humor and entertainment are what the participants from Thisted like influencers to post on social media.

The participants from Copenhagen also mention other factors besides inspiration as reasons for following influencers. Good content comes in the form of important messages, fascinating posts, new knowledge and advantages. For instance, participant 1 from Copenhagen states the following when asked why she follows influencers:

Both because I think they have some strong messages. I also follow one because she provokes me (...) I also partially agree with her. But besides that, there are some strong messages I find important (..) I think it is great to be challenged. She is in a way far away from the life I live (Appendix H1, CPH, 05.20).

The above statement shows that a reason why she follows influencers, is because they share important messages. Furthermore, this participant states that she even follows one because she challenges her in her opinions. This might tell that a reason for following this particular influencer, is to obtain new perspectives or knowledge within some areas. Strong or important messages is also mentioned by other participants such as participant 4 from Copenhagen:

There is one who I think provides some good points and comes with some great reflections about everyday things. Also, on a broader level, where she gets people to stand together about something bigger (Appendix H4, CPH, 03.19).

Here, important messages are a reason that the participant follows influencers, and this might also show that the participant likes to get new or other perspectives on things. The two above participants find strong messages appealing. Furthermore, another participant from Copenhagen finds the life the influencers are living appealing and fascinating. She states the following as a reason to follow influencers:

I think in one way I have it like, I think I wish I had a life like them. Just be able to post stories where they advertise and get a lot of money for it (Appendix H6, CPH, 05.47).
Here, the reason for following influencers is more rooted in admiration and fascination of the life influencers are living and a wish for doing the same. However, another participant from Copenhagen does not share this view entirely, as she provides an opposite reason for following influencers:

(…) I go in at look at them and say: who is this, she has a great style, she also has a good discount code for this website. Then I follow them, and then there are some who are really good to follow because they have a normal body, and a normal relationship to make-up, a normal everyday life and things like that. Then it is not like they only thing they do is blogging (Appendix H3, CPH, 07.57).

The above statement shows that a reason to follow influencers is because they post personal and normal things on social media. Furthermore, it is positive if the influencers provide discount codes, which thereby means that there is an advantage for following them.

To sum up, the above shows that the participants from both Thisted and Copenhagen express similarities and differences in why they follow influencers. The similarities are that the influencers give recommendations and inspiration of their everyday lives and provide good content. However, the good content entails different aspects to the participants. In Thisted, it is entertainment and humor which are provided as reasons. In Copenhagen, the reasons are much more diverse as important messages, fascinating posts, new knowledge and advantages are described as good content. This shows that although the participants in broad terms follow influencers for some of the same reasons, there are also differences. Furthermore, the above also suggests that the participants from Copenhagen differ much more in reasons why to follow influencers. This thereby also indicates that there are more variety in why youths from Copenhagen follow influencers compared to why youths from Thisted do. This might further support the notion that youths from Copenhagen follow more different types of influencers, as they follow them for diverse reasons.

The participants were asked if they were aware of whether they follow the same type of influencers as their friends, which might shed light on whether the above findings are supported by the prevalence of influencers.

The participants from Thisted all state that they mainly follow the same type of influencers as their friends:

Well, the ones I attend continuation school with do, there are many who also follow the same for instance fashion, or what do you say? The same who sell clothes (...) (Appendix G2, Thisted, 06.26).
Yes, I think so. I think it is much of the same - roughly (Appendix G3, Thisted, 04.26).

This shows that the participants from Thisted mostly follow the same type of influencers. This gives a reason to believe that the participants from Thisted are very similar and have interest in the same type of influencers, and they might therefore also follow them for some of the same reasons.

Looking at the same question answered by the participants from Copenhagen, the participants' answers vary much more than the ones from Thisted:

Yes. Yes. When I look over at the others, then it is mostly the same we follow (Appendix H2, 07.20). *(...) I might have one friend where we follow the same, but that is because we share the same interests within interior and clothes. So, we definitely follow the same* (Appendix H5, CPH, 20.15).

Even though, some of participants from Copenhagen follow the same type of influencers on social media, a couple of them do not:

I do not think so (Appendix H1, CPH, 07.53)

No. Many of the ones I do not want to follow is followed by my friends (...) yes, there we do not follow quite the same (Appendix H6, CPH, 09,36).

Also, here, it is shown that youths from Copenhagen vary in their answers. Some of the participants follow the same influencers as their friends however, this does not apply to all of the participants from Copenhagen. This supports the finding that youths from Copenhagen have a bigger variety in the type of influencers they follow and also why they have different reasons to follow them. Thereby, it seems that youths from Copenhagen are more diverse in their choices regarding following influencers on social media. In addition to this, it is relevant to look further into the youths' from Thisted and Copenhagen attitudes toward influencers, as it possibly can be related to why they chose to follow them.

5.2.2.1.3 Attitudes Toward Influencers

In order to determine youths' from Thisted and Copenhagen experience of influencer marketing, it is relevant to examine their attitudes toward influencers, as this might show whether they have a positive or negative view on influencers.

When looking at the participants from both Thisted and Copenhagen, their attitudes toward influencers are mixed. This is shown as all participants both have negative and positive attitudes toward influencers. A participant from Thisted states the following when asked about what her opinion about influencers is:

Mainly positive I think (Appendix G1, Thisted, 03.50).

Participant 5 from Thisted also provides an example of the positive sides of influencers:

(...) it is positive that people, children and youths can follow them and receive inspiration (Appendix G2, Thisted, 05.28).

Here, it is shown that influencer marketing can be experienced as positive by the participants from Thisted. The positive side of influencers are also shared by the participants from Copenhagen.

(...) I see the main part as something positive, and then I see a few as negative. I think there is many who are very good as they focus on stuff like feminism and sustainability, and that we should care about our environment and people who represents different body types (...) (Appendix H3, CPH, 12.22).

The positive is that they can share important messages with many people. They reach many people because they often have a lot of followers (Appendix H4, CPH, 04.39).

Hereby, it is visible that the participants from both Thisted and Copenhagen see some positive sides of influencers. The positive sides are mainly inspiration and that they are able to put focus on important subjects. For the participants from both Thisted and Copenhagen, a negative side is advertising. This is clear when one of the participants from Thisted answers the following when asked about her opinion about influencers:
It is a little mixed (...) I really think it is annoying sometimes when they are posting that it is some kind of sponsored advertisement or something like that. I think it is rude in some ways toward all of us followers that they keep advertising because they are after all getting paid and we can in principle not know if it is good or not (Appendix G5, Thisted 05.58).

This viewpoint is also shared by the other participants from Thisted. This is for instance shown in the beneath statement:

(...) after they have become huge, it is like everything just is about earning money. You sometimes feel like okay; they earn money through this and then I do not think it is that great anymore (Appendix G4, Thisted, 05.49).

Also, the participants from Copenhagen have negative views when influencers advertise too much. According to participant 4 from Copenhagen, advertisement is only a way to make profit which creates a negative view on influencers:

I believe that it is extremely ridiculous with the paid advertisements as they only advertise because they are getting paid and not because they think it is a good product they are trying to sell. That is ridiculous (Appendix H4, CPH, 04.12).

Participant 5 from Copenhagen have a similar view to the above:

(...) I think it is a little sleazy to advertise that way and then there is many who advertise for the same. I get a little tired of it when it is the same which is advertised for (...) (Appendix H5, CPH, 17.39).

In this statement, it is noticeable that the fact that there are many influencers who advertise for the same brand or product becomes a negative factor, which the participant distance herself from. In that way, it is possible to conclude that too much advertisement has a negative effect on the attitude towards influencers, both by youths from Thisted and Copenhagen.

The participants from both Thisted and Copenhagen mention other factors which can create negative attitudes toward influencers. However, these factors differ from each other. The participants from Thisted further place the importance on the perception of exploitation of the influencers' followers which have a negative impact on their attitudes. Furthermore, the participants from Copenhagen, it is a perception of a false or polished world, which can have a negative influence on their attitudes toward influencers.

One of the participants from Thisted mentions the following when asked about the negative sides of influencers:

(…) *Of course, there also are some who take advantages of it, you can say* (Appendix G1, Thisted, 03.50).

Here, the participant mentions that some influencers take advantage of the situation and exploit their followers. This is for instance supported by participant 2 from Thisted:

(...) There are of course also some which might exploit it and maybe advertise too much and make advertisement for something that is fake and stuff like that (Appendix G2, Thisted, 05.28).

This statement explains that exploitation might mean that the influencer uses its followers in order to show advertisements and thereby make profit or advertise for fake products. This might indicate youths from Thisted view too much advertising as exploitation of them, and thereby they have negative attitudes toward influencers who do that. The participants from Copenhagen do not mention exploitation, however they mention fake and polished pictures as something negative:

(...) Well, there also are some negative sides of it. It is mostly a glossy picture they put up, they get free stuff and wear the right clothes all the time, and they live a glamorous life and stuff like that, which is not normal for other people to have or live like that (Appendix H2, CPH, 06.25).

This shows that it can create a negative view on influencers when they create a picture of a perfect live. This opinion is shared by participant 1 from Copenhagen who believes that it can create a negative view on people who state how the conception of an everyday life should be like:
I think there is a lot of talk about it can create a negative view on how people's everyday lives should be (...) (Appendix H1, CPH, 06.56)

The above participant elaborates:

I believe it should be real (Appendix H1, CPH, 07.32).

The above statement refers to what influencers post, should be real and not something polished, which is important for the participants from Copenhagen.

When looking at youths' attitudes toward influencers, it is possible to notice that they view influencers positively and negatively. Youths from both Thisted and Copenhagen express that influencers can show inspiration and provide important messages, which is seen as a positive aspect. Furthermore, youths from both cities find too much advertisement a negative factor. However, youths from Thisted feel that when influencers advertise, they exploit their followers which is seen as a negative aspect of influencers. On the other hand, youths from Copenhagen place the importance on that influencers portray a polished picture of their everyday lives which create negative attitudes toward influencers.

As youths from Thisted find influencers' advertisement a form of exploitation of the influencers' followers, it is noticeable that this is not an aspect youths from Copenhagen place importance on. This could indicate that youths from Thisted are more attentive toward not being frauded.

5.2.2.1.4 Interaction

In order to determine how youth from Thisted and Copenhagen use influencers, it is also relevant to examine their level of interaction with them. Furthermore, the interaction can tell something about what relation youths from Thisted and Copenhagen might have to the influencers. First, interaction through comments and messages, will be reviewed. Second, interaction through 'likes' will be reviewed.

5.2.2.1.4.1 Comment on Posts and Writing to the influencer

When looking at whether the participants from Thisted and Copenhagen interact with influencers through comments or personal messages, it becomes clear that the participants differ in this area. This evident as the participants from Thisted are a little divided as some of them interact with the influencers and some of them do not. Moreover, the participants from Copenhagen do not comment or send messages to influencers at all.

Participant 1 from Thisted mentions that commenting on an influencer's post would be a possibility and explains that the reason for commenting on the post, is to agree or disagree with the message which are posted (Appendix G1, Thisted, 04.54). Two other participants from Thisted who would write to an influencer, would only do it in a private message to obtain more information about a product such as clothes:

(…) *If it for instance was a piece of clothing or something I would want to know more about and I do not feel like I got enough information from them, then I might contact them and ask some questions about the product* (Appendix G2, Thisted, 07.21).

Participant 4 from Thisted also writes private messages to influencers with questions about clothing objects, and elaborate on which questions it could be in the following:

Mostly either workout clothes or bikinis. Just where is it from. What size are you? (...) if I can see they might have the same body type as me, then I might ask them (Appendix G4, Thisted, 07.34).

This shows that the participants from Thisted who write to the influencers mainly do it in relation to obtaining additional information about the products the influencers promote. Furthermore, participant 4 from Thisted also states that even though she sometimes writes influencers privately, she would never comment on an influencer's post because it is public and visible to her friends: *But I never write in the comments so that my friends are able to see it. Because I know they can see it and that is a little weird* (G4, Thisted, 04.54).

The fact that the comments are public and visible to her friends, are also what participant 5 from Thisted provides as a reason for not commenting on influencer posts:

I am afraid to do it. I do not write much on social media (...) I do not know, I believe I think about people's opinions about what I write (G5, Thisted, 08.43).

This indicates that the participants from Thisted are a little reluctant to comment on public posts as they do not want others, including their friends, to see what they write. This might be the reason why the participants from Thisted who contact influencers, mostly contact them through private messaging. Anyhow, it is relevant to look further into what expectations the participants from Thisted who write to influencers have and what feelings it might create. This might show what relation the participants have when they interact with the influencer.

Participant 2 from Thisted expects an answer when writing to the influencer but does not believe it creates a connection or relation between them (Appendix G2, Thisted 08.04). Participant 1 answers 'no' to expecting a response to a comment, but states the following to what feeling a response from an influencer gives:

I just think you would get a feeling of accept, maybe (Appendix G1, Thisted, 05.33). Furthermore, participant 4 from Thisted, who has experienced a response from an influencer, describes a connection to the influencer when the influencer responds to her messages:

I think it is strange if they see it {the message} and they do not answer me (...) then it is like the relation you had, friend-ish, it is gone (Appendix G4, Thisted, 08.18).

Participant 4 further describes the feeling she gets when she receives a response to her messages:

*Then you are a little bit like: okay, we are actually friends when they answer like: 'Hey beautiful, it is a size small'. Then you feel like okay, you are a friend on the internet (*Appendix G4, Thisted, 09.14).

The answers from the participants from Thisted show that it varies in whether they contact influencers, or they refrain from contacting them. When they do contact the influencers, it is mostly to get more information about the products the influencers have posted. However, this does not align entirely with the participants from Copenhagen. The participants from Copenhagen do not either comment or message influencers. A few of the participants have commented on an influencer's post. However, it was only if it was related to a contest where they were able to win something:

No, I do not know what to comment or write. If they for instance have something you can win, a delicious perfume or something, and you have to comment, then I might comment (...) to win the damn perfume. But I never comment things like: You look beautiful (Appendix H2, CPH, 08.32).

