

Not Too Fancy

A Qualitative Study of Professional Wedding Planning Services
in Denmark



Master's Thesis

MSc in Social Sciences in Service Management

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Abstract

The Americanization of Denmark has been going on for decades and continues to influence Danish culture and consumption. It is evident from the products, trends, and traditions Danes adopt from the United States. However, wedding planning is a service known from the US that has not yet gained popularity among Danish consumers.

This thesis investigates the reasons behind the low demand for wedding planning services in Denmark. The first Danish wedding planning company was founded in 2001. Today there is only a few companies in the market, and supply exceeds demand for the service. The aim of this thesis is to understand why Danish consumers still hesitate to use the service, and whether or not this will change in the future. The thesis takes a cultural perspective and uses Consumer Culture Theory (CCT) as the main theory to investigate the subject. A service marketing mix is developed in order to provide recommendations for a fictitious new wedding planning company to increase demand for its services.

Through a qualitative interview study with eleven brides-to-be, three CCT professors, and two wedding planners, we found major cultural barriers for wedding planning services to become popular in Denmark. Especially the Danish consumers' wish for personalization and low-key weddings diminishes the need for wedding planning services. The strong "do-it-yourself" (DIY) culture also means that planning a wedding gives individuals cultural capital and is something that brides enjoy doing themselves.

This thesis presents three opportunities for wedding planners to increase demand for their services. These are: (1) *Adjusting the service to fit Danish consumer culture*, (2) *Increase consumer knowledge*, (3) *Sell the experience of a wedding rather than the service of planning*. These opportunities are discussed and evaluated. It is found that the demand for wedding planning services is unlikely to increase enough to make it an attractive industry for businesses. There are external challenges that are out of the control of wedding planners and cannot be overcome through marketing only. It will take radical changes in Danish consumer culture for professional wedding planning to become a widely used service in Denmark.

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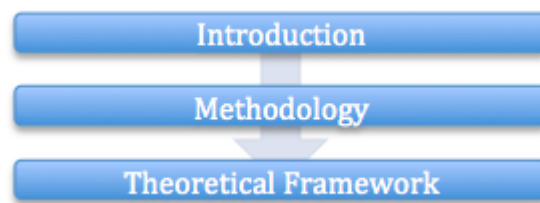
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Part 1

Introduction



"Given its importance, the wedding has been surprisingly overlooked by social scientists, historians, and even scholars of contemporary consumer culture."

(Otnes & Pleck, 2003, p. 5)

1.0 Introduction

Today's wedding is a celebration of love where we want to be confirmed in the "*true and transforming power of love*", and therefore it is no surprise that weddings are associated with fairytales, grand emotions, hope and happiness (Davidsen, 2004, p. 3). From a business perspective, weddings are also associated with sales opportunities and high customer spending. In 2005, the wedding industry was estimated to generate yearly revenues of more than 2.5 billion kr. The industry was expected to grow, and new products and services appeared. One of these was professional wedding planning (Andersen, 2005).

However, there are only a few wedding planning companies in Denmark today, which indicates that the service is not used much. Although a wedding is for many people a special and meaningful event, when Danish couples get engaged and decide to get married, most of them plan their wedding themselves. Only a few couples hire professional wedding planners and it seems rare to even consider it. The purpose of this thesis is to understand why it is so, and whether and how this can be changed.

In other countries, including some of those that Danes usually compare themselves to such as the US, it is common to hire a wedding planner when you get engaged. Trends and changes that occur in the US are very likely to reach Denmark not long after (Frederiksen, 2016). However this does not seem to apply to the business of wedding planning. The American wedding industry is huge and Americans spend more money on their weddings than Danes. In fact, the average cost of a wedding in the US in 2016 was USD 35.329, (equal to approximately DKK 235.000). In 2016, the average cost of a wedding in Denmark was DKK 52.606 (TNS Gallup, 2016).

Moreover, it is much more common to hire a professional to plan your wedding, as 26% of American couples hired a professional wedding planner in 2015 (XO Group, 2016). There is no data available on how many Danes have hired a wedding planner, but one of the leading wedding planning companies in Denmark, Maid of Honour, only plans around 30 weddings per year (Bloksgaard, 2017). Wedding planning has been a widely used service in the US for many years, and in 2001 the first professional wedding planner, Christel Winther, opened in Denmark (Børsen, 2008), but today the demand for wedding planning services is still very small even

though Danish consumers spend more money on their weddings (Finanstilsynet, n.d.) and more wedding planning companies have entered the market.

This thesis takes a cultural perspective as we wonder why the market for wedding planning services is much larger in the US and why it is much more common for Americans to hire a wedding planner to plan their wedding. According to lector and historian, Nils Arne Sørensen, the Americanization of Denmark already started in the 19th century (Buk-Swienty, 2008), and Denmark continues to adopt trends from American culture, but when it comes to weddings there seems to be exceptions. Therefore it is interesting to investigate the reasons behind the low demand for wedding planning services in Denmark. It has been suggested that weddings have transformed from *“a rite of passage to an object of consumption, influenced by the fluctuations of economy, sensitive as any other commodity - an object of consumption, consumed for sign-value rather than use-value.”* (Strandby & Askegaard, 2014, p. 154). Therefore, we find it relevant to use Consumer Culture Theory (also referred to as CCT) to analyze the Danish wedding planning industry and understand the low demand for wedding planning services in Denmark.

1.1 Problem Statement

This thesis aims to understand why Danish consumers have not caught on to the new service offering of professional wedding planning and what it would take for the service to become more common in Denmark. Many factors point in a direction where it would be natural for Danish consumers to adopt the service, but still, only a few Danish couples have done so.

In this thesis, the reason for this will be explored in the aim to understand why it is so uncommon for Danish couples to hire professional wedding planners, and how this could be changed. From a service management perspective, this is interesting, because wedding planning could potentially be an attractive new market with business opportunities for new or established service companies. If this is not the case, understanding the barriers for wedding planning services in Denmark, might reveal barriers that will also limit the success of other service industries in Denmark in the future. Thus the thesis will seek to answer the following research question:

Research Question:

How can wedding planners increase the demand for their services among Danish consumers?

In order to do that, we will answer the following **sub questions**:

1. How is the market for professional wedding planning services in Denmark characterized?
2. How does consumer culture influence the demand for wedding planning services in Denmark?
3. How can marketing be used to influence the demand for wedding planning services in Denmark?

1.2 Research Area of the Thesis

In this section, it will be described how this thesis intends to investigate and answer the research question. This will be done outlining the areas that will be analyzed throughout the thesis. When choosing a research area, it is inevitable to exclude some areas even though they might be interesting. In the *Delimitation* section, it will be described which research areas this thesis does not include. Figure 1.1 in the end of the section illustrates the research area of the thesis.

Answering the three sub questions will enable us to answer the research question. This thesis does not use a case company. Instead, the research area of this thesis is *the Danish wedding planning industry* in general, especially the wedding planners that target Danish consumers. This is because the thesis takes a cultural perspective and Danish consumers are the subjects of analysis. In 2016, the total number of marriages and registered partnerships were 30.773, which has been increasing since 2014 where the total number was 28.337 (Danmarks statistik, n.d. A). The subjects of analysis are Danish couples who are about to get married.

The internal and external environment of the Danish wedding industry will be analyzed based on the available information. Regrettably there is not much data available from Denmark - especially not about wedding planners specifically. The services wedding planners offer will also be described in order to clarify what the services involve.

Consumer culture in the Danish wedding industry will be a main area of research in this thesis as it helps explain consumer behavior from a broad perspective that investigates larger consumer groups rather than individual consumers. This will contribute with an understanding of factors that influence demand in the industry.

Marketing is a broad research area, and many factors could be considered. The service marketing mix will be used in order to cover the most essential areas to consider in marketing strategy. But because of the focus on consumer culture, it is natural to take a *consumer-oriented approach* to marketing, and therefore special attention will be paid to consumer attitudes, segmentation, and targeting in order to identify and assess potential target markets.

1.2.1 Delimitation

This section describes how the research area has been narrowed down and which research areas have consequently been excluded from the thesis.

Researching the demand for wedding planning services could include many various factors. This thesis mainly investigates cultural and personal reasons for the demand of the service. Other factors such as economic and demographic developments could also influence the demand for wedding planners, but this will only be touched upon briefly, as we did not find sufficient information to use these factors to explain demand in the wedding planning industry. The thesis therefore focuses on the cultural influence on demand. *Consumer Culture Theory* works with four research domains, but in order to narrow down the analysis, two domains were chosen as the main area of research. This will lead to a more in-depth and focused analysis of the two domains, *Consumer identity projects* and *Marketplace cultures*.

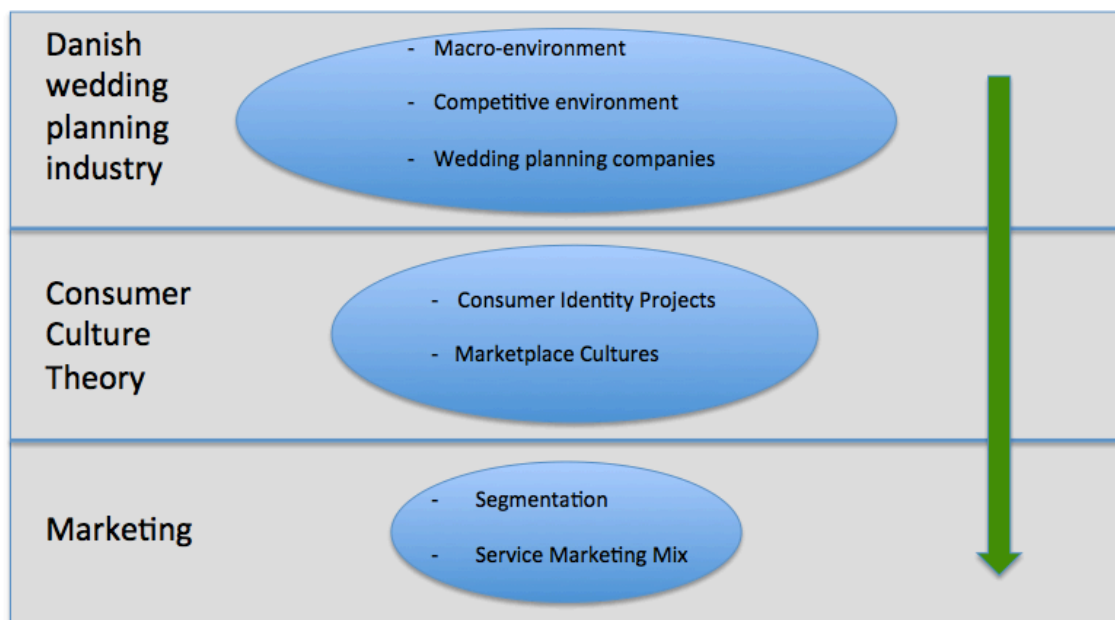
This thesis *only concerns businesses that have wedding planning as their core service* - not e.g. event managers, hotels, or restaurants that might host weddings. This might narrow the identified business opportunities, but the research area of this thesis is the demand for wedding planning services specifically, and using a broader industry definition, could confuse the findings.

Furthermore, the analysis of this thesis only includes *Danish companies serving Danish consumers*, as we found it necessary in order to get a better understanding of the Danish mindset and consumer culture.

Throughout the thesis, parallels are drawn to American consumer culture as the Americanization has brought many American trends to Denmark and we wonder why wedding planning is still not as commonly used in Denmark as in America. However, the thesis is *not a comparative analysis between the US and Denmark*. A comparative analysis would have required much more comprehensive research into the two nations' history and national culture, but this is not the purpose of this thesis.

Figure 1.1 below illustrates the areas of research in broad terms (grey area) and our selected focus areas for the thesis (blue circles). The arrow symbolizes that the research moves from a broad view on wedding planning services and the industry to zoom in on cultural aspects that influence this. Finally, specific marketing opportunities are investigated from the perspective of a single fictitious company.

Figure 1.1: Selected Research Area



Source: Authors' creation.

1.3 Structure of the Thesis

The structure of the thesis is explained and illustrated in this section.

Part 1 of this thesis provides an *introduction* of the research question, the methodology, and the theoretical framework that this thesis is built upon. The research question and sub questions were presented above as well as a brief introduction to the research area and delimitations.

In the following *methodology* section, it is explained how the *Research Onion* has been used to guide the research design and approach to the subject. This includes considerations about research philosophy, approach to theory development, methodological choice, strategy, time horizon, and data collection (techniques and procedures). The methodological choices determine how results are reached and which assumptions underlie the analysis. Finally, the last section of Part 1 describes the *theoretical framework* that is the foundation of the analysis. This reveals the theoretical perspective from which the research question of this thesis is approached.

Part 2 is the first part of the analysis and is divided into three sections. The purpose of this part is to provide background information about the research area. In order to do this, the services that Danish wedding planners offer are described in the first section. In the second section, a PESTEL analysis is used to characterize the macro-environment of the wedding industry and its potential influences on the industry. In the third section, the competitive environment is analyzed using Porter's Five Forces. Finally, these 3 sections of analysis are followed by a discussion that brings together the main findings of the three sections and answers sub question 1. This sets the scene for the more profound analysis that follows in the next parts of the thesis.

Sub question 1: *How is the market for professional wedding planning services in Denmark characterized?*

Part 3 is the second part of the analysis and is divided into two sections representing the two chosen CCT research domains, *Marketplace cultures* and *Consumer identity projects*. The aim is to understand Danish consumers in the wedding industry. Analyzing the marketplace cultures around weddings helps understand how the wedding planning service is perceived by Danish consumers and why. The first section analyses marketplace cultures within the Danish wedding

industry. This is done by investigating taste regimes and social structures that constitute and influence Danish consumer culture. The second section investigates how weddings are used in consumers' identity projects, and how this affects consumer preferences and buying behavior. Finally, the two sections will be discussed in order to answer sub question 2 and understand cultural factors that might influence the demand for wedding planning services in Denmark.

Sub question 2: *How does consumer culture influence the demand for wedding planning services in Denmark?*

Part 4 is the third part of the analysis and is divided into three sections. The first section investigates reasons for consumers to hire a wedding planner by looking at the opportunities wedding planners face in the role of surrogate consumers. The second section looks at consumer segmentation and targeting in order to determine the most relevant consumers to target. Lastly, the third section uses the Service Marketing Mix (7 P's) to develop a strategy for wedding planners to reach a chosen target market.

Sub question 3: *How can marketing be used to influence the demand for wedding planning services in Denmark?*

Part 5 is the last part and rounds off the thesis. The first section is a discussion of the main findings and takes a critical view on these. The second section is the conclusion and answers the research question. Finally, the last section presents reflections about the results and suggestions for further research.

Research Question: *How can wedding planners increase the demand for their services among Danish consumers?*

The structure of the thesis is illustrated in Figure 1.2 on the next page.

Source: Authors' creation

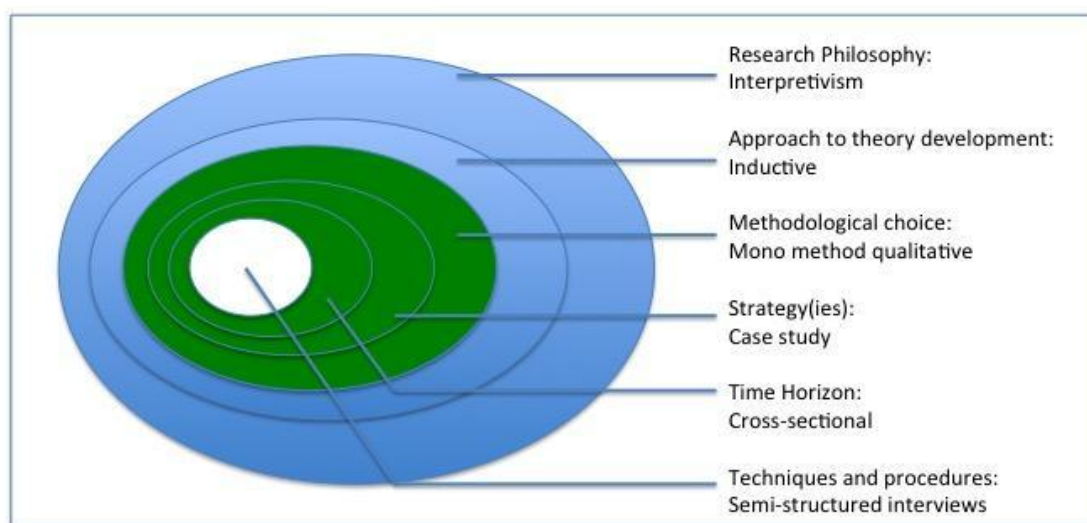


2.0 Methodology

We have chosen to structure our methodology section after the *Research Onion* presented by Saunders et al. (2012). The onion consists of six layers. The idea behind it is to start with the outer layer and then “peel away” each layer and understanding the choices we make, “rather than just peel and throw away” (Saunders et al., 2016, p.122). Therefore it is crucial to be aware of the issues underlying the approach that is chosen to answer our research question and to get a better understanding of how results are reached.

In the sections to come, the following methodological aspects are considered: Research Philosophy, Approach to theory development, Methodological choice, Strategy(ies), Time horizon, Techniques and procedures (data collection).

Figure 2.1: The Research Onion



Source: Authors' recreation inspired by Saunders et al., 2012, p. 128.

2.1 Research Philosophy

Research philosophy is the outer layer of the Research Onion and can be described as the assumptions about the way in which one views the world (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 128). The chosen research philosophy plays an important role in the way we understand and interpret what we are investigating and it also has an impact on the research strategy and methods we chose. Therefore, as argued by Johnson and Clark (2006), it is important to be able to “reflect

upon our philosophical choices and defend them in relation to the alternatives we could have adopted” (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 129).

The philosophical stance adopted throughout this thesis is an interpretivist one as entering the social world of our research subjects is important in order to understand the world from their point of view. Following the philosophical view of an interpretivist means that it is crucial for the researcher to adopt an empathetic stance (Saunders et al., 2016, p.141). This is achieved listening to- and aiming to understand the interviewees’ way of thinking.

On the ontological stance, the interpretivist relies on multiple realities and accepts that reality is complex and also socially constructed. Thus it is necessary to understand differences between humans in our role as social actors, since the focus is on perceptions and interpretations as theories and concepts are seen to be too simplistic. Looking at the role of value (axiology), an interpretivist is part of what is researched, thus taking a subjective approach and their interpretations are key to contribution. Therefore interpretivism is value-bound research. Some argue that the interpretivist perspective is highly appropriate in business and management contexts, since business situations are not only complex but also unique and a function of a particular set of individuals and circumstances (Saunders et al., 2012, p.137).

2.2 Approach to Theory Development

The wedding planning industry is small in Denmark and it is an unexplored scientific field. This means that only very limited theory exist on the subject. This thesis contributes to fill this gap in academic literature by finding explanations to the low demand for wedding planning services. Therefore the approach to theory development in this thesis can be characterized as abductive. Using an abductive approach means that the researcher moves back and forward between data and theory (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 147). The abductive approach enables us to explore the phenomenon of wedding planning and obtain new knowledge within the research field using theory to collect and analyze data. The ontology of the interpretivist philosophy acknowledges that reality is socially constructed by multiple meanings and interpretations (Saunders et al., 2012, p.136). We seek to understand meanings and attitudes within Danish consumers. We do not seek to find ultimate cause-link effects. Rather, we aim to understand individual perceptions through the application of theory when collecting and analyzing data.

2.3 Methodological Choice

This study uses the mono-method qualitative research method in order to obtain a deeper understanding for the subject of wedding planning. With an interpretivist research philosophy, it is natural to choose a qualitative research methodology, which according to Saunders et al. (2012) *“is interpretive because researchers need to make sense of the subjective and socially constructed meanings expressed about the phenomenon being studied.”* (p. 163). Moreover this thesis follows the exploratory research method by e.g. interviewing experts within the subject in order to achieve a better understanding of the subject. For the purpose of this thesis, qualitative semi-structured interviews with consumers are also conducted.

2.4 Strategy

We strive to conduct a problem-driven thesis where an academic role is integrated in the investigation of professional wedding planning services in Denmark. Thus this thesis takes form as an exploratory case study of the wedding planning industry. It is a case study that investigates the phenomenon of professional wedding planning and since this is a unique case, a single case study is conducted (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 186). Furthermore this thesis analyzes the wedding planning phenomenon as a whole and not as different subunits. This makes it a holistic case study (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 187).

One way to conduct exploratory research is to interview experts within the research area. Therefore we aim at interviewing wedding planners and consumer culture experts, which we will elaborate further on in the data collection section. The advantage of exploratory research is that it is flexible and adaptable to change (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 175), and it helps get a better understanding of the subject of wedding planning services, since we are unsure of its precise nature - especially since there is not much data available on the subject.

In addition, we use a triangulation approach by using more than one source of data collection within the same phenomena. This is done for the purpose of ensuring validity and reliability of our investigations. *“For interpretivists, the value of using triangulation is that it adds depth, breadth, complexity and richness to their research.”* (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 207).

2.5 Time Horizon

This thesis investigates wedding planning with a cross-sectional time horizon. This means that it is about the phenomenon at a particular time (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 200). This “snapshot” time horizon is appropriate since we are time constrained and also because we are interested in understanding this phenomenon as it is now and therefore we do not find it relevant to use the “diary” perspective (longitudinal time horizon), which is continuously over a longer period of time that mainly studies change and development (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 201).

2.6 Techniques and Procedures (Data Collection)

The inner layer of the Research Onion is about data collection and data analysis, thus the following parts will discuss both the primary and secondary data that are used. The first part is about primary data and will elaborate on the interviews. The second part will explain the secondary data that was collected in order to answer our research question. The last part addresses the validity and reliability of this thesis.

2.6.1 Primary Data

2.6.1.1 Semi-structured Interviews with Consumers, Wedding Planners, and Academics

Collecting data through interviews can provide researchers with relevant, reliable, and valid data, and the different types of interviews can be categorized as unstructured, semi-structured, and structured interviews (Saunders et al., 2012, pp. 372-374).

The data collection process for this thesis made uses of semi-structured interviews as these provide a good opportunity for a combination of similar structure across interviews and elaboration on important issues in each interview. Semi-structured interviews enable researchers to modify questions and elaborate on relevant, unexpected issues that might occur during the interview and to ensure an accurate understanding and interpretation of answers (Saunders et al., 2012, pp. 374-375). The semi-structured interviews identify important themes within the phenomenon of wedding planning and explore opinions and attitudes among consumers.

As this thesis has an interpretivist epistemology, semi-structured interviews are advantageous because they allow interviewees to elaborate on relevant questions so researchers can understand their meaning or perception of certain phenomena. Furthermore, unexpected, important themes or issues might occur (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 378). If this is the case, semi-structured interviews allow the interviewer to ask about this, which can lead to new perspectives that might be relevant to investigate further in other interviews or in the survey. Kvale (2007) uses two metaphors to describe interviewers' epistemological conceptions; The interviewer as a *traveller* or as a *miner* (p. 19). When conducting interviews for this thesis, we saw ourselves as travellers and through the interviews we aimed to create knowledge rather than collect knowledge. This means, that we were curious to explore different areas that the data collection process would take us to and we were open to unexpected findings and to discover how we might have had expectations that influenced our ability to understand our interviewees' lived world (Kvale, 2007, pp. 19-21). The interviews are analyzed as theoretical reading, which means that no systematic methods or techniques are applied. Rather, the interviews are read and reflected upon theoretically (Kvale, 2007, p. 117). This is possible because we have achieved an extensive theoretical knowledge about the subject matter of consumer culture and developed theoretically informed interview questions. Therefore we can use the interviews to understand and compare interviewees' realities and perceptions to the theories we work with.

2.6.1.2 Groups of Interviewees

In order to answer the research question of this thesis thoroughly, three different kinds of respondents were interviewed. One was a group of professors within consumer culture theory. The other group was Danish wedding planners, and the third was a group of consumers who were currently planning their wedding. All interviews were conducted in Danish, to assure that interviewees did not feel limited by language barriers. All interview quotes are translated to English when used in the analysis. Interview recordings can be found in Appendix 2 and interview summaries can be found in Appendices 3-5.

FIGURE 2.2: Groups of Interviewees



Source: Authors' creation.

2.6.1.3 Consumer Culture Professors

The questions for these interviews had the purpose of exploring overall characteristics of Danish and American consumer culture and to identify differences and similarities between the two. The professors provided insights that were especially useful for answering sub question 2; *How does consumer culture influence the demand for wedding planning services in Denmark?* These interviews and the consumer interviews complement each other in explaining identified consumer culture aspects that influence the use of wedding planners. While the consumer interviews reveal attitudes within individual consumers, the expert interviews provide a broader view on consumer culture and possibly explain the nature of these attitudes and trends among consumers in the wedding industry.

The interviews with consumer culture professors are more factual as the purpose is to investigate possible cultural or behavioral explanations for the low demand for wedding planning services in Denmark. The interviewees were selected using theoretical, purposive sampling. This enabled us to select respondents that were best capable of answering the questions needed to answer the research question (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 287). We found the professors through consumer culture literature. First of all we chose to contact Søren Askegaard and Kira Strandby who are the authors of the article *Weddings as Waste* (2014). The article is about wasteful consumption from a consumer culture perspective, and uses weddings as an example. Søren Askegaard has contributed extensively to consumer culture theory through his publications and participation in the Consumer Culture Theory Conferences. Kira Strandby is a PhD Student at University of Southern Denmark and has worked as Research Assistant within the research area of Consumption, Culture and Commerce. She has written her master's thesis about contemporary weddings as consumption rituals. Because of their expertise and academic writings, we found it very useful to interview them and use their knowledge about consumer culture and weddings in particular. They are both from Denmark and live in Denmark, which also means that they have a better understanding of underlying assumptions in Danish culture, than someone who is not from Denmark.

Moreover we contacted Hanne Pico Larsen who is a Professor at CBS in Consumer Culture Theory. She was born in Denmark and has studied and lived in the US for 15 years. We therefore found it interesting to interview her also as she has knowledge about consumer culture and more interestingly she has experienced both the Danish and American culture.

2.6.1.4 Wedding Planners

In order to answer sub question 1; *How is the market for professional wedding planning services in Denmark characterized?* It was necessary to interview industry professionals who can contribute with their understanding of the wedding industry and which forces have a high impact within the industry. This is because there is little data available about the Danish wedding industry. Because the subject of this thesis is wedding planning, it was natural to interview wedding planners and hear their opinion and professional experiences as they have inside knowledge about their business, the industry, and customer tendencies.

The purpose of these interviews was twofold. First of all, it was to get facts about the Danish wedding industry such as size, players in the market, customer preferences, and money spent. There are reports about this covering the American market, but only very little information available about the Danish market. This means that we need to rely on knowledge from insiders in the industry, even though it might be hard or impossible to confirm the accuracy of their answers. Second of all, wedding professionals interact with couples who are about to get married, so they should have an understanding of the thoughts and needs that drive consumers in their wedding planning process, and this helps provide an understanding of attitudes and consumer culture. As this thesis investigates Danish consumer culture, we were most interested in interviewing wedding planners who target Danish consumers rather than those who have an international target market.

A combination of convenience sampling and snowball sampling was used. First of all we contacted Betina Sjöholm Rønne (owner of Maid of Honour) because we knew her and she had already agreed to be interviewed. Convenience sampling is when you select samples only because they are easily available (Saunders et al., 2012, p.291). However, Maid of Honour is one of the biggest wedding planning companies in Denmark, so Betina Sjöholm Rønne is definitely a relevant interview subject. During the interview, we asked her who the biggest wedding planning companies are, and we used her answer to identify new interview prospects. This method is called snowball sampling, and it is useful when it is difficult to identify members of a specific population (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 289). We could have also identified the wedding planners to interview through Google search and our own judgment, but Betina Sjöholm Rønne's knowledge of competitors contributed to the selection of interviewees. We contacted 3 of the bigger wedding planning companies besides Maid of Honour (*Brink Bryllup*, *The Wedding Company*, and *Twohearts*), but only Sofie Brink from Brink Bryllup was willing to be interviewed.

Figure 2.3: List of Expert Interviews

Name	Occupation	Type	Date
Søren Askegaard	Professor in CCT	Skype interview	15.02.2017
Betina Sjöholm Rønne	Wedding Planner and owner of Maid of Honour I/S	Personal interview	16.02.2017
Kira Strandby	Phd student and Co-author	Skype interview	21.02.2017
Hanne Pico Larsen	Professor in CCT	Personal interview	27.02.2017
Sofie Brink	Wedding Planner and owner of Brink Bryllup	Telephone interview	12.04.2017

Source: Authors' creation

2.6.1.5 Consumer Interviews

The purpose of the consumer interviews was to explore consumers' perceptions and attitudes towards the phenomenon of wedding planning. Respondents were selected through convenience sampling, but with the typical case sampling method used as a selection filter. Convenience sampling means that respondents are chosen because they are easily available (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 291). The interview invitation was posted in wedding groups on Facebook, and people who responded to it were contacted individually to let them know more about the interview. Another way to use convenience sampling was to ask people we know who are in the target group to participate in the interview. The consumer group that was sampled from was Danes who were planning to get married within the next two years. This target group was chosen because we wished to take a "snapshot" of the current situation, and therefore we used respondents who were planning to get married. By "Danes" we mean people who identify themselves as Danes and who have not lived abroad for a longer period of time (more than 2 years). The interviewees we informed that we were investigating the wedding industry, but not wedding planning specifically. This was in order to avoid biased answers and to get their immediate, non-prepared reaction to questions about wedding planning services in the interviews.

2.6.1.6 Preparations for Data Collection

As this thesis uses a case study strategy, the interviews should provide an illustration of the “typical case”, and therefore the idea behind the typical case sampling method was used to ensure that interviewees could contribute to this purpose. This can be done selecting respondents with characteristics similar to the industry average (e.g. in terms of ages and budget for their wedding).

Saunders suggests that the minimum sample size for semi-structured interviews is 5-25 respondents (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 283), so the minimum goal was 5 interviews, but in the end 11 consumer interviews were conducted in order to reach data saturation.

When preparing the interview questions, we used a roundabout approach to guide the order of the questions. This approach is when you ask indirect questions that in the end lead to direct questions about the subjects rather than clearly explaining the interviewee the purpose of the interview and ask direct questions from the beginning (Kvale, 2007, p. 57). We chose this approach to avoid bias where interviewees say what they think we want them to say. If we said that we are researching why there is low demand for wedding planners in Denmark, interviewees might have offered their personal guess to explain how people feel about wedding planners rather than express their own feelings and attitudes. The majority of questions were “what” and “how” questions, but “why” questions were also used in the end of the interviews. This is because, as Kvale (2007) states *“Many “why” questions in an interview may lead to an over-reflected intellectualized interview, and perhaps also evoke memories of oral examinations. Figuring out the reasons and explanations why something happened is primarily the task of the investigator.”* (p. 58).

Figure 2.4: List of Consumer Interviews

Type	Occupation	Type	Date
Søsser	Early retired	Facetime interview	24.03.2017
Lea	Student	Facetime interview	24.03.2017
Amalie & Kristopher	Student & Financial Analyst	Skype interview	26.03.2017
Marie	Head clerk at SKAT	Personal interview	29.03.2017
Birgitte	Teacher	Facetime interview	29.03.2017
Karina	Student	Facetime interview	12.04.2017
Ditte & Tommy	Auditor & Worker at Arla	Facetime interview	13.04.2017
Nina & Mikkel	Student & Service Management consultant	Facetime interview	14.04.2017
Clara	Student & Student	Facetime interview	21.04.2017
Lisbeth	Store Manager	Facetime interview	26.04.2017
Christina	Off work sick	Facetime interview	28.04.2017

Source: Authors' creation

2.6.2 Secondary Data

Besides the primary data, secondary data was also collected. This was mainly academic articles and books that were useful for our theoretical framework. Furthermore, we used available statistics on the wedding industry, however this is very limited in Denmark since the wedding industry is still quite unexplored.

2.6.2.1 Validity and Reliability in Qualitative Research

Validity and reliability are very important to have in mind when doing research, as they are used within social sciences to evaluate the quality and trustworthiness of the findings (Saunders et al., 2016, p.202). In order to ensure good-quality research, two validation techniques were used. The first one is *triangulation*. This was achieved by collecting both primary data (interviews)

and secondary data (academic articles, reports, etc.). Triangulation adds depth, breadth, complexity and richness to research (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 207). The second technique is *participant validation*. We showed the participants their interview summary to allow them to confirm its accuracy.

Reliability refers to replication and consistency, thus research findings are considered reliable if another researcher would be able to get the same findings when applying the same methods to the same data (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 202). However, since this research is based on interpretive assumptions and we are using a qualitative research design, it is important to note that these are not necessarily intended to be repeatable since they reflect a situation at the time they were collected (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 398).

Furthermore, interviewees can be prepared for the interview themes in order to increase validity and reliability (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 402), therefore the interviewed experts were provided with a list of questions before the interview. This was done because the experts have an extensive knowledge about their subject, so we ensured that each of them had the opportunity to prepare for our questions beforehand. This should benefit us in receiving more valid, thorough, and in-depth information.

We chose not to give consumer interviewees the questions beforehand as the purpose of these interviews were to obtain opinions rather than information. We did not want the consumers to prepare their answers, as we believe that instant answers are more authentic and will reveal true attitudes more accurately than prepared answers.

2.7 Limitations

The findings in this thesis could have been tested further with other data collection methods. As an example, we could have conducted a quantitative survey to test the interview findings on larger amounts of data. However, due to space and time limitations, we chose to focus on the qualitative interviews in order to make an in-depth analysis of these.

It could have increased the data validity to conduct more interviews, but as we were getting repeating answers, we did not find it necessary to interview more consumers. Although one of the reasons we got similar answers might be that most of the interviewees were collected from

the same two Facebook groups and had responded to our post about the interview. This could mean that they were all enthusiastic about wedding planning and spend a lot of time planning their wedding. We could have collected interview subjects from other sources, but they would have been more difficult to reach.

As mentioned above, there is very limited data available about the Danish wedding industry, which means that we have been forced to rely on less official data sources such as the interviewed wedding planners. Also the fact that the Danish wedding planners are small companies means that they are not required to publish annual reports, and it has been difficult to obtain information about the companies. This has limited the scope of the industry- and competitor analysis. In addition, it also made it challenging to identify consumer segments and profitable target markets.

3.0 Theoretical Framework

In the following, the theoretical framework for this thesis is provided in order to present the theoretical fields that this thesis is based upon.

First, a brief description of the traditional business models, PESTEL and Porter's 5 Forces, and their contribution to the analysis is given. These models are used to analyze and introduce the wedding industry to the reader and to answer sub question 1; *How is the market for professional wedding planning services in Denmark characterized?*

Secondly, Consumer Culture Theory (CCT) is introduced. This research area constitutes the frame and area of interest for the thesis as it is anticipated that culture might be a major cause for the low demand of wedding planning services in Denmark. Therefore sub question 2 is; *How does consumer culture influence the demand for wedding planning services in Denmark?* CCT takes a broad approach to consumer research and can be used in many different contexts. The theory provides useful areas of investigation and emphasizes the interconnectedness of different aspects that influence consumer culture.

Thirdly, the Service Marketing Mix is used to answer sub question 3; *How can marketing be used to influence the demand for wedding planning services in Denmark?* Sub question 3 will be answered using a fictitious company for which a marketing mix will be developed. In order to do this, a target market will also be selected for this fictitious company.

Applying these theories will enable us to answer the research question; *How can wedding planners increase the demand for their services among Danish consumers?*

3.1 PESTEL

In this thesis the PESTEL model is used to explore and analyze the overall macro-environmental factors that can affect business activities and performance within the Danish wedding industry. The industry is defined broadly to include all businesses that have to do with weddings such as restaurants, dress-makers, photographers, and wedding planners. We take this broad perspective because we can investigate how macro-environmental factors will influence wedding habits and the market in general, but it is more difficult to assess how the factors will

influence wedding planning businesses specifically. This is because there are only a few wedding planning companies, and the market for wedding planners is also influenced by other factors that are not covered in the PESTEL model, such as income, consumer segments, market competition, and personal consumer preferences.

The PESTEL model consists of six external factors and is an acronym for Political, Economic, Socio-cultural, Technological, Environmental, and Legal (Johnson et al., 2014, p. 34). The political factors cover government regulations and legal factors. The economic factors consist of economic issues that can have an impact on the business, such as inflation, interest rates etc. The socio-cultural factor is used to analyze the socio-economic environment of its market, by investigating for example cultural aspects etc. in order to understand how consumer needs are shaped and what brings them to the market for a purchase. The technological factor covers how technological developments can either have a positive or negative impact on the service. The environmental aspect could include weather changes, waste management and recycling etc. Finally the legal factor can be both external and internal laws that might affect the business (Johnson et al., 2014, pp. 34-36).

PESTEL helps us determine how these factors will affect the wedding planning industry in the long term. This is necessary in order to answer the research question; *How can wedding planners increase the demand for their services among Danish consumers?* and assess how likely it is that wedding planners can influence the demand for their services. As argued by Jim Makos, one of the benefits of PEST analysis is that *“it could aid you in predicting the future by looking at the present. You will be prepared to tackle future challenges. It also helps you highlight the opportunities you can cash in on and threats which could harm your business”* (Post, 2017). We therefore find it interesting to investigate how these external factors might explain why there is low demand for wedding planning services in Denmark, and also to understand the opportunities in the future that could help us understand how the wedding planning service can become more common.

It should be noted, that the PESTEL framework can be applied to any industry or market, and it is a very general framework. Therefore all six factors will not be equally important in all cases, but identifying the ones that are most likely to cause changes in an industry can be helpful in order to handle changes proactively.

3.2 Porter's Five Forces

After looking at the macro-environment of the wedding industry, we zoom in to analyze the competitive environment for wedding planners specifically. This enables us to get a better understanding of the industry and answer sub question 1; *How is the market for professional wedding planning services in Denmark characterized?*

Porter's five forces accounts for the various forces shaping competition within an industry, and was originally constructed for the purpose of determining an appropriate strategy for a company and thereby *"to stake out a position that is less vulnerable to attack"* (Porter, 1979, p. 145). The theory is based on the concept that there are five forces that determine the competitive intensity and attractiveness of an industry, and the combined strength of the five forces *"determines the ultimate profit potential of an industry"* (Porter, 1979, p. 137). In this thesis, the model will be used mainly to provide an overview of the industry and existing players. Furthermore, evaluating the attractiveness of the industry helps predict the future development and the likelihood that new or existing companies take action to increase demand for the wedding planning service.

An analysis of Porter's five forces is also useful for identifying and examining industry trends that may hold *"significance as either opportunities or threats"* (Porter, 1979, p. 138). Hence this thesis utilizes Porter's five forces to understand the intensity of competition within the wedding planning industry ranging from "intense" to "mild". In general, if competition is intense, most companies will not be profitable and conversely, if competition is mild, a lot of companies will be profitable. Furthermore, the theory can give insights into the distribution of power in the industry. In the following, the five forces will be reviewed.

An industry is affected by *new entrants*, as they can put pressure on prices, costs, and the rate of investments necessary to compete (Porter, 1979, p. 138). Suppliers can use their *bargaining power* on participants in an industry by *"raising prices or reducing the quality of purchased goods and services"* (Porter, 1979, p. 140). The *bargaining power of customers* addresses how customers in the industry can force down prices or demand better quality and thereby put pressure on industry profits (Porter, 1979, p. 141). The number and capability of *competitors* affects an industry's profitability. *"Rivalry is especially destructive to profitability if it gravitates solely to price because price competition transfers profits directly from an industry to its*

customers.” (Porter, 2008, p. 32). The threat of substitutes is determined by the buyer’s switching costs, buyer willingness to substitute, the relative price, and performance of the substitute product (Porter, 1979, p. 142).

It should be noted that Porter’s five forces is a basic model and has been subject to much critique. Mainly, that the model does not match today’s market dynamic as it assumes relatively static market structures (Lynch, 2006, p. 98). In today’s world, businesses and industries cross borders and it can be limiting to view an industry as a closed environment. However, it makes sense for the Danish wedding planning industry, as it is still small, the service is mainly local, and there are no international players.

3.3 Consumer Culture Theory (CCT)

Consumer culture theory (CCT) illuminates the complexity of consumer behavior focusing on the role of culture in forming consumer identities (Ellis et al., 2011, p. 181). This is helpful in understanding Danish consumers’ low demand for wedding planning services. CCT therefore helps answering sub question 2; *How does consumer culture influence the demand for wedding planning services in Denmark?*

Arnould and Thompson’s article “*Consumer Culture Theory (CCT): Twenty Years of Research*” from 2005 and the first Consumer Culture Conference in the following year mark the founding of the Consumer Culture organization (Levy, 2015, p. 52). Arnould and Thompson’s article offered an overview of the research stream of consumer research, which through the years had covered sociocultural, experiential, symbolic, and ideological aspects of consumption. They define this research tradition by the name “*Consumer Culture Theory*” and explain that it “*refers to a family of theoretical perspectives that address the dynamic relationships between consumer actions, the marketplace, and cultural meanings.*” (Arnould & Thompson, 2005, p. 868).

CCT does not view culture in the traditional sense such as for example Hofstede defines it as “*the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from others.*” (Geert Hofstede, n.d.). Rather, CCT has a distributed view of cultural meaning, which means that it “*analyzes how particular manifestations of consumer culture are constituted, sustained, transformed, and shaped by broader historical forces (such as cultural narratives, myths, and ideologies) and grounded in specific socioeconomic circumstances and*

marketplace systems." (Arnould & Thompson, 2005, p. 869). This means that when investigating consumer behavior and attitude within the wedding industry through a CCT lens, it is relevant to investigate historical forces, socioeconomic circumstances, and marketplace systems.

Consumer culture theory looks at relationships and how these are mediated through markets meaning that culture is dependent on symbols and resources. These symbols and resources can be obtained, used, and shaped through consumption and is used in identity- and culture creation processes. Arnould & Thompson (2005) states: *"Consumer Culture denotes a social arrangement in which the relations between lived culture and social resources, and between meaningful ways of life and the symbolic and material resources on which they depend, are mediated through markets."* (pp. 868-869).

CCT and its contributions to consumer research is further described: *"Much like a game where individuals improvise within the constraints of rules, consumer culture—and the marketplace ideology it conveys—frames consumers' horizons of conceivable action, feeling, and thought, making certain patterns of behavior and sense-making interpretations more likely than others."* (Arnould & Thompson, 2005, p. 869). This means, that applying consumer culture theory to the analysis of the wedding planning industry can help us understand consumers' (in this case Danish couples that are about to get married) sense of reality or normality and maybe even help us predict attitude and behavior in the wedding planning industry.

The theoretical interests of CCT have been divided in into four domains in order to help researchers identify relevant research questions and domains and to realize the limitations or boundaries of CCT. However, Arnould and Thompson emphasizes that this framework of the four theoretical domains should only be used as an orienting device (Arnould & Thompson, 2007, pp. 6-7). The four domains will be elaborated in the following in order to understand their interconnectedness and how each domain contributes to the understanding of consumer culture in the Danish wedding industry. The four domains are:

1. Consumer identity projects
2. Marketplace cultures
3. The Sociohistoric patterning of consumption
4. Mass-mediated marketplace ideologies and consumers' interpretive strategies

This thesis is situated within the first two domains, however all four domains contribute to the analysis.

Figure 3.1: Research Domains in Consumer Culture Theory



Source: Authors' recreation inspired by Arnould & Thompson, 2007, p. 10.

3.3.1 Consumer Identity Projects

This domain is concerned with consumers' identity creation, which is always a "work-in-progress" where market offerings are used as resources to achieve a certain identity (Ellis et al., 2011, p. 179). The purpose of consumption of goods and services is to achieve a certain identity rather than satisfy needs. As Belk (1988) and other researchers have written, people regard their possessions as part of their identity - their self, meaning that what you have is part of who you are (Belk, 1988, p. 148). This has been called "*extended self*", and Belk (1988) groups the extended self into the major categories: *body, internal processes, ideas, experiences, and those persons, places, and things to which one feels attached* (Belk, 1988, p. 141). These categories are all something that people regard as part of their self and can therefore be used in consumer identity projects.

Even rituals and emotions are being materialized, consumed, and used in the process of identity creation. *"Consumer identity projects aligns CCT with the cultural studies focus on identity work and the negotiation of cultural contradictions through the marketplace and the commodification of*

cultural rituals and emotions” (Arnould & Thompson, 2007, p. 8). This commodification of cultural rituals and emotions has become obvious in the development of weddings, as weddings can be seen as a show and opportunity for marrying couples to show their identities and love for each other through massive consumption related to a big wedding celebration. Sociologist Eva Steensig has even described marriage as *“the icing on the cake in people’s self-realization projects of the perfect life.”* (Berlinske, 2014, authors’ translation).

Consumers are conceived of as goal driven identity seekers and makers, even though they might not always be aware of or understand their own goals (Arnould & Thompson, 2005, p. 871). This means that when investigating consumer needs, attitudes, and behavior, it is not enough to ask consumers what identity they aspire to, as they might not know. When consumption is a mean for consumer identity projects, it is relevant to understand consumers’ desired identities and what resources they use to achieve these in order to understand their behavior and sense making through consumption. In this thesis we aim to identify identity goals among marrying couples and understand what role their wedding plays in their identity projects.

3.3.2 Marketplace Cultures

In 1988, McCracken wrote that *“Culture constitutes the world by supplying it with meaning”* and that this meaning is created through cultural categories and cultural principles (McCracken, 1988, p.73). Meaning is transferred from the culturally constituted world to the individual consumer through consumer goods. McCracken noted that members of a culture, in a sense, are constantly engaged in the constitution of the world they live in (McCracken, 1988, pp. 72-74).

Cultural categories are the conceptual grid of a culturally constituted world (McCracken, 1990, p. 74). It is the way we segment the world into distinctive categories such as age, gender, and class. When consumers act in conformity to a cultural blueprint, they constitute and uphold these cultural categories. Cultural principles are the guiding ideas of thought and action with which the world is segmented into distinctive parcels. Both cultural groups and cultural principles are expressed in goods, which are both creations and creators of the culturally constituted world (McCracken, 1988, pp. 76-77).