The above shows that the participants from Copenhagen who comment on influencers' posts, only do it when there is a possibility to win something. This shows that the participants from

Copenhagen do not engage without the possibility to get something out of it. When asked why they do not comment on influencers' post, one of the participants from Copenhagen provides the following reason for not commenting or writing influencers besides at contest posts:

(...) But it is also because all of one's friends can see what you comment and what you 'like'. So, I do not know, I just think it is a little uncool (Appendix H3, CPH, 16.18).

This is similar to what some of the participants from Thisted provide as reasons for not wanting to interact with influencers by commenting on posts publicly. Even though, the majority of the participants from Copenhagen refrain from commenting influencers' posts or wanting to write to them, a single participant from Copenhagen has once written to support an influencer:

I have once written a message to one. (...) I think she experienced a hetz and I had a strong feeling that she needed to know that I believed what she did was good. That is the only thing I have written (Appendix H1, CPH, 08.36).

Although, the above participant has written to an influencer, it is clear that the participant does not interact with influencers through messages on a regular basis as it was a one-time thing. Therefore, according to the answers from the participants from Copenhagen, they do not interact through writing to influencers, and thereby there is not created a relation between the influencer and the participants through this channel. This is in contrast to some of the participants from Thisted as some of them do comment or write messages to influencers. When they do, there is created a relation through a feeling of accept or friendship.

Through this, it is shown that youth from Thisted are more likely to interact with influencers on social media. Additionally, it is noticeable that this interaction creates some form of relation, and thereby it might increase the loyalty towards the influencer.
However, it is not only possible to interact with influencers through direct contact, it is also possible to interact with a 'like'. The following will therefore be an analysis of how the participants from both Thisted and Copenhagen use the function 'like' function and the meaning hereof.

When looking at 'likes' and how the participants make use of this function, it is prominent that all the participants make use of this function. Therefore, it will further be examined if the meaning of a 'like' is the same to the participants from Thisted and Copenhagen. In general, the participants from both Thisted and Copenhagen use the 'like' function as a way to show they somehow like the content or find it interesting. Participant 5 from Thisted answers the following when asked about her opinion about the meaning of a 'like':

I do not know, I just think it is like, so that they can see it is great what they do or that you are interested in what they have done or show that you are following this or something (Appendix G5, Thisted, 10.01).

Also, the participants from Copenhagen use the function 'like' when they see something that is really good:

It is probably when it is ordinary good or. Yes (Appendix H1, CPH, 09.37).

It is assumable that the participants from Thisted and Copenhagen make use of the function 'like' for posts they find interesting or like, since it is in the meaning of the word 'like'. Furthermore, the participants from both Thisted and Copenhagen make use of the function 'like' to show that they not only like the content but like the post for different reasons as well. This is shown in the following when a participant from Thisted and a participant from Copenhagen express that they use the function to show support to the influencers:

(...) It is probably more to support their Instagram profile because I think it is great, and do not want them not to do it anymore because I spend a lot of time on it (Appendix G4, Thisted, 09.45). *Because then I feel as I support them with a "like" and what they care about* (Appendix H6, CPH, 13.46).

The above shows that the participants use the function 'like' when the content is perceived as good or to show support. However, it also perceptible that when it comes to the function 'like', the

participants from Copenhagen have a broader variety of the meaning of a 'like'. This I observable as they also mention things such as a good texts and good messages:

(...) Because I think it is a good picture or a good text to the picture. Good message (Appendix H4, CPH, 08.06).

This indicates that the participant from Copenhagen likes pictures which are thought about a have a deeper meaning. This is also noticeable in the following statement:

It is probably a feeling of that I think this is really good or more people should see this (...) then I like because then other people can see it. Then the message is spread (Appendix H1, CPH 09.51).

This shows that the participant likes content that is perceived as good. Furthermore, the participants from Copenhagen state that a 'like' also can be used as a way to spread a good message in order for other people to see it. Hereby, it is clear that the participants from Copenhagen have thought more about what the good content is, as it involves important messages and the possibility to spread these important messages.

Through the above, it is shown that most of the youths do not interact through comments or messages to influencers. However, there is a higher tendency among youths from Thisted to write private messages to influencers compared to youths from Copenhagen. Therefore, there is a higher feeling of connection to the influencers from youths from Thisted which might create a higher level of loyalty towards the influencer. The fact that some youths from Thisted and Copenhagen refrain from commenting on influencers' posts, are often due to the visibility of the comment. This means that their friends can see the comments which the youths find uncool. This suggests that interaction with influencers might not be perceived as an entirely positive thing. Additionally, the function 'like' is used to show support to the influencer among youths from both Thisted and Copenhagen. However, youths from Copenhagen use the function as a way to share messages they find important. The main differences of interaction are therefore that youths from Thisted are more likely to interact through private messages to influencers and youths from Copenhagen make use the function 'like' in more different ways.

In order to determine what influencers are used for and how they are used by youths from Thisted and Copenhagen, it was found that in many ways the youths have similar behaviors. However, there also were some specific differences to be found.

The above analysis shows that youths from both Thisted and Copenhagen have after-school jobs and spend time with their friends in their spare time. The activities they do with their friends are mainly similar as they all eat together, shop together, go to movies etc. However, one major difference is that youths from Thisted spend a lot of time playing team sports whereas youths form Copenhagen are more cultural inclined as they for instance visit museums. This may be the reason that youths from Copenhagen use social media and influencers to receive inspiration and recommendations for different things to a greater extent than youths from Thisted. This might also be due to the fact that youths from Copenhagen have a bigger variety of offers when it comes to activities. However, youths from Thisted also use influencers to see posts with inspiration, entertainment and humor. On this point, youths from Copenhagen differ, as they are much more diverse in their reasons for following influencers. Some of the reasons for following influencers are that they provide important messages, fascination, new knowledge and discount codes. As youths from Copenhagen not entirely have the same reasons for following influencers, it suggests that they have more variety in the type of influencers they like to follow. This fact is also supported by the notion that youths from Copenhagen are less likely to follow the same influencers as their friends compared to youths from Thisted. In Thisted, youths mainly follow the same influencers. This suggests that youths from Copenhagen have a broader type of influencers they follow compared to youths from Thisted.

When it comes to youths' attitudes toward influencers, youths from both Thisted and Copenhagen define positive and negative sides. They both found that inspiration and important messages were factors which create a positive view on influencers. On the contrary, too much advertisement is something which can create a negative view on influencers for both youths from Thisted and Copenhagen. In addition to this, youths from Thisted believe that too much advertising aligns with exploitation of the influencers' followers, and therefore distance themselves from it. Youths from Copenhagen further mention an unreal or fake representation of the reality as negative. This appears to indicate that a difference between youths from Thisted and Copenhagen is that youths from Thisted do not want to feel as they are taken advantage of. Further, youths from Copenhagen want a real representation of the influencer's life. Moreover, youths from both Thisted and Copenhagen

seem quite similar when it comes to interaction with influencers, as the majority of them do not comment, message or like influencer posts. However, a noticeable difference is that there is a higher tendency to comment and message influencers among youths from Thisted. This interaction increases the possibility that youths from Thisted feel a relation to the influencer. Thereby, there is a greater possibility that loyalty between influencers and youths from Thisted is created.

5.2.2.2 Trustworthiness in Influencer Marketing

This section will review the notion of trustworthiness in relation to influencer marketing. The section will be divided into different sub-sections which each will deal with different perspectives of trustworthiness. First, there will be looked into what youths from Thisted and Copenhagen find trustworthy versus untrustworthy in relation to influencer marketing. Second, there will be reviewed trustworthiness in relation to more specific influencer advertisements. Third, the perception of influencer marketing will be examined and lastly there will be looked into whether youths from Thisted and Copenhagen ever have bought influencer recommended products. This will provide an overall view of the different aspects of trustworthiness in influencer marketing, and it can further contribute to shed light on youths' experience of influencer marketing.

5.2.2.2.1 Trust in Society

The following section will be an analysis of how youths from Thisted and Copenhagen perceive the people living in their respective city, their relationship with their neighbors and their general trust in the society. This can be transferred into their perception and trust in influencer marketing as it will establish their basic position toward trust.

In order to determine how youths from Thisted and Copenhagen perceive the people living in their respective city, the participants were asked how they would describe the people living among them. It is noticeable that the participants from Thisted and Copenhagen mainly describe the people living in their respective city differently. However, some similarities between participants from both Thisted and Copenhagen are present as well. Two participants from Thisted and Copenhagen describe the people living in their respective city as kind. This is apparent in the two following statements:

(…) nice and kind (Appendix G1, Thisted, 01.08).

I would describe them as kind when you get on close terms with them (Appendix H4, CPH, 01.39).

These two statements show that youths from both Thisted and Copenhagen find the people living in their respective city kind. Furthermore, another similarity of the description of the people living in Thisted and Copenhagen is present as well. Participant 3 from Thisted states:

I would describe them as outgoing (Appendix G3, Thisted, 01.33).

Similar to participant 3 from Thisted, participant 5 from Copenhagen describes the people living in Copenhagen as outgoing as well with the following statement:
All fit in Copenhagen and everyone are just very open, and kind and you can be yourself (...). So, I believe that people are very open and very brave compared to other cities (Appendix H5, CPH, 03.17).

Participant 5 from Copenhagen expresses that people from Copenhagen are outgoing as she states that people can be themselves in Copenhagen. In relation to this, she provides the following example:

(...) and I believe it to be very important that people do not look funny at one if they do not believe that you fit in (Appendix H5, CPH, 03.17).

This notion of fitting in is completely different when looking at participant 5 from Thisted and her description of the people living in Thisted. She states:

I would describe them as. (...) It is like homogenize attitudes like, I believe that they do not change their attitudes that much (Appendix G5, Thisted, 01.38).

This might indicate that youths from Copenhagen are more prone to view the people living in Copenhagen as manifold as they accept their fellow men. Comparing this to youths from Thisted which might view people living in Thisted as homogenized in their opinions. This might have something to do with the fact that participant 1 from Thisted states the following in relation to her description of the people living in Thisted:

(...) there are many elderly people. Many youths are moving to the bigger cities (...) (Appendix G1, Thisted, 01.08).

This shows that there are many elder people living in Thisted, which might be the reason why the participant from Thisted describes the people living there as homogenized. When the younger generation move away, new ways of thinking and behaving might not be incorporated in the culture. In contrast to participant 1 from Thisted, a participant from Copenhagen have another description of the people living in Copenhagen:

(...) it is very young people (...) and then there are many families with children (Appendix H2, CPH, 01.27).

The different views of which age group that live in each city might contribute to the notion of Thisted being described as homogenized and Copenhagen being described as manifold. The reason for this, might be that it can be discussed whether the elder generation might be more conservative in their stances whereas young people tend to be more open minded and welcoming to diversity. Another difference in the participants' perception of the people who live respectively in Thisted and Copenhagen are the degree of a sense of community. In this relation, it is possible to notice that the majority of the participants from Thisted explain that there is a form of community feeling. This is e.g. evident in the following:

(...) it is like everyone knows everyone. It is a nice and cozy community where we speak well with each other and say 'hi' to everyone on the street and such (Appendix G2, Thisted, 02.03).

In contrast to the above statement, many of the participants from Copenhagen express that they view the people living in Copenhagen as reserved and arrogant. Participant 6 from Copenhagen e.g. states:

(...) I also think that Copenhageners are like reserved. You do not talk that much with each other (...) (Appendix H6, CPH, 01.45).

Furthermore, participant 4 from Copenhagen explains that people from Copenhagen can seem a little arrogant:

They can seem a bit arrogant but kind (Appendix H4, CPH, 01.39).

This shows that youths from Thisted have a different view on the people living in Thisted compared to the view youths from Copenhagen have on the people living in Copenhagen. People living in Thisted might care more about each other as they have a stronger feeling of community than people living in Copenhagen.

As established that youths from Thisted view the people living there more community-oriented compared to how youths from Copenhagen view the people living in Copenhagen, it is relevant to examine the participants' relationship with their neighbors. This might support the above findings. When looking at the participants from Thisted, it is possible to determine that every one of the participants have or have had a relationship with their neighbors. This is not the case with the participants from Copenhagen as the majority of these participants do not have a particular close relationship with their neighbors.

The relationship among the participants from Thisted and their neighbors is for instance visible when participant 5 states the following when asked if she has a relationship with her neighbors:

Yes. Yes, I have known them ever since I was little, so I have (Appendix G5, Thisted, 03.04).
She continues:

They have always been there. There are no new ones coming or leaving (Appendix G5, 03.10).

Another participant from Thisted states:

Each year we have a street party (...) and and we have this new tradition where we celebrate that Christmas has arrived together (...) (Appendix G2, Thisted, 02.28).

These statements show two participants with a very close relationship with their neighbors. However, another participant from Thisted says that he does not know his current neighbors' names because he just moved into a new apartment. However, at the place he lived before he had a relationship with his neighbors and spend time together with them (Appendix G3, Thisted, 01.55-02.01). Furthermore, participant 4 from Thisted agrees with this as she states:

And then I just moved. However, at my old street, I felt they were my family (Appendix G4, Thisted, 01.11).

This shows that some of the participants from Thisted have just moved into new homes and have not had time to create a relationship with their current neighbors. Nonetheless, they have had a relationship with their former neighbors. Furthermore, participant 1 from Thisted does not have any neighbors at the moment. However, she knows the people in the neighborhood (Appendix G1, Thisted, 01.31-01.45).

Comparing this with the participants from Copenhagen, it is possible to notice that the majority of these participants do not have a particular close relationship with their neighbors. This is seen as participants 1, 4 and 6 state that they do not know their neighbors' names nor having a relationship with them. In this relation, participant 6 states:

It was not someone I said 'hi' to (Appendix H6, CPH, 02.38).