The marketplace cultures domain focuses on how consumption produces culture and Arnould and Thompson build on the view of consumers as culture producers (Arnould & Thompson,

2005, p. 873). Consumers' consumption pattern becomes a way in which "*consumers forge feelings of social solidarity and create distinctive, fragmentary, self-selected, and sometimes transient cultural worlds through the pursuit of common consumption interests*" (Arnould & Thompson, 2005, p. 873). This means that in order to investigate culture, one must investigate consumption and how people through consumption re-configure cultural blueprints or norms for actions and interpretation and thereby create culture (Arnould & Thompson, 2005, p. 873). Another important aspect is that social status for postmodern consumers lies in the expression of *localized cultural capital* such as skills valued in the group (Arnould & Thompson, 2005, p. 874).

Cultural capital can be achieved by conforming to taste regimes within a culture. Taste regimes are defined as "*a discursively constructed normative system that orchestrates the aesthetics of practice in a culture of consumption.*" (Arsel & Bean, 2012, p. 900). Taste regimes are articulated through media and propagate a shared understanding of objects and meanings. Taste can be understood as a set of preferences similar to Bourdieu's "habitus" that stem from social class and cultural capital (Arsel & Bean, 2012, p. 900). So investigating taste regimes within a consumer culture can help identify shared consumer preferences and attitudes within that culture. Also, looking at taste as a regime can help explain how consumers gain cultural capital through their participation in the marketplace. However, Arsel and Bean (2012), suggest that consumer research investigates taste as a reflexive object-person relation that is continually achieved rather than a static state of affairs (p. 900). Thus it is not possible nor desirable to define a static common taste among Danish consumers in the wedding industry, but it is useful to analyze commonalities among consumers' taste, knowingly that their taste changes constantly. We wish to analyze taste regimes within consumer culture in the Danish wedding industry because Arsel and Bean (2012) state that taste regimes regulate consumption (p. 902). Therefore taste regimes might provide an explanation of the low demand for wedding planning services in Denmark.

To sum up, research in marketplace cultures can provide an understanding of how social linkages and cultural capital in a consumer community can influence perceived value of a consumed object, which in our case is the use of wedding planning services.

3.3.3 The Sociohistoric Patterning of Consumption

Consumer culture theorists believe that social class hierarchies shape consumption choices and behaviors, so this domain addresses *“the institutional and social structures that systematically influence consumption, such as class, community, ethnicity, and gender.”* (Arnould & Thompson, 2005, p. 874). Thus it is interesting to investigate the role of social class and how this has an influence on consumer preferences, especially since *“CCT examines the relationships among consumers’ experiences, belief systems, and practices and these underlying institutional and social structures.”* (Arnould & Thompson, 2005, p. 874). In our case this domain is helpful to understand how societal structures can influence consumer choices in regards to wedding planning.

3.3.4 Mass-Mediated Marketplace Ideologies and Consumers’ Interpretive Strategies

Consumer culture conceptualizes an *“interconnected system of commercially produced images, texts, and objects that groups use—through the construction of overlapping and even conflicting practices, identities, and meanings—to make collective sense of their environments and to orient their members’ experiences and lives. These meanings are embodied and negotiated by consumers in particular social situations, roles, and relationships.”* (Arnould & Thompson, 2005, p. 869).

This theoretical domain is concerned with how consumers interpret and make sense of popular culture texts, which include marketing messages, TV shows, and other media content. These texts are viewed as lifestyle and identity instructions, but it has also been studied how consumers defy dominant marketing and media influences. In this view, consumers are critical interpreters, rather than passive decoders (Arnould & Thompson, 2005, p. 875). CCT researches, both at the macro level, how economic and cultural globalization influences consumer identity projects, and, at the meso level, how marketing communications or other cultural production systems systematically predispose consumers to certain kinds of identities in order to create needs and market demand. (Arnould & Thompson, 2005, p. 874).

It is interesting to look at dominating marketplace ideologies within the wedding industry and how consumers react to both Danish and foreign marketing messages and culture texts. However this thesis will not go into depth with symbol and discourse analysis as this would require too much attention and remove focus from the purpose of the thesis.

3.3.5 This Thesis within the CCT Domains

This thesis is situated within the *Consumer Identity Projects* domain and the *Marketplace Cultures* domain. We see weddings as a personal ritual that not only defines people's civil status, but also marks a transformation for the couple. Danish consumers no longer need to get married for financial or religious reasons, but the fact that they still marry indicates that they do it for themselves and for symbolic value. It is also necessary to investigate how consumption produces culture and how this might influence the use of wedding planning services.

As the four domains are interrelated, none of them are excluded from this thesis, and all of them - and the relations between them bring useful contributions and considerations to the analysis of this thesis, but primarily the domains of *Consumer Identity Projects* and *Marketplace Cultures* are used.

CCT has a comprehensive understanding of culture, which makes it possible to understand the relations that constitute consumer culture. But this complex view on culture does not separate cultures based on nationality like e.g. Hofstede (Geert Hofstede, n.d.). Therefore CCT does not approve of talking about an American and a Danish Consumer Culture. This might provide a more correct picture of different consumer cultures, but it also complicates the process of identifying and analyzing different consumers e.g. Danish vs. American consumers.

CCT has been focused on the individual consumer's experiences and phenomenological interviews have been widely used. However, it has been argued, that this approach emphasizes consumers' direct reflections of experiences and thereby limits possibilities of interpretation. Therefore, researchers should add insightful and theoretically informed interpretation (Askegaard & Linnet, 2011, p. 386). In this thesis we aim to do so by interpreting our consumer interviews in the context of applied theories and of the three CCT professors' views on the issues to be analyzed.

3.4 Service Marketing Mix

The expanded marketing mix was presented by Booms and Bitner (1981) in order to be more useful to service marketers than the original 4 P's marketing mix (p. 48). Besides the 4 P's -

product, price, place and promotion, the 7 P's also include *participants (people)*, *physical evidence*, and *process*.

People are defined as “All human actors who play a part in service delivery and thus influence the buyer’s perceptions: namely the firm’s personnel, the customer, and other customers in the service environment.” (Boom & Bitner, 1981, p. 48). In the *physical evidence* all representations of the service are included as they serve as a visual metaphor of what the company represents. This is the environment and also “any tangible commodities that can facilitate performance or communication of the service.” (Boom & Bitner, 1981, p.48). The last one is *process* and is “the actual procedures, mechanisms, and flow of activities by which the service is delivered” (Boom & Bitner, 1981, p.48).

The 7 P's is used as a framework to make marketing recommendations on how the demand for wedding planner can be increased and thereby answering sub question 3; *How can marketing be used to influence the demand for wedding planning services in Denmark?* The marketing mix is a tool developed for companies to satisfy their target market. Therefore a segmentation analysis is necessary in order to identify a consumer segment to target. It should be noted that these recommendations are made for a fictitious company that will be elaborated further on in part 3. This was done due to the fact that wedding planners can chose to target different segments and the chosen marketing strategy should match the specific target segment.

The service marketing mix framework is useful as guideline however it can be limiting that everything has to fit neatly into the boxes and thereby other important factors might be overseen. Furthermore, it does not illustrate how the 7 P's are interrelated and influence each other.

3.5 Sum up of Theoretical Framework

In the theoretical framework above, the main theories used in the thesis were presented. It was outlined what the theories contribute the thesis and how they relate to the research question and sub questions. The table below serves to illustrate the relations between theories and sub questions.

Figure 3.2: Main Theories and their relation to Sub Questions

Theory	Sub Question	Research Question
PESTEL Porter's Five Forces	1. How is the market for professional wedding planning services in Denmark characterized?	
Consumer Culture Theory	2. How does Consumer Culture influence the demand for wedding planning service in Denmark?	
Service Marketing Mix	3. How can marketing be used to influence the demand for wedding planning services in Denmark?	

Source: Authors' creation.

4.0 Summarizing Part 1

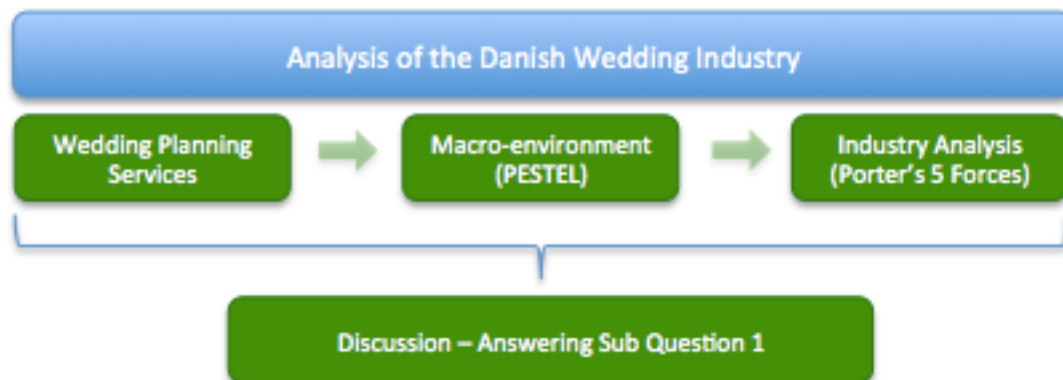
Now, Part 1 has introduced the methodological choices, area of research and theoretical framework that constitute the foundation of the thesis. We move on to Part 2, which is the first part of the analysis. The analysis has three parts in total.

Part 2

Analysis of the Danish Wedding Industry

Sub question 1:

How is the market for professional wedding planning services in Denmark characterized?



“Danish consumers’ use of wedding planning services is increasing. It has to gain ground, but it is slowly coming.”

(Interview, Brink, 2017).

5.0 Presentation of Part 2

This part will investigate the main characteristics of wedding planning services and the industry in Denmark. It is divided into three sections, which are described below.

First of all, in order to set the scene, the services that wedding planners offer will be outlined and described using the *IHIP service characteristics* (Intangibility, Heterogeneity, Inseparability, Perishability). There is general agreement that the IHIP characteristics distinguish services from goods and cause both challenges and advantages for service managers (Wilson et al., 2012, p. 15). This section will provide an understanding of the services and reveal challenges for wedding planning businesses, which will be used in the further analysis.

Second of all, a *PESTEL* analysis will be conducted to understand the macro-environmental factors that influence the Danish wedding industry. This is a useful step in answering sub question 1 and the research question, as the macro-environment can have a strong influence on the development of individual industries.

Finally, in the third and last section of Part 2, an analysis of the competitive environment will be conducted using *Porter's Five Forces*. This also provides a picture of the industry and it is important to understand these mechanisms when dealing with marketing later on in this thesis.

Essentially, Part 2 will discuss the findings from the three sections and answer sub question 1:

How is the market for professional wedding planning services in Denmark characterized?

5.1 Wedding Planning Services

This section will help answer sub question 1 by providing an understanding of the wedding planning services and the challenges that wedding planning companies face.

Services differ from goods in a number of ways, which are important to understand in order to manage and sell services. Services have been distinguished from goods by the IHIP

characteristics (Intangibility, Homogeneity, Inseparability, Perishability), but it is important to remember that these four characteristics simplify the reality. There are many services where only some of the characteristics apply, and likewise the characteristics can apply to some goods as well as services, so the generalizability of the IHIP characteristics can be questioned (Lovelock & Gummesson, 2004). We use the following table to determine which of the IHIP characteristics apply to wedding planning services:

Figure 5.1: Applicability of “Unique Characteristics of Services” to Different Types of Services

	<i>Service Category Involving</i>			
	<i>Physical Acts to Customers' Bodies (e.g., passenger transport, health care, lodging, beauty salons)</i>	<i>Physical Acts to Owned Objects (e.g., freight transport, repair/maintenance, warehousing, laundry and cleaning)</i>	<i>Nonphysical Acts to Customers' Minds (e.g., entertainment, news, education, consulting)</i>	<i>Processing of Information (e.g., Internet banking, insurance, accounting, research)</i>
Characteristic				
Intangibility	Misleading—performance is ephemeral, but experience may be highly tangible and even result in physical changes	Misleading—performance is ephemeral but may physically transform possession in tangible ways	Yes	Yes
Heterogeneity	Yes—often hard to standardize because of direct labor and customer involvement	Numerous exceptions—can often be standardized	Numerous exceptions—can often be standardized	Numerous exceptions—can often be standardized
Inseparability of production and consumption	Yes	No—customer usually absent during production	Only when performance is delivered “live”	Many exceptions—customers often absent during production
Perishability—cannot be inventoried after production ^a	Yes	Yes	Numerous exceptions—performance can often be stored in electronic or printed form	Many exceptions—performance can often be stored in electronic or printed form

a. Note, however, that some service industries can explicitly inventory defined units of capacity for sale in advance of production.

Source: Lovelock & Gummesson, 2004, p. 31.

5.1.1 Different Parts of Wedding Planning Services

Professional wedding planners offer to plan and coordinate weddings. This includes e.g. making the budget, decorate the wedding location, hire suppliers, coordinate everything on the wedding day, and many other things (Brink Bryllup, n.d.). Most wedding planners offer both a “full package” and help or consultancy with individual parts.

The *planning part* of the service that wedding planners offer can be described as a consulting service and belongs in the third category from the left “*Nonphysical Acts to Customers' Minds*”, but the *day-of coordination* of weddings can include e.g. decorating the married couple’s yard for the wedding reception. This part of the service belongs under the second category “*Physical Acts*

to *Owned Objects*”. For simplicity, we will focus on the *planning part* of wedding planners’ service, which is the core of their service offering.

5.1.2 Applicability of the IHIP Characteristics

The following sections will investigate whether all IHIP characteristics are applicable to the wedding planning service.

The service is *intangible*, which has been called “*the most basic distinguishing characteristic of services*” (Wilson et al., 2012, p. 16). This means that services cannot be seen, felt, tasted, or touched as goods can. Therefore it can be difficult for consumers to assess the quality and the service offered by wedding planners. This was also the case with our interviewees as many of them only had little knowledge about the wedding planning service (Interview, Christina, 2017; Karina, 2017; Birgitte, 2017; Nina, 2017; Clara, 2017; Ditte, 2017). Thus the service offered should be well communicated to consumers even though this might not be easy and consumers need to be educated in order to understand the value they get for their money when hiring a wedding planner. The service can become more tangible by managing the 7 P’s, which will be elaborated further in part 4 of this thesis (Wilson et al., 2012, p.21). However, as argued by Lovelock and Gummesson (2004), services are not always intangible. In fact services can be quite similar to goods as they can also be tangible, separable, homogeneous, and durable (p. 32).

As the table shows, the “*Nonphysical Acts to Customers’ Minds*” category of services can have many exceptions to the *heterogeneity* characteristic, as many services can be standardized by recording or automation (Lovelock & Gummesson, 2004, p. 31), but this is not the case for wedding planning, because the service and planning process depend on the customer’s wishes. Heterogeneity means that services performed by humans vary and no two services will be precisely alike (Wilson et al., 2012, p.16). Wedding planners can strive for homogeneity by offering standard packages, but the service can never be completely homogeneous, as it depends on both the service provider and the customer. This means that consumers need to feel a good connection to their wedding planner in order to lower perceived risk, feel safe, and trust him or her to plan one of the most important days of their lives.

The consumption and production of wedding planning services are somewhat *inseparable*. When a wedding planner meets with customers to talk about the wedding, the service happens “live”

and is delivered and consumed at the same time. This can be an advantage for wedding planners as they have the opportunity to customize the offered service to match customer needs. On the other hand, the quality of the service is also highly dependent on how well the customer and the service provider interact in real-time, and this is hard to predict before the service is purchased (Wilson et al., 2012, p. 17). This might cause uncertainty and hesitation to buy. This might be one of the reasons that several of the Danish wedding planners offer a free introductory meeting.

The fourth characteristic, *perishability*, also applies to the service of wedding planning. Perishability means that the offered service cannot be saved, stored, resold or returned (Wilson et al., 2012, p. 17). Once the wedding is over, the service is consumed, and cannot be saved or returned. This implies a need for strong recovery strategies when things go wrong (Wilson et al., 2012, p. 18). A wedding is an especially important life event for many people, which puts a high pressure on wedding planners to deliver a perfect service. However, the wedding planning service is a one-time-buy for most customers, so satisfied customers are as unlikely to return to the company as dissatisfied customers. But because you cannot re-do a wedding, it is hard for wedding planners to recover a bad service delivery. This incurs a great risk as dissatisfied customers can spread bad word-of-mouth and might even sue the company.

5.1.3 Perceived Risk

For all service providers, it is important to try to lower consumers' perceived risk of buying the service because the IHIP characteristics imply that there is more risk connected with purchasing services than goods (Wilson et al., 2012, pp. 32-33).

Wilson et al. (2012) stated that *"more risk appears to be involved in the purchase of services than in the purchase of goods because services are typically more intangible, variable and perishable"* (p.32). However, Lovelock and Gummesson (2004) questioned the generalizability of the IHIP characteristics and found no evidence that they have been validated by research as generalizable to all service situations or collectively relevant for understanding how companies design and implement their marketing strategies or how customers make choices (p.24). We found that wedding planning services are characterized by all IHIP characteristics, which should increase the perceived risk of purchasing the service as Wilson et al. (2012) stated that there is clear evidence that greater intangibility incurs greater perceived risk (p. 32). This indicates that wedding planners should attempt to reduce consumers' perceived risk.

5.1.4 Sum up of Wedding Planning Services

The challenge of wedding planning services is the fact that *all IHIP characteristics apply, which can influence the perceived risk of purchasing the service* if it is not well managed. Furthermore, it was found that the interviewees had little knowledge about the service. This indicates that the service first of all needs to be communicated more effectively as consumers base their decisions on the tangible cues of the service. Moreover, consumers need to feel a good connection with their wedding planner. Since wedding planning services are somewhat inseparable, wedding planners can use this to customize the service to match consumers' needs. Due to perishability there is a high pressure on wedding planners to deliver a perfect service, since it is an important day for many people with no room for mistakes. Figure 5.2 below illustrates the challenges that wedding planners face as a consequence of the IHIP characteristics.

Figure 5.2: Challenges due to IHIP Characteristics

Service Characteristics		Challenges for Wedding planners
Intangibility	✓	Difficult for consumers to assess the quality and the service offered
Heterogeneity	✓	Increases consumers' need to trust the WP – especially because it is an important day for most people
Inseparability	✓	Hesitation to buy because it is not possible to test the service
Perishability	✓	Hard for WP to recover a bad service delivery → high risk of dissatisfied customers

Source: Authors' creation.

5.2 Macro-environment (PESTEL):

Taking a broad perspective on the industry, macro-environmental factors that influence the Danish wedding industry can be identified. These factors should be understood and analyzed in order to take advantage of the opportunities they present. This will also help answering sub

question 1; *How is the market for professional wedding planning services in Denmark characterized?*

5.2.1 Political and Legal

Political factors do not have a big influence on the wedding industry, as a wedding is an agreement between two people. However the role of the church in society has changed over time, which could be one of the reasons fewer people get married in church. Actually, around 66% of Danish couples prefer to get married at the city hall (Euromonitor International, 2015b, p. 14). This indicates that most Danes do not marry for religious reasons.

Most Danish couples get married for emotional reasons, but people also gain some legal and economic rights when they marry such as shared custody of their children and the right to inherit from each other (Familieadvokaten, n.d). These factors are unlikely to influence the wedding industry, as we would argue that people who get married for legal or economic reasons would not spend money on a big wedding celebration, and therefore it would not make a difference for the wedding-related businesses. However, political or legal changes can affect the wedding industry. For example, the law of the mutual obligation to support your spouse was changed in 2013 so it now also applies to couples that live together but are not married (Retsinformation, 2013). This means that married and not-married citizens' have many of the same rights and obligations, eliminating legal or political incitements to get married.

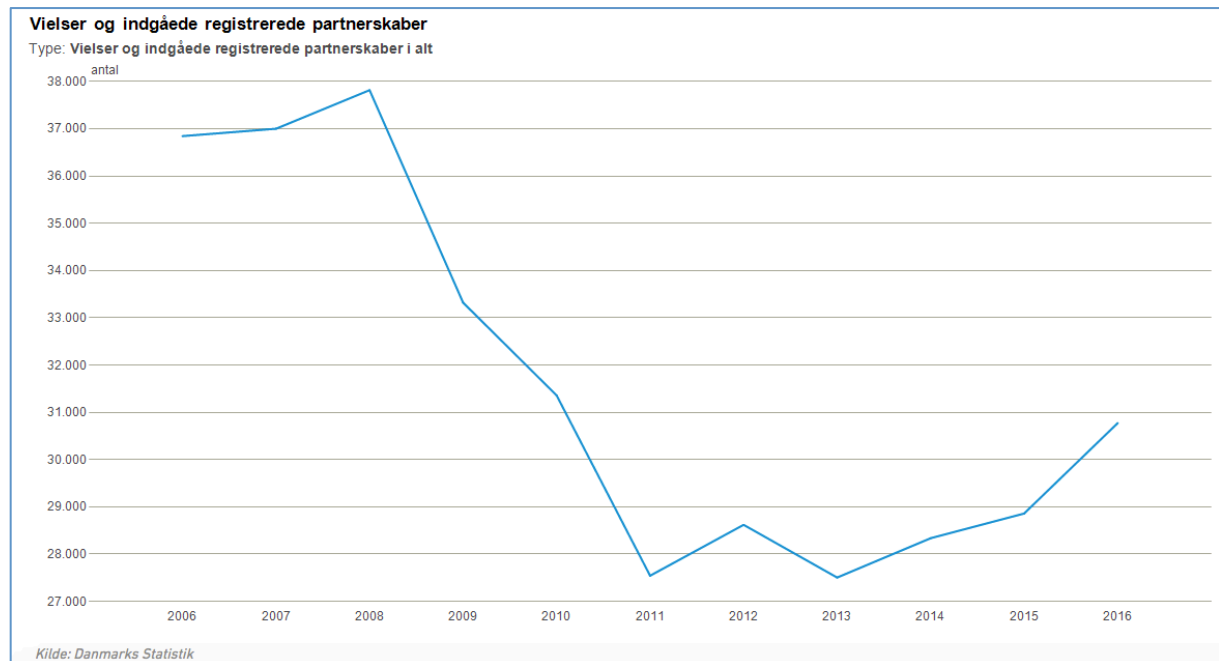
There have been other changes in the legislation such as the legalization of same-sex marriages, which came into effect in 2012 (Retsinformation, 2012) This act caused the Danish wedding industry to grow as Denmark became the wedding destination for many foreign gay couples, that are not allowed to marry in their home country. However, the foreign couples often go to the Island of Årø or the municipalities close to Germany to get married, so the increasing number of gay marriages in Denmark mostly affect businesses in these geographic areas. Furthermore, the foreign couples only spend around 6.000-8.000 kr. when they are in Denmark to get married (Zahle, 2014), which is very little compared to the average amount Danish couples spend on their wedding which is 75.071 kr. for church weddings and 22.688 kr. for civil ceremonies (TNS Gallup, 2016) (Please note that the report is based on first-time marriages).

5.2.2 Economic

The wedding industry is very sensitive to economic fluctuation as weddings are not a necessity and it is easy to postpone it till better economic times. Also if the consumer confidence is low, people will naturally be less likely to spend a large amount of money on a wedding. On the other hand, if the economy is fragile, it could be an incitement for couples to get married and live together and support each other financially especially in the big cities where it can be hard to find affordable apartments. However, nowadays it is normal and acceptable in Denmark to live together as a couple without being married, so the need to find an apartment should not be enough reason for people to get married. It is more likely that people will postpone their wedding until better economic times. A Passport report stated, *“Economic uncertainty had led to many couples postponing their wedding plans. However, improving economic conditions in 2014 led to a 3% increase in the number of marriages.”* (Euromonitor International, 2015b, p. 14). This means that the macro-economic environment has a strong impact on the wedding industry. The tendency also supports the argument that people do not see marriage as a necessity, but as a pleasure that can be celebrated with a wedding when the time and economy is right.

Figure 5.3 below shows that from 2008-2011, the number of weddings in Denmark decreased drastically, which most likely is because of the financial crisis, which is said to have started with the bankruptcy of Lehmann Brothers in 2008 and lasted around seven years (Melander, 2015). Both wedding planner Betina Sjöholm Rønne and CCT professors Kira Strandby and Søren Askegaard mentioned that money is one of the main influences in the wedding industry as it is expensive to throw a wedding (Interview, Rønne, 2017; Strandby, 2017; Askegaard, 2017). So if people have less money, they are less likely to get married and less likely to hire a wedding planner. Good news for the wedding industry is that the unemployment rate for people under 25 years old has been decreasing (Euromonitor International, 2015b, p. 2). This means more young people have jobs and therefore more money to spend on a wedding. As the economy is now on an upturn again, the number of weddings is increasing and people also want to spend more money on their weddings (Interview, Rønne, 2017).

Figure 5.3: Number of Marriages in Denmark 2006-2016



Source: Danmarks Statistik, n.d. B.

It is clear, that the wedding industry suffers in times of financial crisis. This, Strandby & Askegaard (2014) argue *“could be an indication of the transition of the wedding from a rite of passage to an object of consumption, influenced by the fluctuations of economy, sensitive as any other commodity - an object of consumption, consumed for sign-value rather than use-value.”* (p. 154). Passport forecasts that the marriage rate will continue to increase and predict that it will increase from 5.0 per ‘000 people in 2015 to 5.7 per ‘000 people in 2030 (Euromonitor International, 2015a, p. 10). These are positive signs for the wedding industry and indicate that it will grow both in terms of the number of customers and the amount of money customers spend.

Another report from Passport states that consumer confidence levels are at the highest since 2006 and consumers spend more money on both retail and larger purchases. The report it states, *“Consultant Mira Nielsen believes that one should not expect a spending spree, as consumers are still a little wary. However, as economic conditions improve some activities such as eating out are seeing an upturn, for example more people are now dining out at full service gourmet restaurants and cafes rather than fast-food restaurants. More and more Danish consumers are willing to pay higher amounts for better quality foods in general.”* (Euromonitor International,

2015b, p. 2). The report also forecasts that consumer spending on recreation and leisure will increase. So there is a tendency to spend more money in general, and more specifically, Betina Sjöholm Rønne said that people spend more money on their wedding than a few years ago (Interview, Rønne, 2017). *All in all the current economic environment seems to be in favor of the wedding industry, so the current economic situation shows an industry that should grow within the next years.*

5.2.3 Socio-Cultural

Getting married is an ancient tradition in Denmark and used to mark the transition from childhood to adulthood. Today most people do it to show their love for each other and it is no longer necessary for either part to be married. The average age for first marriage was 34,1 years for men and 31.5 years for women in 2015. These numbers are forecast to be approximately the same in 2030 (Euromonitor International, 2015a, p. 10). In most social groups it is completely acceptable to not be married, and as people have become more independent, there is no longer a need to get married. However, the number of weddings indicates that people get married because they want to and not because they need to.

In connection with the younger generations' independency, there is a strong "*do-it-yourself*" (*DIY*) trend in Denmark where it is cool and expected that people handle all the everyday hassle themselves. Both Kira Strandby and Hanne Pico Larsen gave the example that Danish women like to bake home-made bread as it gives credit and admiration if you can manage to work and take care of your children, household, garden, and everything else yourself (Interview, Strandby, 2017; Larsen, 2017). This also reflects in the way people plan their weddings. Most Danes do it themselves and want to do it themselves, for example some people make handmade invitations instead of buying them. In some cultures, this could be seen as a sign that people cannot afford to buy the invitations, but in Denmark, it is perceived as cool and creative to do it yourself. Hanne Pico Larsen stated, *"In Denmark, it has become a marker of status to do everything yourself. And it's not just weddings, it's also careers and everything - we should better take care of the garden and the kids and bake bread and cook dinner in order to be successful. I think we have a taboo here in Denmark about that if you have other people take care of these things for you, it is a bit embarrassing, right? Or a bit less original in a way because you just have someone else to do it."* (Interview, Larsen, 2017, 11:16-11:44). However, there are signs that this attitude is changing among Danish consumers. According to Søren Askegaard, there is an increasing tendency to pay our way out of everyday duties in order to get more spare time (Interview, Askegaard, 2017).

This could be hiring people to walk the dog or do the laundry (Flyttov, 2016), and maybe for some people, hiring someone to plan their wedding.

As mentioned, around 66% of Danes prefer to get married at city hall rather than in the church. This seems to be bad for the wedding industry because people who get married in city hall spend 22.688 kr. on average on the wedding, while people who get married in the church (or elsewhere by a priest), spend an average of 75.071 kr. on the wedding (TNS Gallup, 2016).

When it comes to weddings, it is tradition to invite only the closest family and friends compared to many other cultures, where it is normal to invite hundreds of people, even people who the marrying couple do not know. According to the study by TNS Gallup (TNS Gallup, 2016), 34% of the Danish respondents had between 50-99 guests at their wedding and 25% had 30-49 guests. This means that companies within the wedding industry get smaller orders than in other countries. Also Danish weddings are typically kept low-key, as most couples do not want to show off too much. In many other cultures, the wedding is like a show and a general rule is “the bigger the better”. Søren Askegaard stated that in the US, the most important thing is that the wedding is beautiful, while in Denmark it is more important that it is personal (Interview, Askegaard, 2017). Hanne Pico Larsen also told about the many weddings she had attended during her 15 years living in the US. She stated that weddings are often very big, but short. So it is normally just the ceremony and a reception for a lot of people and only lasts 2-3 hours. In Denmark, it is most often expected that the ceremony is followed by a reception, a dinner, and party afterwards, but for a smaller number of guests (Interview, Larsen, 2017).

5.2.4 Technological

The wedding industry is low-tech, so technological development is not expected to influence the industry much. The Internet and social media specifically make it easy for consumers to communicate with businesses and with each other. People can easily search for vendors and look at online reviews from other consumers. Also there are a number of wedding forums like bryllupsklar.dk and various Facebook groups where especially brides-to-be help each other with their wedding planning by recommending ideas and sharing thoughts on wedding-related issues. These forums can also have a large impact on consumer behavior and decision making as they form a consumer culture and participate in the creation of norms and values within the wedding industry.

There are also apps that help people plan their wedding. These make it easier for consumers to handle everything themselves, which could to some degree substitute wedding planners, but still there are some things that apps cannot help with such as decorations, catering and waiter services.

5.2.5 Environmental

Environmental factors could influence the wedding industry in a number of ways. Right now the wedding season is from May-October with the majority of weddings (Interview, Rønne, 2017), but if the weather gets warmer, more couples might choose to get married during fall or winter. Or, if the weather gets colder, more couples might choose to get married in a warmer country, decreasing the activity in the Danish wedding industry.

The increasing focus on environment and sustainability could also influence the wedding industry. Weddings often involve wasteful consumption, but as people become more conscious about the environment, they might want to limit expenses and waste elements in their wedding. For example, second hand clothing has become very popular in Denmark and this goes for wedding gowns too (Bjah, 2012). This tendency of more conscious consumption might cause a decline of sales and production of new products in the industry, but other areas might increase, such as tailor-services to fit the second hand dress. Therefore environmental factors are not a major influence on the Danish wedding industry.

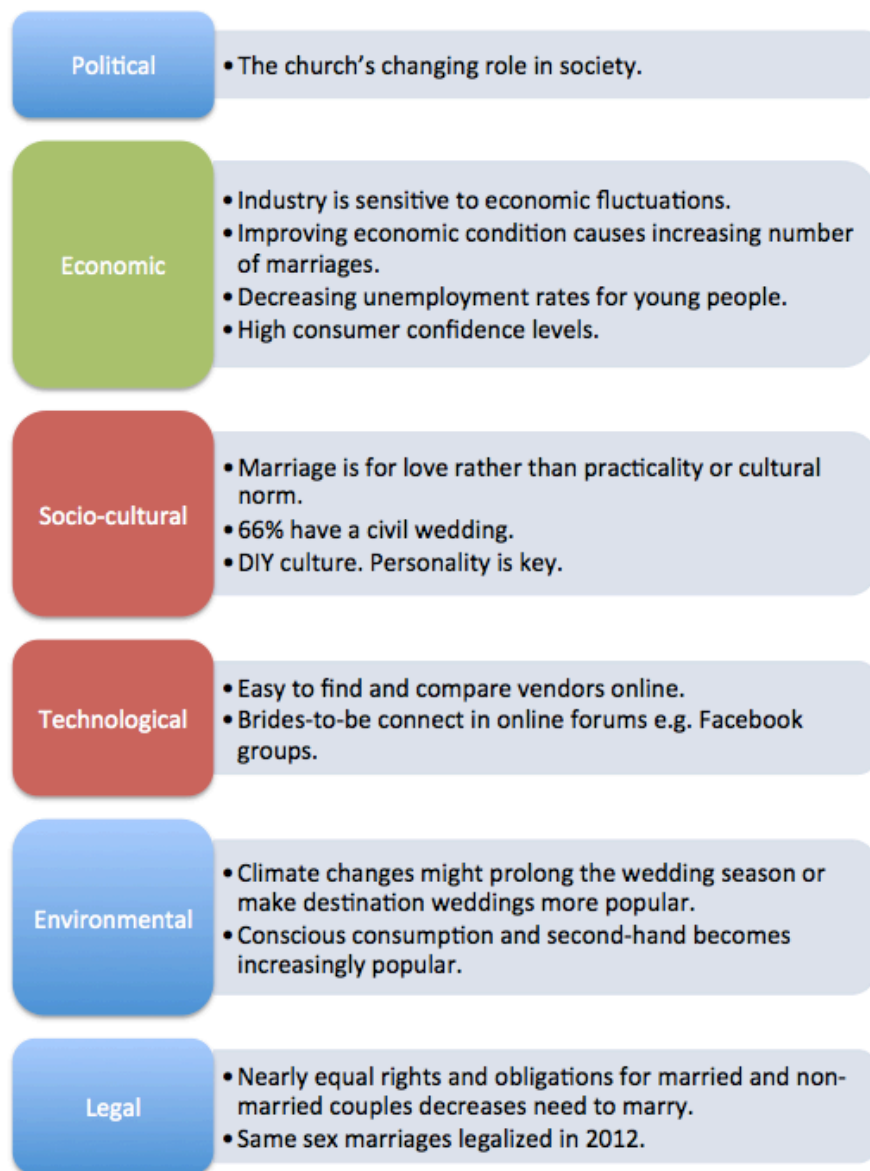
5.2.6 Sum up of Macro-environment (PESTEL)

To sum up, *the Danish wedding industry is mostly influenced by economic, socio-cultural, and technological factors*. Figure 5.4 illustrates the macro-environmental factors that are most likely to influence the wedding industry. The green color symbolizes a positive influence, the red color symbolizes negative influence, and the blue color symbolizes that the influence is insignificant or hard to predict.

Even though less Danes practice religion, they continue to get married. Also there are no longer that many legal advantages for married people compared to non-married people, but this also does not seem to keep people from wanting to get married. Current economic traditions seem to be in favor of the wedding planning industry. Socio-cultural factors influence the consumer

culture and consumer behavior within the wedding industry, and right now the DIY trend that influences many areas of Danish consumer cultures, also means that many brides-to-be want to plan and handle most of their wedding themselves. Furthermore there is a desire for personal and original weddings (Interview, Askegaard, 2017; Larsen, 2017), which influences consumer culture and the Danish wedding industry.

Figure 5.4: Sum up of PESTEL



Source: Authors' creation.

5.3 Industry Analysis (Porter's Five Forces)

In the following section, an analysis of the competitive environment will be made in order to characterize the market for professional wedding planning services in Denmark and answer sub question 1; *How is the market for professional wedding planning services in Denmark characterized?*

This will provide background information about the industry and which opportunities or threats exist for businesses. The competitive environment of the industry also provides an understanding of the relation between the demand and supply of wedding planning services, as it reveals power relations and barriers in the industry. This will be used in Part 3 about marketing in this thesis.

5.3.1 Threat of New Entrants

The wedding planning industry is characterized by low barriers of entry. It does not require many resources to start a wedding planning company, as wedding planning is a kind of consultancy service, so the product wedding planners sell is knowledge and expertise. This means that no financial investment is needed. Also there is no official wedding planning education in Denmark, so basically anybody can call themselves a wedding planner. This is a threat to existing companies, as new competitors can easily appear. However, Betina Sjöholm Rønne stated that she has seen a number of wedding planner start-ups during the past years, but many of them have shut down again or do still exist but have close to zero customers (Interview, Rønne, 2017). So even though it does not require much to start a wedding planning business in Denmark, it seems that it is difficult for new entrants to stay in business. This is partly because of the small customer base and partly because when there is no education, the best way to prove your credibility and expertise is through experience and testimonials, and that is something that takes time to achieve. Sofie Brink mentioned that a lot of women, after their own wedding, want to work as a wedding planner, but do not have any clients besides their own friends and family (Interview, Brink, 2017). It could pose a threat though, if an established wedding planner from a foreign country entered the Danish market, as he or she could have the experience to outperform competitors and to prove their capability and expertise to consumers. It should be kept in mind that wedding planning services are dependent on supplier networks, which means it would take longer for a foreign- than a local company to get established. *The threat of new entrants is therefore assessed to be mild-moderate.*

5.3.2 Bargaining Power of Suppliers

When looking at the industry from the wedding planners' point of view, the suppliers are all companies that provide products or services needed for a wedding. This could be florists, restaurants, designers, DJ's, and so on. Many different suppliers are needed in order to put together a big wedding celebration, and they offer different products and services. Therefore the suppliers' bargaining power also varies, but within most product or service categories, there are a large number of suppliers (Bryllup.dk). This means that their bargaining power is relatively low. However, wedding planners are highly dependent on the suppliers to deliver a good service. If a wedding planner books a supplier for a wedding, and the supplier fails to deliver the agreed product or service, it will backfire on the wedding planner who recommended the supplier (Daniels & Loveless, 2014, p. 10). Therefore it is extremely important that wedding planners can trust their suppliers to deliver good products or services. Yet, if a supplier fails to deliver, the wedding planner can easily find other suppliers for future weddings because there are so many suppliers in the industry.

Some of the suppliers have direct interaction with customers and can therefore influence consumer attitudes and choices. If for example a dressmaker talks negatively about a wedding planner, people will probably not book that wedding planner. Therefore it is important for wedding planners to have a good network and good relationships with suppliers in the wedding industry. Betina Sjöholm Rønne explained that from her perspective, suppliers can be divided into two groups; 1) those that provide a product or service on the wedding day and interact with the marrying couple such as waiters or photographers, and 2) those who deliver their product or service before the wedding day such as dressmakers and bakeries. The first group, she says, sometimes have a negative attitude towards wedding planners because they feel like their services overlap, and some of them feel that the wedding planner wants to control their work. The second group, on the other hand, usually has a positive attitude towards wedding planners, because their services do not overlap or compete in any way. The baker, for example, is only happy that the wedding planner is there to receive the cake upon delivery. Betina Sjöholm Rønne added that within both groups of suppliers there are people with positive and negative attitudes, and usually the younger, more modern suppliers are more positive towards the wedding planning services (Interview, Rønne, 2017).

Finally, the power of suppliers could be a threat if the best suppliers in the industry decide to form exclusive partnerships with a wedding planner, so other wedding planners cannot offer their service to their customers. If, for example, a famous restaurant only wants to work with one wedding planner, the other wedding planners will have no chance to service the customers who want to have their dinner party at that restaurant. But all in all, *the bargaining power of suppliers is assessed to be mild* due to the high number of suppliers and relatively small differentiation between them.

5.3.3 Bargaining Power of Buyers

The demand for wedding planning services is low in Denmark, and only a minority of couples hire a wedding planner when they are getting married. Betina Sjöholm Rønne estimated that approximately 100-150 Danish couples per year use wedding planners. She explained that only around 5 wedding planning companies have more than 5-10 weddings per year, and then there are a few companies who have none or close to none customers (Interview, Rønne, 2017). This indicates that supply exceeds demand, which means that the wedding planners fight over the customers, allowing customers to be picky and to demand low prices and high quality of the service.

Some wedding planners offer service packages (WeddingDeluxe, n.d.), but others make individualized offers for each customer according to the type and extensiveness of service they need (Maid of Honour, n.d.). This means that some customers just purchase e.g. 5 hours consultancy hours and others want help with the entire planning and coordination of their wedding. Regardless of how much money a customer spends with the wedding planner, wedding planning service is a one-time-buy for most people, as they only get married once in their life. This means, that once a wedding is over, the customer is lost and will probably never return. This limits the wedding planner's loss if he or she loses a customer to a competitor.

As mentioned, the Internet and social media have enabled consumers to easily compare prices and reviews, and to communicate about advice and recommendations. The biggest Facebook group is 'Jeg skal giftes' which consist of 4463 members (Facebook, Jeg skal giftes, 2017) and 'Bryllupssnak DK' has 4220 members (Facebook, Bryllupssnak DK, 2017). Many of our interviewees have used these groups for inspiration, to get advice about something specific, or both. For instance, Birgitte had used 'Bryllupssnak DK' to get ideas and to ask people for inputs (Interview, Birgitte, 2017). Karina mainly got inspiration from others' posts (Interview, Karina,

2017), but she had also once posted something about her wedding dress and she said that she received “so many responses and good advice” (Interview, Karina, 2017: 9:55-10:05). Lisbeth found Facebook groups to be a helpful way to get recommendations and to get an idea of prices on different services (Interview, Lisbeth, 2017). This empowers consumers to make informed decisions, and to force down prices in the wedding planning industry where the companies are in fierce competition over the customers. It also means that good and bad customer reviews spread very fast, making companies vulnerable and forced to provide the best service possible (Gorry & Westbrook, 2009, p. 196). On the other hand, the extensive amount of information and opinion available on the Internet can make the market seem like a jungle. If consumers find it difficult to navigate and make decisions, their need for a wedding planner can actually increase, and they will seek professional advice and experience (Daniels & Loveless, 2014, p. 38).

Wedding planner Betina Sjöholm Rønne stated that the Danish wedding planners offer very similar services (Interview, Rønne, 2017). This increases consumers’ bargaining power, as they are able to find the same service more than one place. However, the switching costs can be high if the wedding planner is paid in non-refundable rates. If a couple breaks out of a contract with a wedding planner, they have first of all wasted time explaining their needs to him or her, and if they have already booked a location or other elements of the wedding, these bookings might fall through, and the couple will need to start over in finding new solutions. So once a couple has hired a wedding planner and started the planning process, it is unlikely that they would cancel the contract and hire another wedding planner. However it does occur if the couple is unhappy with the service they receive (Thoby, 2017).

In summary, *the bargaining power of buyers is intense* due to the supply exceeding demand, the undifferentiated services of wedding planners, and the vast amount of online information and consumer-to-consumer communication platforms that empower consumers to compare options and share advice with each other.

5.3.4 Rivalry among Existing Competitors

There is tough competition among the Danish wedding planners. The industry can be characterized as a “*red ocean industry*” because supply exceeds demand so one company’s gain is another company’s loss. Customers only need a wedding planner once, and they are not going to hire more than one wedding planner.

Betina Sjöholm Rønne described how competitors do not talk to each other, which she says is in contrast to other wedding-related businesses. She also described how competitors copy each other (Interview, Rønne, 2017). This might harm the profitability of the entire industry. If companies do not differentiate from each other, they will, according to Porter (2008, p. 85), compete on price, and this will force down prices. This is of course beneficial for customers, but harmful for companies. However, because a wedding is a meaningful and personal event for most couples, the wedding planning service also becomes very personal, and the wedding planner and customers create close relationships. This means that consumers also choose their wedding planner based on emotion and personality fit. Daniels & Loveless (2014) claim that brides in general purchase on emotion, and therefore wedding planners should emphasize the benefits they offer rather than the features (p. 446). This means that it would be rare for consumers to choose a wedding planner on price exclusively. This would also be difficult, as they do not offer the exact same service packages.

In the interview with Betina Sjöholm Rønne, she listed the biggest wedding planning companies in Denmark and the number of weddings she would guess they plan in one year. They were:

- Christel Winther (large market share)
- TwoHearts (max 10 weddings)
- Brink Bryllup (5-10 weddings)
- Wedding Deluxe (close to 10 weddings)
- Elsinore Wedding (does not know, and they target foreign customers)
- Maria Lyng (only has weddings at Sonnerupgård Gods, around 10-20 weddings)

(Interview, Rønne, 2017).

In the interview with wedding planner Sofie Brink from Brink Bryllup, she said that she had planned 58 weddings since 2012 (Interview, Brink, 2017), which gives an average of around 15 weddings per year. There are other up-coming wedding planning companies, and bigger companies that target foreign customers, such as those located on the island Ærø.

The rivalry among existing competitors is assessed to be intense, because of the number of competitors and low differentiation. Even though there are only few wedding planning

companies in Denmark, none of them are very big, and most of them are not fully booked. This is because demand exceeds supply, and it is a red ocean market. There is a tendency for competitors in the market to copy each other, which means they might end up competing on price. This usually has a negative influence on industry profits (Porter, 2008, p. 32).

5.3.5 Threat of Substitution

Today, only few couples hire a professional wedding planner, which indicates that most people can manage without and do not feel the need for a wedding planner. Because the service is new in Denmark, consumers are not used to it, and most couples get help from friends or do everything themselves. Because people have been used to this, they do not feel the need to hire a wedding planner. However, Betina Sjöholm Rønne stated that Danes have become more familiar with the service. When Maid of Honour first had an exhibition at a wedding fair, she received questions from visitors like *“what is that?”*, *“why would I need that?”*, and *“are there really wedding planners in Denmark?”*. Today, she says, more people know about wedding planners and some even say that Maid of Honour is *“exactly what they had been looking for”* (Interview, Rønne, 2017). This indicates that people have become more familiar with wedding planning services and more people recognize the benefits of hiring a wedding planner.

Because it is not yet very common to hire a wedding planner, people are also not looking for substitute services, because it is simply not a service they are used to and feel that they must have. But substitute services do exist such as event coordinators at restaurants or locations who handle weddings and events and can be helpful in the planning process as well as the coordination on the wedding day. However these often have a limited number of vendors they use, which means that the customers do not have as many different options as with an independent wedding planner.

Wedding planning apps can also substitute professional wedding planners to some extent, as they can send reminders and help customers keep deadlines and keep an overview of everything. However, apps do not have the same expertise as a local wedding planner, who knows the different suppliers and can give advice based on the couple's personalities, style, and preferences. Also an app cannot help coordinate the wedding day, decorate locations, and offer the bride an extra bobby pin. So the couple will probably not feel as calm and relaxed, as when they know there is a professional taking care of everything in the background.

The threat of substitution is assessed to be mild because there are no services that can really substitute a wedding planner, and as long as the demand for wedding planners is as small as today, it is unlikely, that someone will launch a service that fulfills the same need. The real threat is that Danish consumers do not feel the need to hire a wedding planner, which is one of the reasons why there is low demand. They are used to handling it themselves, and do not recognize the benefits of the service, or at least they are not willing to pay what it costs, because they do not think it is that valuable. This also has to do with the wage levels in Denmark. Wage levels in Denmark are higher than in many other countries, meaning that it is more expensive to purchase personal services such as hiring a wedding planner than in e.g. the US.