On the contrary to the above statement, participant 2 from Copenhagen is aware of her neighbor's name but does not have a particular close relationship with the neighbor as she just says 'hi' to her neighbor (Appendix H2, CPH, 02.15-02.17). Furthermore, she opens the opportunity for wanting a relationship with her neighbors at some point by adding:

Right now, anyway (Appendix H2, CPH, 02.19).

Nonetheless, it is not all of the participants from Copenhagen that do not have a relationship with their neighbors. It is evident as participant 3 have a closer relationship with her neighbors as she explains that her and her neighbors have introduced themselves to each other. Furthermore, they

give each other a bottle of wine or chocolate on special occasions (Appendix H3, CPH, 03.21-03.42). This shows that participant 3 views her neighbors as somebody she is acquainted with. In addition to this, participant 5 from Copenhagen have an even more close relationship with her neighbors:

(...) I was friends with my neighbors. We ate together and I lived in like a small (...) dormitory (...) (Appendix H5, CPH, 04.50).

This statement shows the participant had a very close relationship with her neighbors. However, as she lived in a dormitory, it is presumably that it was easier to get close with her neighbors because they might have had something in common as they presumably all are young people.
Even though, the above suggests that youths from Thisted have a closer relationship with their neighbors compared to youths from Copenhagen, it is possible to notice that youths from Copenhagen might point in the same direction as youths from Thisted. Nonetheless, it is possible to establish that there is a cohesion between how youths from Thisted view people living in Thisted and their relationship with their neighbors. Furthermore, the same is present with the youths from Copenhagen. However, there is a tendency that youths from Copenhagen are prone to pull in the same direction as youths from Thisted.

As the above align with the assumption that youths from Thisted are more community-oriented compared to youths from Copenhagen, there might also be a cohesion when examining the general trust in the society the participants live in. In order to determine this, the participants were asked if they believed they would get their wallet back if they lost it while walking around in their respective city. This example might indicate the degree of trust youths from Thisted and Copenhagen have in their fellow men.
The answers from the participants from Thisted primarily indicated that they expected that they would get their wallet back. This is evident in the following statements:

Yes, I believe so. Also, if it was people I do not know. Just because we almost are as this big family if you can say it like that (Appendix G2, Thisted, 03.01).

(...) I actually think they would because it is so small. The likelihood that it was someone who knew who I was or knew who my boyfriend was or my mother or father or something like that. I think it could be pretty high (Appendix G5, Thisted, 03.30).

These statements show that due to the small size of Thisted and the fact that Thisted is a city where everyone knows everyone, give these participants a reason to believe and trust that their wallet would return to them. Participants 4 from Thisted actually has experienced losing her phone in the city and receiving it back:

(...) Well I have lost my mobile three or four times in the city and I got them back every time (Appendix G4, Thisted, 01.56).

The above suggests that the participants have trust in the people living among them as they expect that they would receive, or actually have received, their lost items back. When looking at the participants from Copenhagen, they do not share the same level of trust in the people living in Copenhagen. Participant 6 states the following in relation to if she would expect to receive her wallet back after losing it:

(...) Probably not, no. Especially if I had money in it or something, then I for sure would not count on getting the money back (Appendix H6, CPH, 03.06).

Additionally, another participant explains the following:
It is a little difficult because I have actually only experienced it coming back but half empty. But I do not think I would get it back (...) (Appendix H5, CPH, 05.53).

These statements show that the participants from Copenhagen would not expect receiving their wallet back, and if so, it would not be with everything in it as it was when they lost it. However, participant 3 from Copenhagen expresses the following experience as she left her wallet in her bicycle basket:

No, but I have once forgotten my wallet in my bicycle basket right outside my apartment and it actually still was there 6 hours later (...) But I would not expect if I dropped it that I would get it back (Appendix H3, CPH, 04.06).

Here, the participant is surprised to find her wallet in her bicycle basket 6 hours later, but it does not change the fact that she not would trust getting her wallet back if she lost it.
Only one participant from Copenhagen would expect to receive her wallet back if she lost it. However, she hesitates when she answers if she believes that her wallet would contain everything, she had in it before losing it:

Well, I do not know. It is hard because if it was me then I would try to find contact information (...) then I would try to return it. However, you know that there are a lot people out there who just would take it (Appendix H2, CPH, 02.37).

This statement shows that the participant relates it back to what she would have done if she found a missing wallet, which is trying to find the owner. However, she still questions that some people would act the way as she would.

The above suggests that youths from Thisted seem more trustful toward their fellow men compared to youths from Copenhagen. It might be because youths from Copenhagen have a view on Copenhageners to be more reserved and do not have any particular relationship with their neighbors, which might have an impact on how much they trust people living in Copenhagen. The opposite might be evident when looking at youths from Thisted who believe that the city is community oriented, which might have a positive impact on the trust among people living in Thisted.

5.2.2.2.2 Trustworthiness

This section will focus on trustworthiness in influencer marketing on a general level. It will entail what youths from Thisted and Copenhagen view as trustworthy and untrustworthy.

Looking over the participants' trustworthiness toward influencer marketing, it is noticeable that the participants mention the same things when talking about what is untrustworthy. What can make an

influencer seem untrustworthy, is no relation between the influencer's brand and the product which is being promoted. Furthermore, too much advertisement can be viewed as untrustworthy as well. In the following, there are presented examples where two participants from Thisted mention too much advertisement as untrustworthy:

It is mostly advertising again, I think. Then I do not believe they think it {the product}is great, then I think it more becomes an earning-money-machine for them (Appendix G4, Thisted, 22.40).

This statement shows that the participant experience too much advertisement as untrustworthy, as she believes the influencer only does it in order to make profit. This view is also shared by participant 5 from Thisted:

When it is multiple times a day, they make several stories or something about something where they write advertising. Then you might think it is not a trustworthy product (Appendix G5, Thisted, 26.08).

Here, the participants from Thisted states that when the amount of advertisement is too much, it might not be perceived as trustworthy, because they advertise too much about one product. Untrustworthiness and advertising are also mentioned by one of the participants from Copenhagen. This is for instance shown through the following statement when participant 6 answers what can make an influencer seem untrustworthy:

Then I think it have much to do with advertising (Appendix H6, CPH, 27.27).

Additionally, participant 4 from Copenhagen also provides a view as to why advertisements can be seen as untrustworthy:
If they seem over enthusiastic about the things they try to sell or show, and then it just seems like they only do it for the money and not because they want to (Appendix H4, CPH, 14.10).

Similar to the participants from Thisted, the participants from Copenhagen also find too much advertisement untrustworthy, as the influencer make profit on advertisements. Therefore, the participants do not count on getting the truth.

Besides too much advertising, also no relation between what the influencer advertise for, can be perceived as untrustworthy by participants from both Thisted and Copenhagen. Participant 4 from Thisted states the following:

(...) I think mostly when they start to get a lot of followers, then it is like they forget themselves. They only care about the money they earn. Then I do not want to follow them anymore (...) (Appendix G4, Thisted, 20.55).

This shows that the participant wants the influencers to stay true to who they are, and not advertise for anything just to make profit. If the influencers do not stay true to themselves, it consequently means that the participant will stop following them. Another participant from Thisted provides an example of an influencer who advertised for something which did not align with the influencers personal brand:

(...) Irina, she advertises a lot for, I think it is called LuxPlus or something (...) you can get branded goods half off and stuff like that (...) this rub off on her brand when she is an exclusive woman if you can call it that. So those two things do not add up, so that might seem untrustworthy (Appendix G1, Thisted, 11.34).

This example shows an influencer who advertise for a brand something which are not something the participant associates the influencer with, and by doing so, it appeared untrustworthy. This viewpoint is also shared by the participants from Copenhagen:

Among other things, I think something like advertising for something you cannot relate to them (...) (Appendix H1, CPH, 20.26).

And that you do not advertise for something you cannot vouch for (Appendix H3, CPH, 33.04).

Here, the opinion that influencers have to advertise for something they can relate to and vouch for, are also evident.

Thus, it is visible among youths from Thisted and Copenhagen that untrustworthiness in relation to influencers, appear when there is too much advertisement and the advertisements do not relate to the influencers' personal brand. Even though, the youths from Thisted and Copenhagen share similar opinions about what are untrustworthy in relation to influencers, their opinions differ when it comes to what is trustworthy. Here, it is observable that the participants from Thisted find a critical approach towards advertisements, relations and recommendations that are not sponsored, trustworthy. Furthermore, the participants from Copenhagen find personal content and sharing important messages trustworthy.

When looking at what makes an influencer trustworthy, the participants from Thisted mention that influencers should talk about positive and negative sides of the products they promote. Furthermore, a feeling of relation to the influencer and recommendations which are not sponsored, are experienced as more trustworthy to the participants. Participant 2 from Thisted mentions the following as a reason to believe an influencer:

Well I think it is best for an influencer that they write that it is an advertisement (...) But also that they mention the good things {about a product}. However, what really counts is when they write things that could be better (...) things that are not perfect about the product. There is nothing that is perfect as some write a product is. So, that they write some of the dark sides, do that the trustworthiness increases (Appendix G2, Thisted, 17.18).

Through this statement, it is shown that in order for influencers to be perceived as trustworthy, it is important to be critical towards the products they promote in order for the consumers receive the truth about the good and bad aspects about a product.
Several of the participants from Thisted also mention that the feeling of some kind of relation to the influencer, can increase the believability of them. Participant 3 for instance states the following when asked what could make influencers seem trustworthy:

It is more if I have followed them for a long period of time (Appendix G3, Thisted, 15.03).

This statement shows that knowledge about the influencer or a feeling of familiarity, can increase the trustworthiness. This is also evident in a statement made by participant 1 from Thisted, who provides the following example of this:

Yes. Within the swimming world, there is Jeanette Ottesen who promotes, among other things, Adidas swimsuits and other stuff. And off course, I believe that, and it is also the brand I use myself. And that also has something to do with she is a huge idol to me, and I swim in my spare time (...) (Appendix G1, Thisted, 10.56).

In this example, it is shown that the participant trusts the influencer because she is seen as an idol and further there is a relation through swimming. Thereby, the notion of a relation can increases the trustworthiness. This also supports the fact that the participants from Thisted are more likely to feel a relation between themselves and the influencers. Therefore, they might be more inclined to follow influencers who they share similar interests with.

Moreover, the participants from Thisted find recommendations which are not sponsored trustworthy and further, if the influencer uses the product several times, it is perceived as trustworthy:

It is mostly when they do not advertise (...) For instance when they wear it to YouTube Awards or something. Then you know: okay, you actually think it {the product} is great. Yes, when they wear it in their everyday lives too. (...) When they for instance make a video where they are heading down stairs, and I can see they are wearing the shirt, then I know that it is not just because they were paid, but because they think it is great (Appendix G4, Thisted, 21.57).

When the influencers recommend products without receiving payment for it or if they use the products beside when advertising for it, might increase the trustworthiness of the participants from Thisted. Through the above, it is visible that being critical towards the influencer promoted products, having a relation with the influencer, unsponsored recommendations and that the influencers are using the products in their everyday lives, are factors which increase the trustworthiness for the participants from Thisted.

The participants from Copenhagen also identified factors which can increase the trustworthiness of influencers. Being personal is what the participants from Copenhagen most frequently mention as a way to increase influencers' trustworthiness:

(...) I think when it is something personal when there comes something extra and not just: This is good (Appendix H1, CPH, 19.09).

Participant 3 from Copenhagen also finds personal content trustworthy, which is showed in the following statement:

(...) And then I think when she {the influencer} shares about or is open about when she is travelling with her blog, and she then misses her family in Sweden, and I find this really trustworthy because it is human, and she does not put up a filter (Appendix H3, CPH, 28.48).

This shows that when influencers show personal sides through their social media channels, it is possible it might increase the trustworthiness. This is interesting as the participants from Copenhagen are more likely to view influencers as strangers and only as a way to receive recommendations, advices etc. In spite of this, it increases the likeliness that the influencers will be perceived as trustworthy when they share personal aspects of their lives. Even though, this is the case, it might be because the participants from Copenhagen a more aware of a relation with an influencer, is a one-way relation. Furthermore, the fact that the participants from Copenhagen like personal sharing from influences, align with that they find polished images and a misrepresentation of the real life, untrustworthy.

Additionally, several of the participants from Copenhagen are more likely to be influenced or believe an influencer, when the message it about an important subject. Two of the participants from Copenhagen mention blood donation as a subject in a post, which they have believed and acted upon:

(...) She made some posts where she really talked good about this case about donating blood (...) It is a very sensitive subject (...) She just touched a subject which I find important (Appendix H2, CPH, 16.58)

(...) She made a post about donating stem cells and blood donation and got a lot of people to register as blood donors. I was already a blood donor, so in that way it did not influence me, but the next time I was in the blood bank, I asked about being a stem cell donor which she also had focused on. That influenced me (Appendix H4, CPH, 12.13).

This indicates that posts about important subjects might be effective for youths from Copenhagen, as the above participants mention the case of blood donation as an example of of influencer posts which would impact them. This might suggest that advertising for something that is more than just the "traditional" advertisement products, might be an opportunity in Copenhagen, as the participants find it believable when the influencers focus on such things.

All the above show that the participants from both Thisted and Copenhagen might find different aspects of influencer marketing trustworthy. However, it is different kinds of posts or actions from the influencers, they mention as being trustworthy. In Thisted, the participants are more inclined to believe influencers if they feel as they have a relation with them or the influencers are critical toward the products. Furthermore, the trustworthiness is increased if the influencers recommend products which are not sponsored, and they use the products besides in the advertisement. The participants from Copenhagen are more likely to believe influencers if they share personal posts or call attention to important messages. In comparison, this might indicate that the participants from Copenhagen have considerations regarding influencers on a deeper level. This is visible as their trustworthiness toward influencers are related to important aspects, such as showing the reality and influencers using their voice to add awareness to important subjects, such as blood donation. On the contrary, youths from Thisted are more concerned with not getting frauded by influencers. This is visible as the youths want to know both positive and negative aspects about the advertised products and receiving recommendations of products which are not sponsored. This means that influencers choose to advertise the product by choice and not because of the possibility of making profit. Furthermore, the influencer seems trustworthy in the eyes of youths from Thisted, if they use the product several times which therefore might indicate that the product is good or useful.