5.3.6 Sum up of Industry Analysis (Porter's Five Forces)

To sum up, *the wedding planning industry is not very attractive or profitable in Denmark*. The findings in this section reveal the circumstances under which Danish wedding planners operate. This contributes to answer sub question 1 and characterize the market for professional wedding planners in Denmark. Furthermore, the insights are useful for the following analysis as it reveals the threats that wedding planners must consider when developing their marketing strategy.

The industry is characterized by high rivalry among competitors and is influenced by the intense bargaining power of buyers. This is because of the low demand and high supply of the service. Professional wedding planning is a relatively new service in Denmark, and most consumers do not feel the need to hire a wedding planner. This means that wedding planners need to create a need and convince consumers that they provide a valuable service at a fair price. Because the companies are undifferentiated, prices and profits can be forced down to the customers' advantage. The findings are illustrated in Figure 5.5 on the next page.

Figure 5.5: Sum up of Porter's Five Forces



Source: Authors' recreation inspired by Porter, 2008, p. 80.

5.4 Discussion of Part 2 (answering sub question 1)

The three sections of Part 2 all contributed to an investigation of the market for wedding planning services. In this final section, the main findings of the three sections will be discussed in order to answer sub question 1; *How is the market for professional wedding planning services in Denmark characterized?*

From the analyses above, the market for professional wedding planning services in Denmark can be characterized as a small, undeveloped market. This is because the service of professional wedding planners is new in Denmark, and Danish consumers are not very used to hiring other people to provide services for them. Being able to take care of everything yourself is a sign of status and success, yet there is an increasing tendency to pay for everyday services in order to get more time for other things. However, planning a wedding is for many a one-time experience, and much more meaningful than everyday duties. So whether this tendency will increase the demand for the wedding planning services is uncertain, and we argue that the tendency will not affect the wedding industry much in the nearest future. One of the reasons for this is that Danish

consumers value personalization of their wedding very much, and they want to plan every detail themselves and even modify old traditions to fit their personalities.

The number of marriages is increasing, but $\frac{2}{3}$ have a civil wedding, which is not beneficial for wedding planners, as people who have a civil wedding spend much less money on their wedding than people who have a church wedding. When the wedding budget is small, the probability that the couple will hire a wedding planner is also small, because it adds an expense to the wedding budget.

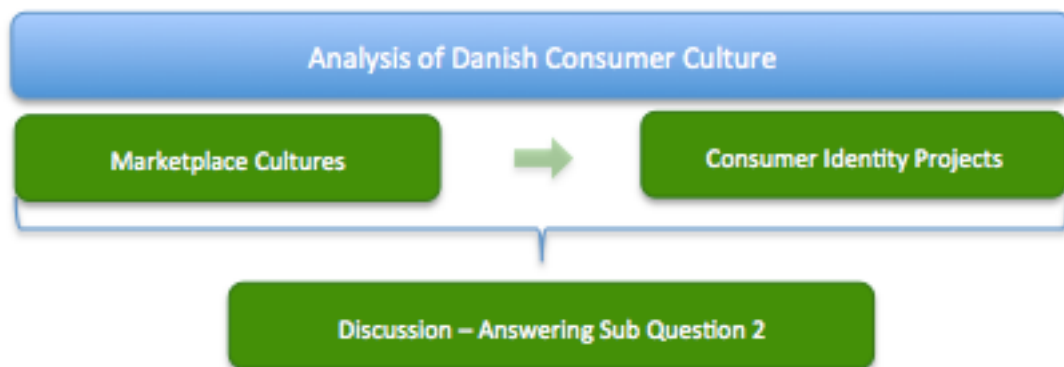
Consumers have high power in the marketplace because supply exceeds demand and there is fierce competition among the Danish wedding planners. Also consumers gather in online forums to seek help and advice from each other, which can substitute parts of the services that wedding planners offer. This means that prices and profits can be forced down, making the wedding planning industry less attractive from a business perspective.

Part 3

Analysis of Danish Consumer Culture

Sub question 2:

How does consumer culture influence the demand for wedding planning services in Denmark?



“Contemporary social life requires much more of the individual than ever before. The consumer must design his or her own consumer lifestyle to meet a plethora of requirements and expectations that extend far beyond the provision of material welfare.”

(Shankar & Fitchett, 2002, pp. 512-513).

6.0 Presentation of Part 3

Part 2 described the wedding planning service and analyzed the competitive environment for wedding planning businesses and the external environment that influence the Danish wedding industry. This enabled us to answer sub question 1 and provide a comprehensive characterization of the market for wedding planning services in Denmark.

Now, Part 3 will look at consumer culture in the Danish wedding industry within the two domains of consumer culture theory, *Marketplace cultures* and *Consumer identity projects*. This is necessary because, as mentioned, cultural meaning is transferred into consumer goods, and individuals create identity through consumption of these goods, services, or experiences. Understanding the meaning that Danish consumers ascribe to wedding planning services can help answer sub question 2 and understand how consumer culture influences the demand of the services. Therefore we look at characteristics of Danish culture that influence consumers in the wedding industry.

In the first section of Part 3, we aim to identify and explain differences in Danish and American wedding habits. This will help us find possible explanations to why wedding planning is not a commonly used service in Denmark.

In the second section of Part 3, it will be investigated how consumers use weddings in their identity creating project and which identity ideals Danish consumers aspire to. This will also lead to an understanding of the demand for wedding planning services in Denmark.

Finally, the findings will be discussed and sub question 2 will be answered;

How does consumer culture influence the demand for wedding planning services in Denmark?

6.1 Marketplace Cultures

We begin Part 3 with an investigation of the demand for wedding planning services in Denmark from the perspective of the CCT Domain *Marketplace cultures*. This will be done comparing Danish and American national culture in order to spot differences that can explain the low demand for wedding planning services in Denmark. One of the differences is the Law of Jante,

which will be elaborated on. Weddings in Denmark and the US are also compared as weddings can be regarded as a culture in itself. It is also investigated how weddings can influence consumers' social status.

6.1.1 Nationality and Culture

Even though the CCT research tradition does not appreciate a homogeneous view on culture, where an entire nation of people is defined by their nationality and cultural attributes ascribed to this nationality, it is necessary for the purpose of this thesis, to try and identify characteristics of Danish consumer culture, that can explain the low demand for wedding planning services in Denmark.

We asked the three CCT professors whether it was fair to say that there is an American consumer culture and a Danish consumer culture. Interestingly we got different answers to this question. Søren Askegaard and Kira Strandby both stated that it is possible to talk about the two as separate and different consumer cultures (Interview, Askegaard, 2017; Interview, Strandby, 2017). Hanne Pico Larsen was more hesitant and argued that consumer culture cannot be defined like that (Interview, Larsen, 2017). Kira Strandby also mentioned subcultures to explain that even though we can talk about a Danish national culture, it does not mean that all Danes are the same because subcultures exist within every culture. When describing the Danish consumer culture, Kira Strandby stated that Danish consumers are very discrete and do not show it if they have a lot of money. She also characterized Danish consumers as very conforming because they do not want to stand out from the crowd and people within the culture look very similar because they want to fit in (Interview, Strandby, 2017). Consumption can communicate belongingness to tribes as well as blueprinting attitudes and behaviors in order to foster *"collective identifications grounded in shared beliefs, meanings, mythologies, rituals, social practices, and status systems."* (Arnould & Thompson, 2005, p. 874). Danes have strong compliance to the overarching taste regime. A taste regime can guide individuals in purchase decision, as it *"offers shared meaning and values that allow individuals to produce and reproduce material representations of a given arrangement of objects, doings, and meanings with a high degree of fidelity. This is achieved through the acquisition and production of meaning through mediated or face-to-face exchanges, the performance of doings, and the embedding of objects in practice"* (Arsel & Bean, 2012, p. 902). If Danes are afraid to stand out from the crowd, it could be because the influence of the taste regime is strong and sets clear standards for acceptable behavior and consumption.

Kira Strandby was more hesitant to characterize the American consumer culture because of the size of the country and population. So American consumer culture cannot be described as a single culture (Interview, Strandby, 2017). However, American culture, homogenous or not, can be used to describe Danish culture, by pointing out the ways Danes differ from Americans. Kira Strandby said that Danes have a general idea of what American culture is like, which is that “more is more”, and things have to be flashy and a little bit “over-the-top”, which she argued is in contrast to Danish culture (Interview, Strandby, 2017). However, Hanne Pico Larsen had an interesting statement on this issue as she said that Danes and Americans are quite similar when it comes to consumer culture. She stated that Danes believe that American consumers buy much more than themselves, but this is not true as Danes consume a lot too (Interview, Larsen, 2017). Hanne Pico Larsen focused on Danish and American cultures of consumption and saw similarities instead of focusing on culture in general, where she might have found more differences.

6.1.2 Weddings as Culture

Weddings can be regarded as a culture in itself, and even though the wedding ritual is the same in Denmark and the US, the way weddings are communicated in the two cultures is very different (Interview, Strandby, 2017). Therefore it is relevant to zoom in on wedding cultures in order to understand what drives demand for wedding planning services.

Kira Strandby stated that American weddings are generally bigger than Danish weddings because weddings mean different things in the two countries (Interview, Strandby, 2017). Americans might feel that their wedding has a great signal value and people will talk about it for many years, whereas Danes tend to see their wedding as “just a party”, like e.g. interviewees Nina and Mikkel (Interview, Nina, 2017: 11:15), and therefore Danes are not willing to spend as much money on it. Kira Strandby stated that this could be explained with the way weddings have been marketed. She explained that in America love has been marketed as something you can buy, e.g. diamonds have come to signal love (Interview, Strandby, 2017). This is supported by Otnes & Pleck (2003), who wrote how diamonds had been marketed as a symbol of love in the 1930’s and 1940’s, and the bigger the diamond on the engagement ring, the greater the love between the couple (pp. 63-64). Kira Strandby confirms this, saying that in the US there is an idea that “the more money you spend, the more it shows that you love each other”. This is completely opposite to the idea of love in Denmark, where the size of your engagement ring is not something people talk about or care much about (Interview, Strandby, 2017). When Hanne

Pico Larsen's husband asked her if she wanted "the rock" she said, "*No, I would rather have a couch.*" (Interview, Larsen, 2017: 06:28-06:33). This has to do with the different attitudes towards money in America and Denmark (Interview, Strandby, 2017). This is influenced by the taste regime Danish consumers live by.

In Denmark it is not always "the bigger the better". In fact, we found that most of the interviewed couples did not want their wedding to be too fancy. They would rather have a fun, cozy, and down-to-earth wedding. It should be a good party, and it should definitely not be too formal (Interview, Clara, 2017, Søsser, 2017, Amalie, 2017, Marie, 2017, Birgitte, 2017, Karina, 2017, Ditte, 2017, Nina, 2017, Lisbeth, 2017, Christina, 2017).

Most interviewees also said that the most important thing was that their guests could see their love for each other. As an example, Nina and Mikkel said that the wedding should show their love to each other and they see the wedding as simply a "party of love" (Interview, Nina, 2017). The interviewees did not feel a need to spend a lot of money to show this. Actually, it seemed like some interviewees thought that spending a lot of money and showing off would take focus away from love and maybe even be a distraction that could overshadow the love and personality that they wanted to show their guests (Interview, Marie, 2017, Nina, 2017).

We asked Kira Strandby what factors influence wedding culture, and she argued that an important factor is economy because wedding celebrations are very expensive (Interview, Strandby, 2017). So money can have a big influence on how many guests are invited. The interviewed couple, Nina and Mikkel, pointed out this consideration. They had a wedding budget of 70.000 kr. and had invited around 80 guests. They were doing a lot of things for the wedding themselves. Nina said "*We would rather have more people attend our wedding and then do more things ourselves, than have to cut down on the number of guests and pay somebody to do everything for us.*" (Interview, Nina, 2017: 6:08-6:17). Later in the interview, they were asked what they had done in order to get the cozy and relaxed atmosphere they wanted, and Mikkel said that one thing was that they had invited everyone they know. Nina corrected him saying that they had not invited *everyone* they know. She also added, that another thing that contributed to the cozy atmosphere was that they did a lot of things themselves and that the location for their wedding was not a castle or another fancy place (Interview, Nina, 2017: 8:30-8:45).

6.1.3 The Law of Jante

In the section above, it was found that the major differences between Danish and American wedding culture are the size of the weddings, the amount of money spend, and the different ways weddings are used to signal love. Nina and Mikkel exemplified how a fancy wedding can be perceived negatively in Denmark. Therefore we find it useful to include the Law of Jante as a possible explanation for the differences between Danish and American wedding culture.

One of the interviewees, Marie, said that she thinks the law of Jante is part of the Danish mindset and therefore Danes in general do not want to show off and do not have a need or desire for a big, lavish wedding (Interview, Marie, 2017). The law of Jante stems from a novel by Aksel Sandemose from 1933, and has grown into the Danish culture and is often used to describe Danish mentality and to explain behavior (Faber & Lenler, 2008). It can be argued that the law of Jante fits well with the high degree of equality that characterizes the Danish society, and that might be why the law of Jante has been able to flourish and affect Danish culture and mentality all the way from 1933 till today. Author Knud Sørensen, who has studied Aksel Sandemose's works, argue that the law of Jante is a self-censorship that Danes use to restrict what they say and do. He also, like Kira Strandby, argues that people prefer to fit in and are afraid to stand out. This, he says, is one of the consequences of the law of Jante (Faber & Lenler, 2008). According to CCT, institutional and social structures systematically influence consumption (Arnould & Thompson, 2005, p. 874). *These two factors; the high degree of equality and the law of Jante strongly influence Danish culture, mentality, and consumption in ways that differentiate a lot from American consumer culture.*

Søren Askegaard stated that the need for things or events to be as big, beautiful, lavish, and luxurious as possible does not give social credit in Denmark the same way it does in America. Actually, he said that it is frowned upon in many Danish and Nordic contexts. He argued that this is one of the general conditions that are important in order to understand the difference between Danish and American consumer culture. When it comes to weddings, this general condition is evident in Danish consumers' wish for a happy, cozy, and personal wedding rather than an opportunity to show off by hosting a big, lavish wedding (Interview, Askegaard, 2017). So based on the collected data, it seems that an overarching taste regime among Danish consumers in the wedding industry can be described by common preferences for a relaxed, cozy, and down-to-earth wedding, with no need to spend a lot of money or show off, and no desire for

luxury and lavishness. A fancy wedding does not give the same cultural capital in the Danish wedding taste regime as it would in the US.

This obviously influences consumption and consumer culture within the Danish wedding industry, as consumers are afraid to show off too much, and therefore are unlikely to spend large amounts of money on their wedding. Birgitte and several of the other interviewed brides stated that they would only consider hiring a wedding planner if they were having a huge wedding that they could not manage to plan and coordinate themselves, but for the wedding they wanted to have, a wedding planner was unnecessary (Interview, Birgitte, 2017, Søsser, 2017, Karina, 2017, Nina, 2017). This shows how *the taste regime that dictates low-key weddings limits the need and demand for professional wedding planning services in Denmark*.

6.1.4 Social Status

As mentioned in the theoretical framework, social status for postmodern consumers lies in the expression of “localized cultural capital” such as skills valued in the group (Arnould & Thompson, 2005, p. 874). Therefore it is necessary to identify the skills that are valued among Danish brides-to-be. We asked the interviewees if anybody helped them plan their wedding and why they did or did not hire a wedding planner. This question was posed in order to investigate the attitude towards getting help or planning your wedding yourself.

None of the interviewees had hired a professional wedding planner to help them with their wedding, but some had considered it or could imagine hiring one under different circumstances. It would have been interesting to hear about someone’s reasons to hire a wedding planner and their experience of the service, but interviewing people who did not use a wedding planner also gave interesting insight into the exact problem this thesis is investigating - namely consumers’ limited use of wedding planners in Denmark. According to Hanne Pico Larsen, the reason why Danes in general do not use wedding planners is the status behind doing it all yourself and this does not only apply to weddings but also career, children, keeping the garden, baking buns and so forth in order to be successful. She states that there is a taboo in Denmark if someone else does something for you, as it is kind of embarrassing and somehow less original (Interview, Larsen, 2017). Through the consumer interviews, different reasons not to hire a wedding planner were identified, but the overarching theme was that the interviewees found it an unnecessary expense, because the brides-to-be liked to plan their weddings themselves (Interview, Birgitte, 2017, Søsser, 2017, Karina, 2017, Nina, 2017, Amalie, 2017, Marie, 2017,

Ditte, 2017, Lisbeth, 2017). Actually, Amalie and Kristopher said that they took pride in doing things themselves. Kristopher gave an example; *“As a hobby, I like to brew my own beer. Now I could perfectly get it from a supermarket - it’s way more convenient, I can have it instantly, but the satisfaction I get from drinking my own produce is much nicer. So I can only imagine that when the whole event (the wedding) is over, and all that sweat and toil has gone into it, you’re gonna be thinking “I did this myself!””* (Interview, Amalie, 2017: 22:57-23:19).

The fact that none of the interviewees had used a wedding planner does not mean that no one in Denmark uses a wedding planner, but the do-it-yourself culture does seem to affect consumer culture when it comes to weddings. In 2013, an article in Jyllands-Posten stated, *“Today’s weddings should be full of personal style and intimacy. We have moved far away from the spending spree where weddings could not get expensive enough or extravagant enough.”* and editor at Bryllupsportalen.dk, Sidsel Thorsteinsson, explained: *“Today’s brides and grooms do not just overspend as it might have been the case earlier. Today it is much more about having something that no one else has. Instead of buying the entire party, doing it yourself is much more in.”* (Hansen, 2013, Bryllupstendenser).

6.1.5 Sum up of Marketplace Cultures

To sum up, the interviewees preferred their wedding to be intimate and cozy rather than big and lavish. Thus it can be argued that the main taste regime among Danish consumers is a preference for relaxed and down-to-earth weddings with no desire to show off. All they want to signal is their love for each other. The Law of Jante’s influence on Danish culture means that Danes are afraid to show off and stand out too much. This naturally limits the need for big, fancy weddings and therefore limits Danish consumers’ need for wedding planning services.

Furthermore, the marketplace cultures and taste regime in the Danish wedding industry mean that in Denmark, planning a wedding yourself gives more cultural capital than having a fancy and perfect wedding planned by someone else. The interviewees enjoyed and took pride in planning their own wedding. This means that *even if Danish weddings become bigger and more luxurious in time, it would not necessarily increase the demand for wedding planning services because Danish brides-to-be, according to our data, enjoy planning their wedding and do not want a wedding planner to take that away from her.*

The factors that have been found to influence the demand for wedding planning services in Denmark are listed in the table below. The red arrows indicate factors that most likely decrease demand, while green arrows indicate factors that are most likely to increase demand. It should be noted, that the table is a very simplified illustration of how marketplace cultures influence the demand, and it does not illustrate properly how the factors are interrelated.

Figure 6.1: Sum up of Marketplace Cultures

Factors that influence demand for wedding planning services	
Small weddings	↓
Taste regimes (Cozy, relaxed, down-to-earth)	↓
DIY culture	↓
Law of Jante	↓
Conformity to cultural norms	↓ ↑

Source: Authors' creation.

Now that we have analyzed how *Marketplace Cultures* influence the demand for wedding planning services, the following part moves on to investigate the other CCT domain, *Consumer Identity Projects*.

6.2 Consumer Identity Projects

Shankar & Fitchett (2002) stated that the postmodern self is defined by consumption and experiences (p. 511). This section zooms in on individual consumers and how they use weddings as identity creation as it has been suggested that weddings have transformed from “*a rite of passage to an object of consumption, influenced by the fluctuations of economy, sensitive as any other commodity - an object of consumption, consumed for sign-value rather than use-value*” (Strandby & Askegaard, 2014, p. 154). This notion supports the investigation of weddings as part of consumers' identity projects that follows.

This section will provide a second perspective on how consumer culture can influence the demand for wedding planning services and thereby contribute to answering sub question 2; *How does consumer culture influence the demand for wedding planning services in Denmark?*

6.2.1 Perfection is the New Religion

This was stated by Kira Strandby and Søren Askegaard in the article *“Weddings as Waste”* (Strandby and Askegaard, 2014, p. 154). It suggests that weddings have such a strong sign-value that consumers care more about perfection of the event than about the religious tradition. Therefore, this section will investigate what perfection means to Danish consumers that are planning their wedding.

Like other consumer products and services, weddings can be used to signal taste and identity. In a study it was suggested that young people prefer self-definition through doing things rather than having things (Belk, 1988, pp. 147-148). This supports the idea that weddings and other experiences are important elements in identity creation projects. Understanding the kind of identities consumers aspire to therefore can help understand the kind of weddings consumers dream of and the culture of consumption within the wedding industry. The primary data collected for this thesis provides insights into the wants of brides- and grooms-to-be, but also more overarching marketplace cultures and ideologies can provide an understanding of consumer needs and how these are fulfilled.

Strandby & Askegaard (2014) wrote: *“It seems like there is much more to contemporary weddings than the joining of two people in holy matrimony. In fact, it seems like the religious ritual might in some cases be the least important aspect of the wedding. Perfection is the new religion, and brides by the thousands, bow down in worship.”* (Strandby & Askegaard, 2014, p. 154). It is extremely important to have a perfect wedding, and the rituals and traditional effect of the wedding (legal marriage of two people) are smaller details.

Otnes and Pleck (2003) stated, *“In a consumer culture, perfection is synonymous with lavishness, because what perfect really means is spectacle, romance, luxury, fashion, and entertainment—the combination of which is never cheap”* (p. 19). However, we argue, that “perfection” means different things to different people, because a perfect wedding must be a wedding exactly like the marrying couple dreams of, and that contributes to their identity projects. This means that depending on e.g. taste and culture, consumers are going to perceive different things as “perfect”.

We need to understand what Danish consumers consider a perfect wedding, in order to understand their usage or non-usage of wedding planning services. Interestingly, none of the interviewed brides-to-be used the word “perfect” when asked to describe how they would like their wedding to be. This could mean, that perfection is not as much of an ideal for Danish weddings than for American weddings. In America, “the perfect wedding” became a commonly used phrase in the 1920s, where marketers and bridal magazines created standards of perfection implying no limit on spending and an increasing reliance on paid professionals (Otnes & Pleck, 2003, p. 18). Naturally Danish and Western culture in general has also been influenced by these *mass-mediated marketing messages*, but we argue that the decoding and perception of these messages depend on cultural background, and therefore weddings look different in different cultures not only in terms of traditions and rituals, but also in terms of consumption and taste. Not only do weddings differ from culture to culture, they also differ from couple to couple because of the need for personalization, which will be explored in the following section.

6.2.2 Personalization vs. Tradition

Even though it was stated in the first section of this part that consumers, and Danes in particular, like to conform to cultural norms, there is also a need for personalization. This is because consumption is used to create common and individual identities. “*Where there is great affluence, people then search for individualism and self-expression.*” (Otnes & Pleck, 2003, p. 6). This goes for weddings as well, as it was noted that weddings have become objects of consumption. Therefore, this section will analyze the need for personalization of weddings.

In Denmark, where there is high economic equality and consumers have a need for making their wedding unique and personal. Danish brides are eager to plan their wedding themselves, because they are afraid to buy a standard package so their wedding will look like everybody else’s. Even priest, Johanne Sloth, noted that personalization is extremely important to couples when they get married, and they often want to modify the rituals or the program in the church in order to make the wedding ceremony more personal (Gazan & Meincke, 2005, p. 30).

It is obviously difficult to leave identity creation and self-expression processes to other people. In order to express oneself and create a personal and unique identity, one must act and consume on their own and create a wedding that reflects their personalities and that has not been seen before. In the article *Possessions and the Extended Self*, the author describes Sartre’s three primary ways of incorporating possessions into the self: (1); *Controlling an object for personal*

use, (2); *Creating or buying an object*, and (3); *Knowing an object* (Belk, 1988, p. 150). Planning your own wedding entails one to both *create* things for the wedding, and also to *know* and *control* everything in the wedding planning process. Therefore, planning a wedding, makes the wedding a significant part of one's self.

Hiring a wedding planner, also makes the wedding part of oneself, as you *buy* the service and also can *control* the service, and direct the wedding planner to create the wedding that you like, but one probably does not *know* much about the wedding planning process, when they have a wedding planner take care of it, and one is not *creating* anything themselves. Still, hiring a wedding planner also says something about a consumer's identity, as it might signal that you can afford it and that you are a busy person.

In the book "Sig Ja!", priest, Johanne Sloth, states that couples have an ambition of the perfect wedding. Personalization is extremely important to the couples Johanne marries in her church, and they often want to add extra "stuff" and make changes to the wedding ritual in order to make it more personal. A good example of this is Marie's wedding where a family member will be playing classic guitar when she walks into the church and she has known for years exactly which songs should be played (Interview, Marie, 2017). Johanne Sloth describes the tendency like this: "*The church's rituals are good enough. But the couples think that if they have designed every single detail, the wedding will be perfect and so will their marriage.*" (Gazan & Meincke, 2005, p. 30).

Johanne Sloth also explains how priests, regrettably, often end up as kind of a "master of ceremonies" where "*the marrying couple creates the framework of the wedding and the priest just has to 'fit into the show'.*" (Gazan & Meincke, 2005, p. 30). This indicates that the religious ceremony and its rituals are just small, unimportant parts of the big wedding celebration and actually mean little to the couples. What is important to the couples is having an impressive wedding party just the way they want it and that reflects their personalities.

As an example, Christina and Martin have done all the planning themselves. Christina believes that the wedding becomes more personal when she takes the time to get all the exact things that she wants. She also thinks that their wedding will be more memorable if it is different than others, and therefore her and her fiancé Martin have made goodie bags for the guests that are

fun and can make the guests laugh (Interview, Christina, 2017). Creativity and inventiveness play a crucial part in most weddings since *“a happy party should not be boring”* (Kofod, 2008, p.165). A boring wedding is not only a bad experience for the guests, it also reflects poorly on the hosting couple. In the next section, we will elaborate on how weddings can signal status in different ways.

6.2.3 Luxury vs. Status

Status is often associated with wealth and superiority. Lea, one of the interviewees, said that one of the reasons she would like to hire a wedding planner was to signal wealth to her friends and family. She said that her family is not that wealthy, and by using a wedding planner they would see her as richer than them, which she would like. Furthermore, she said that she thinks having a wedding planner is a luxury thing and she describes herself as a luxury girl. (Interview, Lea, 2017). This contradicts the way Danish culture and mentality has been described until now, e.g. that Danes adhere to the law of Jante and do not like to show off material wealth.

Lea was the only interviewee who said explicitly that she would like her wedding to signal wealth and lavishness. It might be a coincidence, but there might be a connection between economic wealth and the importance consumers place on luxury in their wedding planning as identity projects. This is because, spending a lot of money on a luxurious wedding is a way to communicate wealth and status, and if one comes from a lower social class, throwing a lavish wedding is a way to impress the guests and signal status. Lea and her fiancé had the lowest annual income among the interviewees, and Lea explicitly said that her family did not have a lot of money, and therefore she would like to show that she was richer than them (Interview, Lea, 2017). This is an example of a research finding within CCT that *“many consumers’ lives are constructed around multiple realities and that they use consumption to experience realities (linked to fantasies, invocative desires, aesthetics, and identity play) that differ dramatically from the quotidian.”* (Arnould & Thompson, 2005, p. 875). So hiring a wedding planner could be a way for Lea to experience the reality of being wealthy, which she desires.

Another way to gain social status is through love. Many interviewees stated that it was important to them that the wedding shows their love for each other and, as Christina put it, *“There should be so much love that people almost puke”* (Interview, Christina, 2017: 12:45-12:48). A wedding should be a demonstration of the couple being happy. Happiness is the new status symbol, as *“many couples look back on their wedding day, as the happiest day of their live (...) the*

feeling of happiness is a state where the inner tension between realities and the person's ideal perception of the world is eliminated (...). This is exactly what happens when a couple plan their ideal wedding down to the last detail, making their ideal and reality come together" (Kofod, 2008, p. 163).

Otnes & Pleck (2003) argued that distinctiveness is just as important as luxury, as taste has become as much a marker of class as money (p. 6). *"Thus, the importance that was attached to the cost of the wedding is now superseded by the emphasis on making these goods and services distinctive (e.g., offered in combinations never before seen by others in attendance)."* (Otnes & Pleck, 2003, p. 6). So it seems that Americans just like the Danes, strive to make their weddings unique and distinctive, but this, like money, has to do with status.

6.2.4 Competing with Other Weddings

The need for unique and distinctive weddings means that some couples will go above and beyond to create weddings that are more special than their friends' and relatives' weddings. This will be investigated below.

Hanne Pico Larsen argued that it is part of the Danish culture that people try to outperform each other on other things than material goods. She stated, *"We (Danes and Americans) compete on different things. While Americans compete on how big "the Rock" (the engagement ring) is, Danes compete on how original their wedding is."* (Interview, Larsen, 2017: 12:12-12:20). It is difficult to confirm or reject this statement, but one of the interviewed couples mentioned the issue about competition, which shows that they think about how their own wedding compares to their friends' weddings. Ditte and Tommy would not like it if their wedding was too easily comparable to other weddings in their network, because then people would judge their wedding compared to other weddings. So they would like their wedding to be different from other people's weddings so it is harder to compare and so it does not end up being a competition of whose wedding was the best (Interview, Ditte, 2017). This notion suggests that consumers' need for a distinctive wedding might also stem from a fear of their wedding being too comparable and that people will judge their wedding in comparison to other weddings.

Nina and Mikkel were asked directly if it was important to them that their wedding is different than other weddings they have attended, and Mikkel first answered a clear "no", but also noted

that this was because they were the first, at least in his circle of friends, to get married (Interview, Nina, 2017: 16:55-17:35). Nina said that she got a lot of inspiration from her friend's wedding even though she could not attend, and she said that it is probably easier for her and Mikkel as they are the first ones in their network to get married. Mikkel stated: *"But I can totally understand the need to distinguish yourself somehow, if you had been to more weddings"* (Interview, Nina, 2017: 18:43-18:53). The more weddings you have been to, the harder it gets to be original and give your guests a unique experience.

Ditte and Tommy said that they were not worried that their wedding will be too similar to their friends' weddings, but it is clear that they have intentionally taken precautions to make sure their wedding will be different than others and incomparable. Ditte explained, *"We have a very unique location, which is difficult to compare with, and it is such a long time since the other weddings, and we do it very different than them, even though we have taken some ideas from the different weddings, it IS going to be very different."* (Interview, Ditte, 2017: 11:11-11.32). When asked if they thought that it was a good thing that their wedding will be different, Ditte said *"Yes, we would rather that it is not too easily comparable, because then it will be like "which one was best", but the important thing is that it should be our day, and it should be best for us, and we have some friends that are also going to a wedding 3 weeks after ours, that we are also going to, and we know that they will be compared, so we just hope that the weddings are so different that it will not be easy to compare them, so it does not become a competition about which is better"* (Interview, Ditte, 2017: 11:39-12.10). This quote shows that the couple feels a pressure to outperform or at least differentiate from other people's weddings, as they know that their guests will be comparing the different weddings they attend. The pressure is high because distinctiveness reflects taste, which is a measure of status (Otnes & Pleck, 2003, p. 6). Thus *it is not only a competition of throwing the best wedding, it is also a competition about status*, and if your friends' weddings are better than yours, your status will fade next to them. The next section analyzes what this means for the perception of wedding planning services.

6.2.5 Standard Packages

The need for originality and threat of comparison might be part of the explanations for the low demand for wedding planning services in Denmark because people might think that they will get a standard package, and this will make their wedding very similar to other weddings and easily comparable.

If a couple plan their wedding themselves, they can add personal details that will distinguish their wedding from other weddings. Ditte and Tommy mentioned that they get ideas from other weddings they have been too, but Tommy noted *“Or maybe take the ideas and make your own twist to them.”* (Interview, Ditte, 2017: 10:52-10:55). Wedding planner Sofie Brink stated that many couples are afraid to let her take responsibility of their wedding: *“Especially the couples that are part of the planning process, they are afraid that I am planning my own wedding, which I am not. But that is just a question of trust, and I need to make them trust that I am helping them instead of taking something away from them, but that I am only guiding them”* (Interview, Brink, 2017: 13:25-13:45). Sofie was asked if she thought that this is a barrier that keeps some couples from contacting her, and she said *“Yes, that they think they will get a full package - definitely!”* (Interview, Brink, 2017: 14:03-14:08). If consumers seek distinction and personality, the fact that they think a wedding planner would just plan their wedding according to his or her own taste is of course a challenge that can decrease the demand for professional wedding planning services.

Hanne Pico Larsen argued that in Denmark consumers care more about the guest experience than the luxuriousness of their wedding (Interview, Larsen, 2017). However, this does not seem to be an especially Danish thing, as American couples are also focusing more on the guest experience and personalization of their wedding. In a survey conducted by The Knot (a leading wedding brand and marketplace in the US), it was stated that: *“Couples are also using their wedding day to make their first big statement as a couple. From invitations to the reception band, couples are spending more to put their personal stamp on every detail.”* (XO Group, 2017). Lea, the interviewee who described herself as a luxury girl and wanted to signal wealth, is a perfect example of the tendency described in the wedding survey. She said that the goal of their wedding is to create an unforgettable day for the guests, and therefore their wedding should not be like other weddings (Interview, Lea, 2017). However, the need to give guests an exceptional experience could be an opportunity for wedding planners if consumers find that this is too challenging to accomplish themselves.

6.2.6 Sum up of Consumer Identity Projects.

In the analysis above, it was found that personalization is extremely important to Danish brides-to-be, and planning a wedding yourself that shows your personality and taste can give individuals social status - if, of course, that taste is accepted and conforming to the common taste regime. Status is not achieved through money, but through taste. The need for personalization

means that Danish consumers prefer to plan their wedding themselves, so every detail is exactly as they want it, and so their wedding is different than other people's weddings. This means that *demand for wedding planning services will probably not increase much if the service is perceived as an impersonal, standard package*. However the need for perfection could increase the demand if consumers do not feel capable of planning a perfect wedding themselves. The sign value of weddings could both increase and decrease demand, but because of the findings in the previous section showed that DIY gives cultural capital, most consumers wish to signal personality rather than luxury. It was also found that a wedding becomes more a part of one's self, if it is not planned by someone else. Finally, *if couples want to give their guests truly exceptional experiences, it could increase the demand for wedding planners*.

Again, the factors that have been found to influence the demand for wedding planning services in Denmark are listed in the table below. The red arrows indicate factors that most likely decrease demand, while green arrows indicate factors that are most likely to increase demand. It should be noted, that the table is a very simplified illustration of the findings.

Figure 6.2: Sum up of Consumer Identity Projects

Factors that influence demand for wedding planning services	
Need for personalization	↓
Perfection is the new religion	↑
Need for unique weddings	↓
Sign value	↓
Perception of wedding planning services	↓
Weddings as part of extended self	↓
Guest experiences	↑

Source: Authors' creation.

6.3 Discussion of Part 3 (answering sub question 2)

The two sections of Part 3 provided an analysis and investigation of consumer culture in Denmark and wedding culture specifically. In this final section, the main findings of the two sections will be discussed in order to answer sub question 2; *How does consumer culture influence the demand for wedding planning services in Denmark?*

The analysis in Part 3 investigated consumer culture in the Danish wedding industry and its influence on demand for wedding planning services. It was found, that there is high conformity to marketplace cultures and that consumers are afraid to stand out. Therefore the taste regime has a strong influence on consumer behavior. The overarching taste regime dictates cozy, low-key weddings that show personality and great taste. In fact, it was found more important to signal taste and personality with your wedding than to signal wealth and status. It is also important that your wedding is different from other people's weddings, which means that consumers are afraid of buying a standard-package wedding. Therefore *wedding planners should communicate to consumers that they can create weddings that are both distinct and personal*. If they manage to do this, it could increase the demand for wedding planning services. If not, the demand might only come from consumers who do not feel like they can create a personal and distinct wedding themselves.

It was even found, that in the Danish consumer culture, it gives cultural capital to plan your wedding yourself. This was also reflected in the way Danish brides-to-be enjoyed planning their wedding. Not only did they find it fun, it also gives them the identity of a "handle-it-all" person. This of course decreases the demand for wedding planning services both because *Danish consumers do not need a wedding planner and because they actually do not want someone else to plan their wedding*. This finding is primarily based on the data collected for this thesis, so of course there are exceptions. However, *it seems like the consumer culture limits the demand for wedding planning services in Denmark drastically, and this is something that cannot easily be changed*. For that to happen, it would take a major shift towards a culture that praises wealth and perfection rather than personalization, or a change of the service to provide exactly the personalization and distinctiveness that Danish consumers aspire to.

Part 4

Analysis of Marketing Challenges and Opportunities

Sub question 3:

How can marketing be used to influence the demand for wedding planning services in Denmark?



“Great marketing is when you see an unrecognised need and launch an appropriate offering and the offering matches this need and there is demand and ultimately profitable sales of your offering.”

(Kotler et al., 2012, p. 13).

7.0 Presentation of Part 4

In Part 3, consumer culture theory was used to analyze weddings as culture in order to understand consumer behavior and how culture influences demand and consumption in the wedding industry. Furthermore, it was analyzed and evaluated how weddings are used in identity projects and what this means for the demand of wedding planning services. Now, Part 4 will look at business opportunities and how wedding planners can most effectively market their services to Danish consumers.

In the first section of Part 4, the theory of surrogate consumers will be used as it offers suggestions to situations that can increase the need for surrogate consumers. Assessing whether these situations apply to Danish wedding planners will help explain marketing challenges and reveal opportunities, that wedding planners should consider in order to increase demand.

Then, in the second section of Part 4, a segmentation analysis will be conducted and it will be assessed which consumer segment it would be most beneficial for a fictitious, new wedding planning company (referred to as COMPANY) to target in order to utilize and increase demand. This will be done using the *Adoption Process of new Products* to assess consumers' readiness to adopt the services that professional wedding planners offer.

In the third section of Part 4, the service marketing mix (the 7 P's) will be applied as the framework for marketing recommendations. It should be noted that the marketing recommendations will be made for the fictitious company, as the best marketing strategy of course depends on e.g. a company's competitive advantage and target market.

In the last section, we will discuss the findings, and answer sub question 3:

How can marketing be used to influence the demand for wedding planning services in Denmark?

7.1 Wedding Planners as Surrogate Consumers

This section serves to identify potential reasons to hire a wedding planner. Michael R. Solomon's (1986) theory of *surrogate consumers* will be applied in order to understand what might drive consumers to hire a surrogate consumer – in this case, a wedding planner. Solomon (1986)

defined a surrogate consumer as: “an agent retained by a consumer to guide, direct, and/or transact marketplace activities.” (p. 208) and outlined a number of reasons that people use surrogate consumers (Solomon, 1986). This is useful in order to find marketing challenges and opportunities that will be investigated further in the following sections of Part 4.

It is relevant to investigate wedding planners as surrogate consumers, as “*surrogates potentially exert control over both tangible and symbolic aspects of marketing channels. They play a role in determining actual goods purchased, as well as in defining the symbolic qualities of those goods.*” (Solomon, 1986, p. 209). This means that wedding planners can influence consumers’ needs and their perception of the different elements in the wedding, making some elements more or less attractive because of their symbolic value.

Wedding planners’ core service offering is to guide a couple through the planning process of their wedding or take full responsibility for planning and executing the wedding. A surrogate is an intermediary who helps consumers in purchase situations. This can be in providing access to special products, recommend suppliers, give styling advice, or many other things. Solomon (1986) hypothesizes that the variables affecting the likelihood of hiring a surrogate can be divided into *consumer* vs. *environmental* variables and *functional* vs. *psychic* benefits as illustrated below. We use the model to systematically look for which, if any, of these antecedents are present among the interviewed brides. This knowledge can be used to understand the reasons for people to hire a wedding planner. It is useful for marketers to understand these needs, and it will be used in the final section of Part 4 to recommend marketing efforts that can help increase the demand for wedding planning services in Denmark and thereby answering sub question 3. Solomon’s figure “*Some Hypothesized Antecedents of Surrogate Utilization*” (Solomon, 1986, p. 211) is presented below, and in the end of this section, the same model will be used to summarize the findings of the analysis.

Figure 7.1: Some Hypothesized Antecedents of Surrogate Utilization

	Functional	Psychic
Consumer	<input type="checkbox"/> Low shopping motivation <input type="checkbox"/> Low product knowledge <input type="checkbox"/> High perceived (functional) risk	<input type="checkbox"/> Low self-confidence in selection ability <input type="checkbox"/> Low discriminatory ability <input type="checkbox"/> Need for status <input type="checkbox"/> High emphasis on product sign value and perceived instrumentality to social goal(s)
Environment	<input type="checkbox"/> Limited product availability <input type="checkbox"/> Inadequate access to channel <input type="checkbox"/> Low leverage in channel <input type="checkbox"/> Time constraints	<input type="checkbox"/> Lack of informal referral networks <input type="checkbox"/> High role conflict <input type="checkbox"/> Normative pressure

Source: Authors' recreation of Solomon, 1986, p. 211.

In the following, the four boxes representing *Hypothesized Antecedents of Surrogate Utilization* will be applied to wedding planning services one by one.

7.1.1 Reasons to Hire a Wedding Planner

7.1.1.1 Functional/Consumer

Starting from the upper left corner, which contains the functional/consumer parameters, we did not come across any brides with a low shopping motivation for their wedding. All the interviewed brides said that they enjoyed planning their wedding (Consumer Interviews, 2017). The level of product knowledge is hard to determine. None of our interviewees had been married before, but on the other hand, many of them had been to weddings before, and since getting married is an old tradition, most people should have an idea of what is needed for a wedding celebration. However, Lisbeth noted that it is hard to know the prices of services that she does not normally use such as e.g. a DJ, but then she seeks advice in Facebook groups (Interview, Lisbeth, 2017), so product information is never far away. However, it can be time consuming to research unknown product areas and seek advice from other brides-to-be, so for some consumers the low product knowledge could cause them to seek professional help from a

wedding planner. The perceived functional risk also varies from consumer to consumer. Some people do not worry, but others - especially brides, can get very anxious and worry that something goes wrong on their wedding day. For them, the functional risk is perceived to be very high, and they might be more likely to hire a wedding planner. Lisbeth explained that she had been to a wedding where there was a wedding planner, and she thought it was great because *“you could tell that the bride was relaxed. It probably was not as important to the groom - I mean he is a man, but you could see that the woman was calm at her own wedding, and I think that means a lot because it is such a short day, so I really believe you should enjoy every second of it (...)”* (Interview, Lisbeth, 2017: 16:41-17:00).

7.1.1.2 Psychic/Consumer

A feeling of insecurity regarding standards and taste may cause consumers to use a surrogate consumer. This has to do with identity creation, as consumers want to make sure that their purchases maximize their personal status or identity. A good example of this is Lea who stated that her family is not that rich and if she had had a wedding planner, her family would see her as richer than them which she would like. She argued that even though her wedding is not that big, she still wants it to be pretty and she wants her family to think that she really made it count. So as she puts it, she would like to signal wealth and surplus (Interview, Lea, 2017). To Lea, hiring a wedding planner has a strong sign value and can get her closer to the social goal of looking rich. This also points to a need for status that Lea thinks hiring a wedding planner would signal. However, she had not hired a wedding planner because her fiancé was worried that if they hired a wedding planner, the wedding would become too big, and he prefers to keep it low-key (Interview, Lea, 2017). Furthermore, Lea was the only interviewee who expressed a need for status. Some of the other interviewees were quite contradictory and said that they preferred a smaller, low-key wedding and therefore did not need help from a wedding planner (Interview, Birgitte, 2017; Karina, 2017; Nina, 2017).

Throughout this thesis, it has been clear that the point of *High emphasis on product sign value and perceived instrumentality to social goal(s)* is dominant when it comes to weddings. CCT articles and the interviewed professors have stated how important it is for people to express their personalities through their weddings and to achieve social capital. So there is no doubt that weddings have a strong sign value, and that the wedding, for many consumers, is an important part of their identity project. However, this alone does not mean that consumers will use a wedding planner as a surrogate consumer because in order for them to choose that, they also

need to believe that the surrogate will signal the desired things and achieve social capital for the couple (Solomon, 1986, p. 210). This might be a challenge for wedding planners in Denmark, as we found that personalization and the DIY culture is very popular and gives social credit.

Low discriminatory/negotiating abilities can also be a reason to seek help from a surrogate consumer, but there were no signs of this being the case for consumers in the wedding industry. It was found, that the bargaining power of consumers is high, so it should not be difficult to negotiate with suppliers. However, some might want to avoid it and therefore hire someone else to do it, but if it is important for a couple to save money, it is unlikely that they will spend money on a wedding planner. Several interviewees described the service as an unnecessary expense (Interview, Christina, 2017; Marie, 2017; Birgitte, 2017).

7.1.1.3 Functional/Environment

The only factor in this category that we have found could influence consumers' probability of hiring a wedding planner is the factor of "Time constraint". In the US, the use of wedding planners increased as more women entered the workforce and therefore had less time for private matters (Otnes & Pleck, 2003, p. 85). Also, some of the interviewees mentioned that they imagined that people who hire wedding planners are very busy, and they would consider hiring a wedding planner themselves if they did not have enough time to plan their wedding (Interview, Nina, 2017, Christina, 2017).

The remaining factors in this category might present business opportunities for professional wedding planners. Solomon gives the example of the interior decorating business where the designer to a large degree controls access in the channel. Some designers maintain exclusivity by restricting access to products and that way derive power by creating barriers and control channels (Solomon, 1986, p. 212). That way consumers become dependent on the surrogate if they want the specific product that the surrogate controls access to. Wedding planners might achieve competitive advantages by restricting access to some exclusive products or services. For wedding planners that have their own wedding location such as wedding planner, Christel Winther who manages the castle *Næsbyholm Slot*, this should be relatively easy. She could restrict availability by only letting clients who hire her as a wedding planner rent the castle for their wedding.