To sum up the analysis, there are factors that both can be experienced as trustworthy and untrustworthy in influencer marketing to youths from Thisted and Copenhagen. For youths from both Thisted and Copenhagen, untrustworthiness is related to too much advertisement and a missing

connection between the advertised product and the influencer's brand. When looking at trustworthiness, youths from Thisted and Copenhagen are very different in their perceptions. This is evident as youths from Thisted find personal relation with the influencers and factors that limit the possibility for them to get frauded by influencers as trustworthy. Opposite to youths from Thisted, the youths from Copenhagen find trustworthiness in posts that touch upon important subjects or reflect reality.

Another way to express dissatisfaction with influencers and their level of advertisement, is through the action of unfollowing them. This action will be examined more in the following section.

5.2.2.2.2.1 The Use of "Unfollow"

When unfollowing influencers, it can be a way to show dissatisfaction with their posted content, as it may no longer be interesting or relevant to be exposed to. The above section found that many of the participants from both Thisted and Copenhagen find too much advertising untrustworthy. Therefore, this section will look further into whether the participants actually have acted on this dissatisfaction by unfollowing influencers because they advertised too much.

The answers from the participants from Thisted and Copenhagen are very similar, as most of them have unfollowed influencers because they advertise too much. In the following, there are presented some examples from the participants from Thisted when they were asked to whether they have unfollowed influencers:

(…) it can be too much of the good. You have to find a balance. At least for me. Then I sometimes feel if they post too many, for instance advertisements or promotions, then I do not feel like following them anymore (Appendix G3, Thisted, 15.26).

Yes, I have. But it is mostly Paradise participants and reality stars. When it is like it becomes too much of a good thing. When it is too much all of a sudden (…) they should say no sometimes (…) (Appendix G4, Thisted, 23.02).

Through the above, it is shown that the participants from Thisted unfollow influencers when they advertise too much. They were further asked to state what they perceive as too much advertisement and they stated:

Definitely if it is on a daily basis (Appendix G3, Thisted, 16.12).
(...) But also, more generally if it is once a day (Appendix G4, Thisted 24.01).

According to the participants from Thisted, too much advertising is when influencers advertise on a daily basis. A consequence of this, is that these participants unfollow the influencers and thereby, the participants are no longer exposed to their content.
Similar to the participants from Thisted, the participants from Copenhagen state when asked whether they ever have unfollowed an influencer because they have advertised too much:

Yes, I have. I unfollowed quite a lot (…) (Appendix H5, CPH, 48.44).
Yes, I actually have. I also think a lot of the ones I do not follow is because the advertise a lot (Appendix H6, CPH, 29.39).

Also, the majority of the participants from Copenhagen have unfollowed an influencer because he or she advertised too much. They further state what they perceive as too much advertising as well:

I actually think on a daily basis, also because it was many very extensive videos (Appendix H4, CPH, 15.05).

I would say nearly every second picture, I think. That is simply too much (Appendix H5, CPH, 49.01)

Also, here, advertisement on a daily basis or if nearly half of the content is advertisement, are mentioned as too much advertisement. However, a few of the participants from Thisted and Copenhagen state that they never have unfollowed an influencer because they advertised too much, but it might be relevant at some point. The participant from Thisted who has not unfollowed an influencer states this when asked if it might be a possibility:

*Yes, if it takes up too much space and you think a lot about it (...) (*Appendix G1, Thisted, 12.20).

If advertisements take up too much space, unfollowing influencers might also become relevant for the participant in Copenhagen:

Yes. It might. I might stop following them if they advertised (Appendix H2, CPH, 21.51).

Hereby, it is possible to see that the participants from both Thisted and Copenhagen find advertising on a daily basis too much. Consequently, the participants unfollow the influencers or they might do it, if it becomes relevant.

5.2.2.2.2.2 Importance of #Ad #Sponsored

When reviewing the importance of #advertisement or #sponsored, it becomes clear that it is important for the participants from both Thisted and Copenhagen, that it is visible if a post from an influencer contains advertisement or sponsored products. When looking at the participants from Thisted, it is possible to notice that it affects their trustworthiness toward the influencers if they do not write #advertisement or #sponsored when advertising. Furthermore, the participants from Copenhagen express that they are being more careful or even skip the posts which mean that they are not fully exposed to the advertised content.

As mentioned, it is important for the participants from Thisted that that it is visible when influencers advertise as it affects their trustworthiness toward the influencers. Participants 5 for instance states the following when asked if it affects her when influencers advertise:

I definitely think so, then you are unsure if it is just because of the money they advertise or what the reason is for advertising, whether it even is good or what (...) (Appendix G5, Thisted, 19.35).

Here, it is shown that the participant does not trust content that is advertisement because the participant does not feel that she can be sure whether it is the truth or not. However, another participant from Thisted believes it can be positive when influencers write #advertisement:
(...) I think it is important that they write it is an advertisement (...) I believe it is much more trustworthy that they do it, because then you know that: okay, it is trustworthy enough when you do

not write it {#advertisement} because then is because you want it {the product} yourself (Appendix G4, Thisted, 17.44).

This participant focuses on trustworthiness in another relation. Here, the focus is on posts or recommendations which are not advertisements. The participant expresses that it is only possible to trust recommendations from an influencer which are not sponsored. Therefore, the participant finds it important that the influencers note #advertisement on sponsored content, because then the participant is able to sort out what posts are paid and what content that are posted of the influencer's own interest. Hereby, it suggests that the participant only trusts recommendations which are not sponsored. This is also shown by the participants from Copenhagen as they become more careful when it is displayed as advertisement:

(…) I become more careful (…) (Appendix H1, CPH, 16.49)

(…) when there is written 'advertisement' then I think: then I do not want to buy the product (…). Then I just think: Eh, are you just doing this to make money? (Appendix H6, CPH, 23.43).

These two statements show that the fact that they know the posts are advertisement and thereby paid, they become more careful. This might mean that they are less likely to believe what is written. Furthermore, there also are a tendency among the participants from Copenhagen that they just not read advertisement posts:

(…) because when it is advertisement, I do not want to read it, but if they post something somewhere it is not an advertisement but just a recommendation then I might read more about the product (Appendix H3, CPH, 25.40).

In this statement, there are a couple of things worth noticing. First, the fact that advertisement posts are not even read, and second that non sponsored recommendations are more believable.
This shows that youths from Thisted and Copenhagen are very similar in their views regarding advertisement posts. All the participants refrain from advertisement posts as they are not believable because it is paid content. Furthermore, the above showed that recommendations which are not sponsored are more believable to the youths. This might suggest that neither of youths from Thisted

and Copenhagen use influencers as a way to get recommendations through advertisement posts, the inspiration and recommendations they seek is therefore beyond advertisements. This is also evident as too much advertisement is perceived as untrustworthy.

5.2.2.2.2.3 Effect of #Ad #Sponsored

This section will attempt to shed light on the effect #Advertisement and #Sponsored have on youths from Thisted and Copenhagen.

When examining this effect, it was found that the participants from both Thisted and Copenhagen have very similar opinions. All the participants were asked whether they become more or less affected when it is visible that influencers' posts are advertisements. One of the participants from Thisted says that advertisement affects him in a negative direction:

You probably get more affected (...) in a negative direction (Appendix G3, Thisted, 13.05).

This shows influencer marketing does not has the effect that it inspires to buy the products. A similar statement is made by participant 4 from Thisted:

Well, I just do not want to buy it. I do get affected when it is written there, because then I scroll by compared to if it was not written there (...) (Appendix G4, Thisted, 18.47).

This tells that the participant gets affected in the way that she will not read the posts if they contain advertisement. However, if the posts are not advertisement or sponsored, the participants will read the content. Through this, it is obvious that the participant from Thisted gets affected negatively when influencers post advertisement content. This aligns with the fact that they find influencer advertisements untrustworthy. Also, the participants from Copenhagen get less affected when the content is advertised or sponsored:

I do not know. I definitely do not think I get more affected (Appendix H2, CPH, 16.00).

Then I think 'another one'. I do not think much about it (Appendix H4, CPH, 11.52).

The above statements show that the participants from Copenhagen do not get affected in positive way as well as the participants from Thisted. Participant 3 from Copenhagen also shares that she is not affected by advertisement posts, as she skips them:

I scroll past them. And then it is often when they post a real long video in their story, I just skip by the whole video instead of watching the clips (Appendix H3, CPH, 26.19).

It is further shown that the effect of advertisement posts made by influencers are negative, as the participants from Copenhagen do not get affected by them, and they further might not even read the content or watch the videos.

This suggests that youths from Thisted and Copenhagen do not get affected much by advertisement posts made by influencers. This supports the notion that youths from Thisted and Copenhagen do not follow influencers because they promote different products, as they distance themselves from posts which are marked as advertisements. Therefore, the trustworthiness is not increased in sponsored advertisements made by influencers.

5.2.2.2.3 Perception of Influencer Marketing

The previous section found that the youths from Thisted and Copenhagen do not get affected much by influencer posts which are marked as advertisement or sponsored. However, the participants were also asked to look at three different advertisement posts which have been posted on social media by three Danish influencers (Appendix E). This was done in order to determine how the participants perceive this type of posts, by responding to concrete examples. Furthermore, the participants were asked if they wanted to buy the advertised products displayed on the posts. This can contribute to determine what effect such posts have. Finally, this section provides a more concrete point of view of trustworthiness as it provides a perception of what the participants actually think when they are presented with these kinds of posts on social media.

5.2.2.2.3.1 Perception of Sponsored Influencer Posts

When presenting the participants with the posts, there were in general a tendency that the participants from both Thisted and Copenhagen identified positive and negative aspects of the

presented posts. Approximately half of the participants from Thisted found the posts negative and a third of the participants from Copenhagen did the same. The participants from both Thisted and Copenhagen have mainly similar reasons for why the posts are perceived as negative. They state that the posts are polished and arranged, too many influencers advertise for the same products and the focus of the product.

As an example, participant 5 from Thisted answers the following when asked whether she believes the lotion works (picture 1, Appendix E):

Then I think no because I can see she has a lot of make-up on (Appendix G5, Thisted 14.22).

This shows that a polished picture does not work as, in this case, it might be perceived as contradicting with the purpose of the product. Additionally, participant 1 from Copenhagen finds the posts arranged:

(…) Well, it is very stereotypical (…) in a way very very polished (…) It is very clear that there is done much to sell a product (Appendix H1, CPH, 13.16).

Through the above statements, it is possible to notice that these kind of arranged or polished pictures, are perceived as stereotypical and thereby they are perceived as typical influencer advertisement posts. This representation of products are according to some of the participants from Thisted and Copenhagen viewed as negative.

A reason that also was provided as negative, was the focus of the product. However, here there is a difference of opinion between the participants from Thisted and Copenhagen. One participant from Thisted states the following when asked if she liked posts where the focus was on anything besides the product:

Yes, because I also think the picture is nice. And then I can get some inspiration from the picture. It is a beautiful place he {the influencer} is and then you can take a picture there for your own Instagram account (…) (Appendix G4, Thisted, 13.04).

Here, the participant states that it is good that it is not only the product, which is in focus, as the other details in the post can give inspiration and further inspire to what posts she can post on her own social media. This shows that it is negative to post pictures where the product is in focus, as the inspirational parts of the posts are left out. However, this contradicts with one of the participants from Copenhagen as she states:

(...) She {the influencer} posts a picture where she looks very good and stands with a product in her hand and there I feel a little (...) There is not much focus on the product, and there is a lot of focus on her, I think and there are things you notice more than the lotion (...) (Appendix H5, CPH, 29.55).

Through this statement, it is evident that too many objects in a post can remove the focus from the actual product, which is perceived as negative.

Another difference between the participants from Thisted and Copenhagen was also found as the participants from Copenhagen distance themselves from advertisements posts where influencers advertise for the same products as all the other influencers:

(...) I have seen this advertisement {Daniel Wellington advertisement} a lot through almost all bloggers and reality stars. And it is like it comes in periods. Then everyone gets a discount code and then they advertise for it (...) And there I think it is an advertisement I get really tired of.. it has really.. there are many who have advertised this, and it goes on... Then there is a two-months break and then it returns. It is an advertisement you are really tired of (…) (Appendix H5, CPH, 31.24).

This participant gets tired of products that too many influences advertise for. This view is among others, shared by participant 3 from Copenhagen:

(...) and post the same pictures and the same stories and advertise for the same clothes. And it is a little arh.. do your own instead of riding a wave (...) (Appendix H3, CPH, 29.45).

Thereby, it is possible that the participants from Copenhagen might be more attracted by advertisements if not too many influencers advertised for the same products.

The above shows, that the participants from Thisted and Copenhagen who react negatively toward the influencer posts, do it because they find them too polished or arranged which therefore is not presented as trustworthy. Furthermore, the participants mention the focus of the product. However, in Thisted the participants prefer that the product is not the only object that is in focus. On the contrary, the participants from Copenhagen want the advertised product to be in focus. Furthermore, the participants from Copenhagen distance themselves from advertisement posts which many influencers advertise for.

Some of the participants from both Thisted and Copenhagen also express that they reacted positive toward the influencer posts. However, there are a difference in the positive aspects of the posts. The participants from Thisted who view the posts as positive, mention them as trustworthy:

(...) Well it is good pictures, because first of all there are people on, so they seem more trustworthy (...) (Appendix G1, Thisted, 7.41).

(...) It is three very popular people and celebrities who have received some sponsored products, which they feel like is working and fit well to them. Therefore, I would trust them when I see the posts and it is correct what they write (Appendix G2, Thisted, 11.53).

Here, the above participants like the posts because there are people or celebrities on them and therefore, the posts are perceived trustworthy. Furthermore, a participant from Copenhagen mentions trustworthiness in relation to the pictures as well. However, here it is because the influencers advertise for the products several times. The participant answers the following when asked whether it is because the influencer has advertised for it repeatedly:

Exactly, it just seems like a good product she gets and afterwards she advertises for it, but it is something she cares about. And Mascha Vang (...) it is a little like Irina, I also follow Mascha Vang a lot on Instagram, and I think it seems trustworthy what she posts and advertise for (Appendix H6, CPH, 19.29).

Here, it is noticeable that what seems trustworthy is that it is products which the influencer cares about, uses and advertise for because she liked it before advertising for it. So, the trustworthiness is

evident because there is a relation between the influencer and the brand. The participants from Copenhagen further mention that the posts as standard influencer posts, which they do not think much about:

It is normally what you see (Appendix H2, CPH, 12.30).

The above participant was further asked if she would be drawn to the posts where she answers 'no' (Appendix H6, CPH, 12.49). Also, participant 3 states that the posts are standard influencer posts:

Yes, well it is some very common pictures, I think. Something they posts often in relation to advertisements and something like that (Appendix H3, CPH, 21.07).

The above analysis shows that some youths from Thisted and Copenhagen find that influencer advertisement posts have both positive and negative effects. Some youths from both Thisted and Copenhagen view influencer posts as negative in which they agree that it is because they are polished and arranged or that there is an issue with the focus of the product. Furthermore, some youths from Copenhagen believe that when too many influencers are advertising for the same products, it becomes annoying and have a negative effect. However, some youths from Copenhagen also find that the posts have a positive effect. A way the posts can be perceived as trustworthy by youths from Copenhagen, is if the products that are advertised for, match with who the influencer is. Lastly, youths from Copenhagen are not necessarily drawn to posts that are common. Furthermore, youths from Thisted place the importance on having people present on the posts as something that seem trustworthy.

In general, this shows that youths from Thisted and Copenhagen are a little divided in their opinions about the influencer posts. Therefore, it is relevant to look further into whether the influencer posts give youths a desire to purchase the advertised products.

5.2.2.2.3.2 Purchase Desire

This section will focus on whether influencer advertisement posts give youths from Thisted and Copenhagen a desire to buy the products that are being advertised for. The participants were asked

whether they wanted to buy the products the influencers advertised for in the posts which were mentioned in the previous section.

When asked if the participants were tempted to purchase any of the products on the influencer advertisement posts, it is clear that the participants from Thisted mainly answer 'yes' and the participants from Copenhagen mainly answer 'no'.

Looking over the answers from the participants from Thisted, it is interesting that the participants are interested in the products when they see the posts, as their answers above vary to how they perceive the influencers' posts. Participant 1 from Thisted answers the following when asked about whether she would be interested in purchasing the products:

(...) Well, it looks good and positive (...) There are off course the brand in the middle (Beauté Pacifique) it is something I know, so that would be interesting to read more about. So, I have a positive feeling about it (Appendix G1, Thisted, 8.05).

This shows that she knows the product that is being advertised for and she is tempted to seek more information about it. Thereby, the participant is influenced in a positive direction by the one post. Participant 3 from Thisted also mention something similar when looking at the post of the advertisement for the Daniel Wellington watch (Appendix E):

You might want to check it out some more if you can say that (Appendix G3, Thisted, 10.30).

Also here, it is possible to see the participant is affected in the way that there is a possibility that the participant would want to look further into information about the product. Another participant from Thisted mentions that the desire to buy influencer recommended products has something to do with both the product and the influencer:

(...) Then I would buy the one with Mascha Vang, but it is also because I know that brand, and because I believe she is more reliable than some of the others. The ones from Paradise Hotel, there I just think oh my god, it is only because they have participated in that {Paradise Hotel}, they do not understand anything (Appendix G4, Thisted, 16.49).

Through the above statements, it is first visible that the one participant from Thisted might buy the products if there are advertised for a brand, they she familiar with. Second, the participant has to find the influencer reliable in order to be intrigued by the product. Thus, it is conspicuous that the participants from Thisted might find the advertisements interesting and seek out more information, or they might buy the products if the know of it beforehand.

Moreover, it is noticeable that the participants from Thisted may be open to the possibility of purchasing some of these products showed in the posts. However, none of them say yes unconditionally. The participants are interested and want to know more, or they would only purchase the products because they have previous knowledge about the product. Thereby, it appears as the participants from Thisted would not buy a product solely based on an influencer recommendation, but they might get inspired.

When reviewing the answers from the participants from Copenhagen, there is a tendency that the participants say 'no' whether they want to purchase the products that are advertised for in the influencer posts. An example hereof is provided by participant 1 from Copenhagen:

No, I do not think so (...) both because I do not think it is something for me (...) I cannot see similarities between me and the ones on the pictures (Appendix H1, CPH, 13.43).

This shows that because of a missing identification, the participant does not want to buy the products. However, the participant continues:

(...) Had it been one of the ones {influencers} I follow, then there might have been a greater trust towards it (Appendix H1, CPH, 14.17).

This might indicate that even though, the participant does not want to buy any of the three products showed in the examples, there is a possibility that the participant would purchase other influencer advertised products. The reason for this is that the participant places more trust in the influencers she follows. Also, some of the other participants from Copenhagen state that they would not want to purchase any of the presented products but are open to the possibility of buying other products. For instance, participant 6 from Copenhagen says:

I have considered it. Irina has advertised for her own make-up palette and I think I care more about make-up than lotion (...) I think make-up catches my attention (...) Sometimes influencers have promoted a great mascara, and there I have come really close to buying it (Appendix H6, CPH, 21.08).

This shows that the participant would consider buying products which she finds more interesting, and thereby is not reluctant to purchase products which influencers promote.
Furthermore, some of the participants from Copenhagen also state that they would not purchase the products shown in the examples provided. However, they might be tempted to use a discount code:

No. It is very rare I get the urge to buy products. I primarily use it if there is a discount code (Appendix H3, CPH, 23.44).

This idea is agreed upon by participant 4 from Copenhagen:

Okay. If it for instance was the mascara I use (...) Then I might want to buy it because they provide a discount code, because it is what I usually use (Appendix H4, CPH, 10.46).

This shows that if these participants should want to purchase a product, it would be because they got a benefit in form of a discount code, and not because of the advertisement or the influencer.

There is a tendency among the participants from Copenhagen that they do not want to purchase the products which are present on the examples provided. However, they might want to buy products which they normally use. Furthermore, they also might be tempted to use discount codes in this relation. This shows that the participants from Copenhagen not are entirely dismissive to the possibility that they would purchase products which are advertised by influencers.

Based on the above, it is possible to conclude that youths from Thisted and Copenhagen have different views toward whether they want to purchase the products which are provided as examples. Youths from Thisted are more positive toward the posts as they would be interested in them if they know the product beforehand or they might want to obtain additional information about the product.

This might indicate that youths from Thisted are more inclined to be inspired by influencer marketing.

Youths from Copenhagen, on the other hand, do not want to purchase the influencer advertised products but might want to purchase other products that they normally use. In this relation, they might also make use of discount codes. This indicates that both youths from Thisted and Copenhagen are open to be possibility to purchase products which are advertised by influencers. However, as they want to know the product beforehand or obtain additional information, they do not solely trust influencers when they advertise products.

There will in the following section be examined whether the participants have ever bought a product based on an influencer advertisement post.

5.2.2.2.4 Previous Purchase Behavior

In the above, it was found that the participants from both Thisted and Copenhagen might want to purchase products which are promoted by influencers. In addition to this, this section will examine if the participants have ever purchased a product based on an influencer advertisement, including the reasons for purchasing or not purchasing the products. This will provide a more thorough view of the effect of influencer marketing.

When assessing the responses from the participants from Thisted and Copenhagen to the question if they have ever bought a product which was recommended by an influencer, it was found that the answers differ. This is visible as there are both participants from Thisted who have bought influencer advertised products and participants who have not. This is also the case when looking at the responses from the participants from Copenhagen. However, the answers could indicate that there is a tendency that the participants from Thisted more often buy products which are advertised by influencers compared to the participants from Copenhagen. This is evident as three participants from Thisted have bought a product based on an influencer advertisement, whereas only two participants from Copenhagen have done the same. Additionally, the two participants from Copenhagen who have bought an advertised product, have not bought the products only because of the recommendation from the influencer:

Yes, I have. At least I have seen some products and then I have researched them some more. I bought some underwear once. Yes (Appendix H1, CPH, 14.50).

I think I have. I do not know if it was an influencer (...) Then they might have recommended it and I have seen it many other places, I then thought it must be good and then I eventually bought it (Appendix H2, CPH, 13.34).

This shows that the participants who have bought influencer advertised products have acquired some additional information, which lead to the purchase of the products. However, this is not the case among the participants from Thisted. They purchased their products for other reasons:

Yes, I have (...) It was because there was discount on the stuff which there were talked about, a clothing website, and then I thought it was some cool clothes (Appendix G3, Thisted, 11.28).

Yes a ring (...) It was because it was more personal and because I thought it was pretty and there was many who wore it (...) She {the influencer} said it was really pretty and that there were many of her friends who wanted it, and then I thought that I also wanted it (Appendix G4, Thisted, 16.35).

Participant 4 was further asked about whether it had an impact that it was an influencer who recommended it, and the participant answered:

Yes, I think it is because I follow them every day and then I think it is cool if I also could post a picture wearing that ring because she got it, and she has many followers and that it just nice (Appendix G4, Thisted, 17.08).

This shows that one of the participants from Thisted bought the product because there was a discount code, and the other participant from Thisted purchased the product to be similar to the influencer. This does not align entirely with what was found in the aforementioned section, as the participants from Thisted stated that they would want to purchase a product if they have had it beforehand or after obtaining additional information about it. However, they seem more open to the idea of purchasing products which are recommended by influencers. This could be the reason why

more of the participants from Thisted have bought a product based of an advertisement from an influencer compared to the participants from Copenhagen. Moreover, there are also differences in reasons why some of the participants from Thisted and Copenhagen did not purchase a product based on an advertisement from an influencer. One of the participants from Thisted who said 'no' to ever have bought an influencer promoted product, provides the following reason:

(...) because it is something they get paid to do. That you know. Earlier I had a tendency to being caught by it (...) but they have to say their products are good even though, they always say they would never say otherwise (…) (Appendix G5, Thisted, 18.47).

This participant refrain from purchasing products which are advertised by influencers because the participant does not believe the influencers are 100 % trustful, because they are paid to sell the product. However, this is not the common reason for not buying the products as the last two participants from Thisted state that they have not bought an influencer recommended product, but may be indirectly influenced by the recommendations:

Not that I remember (...) If I go in Matas and see something then I for sure think that you have it in mind like: I remember something about this. There is something positive about this. This is good or something. Because you have heard it from them. So, I think it has an impact in that way, yes (Appendix G1, Thisted, 08.32).

This statement shows that even though, the participant does not buy products based on a recommendation from an influencer, it still creates awareness and the information about a certain product might be recalled at some point, and thereby result in a purchase. Participant 2 from Thisted has not either bought a product directly based on an influencer recommendation, but is also influenced by the information the influencer provides:

I would not say that I have never bought a specific product, but I follow many influencers who talk about clothing brands, and then I have bought something from that brand (...) because I feel as they can tell how it fits on the body and stuff like that and I can trust that (Appendix G2, Thisted, 13.35).

This shows that even though, this participant does not buy specific clothing items that the influencer talks about, the information still has an effect. This is evident as the participant may buy something from the brand because the participant trusts the information, and that information can be used to purchase other items.

In an overall perspective, it mainly seems like the participants from Thisted either are directly or indirectly influenced by influencer marketing. Even though, the majority of the participants from Thisted do not purchase products that are recommended by an influencer, some of them are indirectly influenced, as they might use the information received by the influencer to purchase other items or purchase them at a later time.

The majority of the participants from Copenhagen did not either purchase a product based on an influencer advertisement. However, they provide some different reasons than the participants from Thisted:

I actually do not think that I have (...) In relation to Daniel Wellington and the clothes they post there, is often where I think that I do not want it because it is like a blogger-girl. I think you can spot who follows influencers on the street, because you have seen a pair of really ugly shoes and I think they are really ugly and two months after you have them yourself and everyone else have them too. And there I think, you can really see who follows them (...) (Appendix H3, CPH, 24.28).

This shows that this participant does not buy products which are recommended by influencers, because she does not want to be associated with influencers and the products they promote. Another participant from Copenhagen share a different view to why she refrains from buying the products which influencers advertise for:

(...) Well, I do not think they have any knowledge behind everything they promote because it is so many different things, they go from lotions to sunscreen to toothpaste and then suddenly it is a watch. So, it is really different things which they advertise for. And then suddenly it is a discount code for some clothes. There are many different things, which they advertise for and I feel frustrated by that they do not study thoroughly how the different things work. They just advertise to get something, and that annoys me that it is done that way (Appendix H5, CPH, 36.58).

Here, the reason for not purchasing products which influencers advertise for, is because they do not have the necessary knowledge to recommend it. Therefore, the participant distances from these advertisements, which consequently means that she would not purchase the products. Even though, the two above statements show that these two participants have considered not purchasing influencer recommended products much, it is not considered by the last two participants from Copenhagen, who have not bought products which are advertised by influencers:

No (...) I have only considered it (Appendix H6, CPH, 22.18).

No (...) because there has not been anything, I found interesting (Appendix H4, CPH,11.21).

These two statements indicate that the participants did not give much thought to it. Therefore, the possibility they might purchase influencer recommended products in the future, cannot be excluded. When examining the answers from the participants from Copenhagen, who have not bought a product based on advertisements made by influencers, it is noticeable that two of them have considered this much whereas the last two have not. This might suggest that more youths from Copenhagen take a stance from this form of marketing.