7.1.1.4 Psychic/Environment

The lack of informal networks of friends and family might cause people to use surrogate consumers (Solomon, 1986, p. 212), but this does not seem to apply for couples that are planning their wedding because they hold on to the fact that it is their wedding, and they do not need to please anybody else (Interview, Lea, 2017). On the other hand, a wedding planner could be very helpful if an engaged couple needs advice and want unbiased opinions because if the bride-to-be asks her best friend or mom for help, they might end up planning a wedding that they want and not what the bride wants. In situations where people change roles or need to play many roles at the same time, the need for surrogate consumers may also increase, especially when the consumer takes on a new, unfamiliar role (Solomon, 1986, p. 212). This should not apply to marrying couples. Even though they take on the new role as married people, the wedding in itself does not determine their ability to fulfill this role successfully.

Normative pressure can also cause people to seek guidance from professionals when making high-involvement purchases, in order to make the correct decision— as determined by normative standards, and in many cases, consumers appear to believe that the validity of subjective, aesthetic choices can be determined objectively. Solomon explains: *“Consultants are hired to maximize the probability that such choices will be validated in the desired manner by relevant others.”* (Solomon, 1986, p. 211). This statement should increase the need for wedding planning services, as most couples are highly motivated and eager to plan their wedding and make all the right decisions. Also, most marrying couples invite their closest friends and family (as a minimum) to the wedding, so their *relevant others* are present at the wedding and can witness and judge all the aesthetic choices the couple has made regarding the wedding. This should make the wedding planning and the purchases connected to the wedding a risky affair, as the wrong decisions can reflect poorly on the marrying couple’s style, wedding planning skills, and ultimately their identities. Ditte and Tommy expressed concerns about their wedding being compared to other weddings in their network of friends, and they, as well as Amalie and Kristopher, said that they could imagine that people who needed stylistic advice or help with decorations would be likely to hire a wedding planner (Interview, Amalie, 2017; Ditte, 2017). But for this to happen, people must trust the wedding planner’s taste and judgment and believe that he or she can help them reach their social goals. This is an important note for professional wedding planners, as they will need to convince consumers of their capability to create personal weddings of high normative quality that will be approved by the consumers’ relative others.

Therefore the next section will elaborate on the obstacles of leaving the responsibility of a wedding to a stranger.

7.1.2 Leaving the Responsibility to a Wedding Planner

Throughout the analysis it has been found that Danish brides-to-be are reluctant to leave the responsibility of their wedding to others, which poses a challenge for professional wedding planners. However, Solomon (1986) noted that even though consumers typically wish to retain control over purchase situations that have serious consequences for themselves such as personal expression or cost, some situations may have such serious consequences that consumers do not rely on their own personal judgment alone, but prefer to seek advice and delegate some responsibility to surrogate consumers (p. 209). We found different views on this in the consumer interviews. As an example, Ditte said that if they had used a wedding planner, she probably would have had a hard time leaving the responsibility to that person, as she likes to be in control of everything herself (Interview, Ditte, 2017). But we also interviewed Clara, a young bride who said that if she could afford it she would love to hire a wedding planner that could keep track of all the details and deadlines (Interview, Clara, 2017). Clara's reason to hire a wedding planner is mostly practical and not an insecurity of choosing the wrong style for the wedding, so according to our primary data, Solomon's theory that consumers use surrogates because they do not trust their own judgment, does not apply to wedding planning services.

7.1.3 Sum up of Wedding Planners as Surrogate Consumers

To sum up, there can be many reasons that people hire a wedding planner. Some interviewees argued that it would be great to have someone to keep track of all the details while others stated that it would be hard for them to leave the responsibility to someone else. There is no doubt that weddings have great sign value and therefore are important in identity projects and in achieving social goals. However, as it was found in Part 3 that social status is achieved by doing things yourself, *the strong sign value of weddings might actually decrease the incentive to hire a wedding planner.*

Because a wedding means a lot to most people, and because relevant others often take part in the wedding, the perceived functional risk is often high, and consumers can feel insecure about their selection ability. However, the interviewed consumers did not express insecurity as a reason to hire a wedding planner. If consumers consider hiring a wedding planner, they need to

trust a wedding planner's taste and ability to live up to the expected standards, but as argued in Part 2, the heterogeneity of the service can make it difficult to convince consumers of this.

Time constraints and low knowledge about weddings can cause people to hire a wedding planner, but this mainly goes for the "money rich, but time poor" consumers. Finally, the theory of surrogate consumers revealed *marketing opportunities for wedding planners to control channel access and thereby create incentives to hire them*.

In the table below, the factors that are likely to get consumers to hire a wedding planner are checked off with a ✓. The identified challenges and opportunities will be elaborated in the following sections.

Figure 7.2: Sum up of Hypothesized Antecedents of Surrogate Utilization

	Functional	Psychic
Consumer	<input type="checkbox"/> Low shopping motivation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Low product knowledge <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> High perceived (functional) risk	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Low self-confidence in selection ability <input type="checkbox"/> Low discriminatory ability <input type="checkbox"/> Need for status <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> High emphasis on product sign value and perceived instrumentality to social goal(s)
Environment	<input type="checkbox"/> Limited product availability <input type="checkbox"/> Inadequate access to channel <input type="checkbox"/> Low leverage in channel <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Time constraints	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lack of informal referral networks <input type="checkbox"/> High role conflict <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Normative pressure

Source: Authors' recreation inspired by Solomon, 1986, p. 211.

7.2 Consumers' Readiness to Try the Service

Now that we have investigated what can drive consumers to hire a wedding planner and thereby revealed business opportunities, we shift the perspective from that of the consumers' - to that of

the wedding planners'. This means exploring how wedding planning companies can utilize these opportunities through effective marketing. Ultimately, a marketing mix will be developed in the next section in order to show a specific strategy to how wedding planners can increase the demand for their services.

In order to develop a marketing mix, companies must choose which consumer segment to target. Therefore, a brief segmentation will now be conducted based on consumers' attitude and position in the *adoption process*, and a target market for a fictitious company will be chosen. This will essentially help us answer sub question 3; *How can marketing be used to influence the demand for wedding planning services in Denmark?*

It should be noted, that the best or most cost-efficient segment to target can be regarded as the segment with the most volume, growth potential, and decision-making power for the lowest marketing costs (Clancy & Roberts, 1984, p. 71). It would be useful for Danish wedding planners to conduct this analysis and determine which consumer segment to target, but that is out of the scope of this thesis.

7.2.1 Attitude-based Segmentation

A behavioral segmentation method will be used to divide the market into segments. Attitude-based segmentation lets us group consumers based on their attitude towards the wedding planning service. This way wedding planners can choose the most attractive segments to target and tailor their marketing effort to fit the target market and create the most appropriate marketing message.

In the interview with wedding planner Betina Sjöholm Rønne, she explained that she experienced the market as divided into three groups: *the sceptics, the neutrals, and the enthusiasts*. When asked about the Danish consumers' general attitude towards wedding planners, Betina Sjöholm Rønne explained that there is some negativity, but also that she has seen a change in the few years since she started her company:

"Generally, it is probably... there is quite a lot who have a kind of negative impression. I don't think it is 50/50, but my experience is that people are divided into three groups. (1) There are the ones who think it is great, and we should definitely just do it. (2) Then there are the ones who do not

really have an opinion towards it, and it is fine for those who can afford it and want it, but (3) there are also the ones who have a very strong opinion about it and who think it's bullshit, and that it is only for the rich, and yeah., but that I will say has become better. The group who is very negative towards it has become smaller. (...) More and more wedding planners have emerged who also offer packages for the consumers with normal weddings, and I think it is more a "Copenhagen/North Zealand phenomenon" than a "dark Jutland phenomenon." (Interview, Rønne, 2017: 5:05-6:40).

Betina added that people who want a traditional, low-key, Danish wedding are very unlikely to hire a wedding planner and more likely to have a negative attitude towards them (Interview, Rønne, 2017). Based on this statement, a geographical segmentation could also be useful, but behavioral segmentation enables wedding planners to create a more detailed marketing mix and to communicate in a way that matches consumers' willingness to buy their services. Consumers' willingness to try a service can be assessed using the theory of the adoption process. Therefore, in the following section the interviewees will be categorized based on their position in the adoption process.

7.2.2 The Adoption Process of New Products

Understanding where consumers are in the adoption process will enable wedding planners to implement the right marketing strategies. In our case it was found that not everyone felt a need to hire a wedding planner.

All of the interviewees except Clara said that they do not need a wedding planner (Interview, Søsner, 2017; Lea, 2017; Amalie, 2017; Marie, 2017; Birgitte, 2017; Karina, 2017; Ditte, 2017; Nina, 2017; Lisbeth, 2017; Christina, 2017), so it is fair to say that there is a long way to get these consumers to make a purchase. This can be explained by the fact that wedding planning still is a relatively new service that many Danish consumers are unfamiliar with. Now the adoption process of new products will be outlined and used to evaluate consumers' readiness to try wedding planning services.

The model of the *Adoption Process of new Products* outlines the 5 stages consumers go through from the first time they hear about a new product (good, service, or idea) to the decision to make full and regular use of the product (Kotler et al., 2017, p. 158). The 5 stages are:

1. Awareness

2. Interest
3. Evaluation
4. Trial
5. Adoption

Naturally, wedding planning is a service most people only need once in their life, so the Trial stage and the Adoption stage can be considered the same thing. Depending on the distribution of consumers at the various stages, wedding planners can choose to focus on one or a few of these stages. It is obvious that consumers at the later stages have a shorter way to purchase, but if there are only a few consumers at e.g. Stage 3, it might not make sense to target this group. *The question is then if wedding planners should try to create an interest among those who do not know much about wedding planners, or if they should focus on the ones that are already evaluating alternatives and considering trying the service.* The latter is the shortest way to purchase, but in order to expand the market and keep getting new customers, wedding planners need to also work at the stage of awareness and interest.

7.2.2.1 Interviewees' Position in the Adoption Process

As it has been found throughout this thesis, wedding planning services are not for everybody, and even though the interviewees were generally positive towards the service, none of them had hired a wedding planner. Therefore it is relevant to look at consumer segments so wedding planners do not waste resources targeting the wrong people. In the data collected for this thesis, all interviewees were at the first, second, or third stage of product adoption. Four of the eleven interviewed brides-to-be said that they did not know much about the service wedding planners offer, thus they are at the awareness stage (Interview, Birgitte, 2017; Ditte, 2017; Nina, 2017; Christina, 2017).

Marie would be characterized as being at the interest stage, as said she had tried to Google wedding planners in Denmark, however she did not consider hiring one herself. Also, she stated that no one she knows would even consider hiring a wedding planner (Interview, Marie, 2017). This shows that even though consumers are at the interest stage and seek information about a new product, they do not necessarily move on to next stages and end up buying the product. At every stage in the process, there is a risk that consumers decide not to go further towards purchase.

Actually six of the interviewed brides can be characterized as being at the evaluation stage, however only Lea and Clara seemed seriously interested in their consideration of trying the service, and Amalie considered hiring a coordinator for her wedding day (Interview, Lea, 2017; Clara, 2017; Karina, 2017; Søsser, 2017; Lisbeth, 2017; Amalie, 2017). In Figure 7.3 below, the interviewed consumers are positioned based on their attitude and stage in the adoption process.

Figure 7.3: Consumers' Attitude and Readiness to try.

	Negative	Neutral	Positive
Awareness		Birgitte Ditte Nina	Christina
Interest		Marie	
Evaluation			Søsser Lisbeth Karina Lea Clara Amalie
Trial/ Adoption			

Source: Authors' creation.

In reality, consumers' adoption of new products does not always follow the model, and wedding planners should be aware that some consumers spend more time than others searching for information and evaluating options before they purchase.

Based on the consumer interviews, the fact that only a few of the interviewed brides-to-be considered using a wedding planner shows that the service is not a part of the *consumers' horizons of conceivable action, feeling, and thought*. Brides simply do not think about hiring a wedding planner or consider it an option. This is a challenge as *Danish wedding planners need to become part of consumers' awareness and their services need to be included as a possible and normal service within the consumer culture*.

According to the analysis above, wedding planners should focus on making consumers at the awareness stage curious to search for information about wedding planning services and on

converting the consumers at the evaluation stage from not trying the service to trying it and hopefully buy the full package. In the interview, wedding planner Sofie Brink stated that people who understand what wedding planners do are positive towards it, but people who do not understand the service have negative attitudes (Interview, Brink, 2017). This would mean that all consumers at the awareness stages were negative towards the service, but this was not the case for either Birgitte, Ditte & Tommy, Nina & Mikkel, or Christina. However, it might be true that the more people know about the service, the more positive their attitudes towards it are. *If this is true, there is great potential for wedding planning businesses in increasing consumers' knowledge about their services.* In order to do this, wedding planners must understand where and how consumers find information about their services.

7.2.2.2 Speed of the Adoption Process

One of the things that influence the adoption process is personal influence, which is one person's influence on another person's attitude and this factor is most important in the evaluation stage (Kotler et al., 2012, pp. 642-643). This means that if wedding planners target consumers at this stage, they should pay special attention to opinion leaders and peer-to-peer communication. Another thing that influences the adoption process is the rate of adoption and characteristics of the innovation.

An innovation's rate of adoption is influenced by different characteristics. The five major influencers are; *Relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, divisibility, and communicability* (Kotler et al., 2012, pp. 643-644). In short, it has been found throughout the analysis in this thesis that the wedding planning service has *relative advantage* because it is a new service. Wedding planning is somewhat *communicable*. Other people, especially the guests at a wedding, can see some of the benefits of the wedding planning service, but much of the wedding planner's work happens before the wedding, where no one can see it. However, the service and its benefits can easily be described by people who have tried it. These two factors should make the adoption process faster.

On the other hand, the service was not found to be *compatible* with the Danish consumer culture or the individual needs of the brides-to-be. Wedding planning services are *complex* to sell. Furthermore, the service is only *divisible* to some degree, as consumers cannot really test the quality of the service until the wedding. These three factors seem to hinder or slow the adoption

process. This means that wedding planners should focus on decreasing these influences by e.g. adjusting their services or marketing messages.

7.2.3 Sum up of Consumers' Readiness to Try the Service

In this section, *attitudinal segmentation* and the *adoption process of new products* were used to identify the most relevant consumer segments for a fictitious wedding planning company to target. The target market will be described below and used to develop a consumer focused marketing strategy based on the 7 P's. This will ultimately enable us to answer sub question 3; *How can marketing be used to influence the demand for wedding planning services in Denmark?*

7.2.3.1 Ideal Target Market for a new company

Wedding planners can use different approaches to find potential target markets, and it would not be possible to recommend one consumer segment for all wedding planners to target as the best target market for each wedding planner depends on their service offerings, competitive advantage, and positioning strategy. However, the previous analysis has given insights into characteristics that are important for wedding planners to consider in their segmentation and targeting. Now, we will describe the consumer segment that we would advise a fictitious, new wedding planning company (referred to as COMPANY) to target.

A new wedding planning company in Denmark should target young people in the capital area, even though some of the main competitors are also located here. This is because people living in Copenhagen were found to have more positive attitudes towards the service. Consumers that are considering a church wedding are especially interesting. Since The Wedding Company and Brink Bryllup already target the small group of very wealthy consumers, it would be wiser to target consumers with an income closer to average, as this segment is also much larger.

In the short term COMPANY should focus on making consumers at the evaluation stage try their services, and in the longer term on converting consumers at the awareness stage to the interest stage. It is important to educate potential consumers at every stage of the adoption process, as there is indication that the more consumers know about the wedding planning service, the more positive attitudes do they have towards it. Therefore there are also marketing opportunities in educating consumers. It was found that the adoption process is hindered by the *compatibility*,

complexity, and *divisibility* of the service, which is something wedding planners should aim to change in order to speed up the adoption process.

In the next section, a marketing strategy based on the 7 P's will be developed for COMPANY targeting the consumer segment described above.

7.3 Marketing Strategy (the 7 P's)

Now that we have looked at reasons to hire wedding planners, suggested how consumers can be segmented into target groups, and identified an ideal target market for a new, fictitious wedding planning company, this section will look at the marketing mix which is defined as *“the controllable variables that an organization can coordinate to satisfy its target market”* (Bitner, 1990, p. 70).

The marketing recommendations will be made for COMPANY targeting the target market described in the sum up above. Shankar & Fitchett (2002) argued that marketing activities might have *“the most important role to play in helping consumers to manage social life (...)”* (p. 513). The 7 P's is thus used as a framework to answer sub question 3; *How can marketing be used to influence the demand for wedding planning services in Denmark?* Whether or not these recommendations would work for the existing wedding planning companies in Denmark depends on their current strategy, and a more thorough competitor analysis and assessment of the profitability of consumer segments.

7.3.1 Product

Wedding planners offer both full-set services and specific parts of the service, however in our interviews it was found that several interviewees did not know that much about the services that wedding planners offer (Interview, Birgitte, 2017; Ditte, 2017; Nina, 2017; Christina, 2017). Birgitte as an example only knew about wedding planners from movies and it was therefore difficult for her to know about the service that they actually offer (Interview, Birgitte, 2017).

Furthermore, as argued by Søren Askegaard, it is not only about visibility and marketing because the service of wedding planning is thought of as impersonal and “Americanized” in a negative sense (Interview, Askegaard, 2017). Kira Strandby also argued that if one of her friends had used

a wedding planner, she would think that the wedding was less personal (Interview, Strandby, 2017). Christina agreed with this statement as she believes that her wedding would be more personal if she takes time to get exactly the things that she wants (Interview, Christina, 2017). This indicates that COMPANY should try to *promote their services by emphasizing that they can help couples make their wedding personal* by matching the couple's needs, since it is more important to Danes to have a personal wedding rather than a beautiful, lavish wedding. Furthermore, Betina Sjöholm Rønne stated that most of her customers seek help with coordination and preparation/decorations on their wedding day (Interview, Rønne, 2017). Thus one might argue that this service is more compatible with the Danish consumers' needs than the actual *planning* of weddings.

Sofie Brink also stated that the most popular service is the on-the-day coordination of the wedding. Consumers appreciate having a person at the wedding that has the big overview and ensures that everything runs smoothly. As found in Part 3, some customers are uncomfortable leaving the responsibility to a wedding planner. This might keep some couples from hiring a wedding planner because they think they have to buy a full-package wedding and that a wedding planner will create his or her dream wedding and not the wedding that the couple wants. Moreover as stated by Lisbeth, it is important that the bride enjoys every single moment of her wedding day, and she believes that having a wedding planner can help the bride relax at her wedding (Interview, Lisbeth, 2017), which again indicates that *COMPANY should emphasize on-the-day coordination services*.

7.3.2 Pricing

According to Betina Sjöholm Rønne, the TV-shows about wedding planners might have given the impression that wedding planners are only for wealthy people. However this is not the case as wedding planners are no longer just hired for big and expensive weddings but also for weddings with a budget a little bit higher than average (Interview, Rønne, 2017). When we asked the interviewees about their opinion on people who use a wedding planner, several interviewees mainly thought of them as either rich or with a high budget, which matches Betina Sjöholm Rønne's observation (Interview, Birgitte, 2017; Marie, 2017; Lea, 2017). Furthermore most interviewees stated that hiring a wedding planner is too expensive or that it does not fit into their budget. Regrettably, we had not asked the interviewed consumers if they actually knew what it would cost to hire a wedding planner. Therefore we sent a follow-up e-mail to investigate this. Several of the interviewees replied that they actually did not know the prices (E-mail, Ditte,

2017; Christina, 2017; Karina, 2017; Birgitte, 2017; Nina, 2017). The e-mails can be found in Appendix 6. This shows that there is a lack of knowledge among consumers. Amalie, Marie and Lisbeth knew the prices (E-mail, Amalie, 2017; Marie, 2017; Lisbeth, 2017). Amalie has worked as a wedding planner herself, so she is obviously aware of the prices. Marie and Lisbeth had found prices online. Marie expressed that she thought wedding planning services are too expensive and unnecessary in Denmark (Interview, Marie, 2017). Lisbeth on the other hand, could definitely see the value of hiring a wedding planner and thought that it would be worth the money (Interview, Lisbeth, 2017). Therefore it cannot be concluded that people who know the prices are more likely to hire a wedding planner, but some consumers might be surprised that it is less expensive than they thought, and not reject the service because of its price.

Therefore *COMPANY* should first of all make it more clear what the prices are for the different services they offer. Moreover, as argued by Porter, a way to achieve competitive advantage is by either delivering greater value to customers or by creating comparable value at a lower cost (Porter, 1996, p. 62). By cutting down prices wedding planners could try to attract a wider target group since more people would be able to afford hiring one. However, as argued by Shapiro, price connotes quality, so if the price is too low compared to the other wedding planners this might put off consumers (Mudie & Cottam, 1999, p. 168). Søsser stated that the service of wedding planners is like that of photographers and you should not try to save money on this, as she believes that the service will be bad if it is too cheap. Furthermore she said that if she was going to choose a wedding planner, she would not chose the cheapest one (Interview, Søsser, 2017). Hence the price can be important to some consumers as it carries a snob appeal (Mudie & Cottam, 1999, p.168). *COMPANY* needs to create value for consumers e.g. by forming partnerships with different suppliers in order to be able to get some kind of discounts to the consumers or just making it easier to get in touch with suppliers and thereby make it more attractive to hire *COMPANY*.

7.3.3 Place

The location of the service provided is important, so it would be smart if *COMPANY* locates their service in Copenhagen. Moreover, Betina Sjöholm Rønne argued that people are more receptive towards the service in Copenhagen and North Zealand (Interview, Sjöholm, 2017). Christina also argued that one's attitude towards wedding planners depends on where you are from. Her parents who are from Jutland would think it was silly to hire a wedding planner, whereas her friends would think it was cool (Interview, Christina, 2017).

The planning service can also be provided through the phone/Skype/e-mail etc., however most people would probably prefer to meet the wedding planner in person in order to evaluate whether or not they can trust him or her. As argued by Søsser, it is important that the wedding planner has a good human connection (Interview, Søsser, 2017).

7.3.4 Promotion

As aforementioned, consumers know little about price and the services offered by wedding planners, hence promotion is essential in order to improve customer education. As Sofie Brink stated, there is a misunderstanding of her service as people think that she sells standard packages (Interview, Brink, 2017), and it seems that the wedding planning service has not been communicated clearly enough to the Danish consumers. The Danish TV shows about wedding planners (*Bryllupper for millioner* and *Købmænd på første klasse*) have raised awareness about the new service in Denmark, but now *the challenge is to lead the Danish consumers from the awareness stage to the interest stage*, and to make sure there is accurate information available when consumers become interested and seek information about the service. This could for example be done through PR, and the target group could be reached by choosing wedding related media channels such as wedding magazines and websites. *PR can be extremely effective if a company wants to challenge consumers' misconceptions* because it is more credible than advertising (Kotler et al., 2012, p. 797). The downside of PR is that it is hard to control, so COMPANY would not be able to control exactly what is communicated. Therefore *they should also use more company-controlled channels* such as websites and social media.

If wedding planners can convince consumers that their service is personalized and that they help create unique and distinct weddings, it might contribute to an increasing demand. Consumers need to know that they do not buy a standard wedding by hiring COMPANY, and that COMPANY might actually be able to realize their dream of a personal wedding that looks nothing like their friends' weddings.