Comparing the examination of why or why not youths from Thisted and Copenhagen have bought products that are promoted by influencers, it is clear that most of the youths from Thisted either have directly or indirectly purchased products based on recommendation from an influencer. This can indicate that youths from Thisted have higher degree of trust toward influencers. On the contrary, youths from Copenhagen who have purchased products which are promoted by influencers, have obtained additional information before purchasing them. Furthermore, youths from Copenhagen who have not purchased an influencer recommended product, seem to have considered it more than youths from Thisted. This is shown as youths from Copenhagen have more in-depth reasons to why they do not want to purchase, or trust influencer recommended products.

5.2.2.2.5 Sub Conclusion: Trustworthiness in Influencer Marketing

This section will conclude on the analysis regarding trustworthiness in influencer marketing. Here, it was found that youths from Thisted and Copenhagen in general view influencers as both

trustworthy and untrustworthy. Youths from both Thisted and Copenhagen find that too much advertisement and a missing connection between the advertised products and the influencers' brand are factors that create untrustworthiness in influencer marketing. Furthermore, youths from Thisted and Copenhagen do not believe the content influencers posts when it is paid. Too much advertisement does often result in that youths stop following the influencer and thereby, they are no longer exposed to the influencers' content. Some youths from Copenhagen also explain more concretely what could make an influencer advertisement post seem untrustworthy. Here, things such as if the posts are arranged or polished seem untrustworthy. Furthermore, the focus of the product is an issue. Youths from Thisted do not want the product to be the only thing in focus, and on the contrary, youths from Copenhagen do not want the pictures to contain a lot of other details besides the product.

On the other hand, trustworthiness can also be achieved in influencer marketing. For youths from Thisted trustworthiness increases with factors that can limit the possibility that they feel defrauded by the influencer. This is shown as youths from Thisted want the influencer to be critical toward the advertised or recommended products, which are not sponsored in order to get their true opinions. For youths from Copenhagen trustworthiness is much more related to the influencers' ability to reflect the reality and if they touch important subjects.

When participants from Thisted and Copenhagen were presented with some examples of influencer advertisements, some of them also found some trustworthy elements in the examples. Youths from Thisted believe it is trustworthy when it is people who are present on the pictures. Furthermore, youths from Copenhagen believe it is important that the advertised products match the influencers' personal brand.

In order to determine what impact trustworthiness or untrustworthiness have on actual purchase behavior, the participants first answered whether they wanted to buy the products that were in the examples presented. Here, the participants from Thisted seemed more positive toward the possibility to want to purchase products, however they wanted additional information before purchasing it. The participants from Copenhagen were more negative toward the possibility that they might buy the products. However, they stated that other products might be of interest, or they might use a discount code provided by the influencer. Thereby, youths from both Thisted and Copenhagen might buy some influencer promoted products. This is supported by the fact that youths from Thisted and Copenhagen has purchased influencer promoted products. However, it is evident that youths from Thisted seem to be more likely to purchase, as there is a tendency among

them that they either have purchased such a product directly or indirectly. Youths from Copenhagen who have bought influencer promoted products, have only done it after obtaining additional information about the products. The purchase behavior in relation to influencer promoted products, might suggest that youths from Thisted have higher trust in influencers than youths from Copenhagen.

5.2.2.3 Authenticity

The following section will contain an analysis of authenticity of influencer marketing among youths from Thisted and Copenhagen. This will first be determined through the importance of the relation between what influencers advertise and their personal brand. Next, there will be accounted for the importance of the balance between advertisement content and personal content on the influencers' social media platforms. Finally, there will be established whether the participants feel that they know influencers on a personal level.

5.2.2.3.1 Advertised Products versus Personal Brand

In order to determine if it is important for the participants from Thisted and Copenhagen, if influencers advertise products that relate to the influencers' personal brand, the participants were given an example of a well-known Danish influencer. They were asked to state their reaction if the influencer advertised products that were far from her brand. All the participants from both Thisted and Copenhagen agreed that it was important that there was a relation between what influencers advertise and their personal brand. All of the participants from Thisted express that if influencers advertise products that are far from their personal brand, it would just be for the sake of making profit. Participant 1 from Thisted states:

Then you probably are aware that it is sponsored, and she does it for the financial aspect in it (Appendix G1, Thisted, 06.50).

However, the participant further rationalizes those influencers who advertise products that not relate to their personal brand:

(…) it is a job for them. So, sometimes they have to do things that not necessarily in their self-interest (Appendix G1, Thisted, 06.50).

Another participant from Thisted explains that she does not believe those influencers who advertise for products that are not entirely relatable to their personal brand. However, she understands it as they have a lot of followers.

(…) I know that you have been told to say this. But that is fair enough because you have a lot of followers. I know you have received money for this (Appendix G4, Thisted, 11.17).

Furthermore, she states that if influencers are advertising products that do not relate to their personal brand, she believes that they have been told what to say in order to make profit.

These statements show that the two participants know when influencers are advertising products that do not relate to their personal brand and realize that they make profit off of it. However, at the same time, they understand why influencers have to do it because it is their job to advertise. The fact that the participants express that it is the influencers job to advertise and it might not be in their own interest, might also indicate that influencers are not perceived as very authentic by the participants, as it is not something that they do self-imposed.

Similar to the participants from Thisted, the majority of the participants from Copenhagen also express that if influencers advertise products that are far from their personal brand, it would just be for the sake of making profit. Participant 1 from Copenhagen states:
I know that they get paid for it (…) (Appendix H1, CPH, 11.12).

It is also evident in the following statement from participant 6 from Copenhagen:

(…) I would think like they definitely just did it to get paid (Appendix H6, CPH, 14.14).

Furthermore, participant 6 from Copenhagen does not think that she would think much of it if influencers started advertising products which are not related to their brand. However, she would definitely think that it would be to make profit:

I think that I probably would think it is kind of atypical if an influencer that cared about make-up suddenly posted something that did not fit with, like, what the person cared about. I would think that it defiantly where to receive money. But I would not, like, think further of it (Appendix H6, CPH, 14.14).

Similar to the above statements from the participants from Thisted, one participant from Copenhagen states as well that it is understandable that influencers advertise as it is how they earn their living:

It is also how they make a living so if they get offered something, then I just think they accept (Appendix H3, CPH, 18.18).

The participants from Thisted and Copenhagen do not only believe that influencers advertise to make profit and to make a living, they also believe that it would affect the influencers' authenticity if they advertise products which do not relate to their personal brand.

Participant 2 from Thisted states that it might harm the influencers' image and likes if they start advertising products that do not relate to their personal brand. According to him, the influencers might lose a lot of likes and followers because the influencers then are targeting another audience (Appendix G2, Thisted, 10.50). A participant from Copenhagen expresses correspondingly:

It is also connected with how real they are (...) (Appendix H1, CPH, 11.05).
The above indicates that youths from both Thisted and Copenhagen, find it important that influencers advertise products which relate to their personal brand. Therefore, this might increase the authenticity of the influencers. Furthermore, they are aware that advertising is a part of influencers' job, which might decrease the perception of authenticity as advertisement is not perceived as something influencers do self-imposed. Nonetheless, if influencers advertise content that does not have a relation with their personal content, youths from Thisted and Copenhagen believe it might harm their image and question how authentic they are. This will be analyzed in the following section.

When looking at how important the participants from Thisted and Copenhagen find it that influencers create a balance between their advertised content and personal content on their social media, it is noticeable that almost all of the participants from Thisted and Copenhagen agree that the balance between advertised content and personal content is important.

Only participant 2 from Thisted believes that it is irrelevant that the balance of advertised content and personal content is present. He was asked if he follows influencers in order to keep up with their lives. He answered:

No. I do not feel that it is to see how they move into a house or something like that (Appendix G2, Thisted, 22.08).

He continues when answering if he just follows influencers to receive recommendations:

Yes, to receive inspiration to clothes or something (Appendix G2, Thisted, 22.23).

This shows that participant 2 from Thisted does not find it important that influencers have a balance between advertised content and personal content on their social media platforms. However, as mentioned before, this is not the case when looking at the other interviews from the participants from both Thisted and Copenhagen. When participant 5 from Thisted was asked if she finds it important that the influencers, she follows, show a personal aspect as well on their social media platforms, she explains:
Yes, it is more fun. It is what you are most curious to see, know and hear about (...) (Appendix G5, Thisted, 28.45).

Another participant from Thisted additionally states that he finds it important that influencers have personal content on their social media as well because he started to follow them for a reason:

It is also why you start {to follow influencers}. A lot of those I have followed, are some I have followed for a long time because of the content they make themselves (...) (Appendix G3, Thisted, 16.38).

This is agreed upon by a participant from Copenhagen as she states:

Yes well. I have after all started to follow them because I thought that they had something important to say (Appendix H1, CPH, 21.49).

These statements show that a reason for the two participants to have started to follow influencers in the first place, is because of their personal content. Furthermore, participant 2 from Copenhagen also expresses that influencers not only make a living of posting advertisements and sponsored products from companies, but also showing their personal lives:

Because they after all live of showing their lives and such and not only restaurants and expensive clothes and being on holidays all the time and what else they do. So yes, it is important that they also post that they have a depressing Sunday or something (Appendix H2, CPH, 22.23).

This is also stated by participant 1 from Thisted. However, she emphasizes that being an influencer is a fulltime job, so it is inevitable to not show something personal:

(...) for a lot of influencers, it is a 37 hours position, if not more. Well, it is after all a fulltime job, so it is important that the two things are interrelated (Appendix G1, Thisted, 12.38).

These two statements show that the participants believe that there have to be a balance between the influencers' advertised content and personal content as it is their jobs.
Furthermore, another participant from Thisted states that she tends to get bored when influencers only post advertisement (Appendix G5, Thisted, 23.20). In addition to this, participant 6 from Copenhagen states:

I think that it is much more interesting to follow, and I also think that it gives a better picture of who they are and not just a polished side (Appendix H6, CPH, 31.25).

Here, the participant places the importance on that influencers create a better picture of themselves when also posting personal content and not just a polished side of their lives. Furthermore, participant 5 from Copenhagen expresses that she thinks that the content might get too personal and

that it does not concern her. However, she believes that personal content about influencers' everyday life is appropriate when also advertising (Appendix H5, 50.08-50.49).

Having established that almost all of the participants from Thisted and Copenhagen agree that the balance between advertised content and personal content is important, might indicate that they use the personal content from influencers to determine authenticity in the advertisement posts.

It is further essential to determine if the notion of posting personal content make a difference when influencers advertise. This is done in order to support the notion that the participants use personal content from influencers to determine authenticity in the advertisement posts.
It is noticeable that the participants from Thisted have mixed positions to whether it makes a difference when influencers advertise when they show a personal aspect as well on their social media platform. This is also evident in the interviews with the participants from Copenhagen. One similarity is present among the participants from Thisted and Copenhagen:

Yes, I think so. They are allowed to. But as mentioned before, it has to be on a limited extent (Appendix G3, Thisted, 17.16).

Participant 3 from Copenhagen agrees with this as she states:

They are allowed to, but I also think it has to be moderately (…) (Appendix H3, CPH, 34.43).
These statements show that when influencers show a personal aspect on their social media platforms, the participants accept advertisements in a moderate rate. In addition to this, participant 5 from Copenhagen states:

Well, they are allowed to advertise. I really believe that it depends on their personality and their approach. As I think some just write 'advertisement' and a ramble like: 'this product is called this and does exactly this' and nothing more. It is not like: 'I have been trying this and I think it is really good' or 'It really works for me and now that I have used it for several weeks…' or something like that (Appendix H5, CPH, 51.46).

This shows that the participant accepts the advertisement, however, it depends on who advertises it and how it is advertised. Furthermore, participant 5 from Thisted states:

(...) I think as soon as they have over a certain number of followers, they can advertise (...) (Appendix G5, Thisted, 29.07).

This statement shows that the participant almost expects that influencers advertise when they reach a certain number of followers. However, she elaborates her statement with the following:

(...) then you know that they not only use their followers for something like that {advertise} (...) then they also use them to show who they are. It is not just a profile of advertisement and income (Appendix G5, Thisted, 29.32-29.38).

This shows that the participant does not feel that she is being exploited by influencers' advertisements when they post personal content as well. However, participant 4 from Thisted have a different conception of the notion of advertising even though, influencers show personal content:

Yes, it is like I lose it a little {feeling of relation}. Well, it is like it just is advertisement. And then it is like the personality you thought you followed, is gone (Appendix G4, Thisted, 24.45).

The statement from participant 4 from Thisted shows that she has a close relationship with the influencers she follows, as it is possible to argue that she feels disappointed and betrayed losing the relationship with the influencers because they advertise.

The above indicates that it is important for youths from both Thisted and Copenhagen that there is a balance between influencers' advertised content and personal content. In this way, it is possible for the youths to get behind the professional side of being an influencer, which might increase the authenticity. Furthermore, youths from both Thisted and Copenhagen accept advertisements when it comes in moderate amounts, which might provide a positive effect on the influencers' authenticity. Therefore, youths from both Thisted and Copenhagen assess the authenticity of influencers through the personal content.

5.2.2.3.3 Knowing Influencers on a Personal Level

The last aspect of the analysis that will be covered in relation to authenticity in influencer marketing, is whether the participants feel that they know the influencers on a personal level. Knowing influencers on a personal level, might increase the perception of authenticity as the participants might see through what advertisement content is real and what is fake.

When viewing the interviews from the participants from both Thisted and Copenhagen, it becomes clear they differ in this area. This is evident as the participants from Thisted are divided as the majority of the participants feel that they do not know influencers on a personal level. This is in contrast to the participants from Copenhagen as the majority feel that they know influencers on a personal level.

In the following statement, participant 1 from Thisted states:

I do not believe so, no. Because one thing is what they (...) advertise for and what they express through the media to their followers, and another thing is how they are in person. I do not think that the two necessarily are interrelated (Appendix G1, Thisted, 4.26).

This statement shows that the participant does not believe what influencers show and how they are in person, are interrelated. This might indicate that the participant does not think that influencers present the true reality all the time. Another participant from Thisted does not follow influencers to get to know them on a personal level. This is evident as she states the following:

It is just to be curious (Appendix G5, Thisted, 07.53).

This statement shows that the participant mainly follows influencers because she is curious to keep up with their lives and not to get to know the influencer on a more personal level. Also, a participant from Copenhagen explains that she does not feel that she knows influencers on a personal level:

No. I do not feel that. I feel that they do it because it is their job (Appendix H4, CPH, 06.29).

She continues:

They always have a private side (Appendix H4, CPH, 06.36).

Here, the participant from Copenhagen has the perception that being an influencer is a job, which might indicate that she believes that they do not show their whole personality for their followers to get to know. This might hinder their followers to get to know the influencers on a personal level which can decrease the participant's perception of authenticity towards influencers.
Even though, the majority of the participants from Thisted do not feel that they know influencers on a personal level, some feel that they do as well. Participant 4 from Thisted states:

You somehow feel that you get a relation with them that is when you have known them for a long time (...) (Appendix G4, Thisted, 03.30).

Another participant from Thisted agrees with this by stating:

Well a little. (...) The longer you have followed them, the more you hear about them and then I think you get to know them a little more personal. Also, in terms of their stances (...) (Appendix G3, Thisted, 04.42).
The above two statements indicate that when the participants have followed them for a long time, they feel that they know the influencers a bit more personal. Furthermore, participant 4 from Thisted continues:

It is like you have more friends on another platform of somehow (…) *It is like they talk to you, but you know it is not true as they talk to another 40,000 followers* (Appendix G4, Thisted, 03.50).

Here, the participant has the feeling of having more friends on another platform, but at the same time, she is aware that she is not the only follower the influencers have, and thereby maybe the relation is not real. A participant from Copenhagen has a similar view as she states that she feels she kind of know the influencers she follows on a personal level. However, she is also aware that she probably does not (Appendix H1, CPH, 08.10).

Participant 3 from Copenhagen states the following when asked if she feels that she knows influencers on a personal level:

Yes. I actually do (Appendix H3, CPH, 14.43).

She continues by giving an example where she passed by an influencer she follows and felt like she should say 'hi' as she knows so much about the influencer's live because, as she puts it, she is an observer of the influencer's life (Appendix H3, CPH, 14.48). This shows that the participant has a feeling of knowing the influencer. Another participant from Copenhagen expresses that she feels that she knows influencers as well, however she states:

I think that I know some influencers better than others. If they post personal videos, it feels like I know them personal. However, there are also many who just show some clothes and yes, advertise. So, it differs depending on who I look at on Instagram (Appendix H6, CPH, 10.03).

This statement shows that the participant feels that she knows influencers on a personal level, however, some better than others. This is agreed upon by participant 5 from Copenhagen as she states that she feels that she somehow knows influencers who she has something in common with (Appendix H5, Thisted, 22.38).

The above indicates that some youths from both Thisted and Copenhagen are a little hesitant to express that they know influencers on a personal level. However, youths from Thisted furthermore think that when you have followed the influencers for a long time, it feels like that they know them better. Moreover, youths from Copenhagen have the assumption that having more in common with the influencer increases their personal relationship. Feeling that youths know the influencers on personal level, might increase the perception of authenticity as the youths have some personal traits to assess authenticity in influencer marketing from. Based on the analysis, youths from Thisted and Copenhagen perceive authenticity differently.

Youths' from Thisted perception of authenticity toward influencers, might increase when they have followed influencers for a long time because they feel as they know the influencers on a deeper level. Additionally, youths from Copenhagen want to have similar traits as the influencers, and thereby the perception of authenticity might increase as they possibly have a feeling of familiarity.

5.2.2.3.4 Sub Conclusion: Authenticity

The above analysis suggests that youths from both Thisted and Copenhagen find it important that influencers are authentic. A way the influencers can increase this, is through the balance between advertised content and personal content. Here, it is possible to establish that the personal content is what make influencers authentic. Furthermore, another aspect that can increase the authenticity of the influencers, is the notion of advertising products that relate to the influencers' personal brand, which is important for both youths from Thisted and Copenhagen. Moreover, the analysis indicates that youths from Thisted and Copenhagen see a touch of authenticity in influencers. However, youths from Thisted find having followed the influencers for a long time, can increase the authenticity of the influencer. Furthermore, youths from Copenhagen place the importance on having something in common with the influencers, which might indicate that it can increase the influencers' authenticity.

6. Discussion

This section will entail a discussion of the findings presented previously, using the literature review of the research to critically discuss different aspects of influencer marketing and regional cultures in Denmark. The discussion will provide the possibility to generate marketing ideas within the field of influencer marketing as the discussion will contribute to an understanding of what influence regional cultural differences in Denmark have on influencer marketing.

The discussion is divided into four subsections. The first section will be a discussion of the regional cultural differences in Thisted and Copenhagen. Next, a discussion of the findings in relation to the presented influencer marketing literature, is outlined. The third section discusses trustworthiness and authenticity in relation to influencer marketing. Finally, the last section will discuss actual influencer marketing ideas.

6.1 Regional Cultural Differences in Peripheral and Urban Areas

One aspect this thesis aims to investigate is the notion of regional cultural differences in Denmark. Viewing the literature within the field of peripheral and urban areas, it is possible to see that there are different conceptions of peripheral and urban areas (Dinis 2006; Svendsen & Svendsen 2016; Sørensen 2012). A part of the literature suggests that there exist differences when looking at peripheral and urban areas. In peripheral areas, it is suggested that people living there are more

connected to tradition and conservative practices, have greater mutual trust and personal acquaintances. The literature further argues that urban areas have more division, anonymity and impersonal relationships. However, other literature suggests the differences are limited (cf. 4.4). The findings of this thesis support the first mentioned claims as youths from Thisted describe the people living in Thisted as homogenized, an elder population and that there is a community feeling in the city. Whereas youths from Copenhagen describe the people living in Copenhagen as manifold, reserved and there are many young people. This might suggest that youths from Thisted and Copenhagen are diverse and their perception of marketing likewise. However, it is also argued that people living in urban areas are no more isolated from global trends than people living in peripheral areas (Dinis 2006). This claim is supported by literature which suggests that the younger part of the generation becomes more and more intertwined with other cultures, and thereby the development of one cultural identity, is no longer only related to regional levels but exceeds national borders (Jensen, Arnett & McKenzie 2011). Even though, the findings from this thesis suggest that there are regional cultural traits in Denmark, the younger part of the generation might be exposed to globalization which makes them homogeneous.

The above suggests that there are regional cultural differences present between Thisted and Copenhagen. Furthermore, it also suggests that there are not only a national culture but also subcultures in Denmark. However, it is not clear what significance regional cultural differences have on the experience of influencer marketing. Therefore, this will be discussed in relation youths from Thisted and Copenhagen in the following section.

6.2 Influencer Marketing

In addition to the above, another aspect the thesis seeks to investigate is important elements of influencer marketing. Therefore, this literature will be discussed in relation to youths' from Thisted and Copenhagen experience of influencer marketing.

Some literature argues that it is important for the influencers to meet consumers on the platforms they are present on (Veirman, Cauberghe & Hudders, 2017; Childers, Lemon and Hoy, 2018). According to the findings of this thesis, youths from Thisted and Copenhagen use social media in their everyday lives. The main platforms the youths are present on are Facebook, Instagram, SnapChat and Youtube. Additionally, it was found that youths from Thisted and Copenhagen use

social media on a daily basis, mostly in the afternoon and night. This shows that in order for influencers to be most effective in relation to marketing toward youths from Thisted and Copenhagen, they have to be present on the aforementioned social media platforms and post content in the afternoon and night.

Some literature argues that influencer marketing creates a positive effect among consumers (cf. 4.1.2). However, the findings of this thesis do not provide an unambiguous answer to whether influencer marketing creates a positive effect among youths from Thisted and Copenhagen. The youths have different attitudes toward influencers. Some aspects that youths from Thisted and Copenhagen find positive, is that influencers are able to provide them with inspiration, recommendations, advice etc. beyond marketing purposes. Furthermore, youths from Copenhagen also find it positive that influencers are able to draw attention to important subjects and reflect reality. Moreover, youths from Thisted prefer that there are people present on the content the influencers posts.

On the other side, youths from Thisted and Copenhagen also define negative aspects of influencers. The negative aspects involve, according to the youths that influencers often advertise too much. Furthermore, youths from Copenhagen find polished and arranged posts negative, and youths from Thisted feel as influencers have the possibility to fraud them. This could indicate that influencer marketing not just creates a positive effect among consumers as the youths also see negative aspects of influencers. Thereby, organizations have to consider how to use influencers because they are not necessarily effective. Moreover, it seems as there are some general aspects which make influencer marketing effective, however it might also be important for organizations to take differences on a regional level into consideration.

As mentioned above, youths from Copenhagen like content which have more to offer than 'traditional' marketing. This is shown as they like influencers to address sensitive subjects. This notion does not comply with the literature that suggests that consumers should be able to decode marketing information in an easy and spontaneous way (Briley & Aaker, 2006). Youths from Copenhagen want content which inspires them to engage and move them on a deeper level than 'traditional' marketing content does.

Throughout the literature regarding influencer marketing, it is also evident that influencers are mainly used as a marketing tool, as their purpose is to promote organizations' brands (cf. 4.1.2). However, the findings of this thesis suggest that it might be beneficial for organizations to consider influencers as something beyond a marketing tool. A reason for this, is for instance that too much advertisement is not effective when it comes to youths from Thisted and Copenhagen as they then unfollow the influencers. The youths rather prefer a balance between advertisements and personal content. Therefore, it is beneficial for organizations to choose influencers to advertise for their products who also prioritize personal content on their social media platforms.

6.3 Trustworthiness and Authenticity

As trustworthiness and authenticity are important aspects of influencer marketing, these core values will be discussed in the following.

6.3.1 Trustworthiness

An important aspect of marketing, including influencer, is trustworthiness (Childers, Lemon & Hoy, 2018). According to the findings of this thesis, it is suggested that youths from Thisted have more trust in their society compared to youths from Copenhagen, who have less trust in their society. This could indicate that youths from Thisted have a trust to the well-known and maybe distance themselves from new things, such as influencer marketing. However, it might also mean that they are in general more trustful, and thereby more prone to trust or embrace new things, for instance influencer marketing. Furthermore, it is difficult to conclude youths' from Copenhagen approach to influencer marketing. Youths from Copenhagen seem less trustful to their society, which possibly can suggest that they will be distrusting toward influencer marketing. However, as they also are described as manifold, could entail that they embrace new things as well, such as influencer marketing.

A part of this thesis' examination was made to discover youths' from Thisted and Copenhagen perception of trustworthiness in influencer marketing. According to research, a way to increase trustworthiness in influencer marketing, is for influencers to have a relation with what they advertise and their personal brand. If the relation is not present, and the followers do not associate the product with the influencer, they will not be persuaded by this form of marketing (Veirman,

Cauberghe & Hudders, 2017; Childers, Lemon and Hoy, 2018). This claim is fairly supported by the findings of the analysis as the qualitative analysis supports this claim however, the quantitative analysis is equivocal.

The qualitative findings of the thesis support the above research. When the factors of trustworthiness and untrustworthiness were examined, it was found that both youths from Thisted and Copenhagen find it untrustworthy when there is no relation between the advertised products and the influencers' brand. Also, when presented with examples of influencer marketing posts, especially youths from Copenhagen emphasize the importance of the advertised product being related to the influencers' personal brand. Additionally, when there is a relation between the products that are advertised and the influencers, it increases the authenticity. This is the case for both youths from Thisted and Copenhagen.

The quantitative data of this thesis, on the other hand, are not as unambiguous. Here, it is suggested that youths from Thisted and Copenhagen differ in opinions about whether there should be a relation or not between the advertised products and the influencers' personal brand. Nearly half of youths from both Thisted and Copenhagen do not believe the relation is that important. On the contrary, a little more of youths from Thisted find it important compared to youths from Copenhagen.

Therefore, the findings of this thesis suggest that there might be a difference in opinion when it comes to the importance of a relation between the advertised products and the influencers' personal brand. However, it might assumable be that youths from Thisted and Copenhagen, who do not find it important, do not care if this relation is present. Despite the difference in opinion of whether it is important that influencers advertise for products that relate to their personal brand, it can be argued that it is an aspect influencers and organizations have to take into consideration. This is because youths who place importance on this aspect, find it very important, and youths who do not find the relation important, may be indifferent to whether the relation between the advertised products and the influencers' brand is present or not. If the relation is nonexistent, it will consequently mean that the marketing message is not believable for some of the youths.

Additionally, for the message to be perceived as trustworthy, is if it is seen as transparent (Lih & Suh 2015; Molleda 2010). This claim is only visible in the case of youths from Thisted. Transparency is enhanced when influencers are critical toward the products they advertise, meaning

that they mention both positive and negative aspects about the advertised products. This finding also supports the previous finding that youths from Thisted are very aware of not being defrauded by influencer marketing.

6.3.1.1 Trustworthiness and Purchase Intention

According to literature, a way to see if influencers' trustworthiness has the wanted effect, is by examining whether they have attended to, recalled and acted upon the marketing message (Wathen & Burkel 2002). When it comes to whether youths from Thisted and Copenhagen have purchased influencer recommended products, the answers are varying.

The qualitative data of this thesis suggests that youths from Thisted act upon influencer advertisements more frequently compared to youths from Copenhagen. The findings further show that youths from Thisted are more inclined to purchase influencer recommended products either directly or indirectly. However, youths from Copenhagen only want to purchase products they normally use. This indicates that youths from Thisted have a greater trust towards influencers.

On the other hand, the quantitative data show the opposite as it shows that youths from Copenhagen more often purchase influencer recommended products. However, a reason for this difference might be because youths from Thisted also make use of influencer recommendations indirectly.

Nevertheless, this shows that youths from both Thisted and Copenhagen do purchase influencer recommended products, and thereby influencer marketing has an effect. However, in order to keep developing this field, it is important the marketing part of influencer posts do not become too much. Youths from Thisted and Copenhagen find advertisement on a daily basis too much, which therefore suggests that influencers limit their advertisement posts.

6.3.2 Authenticity

Besides trustworthiness, authenticity is also an important aspect when it comes to influencer marketing. According to literature, authenticity is used to sort out what is fake and what is real, which is important with the technological changes which are experienced today. This is done through subjectivity, cultural background, values and beliefs (Molleda 2010).

When examining the perception of authenticity among youths from Thisted and Copenhagen, the analysis discovered that authenticity is very important. This is showed as the youths find it important that they also have a feeling that they know the influencer on a more personal level. It is the personal content, which the youths find authentic.

When looking at factors which can increase authenticity among youths, the thesis' findings found that there are some differences between youths from Thisted and Copenhagen. Youths from Thisted believe that the longer they follow the influencers, the better they know them, and thereby the authenticity is increased. Youths from Copenhagen find that the authenticity is increased when they have something in common with the influencer. With this, it is shown that authenticity is increased in different ways for the youths.

The literature suggest that the cultural background, values and beliefs can be a reason for the difference. Thereby, the regional cultural differences which are found between Thisted and Copenhagen in this thesis, might be a reason for the different perceptions of authenticity. The findings of this thesis showed that youths from Thisted are more likely to have closer relations with the people living in Thisted and, in general, seem more trusting toward their fellow men. This might relate to the fact that they believe authenticity is increased when they follow influencers for a long period of time, and thereby have a feeling that they know them better. Furthermore, youths from Copenhagen describe the people in Copenhagen as reserved and they do not tend to have close relations with e.g. neighbors. This could be a reason why they believe that authenticity of the influencers increases when they have something in common with the influencer, as they thereby might share some traits or characteristics. These influencers might be seen more trusting or authentic as youths from Copenhagen know these traits from themselves. Based on this, a way for influencers to increase their authenticity, could be by posting personal content. This can be done in order for youths from Thisted and Copenhagen to determine whether they have something in common with them and build a relation with them.

6.3.3 Interaction

According to some literature, interaction between consumers and influencers is an important factor to increase the trustworthiness towards influencers (Lih & Suh 2015).

When reviewing the notion of youths' from Thisted and Copenhagen interaction with influencers, it was found that they 'like' to show support. However, it was also found that most of the youths do not interact through comments or messages. There is a tendency that it is perceived as uncool to do so. Nonetheless, there is a higher tendency that youths from Thisted comment on influencers' posts and write private messages to influencers. This suggests that interaction with influencers is not an aspect that youths from Thisted and Copenhagen find trustworthy, as most of the youths from both cities refrain from contacting them. The fact that the main part of youths from both Thisted and Copenhagen do not interact with influencers, can have an effect on the para-social interaction (PSI) (Lee & Watkins, 2016). Because the youths do not make use of the opportunity to communicate with influencers, the feeling of friendship might be left out. However, as mentioned, some youths from Thisted do interact with influencers in which they then describe a feeling of accept or even friendship. Therefore, it is possible to notice that when youths from Thisted do interact, a positive relation is created. However, interaction is not carried out and therefore, the personal relation is not accomplished. As a result, influencers have to come up with alternatives ways to create the personal relation in order for the advertisement content to be effective. Youths from Thisted and Copenhagen repeatedly mention personal content as a way to increase trustworthiness and therefore, it could be a possibility to post personal content to enhance trustworthiness.

6.4 Marketing Ideas

This section will be a discussion of the above suggested marketing ideas, which might show whether the experience of influencer marketing among youths from Thisted and Copenhagen, is similar or different. This is beneficial as literature suggests that a way to increase credibility in marketing, is by tailoring the marketing message to the beliefs and need of the receiver (Wathen & Burkell 2002). This will tell if influencer marketing strategies, in these two areas, should be standardized or adapted.

At first glance, it appears that many parts of the findings indicate that youths from Thisted and Copenhagen have similar experiences of influencer marketing. This is evident as youths from both Thisted and Copenhagen use social media on a daily basis, and they also use the same social media channels. Furthermore, they follow the same type of influencer which primarily are influencers involved with workout and diet, fashion and beauty. The youths also mainly use influencers for the same purposes which are to receive recommendations, input, advice and inspiration. Furthermore,

youths from both Thisted and Copenhagen find too much advertising negative and untrustworthy, and as a consequence of this, they decide to unfollow the influencers who they believe post too much advertisement content. Youths from both cities also want personal content. The youths also find it important that there is a relation between the advertised products and the influencers' brand in order to be perceived as trustworthy. The youths are also similar when it comes to interaction in the way that the ones who do not interact with influencer through messages or comments on the influencers' posts, they do not want to as they find it uncool. However, the youths 'like' influencer posts to show what content they like and show support to the influencer. Additionally, the youths state that they do not feel as they have a personal relation to influencers. However, it was discovered that there are factors which could create a feeling of relation to influencers. Here, youths from Thisted and Copenhagen differ in how, so this will be elaborated on in the following.

This suggests that the same marketing ideas can be implemented, such as making sure the influencer has a relation to the brand which is promoted and there is a balance between advertisement content and personal content. The personal content might create a feeling of relation between the youths and the influencer, which might have a positive effect on the experience of influencer marketing. However, there are differences of the experience of influencer marketing among youths from Thisted and Copenhagen present as well.

It is possible to notice that youths from Copenhagen follow a wider range of influencers compared to youths from Thisted. It aligns with the fact that youths from Copenhagen describe people living in Copenhagen as manifold. This might suggest that youths from Copenhagen are more receptive toward influencers who are not the typical type influencer and are more open-minded toward diverse influencers. Therefore, organizations could benefit from making use of different types of influencers. Furthermore, it is important for youths from Copenhagen that the influencers post content that reflects the reality and contains important messages. Whereas, content that reflects reality and contains important messages are important toward youths from Copenhagen, it is important for youths from Thisted that the influencers post content that shows people and personality. Furthermore, youths from Thisted place the importance on that influencers and their content is transparent, meaning that influencers have to be critical toward the content they post. The above are aspects that increase the trustworthiness toward influencers among youths from Thisted and Copenhagen.

Aspects that increase the authenticity of influencers among youths from Thisted and Copenhagen are also different. When looking at youths from Copenhagen, they believe that influencers are more

authentic when they have a deeper connection with them in terms of having something in common with them. Additionally, youths from Thisted find influencers authentic when they have followed them for a long time. This aligns with the fact that youths from Thisted have tendency to have a deeper relation with influencers compared to youths from Copenhagen.

The above suggests that there are differences and similarities between youths from Thisted and Copenhagen when it comes to their experience of influencer marketing. These differences and similarities can be beneficial when organizations have to construct marketing strategies to different market in Denmark.

6.4.1 Influencer Marketing Strategy

The discussion regarding what impact globalization has on the development of cultures, is present in the literature. Here, there is a discussion present on whether globalization makes cultures all over the world similar, or the opposite happens, and it creates differences (cf. 4.2.3). This is relevant in the discussion of influencer marketing in Denmark, as it is argued that there are subcultures present in Denmark. Therefore, it is necessary to determine whether these subcultures have an impact on how to make use of influencer marketing.

Thisted and Copenhagen represent two different subcultures in Denmark, where youths from both areas present similarities and differences in relation to their experience of influencer marketing. As it is visible in the cultural aspect of the analysis, youths from Copenhagen and Thisted describe the people living respectively in Copenhagen and Thisted differently. In spite of the cultural differences, there are still several similarities visible in the youths' experience of influencer marketing. This may indicate that globalization has an impact on the development of some subcultures in Denmark, as it seems that youths from Thisted and Copenhagen come closer to each other, in terms of their experience of influencer marketing, in some areas. These are areas such as the content influencers post and what type of products they advertise. However, there are differences present as well. Though, differences are present, the differences are specific within the youths' experience of influencer marketing, which could indicate that they lie in the nuances. The differences are for instance seen as youths from Thisted and Copenhagen agree that authenticity in influencer marketing is important however, they have different opinions to how authenticity is achieved. Furthermore, youths from both cities prefer personal content however, youths from

Thisted want content with people and personality whereas youths from Copenhagen want content that reflects the reality and important subjects.

The above does not show an unambiguous answer to either standardize or adapt the marketing strategies when it comes to influencer marketing in Denmark, according to the findings of this thesis. Thereby, this thesis supports the claims made by Hussain and Khan (2013) and Viswanathan and Dickson (2007), as they suggest that organizations need to balance a marketing strategy between standardization and adaptation. This suggests that it might be beneficial to create a standardized influencer marketing strategy toward youths in Thisted and Copenhagen, but it might be necessary adjust some areas where the youths differ in order to be most effective.

7. Conclusion

The present thesis has the aim to understand the experience of influencer marketing among youths from Thisted and Copenhagen. Furthermore, regional cultural differences in Thisted and Copenhagen will be taken into account in order to understand influencer marketing in a new perspective.

When looking at the prevalence of influencer marketing, it is possible to conclude that youths from both Thisted and Copenhagen use social media on a daily basis, mostly in the afternoon and at night. They primarily are active on Facebook, Instagram, SnapChat and Youtube. The main part of youths from both cities spend between 1-3 hours a day on social media, however more youths from Thisted spend more than three hours a day on social media. This might indicate that youths from Thisted have more free time to be active on social media compared to youths from Copenhagen. It is further possible conclude that youths from both Thisted and Copenhagen follow influencers on social media. They primarily follow the same type of influencers who are involved with workout and diet, fashion and beauty. Furthermore, youths from both Thisted and Copenhagen follow influencers to receive inspiration, recommendations etc. and to get an insight into their personal lives. However, youths from Copenhagen follow influencers to receive recommendations, inspiration etc. to a greater extent compared to youths from Thisted.
It was also found that youths from Thisted to a greater extent follow the same influencers as their friends whereas youths from Copenhagen are less inclined to follow the same type of influencers as their friends. This suggests that youths from Copenhagen might have a wider variety in the influencers they follow compared to youths from Thisted.

When reviewing what influence regional cultural differences in Thisted and Copenhagen have on the core values within influencer marketing, it first of all noticeable that there are regional cultural differences. This is visible as youths from Thisted have more trust in the society they live in and furthermore, they have personal relations to their fellow men. Moreover, they describe that the people living in Thisted as homogenized and there is a greater feeling of community in Thisted. On the contrary, youths from Copenhagen are described as manifold and reserved with less trust in the society they live in. Furthermore, youths from Copenhagen do do not have a particular close relationship with their fellow men.

Even though, there exist the above regional cultural differences between Thisted and Copenhagen, youths from both cities have similar experiences of influencer marketing on a comprehensive level. Youths from Thisted and Copenhagen find too much advertisement untrustworthy which leads to that they unfollow influencers. Furthermore, youths from both Thisted and Copenhagen place the importance on the relation between the advertised content and the influencer's brand and it is important for them that influencers posts personal content. Moreover, youths from Thisted and Copenhagen do not interact through comments and messages to influencers. Nonetheless, there are a greater tendency that youths from Thisted would write private messages to influencers.

On the contrary, there are also different experiences of influencer marketing to be found among youths from Thisted and Copenhagen. Youths from Thisted place the importance on that content from influencers have to show people and personality and influencers have to be transparent and critical toward the advertised products. Furthermore, according to youths from Thisted, authenticity is increased when they have followed influencers for a long time. Moreover, there are a greater possibility that they buy influencer recommended products. When looking at youths from Copenhagen, it is possible to notice that they follow a wider variety of influencers. They further place importance on posts which represent reality and that contain important subjects. Additionally, their authenticity toward influencer are increased when they have something in common with them. Moreover, youths from Copenhagen are more reluctant to buy influencer recommended products. It might indicate that the reasons for these differences between youths from Thisted and Copenhagen, can be found in the regional cultural differences. This is evident of the fact that youths from Thisted like to follow influencers for at long period of time which increase the authenticity. This can be related to the cultural trait that they are inclined to build personal relations with their peers. Furthermore, they have a higher degree of trust in their fellow men and society which can be transferred into trust in influencers as youths from Thisted are more inclined to buy influencer recommended products. The reason why youths from Copenhagen follow a broader variety of influencers, might be connected to the fact they are more manifold. Furthermore, it was found that youths from Copenhagen are less trusting toward other people, which might be the reason why they do not trust influencer recommended products without obtaining additional information.

It is possible to conclude that the regional cultural differences in Thisted and Copenhagen in some areas have an influence on influencer marketing whereas in other areas, the regional cultural differences do not have an influence on influencer marketing.

Knowing regional cultural differences between Thisted and Copenhagen, can generate the following marketing ideas when influencers target youths from Thisted and Copenhagen.

It might be beneficial for organizations that the influencers which promote their brand, are active on Facebook, Instagram, SnapChat and YouTube as these platforms are where the majority of youths from both Thisted and Copenhagen are present on. Furthermore, as youths from Thisted and Copenhagen mostly are active on social media during the afternoon and night, it is at this point, the influencers target the youths most effectively.

Furthermore, it is important that influencers balance advertisement content and personal content in both Thisted and Copenhagen. Furthermore, ensuring a relation between the advertised product and the influencers' personal brand, are important as well. Withal, influencers who are involved with workout and diet, fashion and beauty are especially beneficial to use when targeting youths from Thisted and Copenhagen. However, youths from Copenhagen are more varied in what they follow. Therefore, it is a possibility for organizations to make use of a more varied type of influencers toward youths from Copenhagen. It might also be favorable to make use of influencers who advertise beyond typical products. This could be done by showing the bad days and touch upon important subjects. In Thisted, it is important for influencers to be critical toward the products they advertise.

This does not give an unambiguous answer to whether to standardize or adapt the marketing strategy within the field of influencer marketing. However, it suggests that it might be beneficial for organizations to create a standardized influencer marketing strategy toward youths from Thisted and Copenhagen, but it might be necessary to adjust some areas where the youths differ in order to be most effective.

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