Most of the interviewees found inspiration from the Internet and social media (Interview, Søsser, 2017; Lea, 2017; Marie, 2017; Birgitte, 2017; Karina, 2017; Ditte, 2017; Nina, 2017; Clara, 2017; Lisbeth, 2017; Christina, 2017), so *COMPANY should utilize social media and their website into their strategy* and create interest among consumers and incentives to try the service. This is also a cheap and flexible promotion channel, which is beneficial for a new company, and social media has the possibility to spread messages to a lot of people and to encourage word-of-mouth

among consumers. Kotler et al. (2012) stated, *“Personal influence carries an especially great weight in two situations. One occurs when items are expensive, risky, or purchased infrequently. The other arises when purchases may suggest something about the user’s status or taste.”* (p.789). In the case of purchasing wedding planning services, we argue that both of these situations occur, which means that consumers will rely heavily on recommendations from other consumers. Therefore *COMPANY* would benefit a lot from positive consumer recommendations and word of mouth.

On social media *COMPANY* can communicate directly with individual consumers and adjust their service offerings accordingly. When Vargo & Lusch (2004a) conceptualized the *Service-Dominant Logic*, they argued that companies should listen to consumers and make value-propositions to co-create value with consumers. They stated that *“The normative goal should not be communication to the market but developing ongoing communication processes, or dialogues, with micromarkets and ideally markets of one.”* (Vargo & Lusch, 2004a, p. 14). *COMPANY* can monitor - and engage in consumer-to-consumer interaction and run campaigns that fit their wants. If for example people talk about theme weddings in a Facebook group and a Hawaii theme is popular, *COMPANY* can run a campaign advertising a Hawaii-themed wedding. Facebook now also has a *chat-feature* for company pages allowing consumers to communicate with companies fast and easily. *COMPANY* should encourage this dialogue because it is an opportunity to personalize their service to individual consumers. Gorry & Westbrook (2009) argued that companies should engage in social networks, online groups, and forums in order to address the interests and concerns of their customers (p. 197). Doing this, wedding planners can reassure consumers that they can provide a tasteful yet distinct wedding that matches the individual consumer’s personality.

Furthermore, using social media - especially Instagram can allow *COMPANY* to identify the most influential opinion leaders (based on hash tags and number of followers). Through partnerships or sponsorships with these people *COMPANY* can utilize their communicative power in order to increase marketing reach and convince early adopters to try their service.

Another way to communicate value to consumers, is *making partnerships with different suppliers* such as locations, wedding dress shops, florists, photographers, etc. which might help spread the word and thereby improve customer education. If a hotel is hosting a wedding and they recommend *COMPANY* to the couple that is getting married, the couple might consider hiring

COMPANY if they trust the person that recommends them. Especially since “*service customers rely heavily on word-of-mouth endorsements in deciding which providers to try*” (Wilson et al., 2012, p. 286).

7.3.5 People

People refers to all humans that are part of the service delivery including employees, customers, and other people where the service is delivered. (Wilson et al., 2012, p. 21). Especially in the case of wedding planners, the provider *is* the service, so the way they are dressed and their personal appearance and attitude all play an important role in customers’ perception of the service. A consistent service experience can be accomplished through a course or seminar for employees (Boom & Bitner, 1980), as it is important that they dress professionally and that they are service-minded and perform the brand. As mentioned, it is important that wedding planners have a good human connection. Moreover, the customers themselves can influence service delivery depending on their own attitude and behavior. Christina said that she would not be able to plan her wedding with a wedding planner if she thought the person was annoying or if they did not listen enough or she felt that they did not want to give her exactly what she wanted (Interview, Christina, 2017). *It is therefore crucial that consumers feel that they can trust COMPANY and believe that everything is under control.*

7.3.6 Process

The process is the delivery steps that customers experience and that gives them evidence on which to judge the service (Wilson et al., 2012, p. 22). It is important for wedding planners that the process is customized to the individual as it has been found that consumers do not want standard packages from a wedding planner, because Danes have a negative attitude towards standardized solutions when it comes to weddings (Interview, Askegaard, 2017). Thus *COMPANY should provide a non-standard service that meets the needs of the individuals* in order to influence the customer’s initial decision to purchase the service. The challenge of this is that it can be difficult to communicate a service that is that heterogeneous.

As mentioned in the first section of Part 4, controlling access to products or services can enhance the need for a surrogate consumer, and therefore *COMPANY should attempt to create exclusivity agreements with e.g. some of the popular wedding locations*. However, this could be difficult to achieve for a new and unknown company.

7.3.7 Physical Evidence

The *physical evidence* or “servicescape” is the physical facility of the service offered and it has a profound effect on the customer experience (Wilson et al., 2012, p. 21). Especially since a wedding is personally meaningful event with strong sign-value, the physical evidence needs to signal that COMPANY has good taste and can deliver weddings that live up to standards within the taste regime. At the same time, in order to target consumers with average incomes and convince them that the service is affordable, the physical evidence should not be too luxurious or fancy, as this could scare off the many consumers who want a cozy and low-key wedding. Therefore *COMPANY should create neat and organized physical evidence, but not too fancy.*

COMPANY can also use physical evidence to make the service more tangible and less complex. This could be showcasing various decorations they can provide, or giving customers a personalized wedding folder with all the details of the planning process.

7.3.8 Sum up of Marketing Strategy

It is important to make the service more tangible so it is easier for consumers to understand. Also COMPANY should emphasize that the service can be personalized and that it is not a standard package. Likewise it is important to communicate that the service is affordable. COMPANY does not necessarily need to price their services lower than competitors, as it was found that consumers thought the service was too expensive without knowing the price.

The *people* and *physical evidence* should signal trustworthiness and good taste according to the taste regime. Social media should be the main promotion channel for COMPANY, as it is affordable and can reach the target market specifically, businesses can communicate directly with individual consumers, and it can facilitate personal recommendations through online word-of-mouth. Also the advantage of utilizing opinion leaders can be achieved through social media marketing, and this should get more early adopters to try the product. In order to increase consumers' knowledge at all stage of the adoption process, PR marketing would be useful.

The recommended marketing mix for COMPANY is illustrated on the next page:

Figure 7.4: Sum up of Marketing Strategy

7 P's	Recommendations for COMPANY
Product	- On-the-day coordination
Pricing	- Prices easily available - Create value for consumers
Place	- Copenhagen/North Zealand
Promotion	- PR to challenge consumers' misconception - Website (for information about services and prices) - Social media - Encourage WOM - Dialogue with individual consumers - Opinion leaders - Supplier partnerships
People	- Good human connection - Trustworthy personnel
Process	- Non-standard - Exclusivity agreements with suppliers
Physical Evidence	- Neat and organized

Source: Authors' creation.

7.4 Discussion of Part 4 (answering sub question 3)

In this section, the main findings of Part 4 will be discussed. Part 4 looked at business opportunities and how wedding planners can most effectively market their services to Danish consumers. This was done using the theory of surrogate consumers and the adoption process. Furthermore, market segmentation and targeting was used to identify the most attractive consumer segment for a new, fictitious wedding planning company referred to as "COMPANY", to target. Based on this and the competitive environment described in Part 2, a marketing mix was developed for COMPANY in order to answer sub question 3; *How can marketing be used to influence the demand for wedding planning services in Denmark?*

The most prominent business opportunities were that the *strong sign-value and normative pressure could lead consumers to hire a surrogate*, and both of these factors were found in the data collected for this thesis. In order to utilize these opportunities, wedding planners should make sure their physical evidence shows good taste and trustworthiness, so consumers feel safe leaving some decisions and responsibilities to them. This also calls for credible personnel that can establish good customer relationships. However, *the high importance that Danish consumers place on personalization is a barrier that keep consumers from hiring a wedding planner*, as it is

considered less personal than doing everything yourself. *The social status and personal joy of doing things yourself, is one of the cultural influences that makes the wedding planning service incompatible with Danish consumer culture.* Unfortunately for wedding planners, this is something that is difficult for businesses to change.

What wedding planners can do, is adjusting the service to fit the Danish culture better and try to increase consumers' knowledge about the service, and target the right consumers. As mentioned, the most used service right now is the on-the-day wedding coordination so wedding planners could make this their core service offering and market this part of the service more heavily than the planning service. *However the growth opportunities and economy of scale is limited,* as the wedding planner can only coordinate one wedding at a time, so this kind of business would require a large staff in order to grow.

Wedding planners should recognize the low levels of knowledge about their services and aim to increase this at the awareness, interest, and evaluation stage of the adoption process. *In the short term, the most attractive target market for Danish wedding planners was assessed to be consumers at the evaluation stage who have positive attitudes towards wedding planners.* However, as wedding planning is for most customers a one-time-buy, the group of potential new customers should be increased. Therefore *wedding planners should also try to increase knowledge and interest among consumers at the awareness stage, but this has more long-term benefits,* and it might benefit competing companies as well. Therefore wedding planners might hesitate spending resources on this, and instead prefer to focus on more short-term marketing initiatives such as social media campaigns or wedding exhibitions. However, it is advised that wedding planners use PR to spread information about their services, and that they use opinion leaders e.g. through sponsorships to get them to recommend the service to early adopters.

Part 5

Conclusion

Research question:

How can wedding planners increase the demand for their services among Danish consumers?



"I don't think wedding planning will ever become as big a business in Denmark as it is in the US."

(Interview, Marie, 2017).

8.0 Presentation of Part 5

Now, we have

- Described the Danish wedding industry and its external environment (sub question 1)
- Analyzed consumer culture and its influence on the demand for wedding planning services (sub question 2)
- Suggested a marketing mix that a new wedding planning company could use to increase demand for their services (sub question 3)

We start this final part of the thesis summarizing the identified challenges and opportunities for wedding planning businesses to grow in the Danish market. Based on this, it will be discussed what it would take for the demand to grow, and how likely it is to happen. We end this thesis with a conclusion answering the research question; *How can wedding planners increase the demand for their services among Danish consumers?*

9.0 Discussion

Throughout the analysis, several challenges were identified that influence the demand for wedding planners, but the main focus was cultural challenges. Due to the fact that weddings in Denmark are small, most interviewees did not find it necessary to hire a wedding planner. Moreover it was found that brides prefer planning their wedding themselves. This is partly because *Danes are not that used to hiring people to do things for them*, but this is changing as people buy more services to get more spare time. If this tendency of buying more services continues and Danes become more comfortable hiring help from others, it could affect the wedding planning industry as well. This tendency would also increase if people become so busy that they do not have time to plan their wedding. It was argued however, that the tendency will not affect the demand for wedding planning services in the short term because *the interviewed brides-to-be truly enjoy planning their weddings*, and some of them even said that they would love to work as a wedding planner themselves (Interview, Marie, 2017; Lisbeth, 2017).

There are many reasons to why they prefer planning their wedding themselves. First of all, it is uncommon in Denmark to have big, lavish weddings, and the dominant taste regime within weddings prescribes cozy, low-key weddings that should definitely not be too fancy. This taste

regime carries evidence of the Law of Jante that still is a big part of Danish culture. The modesty and fear to stand out from the norm also explains why *Danish consumers do not even consider hiring a wedding planner*. This is because wedding planning services are perceived as a luxury mainly for the wealthy. This perception has been formed by e.g. American movies and Danish reality shows, and it was found that the interviewed Danish consumers actually knew very little about wedding planning services and prices.

Second of all, the high conformity to the taste regime and cultural norms does not mean that Danish consumers want all the same things. Actually the opposite was found. Weddings are used in consumers' identity projects and therefore they have to be very personal and cannot look like their friends' weddings. However, they should still live up to the standards of the taste regime, as taste has become an indication of status. There is a strong DIY trend in the marketplace cultures, and *consumers achieve cultural capital through doing many things themselves* (weddings, cooking, child care, and so on). In the Danish consumer culture, this signals that one is able to get things done and manage a lot of things at the same time.

These things are important to Danish consumers because weddings, as an object of consumption, have a strong sign-value, and are used to create identity and achieve cultural capital. This might explain why Danes are afraid to leave their wedding planning to others, and this is enhanced by the need of personalization, as consumers think that their wedding is more personal if they plan it themselves.

In the following, three opportunities for how wedding planners can increase the demand for their services among Danish consumers will be presented and discussed.

9.1 Opportunity 1: Adjusting the service to fit Danish consumer culture

The low compatibility of wedding planning services and Danish consumer culture means that the services must be adjusted to fit the Danish consumers' needs. The theory of surrogate consumers suggests, "*Surrogates can consider the benefits sought by clients and position themselves accordingly. For example, they may find it advantageous to position an offering according to the degree to which the service rendered is functional versus stylistic, or the degree to which the consumer wishes to retain primary control over decisions*" (Solomon, 1986, p. 215). As it was found that Danish consumers are afraid of leaving the responsibility of their wedding to

others, wedding planners must position themselves in a way that allows consumers to be involved and in control of decisions. This could be done offering a service that takes advantage of the strong DIY culture rather than neglects it.

Wedding planners should not try to force a full standard-package on consumers. Instead they should find common ground and co-create the service. Vargo & Lusch (2004a) emphasized the importance of value co-creation when they conceptualized the *Service-Dominant Logic* of marketing and argued that companies can only make value propositions, but it is the customers that perceive and determine the value (Vargo & Lusch, 2004a, p. 7). Therefore, companies need to listen to consumers in order to offer value propositions, that consumers want to engage with and use to co-create value. As mentioned in the marketing mix, social media enables companies to engage in consumer interactions and understand their needs. Therefore wedding planners should utilize this option in order to create proper value propositions.

As an example, wedding planners could offer a platform or membership to an online community of brides-to-be, where DIY brides can interact with each other and the company can offer relevant services that they see a demand for. This way consumers get a forum to engage with other consumers and help each other in their wedding planning processes. At the same time, the company can get insights into consumers' behavior and needs and offer tailored value propositions to individuals or smaller consumer segments. This can enable personalization in the wedding planning process, because if consumers see that the company has understood their personal preferences, they might be more interested in receiving help from the wedding planner and thereby co-create value. Of course targeting individual consumers with tailored service offerings would require a lot of resources from the company, so this might be too costly compared to the profits that can be made. Especially in the introduction stage because, as with the wedding planning service, it would take some time before consumers adopt the new online community and before the community has enough members to make a membership attractive to consumers.

Wedding planners should downsize their service to fit the average wedding size and budget. As Betina Sjöholm Rønne mentioned, she had experienced more interest in the service since it has been offered to consumers who want more "normal" weddings instead of just big, lavish weddings (Interview, Rønne, 2017). Instead of offering an all-inclusive package, wedding planners should offer help with small parts of the planning. Some wedding planners already do

this, and as mentioned, the coordination service is the most widely used service. The risk is that if wedding planners divide their different services, it might not increase the demand for the service of planning, and wedding planners will end up working as coordinators or decorators. Then their service is suddenly wedding execution more than wedding consulting and they can only charge money for the hours they spend on the wedding day and not for their knowledge and consultancy throughout the planning process. Therefore it might not be possible to offer a service that fits Danish consumer needs (as they are right now) and still make a profit. It seems that it would also take a change in cultural preferences, norms, and taste regimes for the demand of wedding planning services to increase. This change could happen over time as Denmark continues to adopt trends from the US.

However, cultural changes do not happen overnight, but effective market communications might be able to accelerate change. However, it is estimated that it will take at least 5-8 years until there is a noticeable increase in demand for wedding *planning* services (not just coordination services). *Generations Z* is born around 1995 (Bædkel, 2016), so in around 8 years, the first members of this generation are at the average first-marriage age. Generation Z might have a slightly different attitude towards wedding planning services than older generations, but it would require a more thorough analysis to determine whether there are characteristics of Generation Z that can indicate a larger demand for wedding planning services.

9.2 Opportunity 2: Increase consumer knowledge

A service marketing mix was created in Part 4 in order to show what a new or existing wedding planning company could do in order to meet the identified cultural challenges and meet the needs of an identified target market that would be interesting for a wedding planning company to target in order to increase demand. It was found that in order to increase demand, wedding planners should not only target consumers at the evaluation stage, but at all stages of the adoption process and try to increase consumers' knowledge about the service. However, it can be anticipated that wedding planners see more value in targeting consumers at the evaluation stage, as this has more short-term results, and they risk losing these consumers to competitors if they focus their marketing elsewhere. This has to do with the fact that it is a red-ocean market and the Danish wedding planners are small companies that most likely do not have large marketing budgets.

It can be argued that even if the Danish wedding planners had large marketing budgets, increased knowledge among consumers would not necessarily lead to an increase in demand. This is because the DIY trend still plays a tremendous role for the Danes in their wedding planning process. This might change over the years to come, but according to Kira Strandby, it will take a radical change of attitude in Denmark before the demand for wedding planning services will increase and this will not happen in the nearest future (Interview, Strandby, 2017). Thus visibility and marketing is not enough to increase the demand for wedding planning services in Denmark, as argued by Søren Askegaard (Interview, Askegaard, 2017). However, Danes' attitudes towards the wedding planning services might be changed if it is marketed in a way that shows that it is not only for rich people with lavish and big weddings.

Instead wedding planners should show that their services are also useful for smaller, intimate, and personal weddings as well. We did find indications of changes in consumers' attitudes. As an example, Betina Sjöholm Rønne stated that there has been an increase in demand so far, as she explained, *"there is definitely a bigger interest from consumers - rather they look for our service themselves, than we have to pull them in and explain to them why they should have a wedding planner."* (Interview, Rønne, 2017: 4:40-4:52). However, as she is a wedding planner, her positive attitude might be biased, and she might overexaggerate the increase in demand.

Promoting word-of-mouth could also increase consumer knowledge. As mentioned, word-of-mouth can help companies reach a large audience - especially on social media. Therefore wedding planners should utilize this marketing challenge and encourage satisfied customers to share their experience and recommend the service to other consumers. This is important because consumers rely heavily on personal recommendations when purchasing a service. Wedding planners should ally themselves with prominent opinion leaders within their target market, because they have an audience that listen to them and might even trust them enough to try a service based on their recommendation. Yet, in order for word-of-mouth marketing to be successful, the wedding planning service still has to be adjusted to match the needs of the Danes. Otherwise consumers will not realize the value of using the service, and word-of-mouth would be useless. Of course social media also carry the risk that negative word-of-mouth spreads as fast - if not faster - than positive word-of-mouth, and as the bargaining power of buyers is high in the wedding industry, an unhappy customer could pose a big threat to a wedding planner.

Social media can also help wedding planners reach the target market specifically and businesses can communicate directly with individual consumers. This gives companies the opportunity to explain their service in detail to interested consumers. Market communication through social media should be characterized by dialogue and not one-way mass communication.

Wedding planners should keep in mind that their target audiences are Generation Y and Generation Z, as they are younger than the average age of first-time marriages. A report from Mindshare reveals that among consumers between 16-24 years old, Snapchat is by far the most popular social media. For the 25-34 years old consumers, Snapchat and Instagram are almost equally popular. 73% of Instagram users are interested in content from brands (Wrang, 2016), which presents a marketing opportunity for wedding planners. However, it is argued that the increased interest is caused by more sophisticated content and the fact that consumers increasingly search and select content that meet their current needs (Wrang, 2016). This requires wedding planning companies to create sophisticated content in order to be noticed on social media. Media agencies can manage wedding planners' social media channels, and as an example, the management of a Facebook page can cost around 2.600 kr./month (Propagandafabrikken, n.d.). This should be affordable even for small companies, however wedding planners would still need to spend time on social media themselves in order to provide fast and informed answers to consumer inquiries.

Because of consumers' need for personalization, it is impossible for wedding planners to create one market message that appeals to all consumers. By asking and listening to consumer questions, wedding planners can understand the needs of the Danes and thereby try to match these with value propositions. There is a downside to the personal communication however - that the more a service is tailored to individuals, the less intangible it becomes, and it becomes more difficult for consumers to understand what exactly the service includes. In order to find out, they must contact the wedding planner, explain their needs, and get a tailored offer. This might be a lot to ask of consumers who are unfamiliar with the service, and it might keep potential consumers from trying the services, because they are too insecure to contact the wedding planner and ask about price and service offerings. Therefore it is suggested, that wedding planners create some basic service offerings that exemplify what services and prices they offer, but also make it very clear that these can be adjusted and personalized to fit individual needs. It is difficult to predict how long it will take for consumer knowledge levels to reach a point that causes increase in demand. It depends on the intensity and effectiveness of

marketing efforts and on consumers' willingness to learn. However, it is estimated to take at least 10 years until consumers know more about the service and before they want professional help planning their wedding.

9.3 Opportunity 3: Sell the experience of a wedding rather than the service of planning

Throughout the thesis, wedding planning has been referred to as a service. It has all the IHIP characteristics, and the core product that wedding planners sell is helping people plan and coordinate weddings.

However, the experience economy concept has gained more attention and acknowledgement and has become an independent research field since Pine and Gilmore in 1999 introduced it as a new business movement in the book "The Experience Economy" (Sundbo & Sørensen, 2013, p. 5). In an article from 1998, Pine and Gilmore suggested that businesses should design and sell experiences rather than goods and services. They used this definition of experiences: *"An experience occurs when a company intentionally uses services as the stage, and goods as props, to engage individual customers in a way that creates a memorable event."* (Pine & Gilmore, 1998, p. 98). Planning and executing a wedding fits perfectly under this definition, however, most weddings are probably memorable (especially for the marrying couple) regardless of who planned it, so it can be discussed whether companies can add special value to an already special event.

It is not important to determine whether wedding planning is a service or an experience, and other researchers have criticized the way Pine and Gilmore (1999) made clear distinctions between goods, services, and experiences, as they found many similarities as well as differences between the three categories and therefore argue that the line between services and experiences is blurred (Nielsen & Dale, 2013, p. 74). But thinking about wedding planning as an experience might change the marketing and positioning of the businesses, because consumers buy services for different reasons than they buy experiences. Purchasing a service is about getting someone to solve a problem for you, while purchasing an experience is about going on a mental journey and creating memories (Sundbo, 2009, pp. 432-433). Through the data collection, we found that the interviewees did not feel a need to hire a wedding planner. But maybe they would want to buy the experience of a unique wedding - maybe in a theme that they like. This would also meet

consumers' need for unique, one-of-a-kind weddings that Hanne Pico Larsen described (Interview, Larsen, 2017).

Maybe wedding planners should go a new way and sell wedding experiences instead of wedding planning services. This contradicts the DIY culture and the finding that brides-to-be all said that they enjoyed planning the wedding themselves. But maybe, if consumers see an over-the-top, unimaginable wedding, that requires too much to do it themselves, they might choose to buy that full wedding experience and leave it to professionals to plan everything. Sundbo (2009) argued that the experience economy is growing (p. 436), which might present opportunities for wedding planners. He stated, "(...) *There is an increasing demand for experiences determined by several factors: seeking social status, more meaning and less boredom in life, and psychological self-realisation. This demand is flighty. It is rooted in fundamental psychological needs and societal factors, but these are needs and factors form the luxury end of human life.*" (Sundbo, 2009, p. 436).

The wedding planning company Maid of Honour recently posted a link to an article about a "Game of Thrones" themed wedding, with the text *"We are in Game of Thrones mood at the office! Of course the dream is to plan a wedding with exactly this theme – so now we pass on the inspiration to you"* (MoH Facebook, July 18, 2017, authors' translation). The post got a reach of 1,3K, 70 clicks, and 25 reactions. This is compared to the average performance of MoH's links, which have a reach of 528, 30 clicks, and 12 reactions (Appendix 1). Of course the timing was good because of the new season launch of the TV series, but it might indicate an interest in theme weddings. Throughout the analysis it was found that Danish consumers do not need wedding planners, but they might want the leisure and adventure that the experience provides.

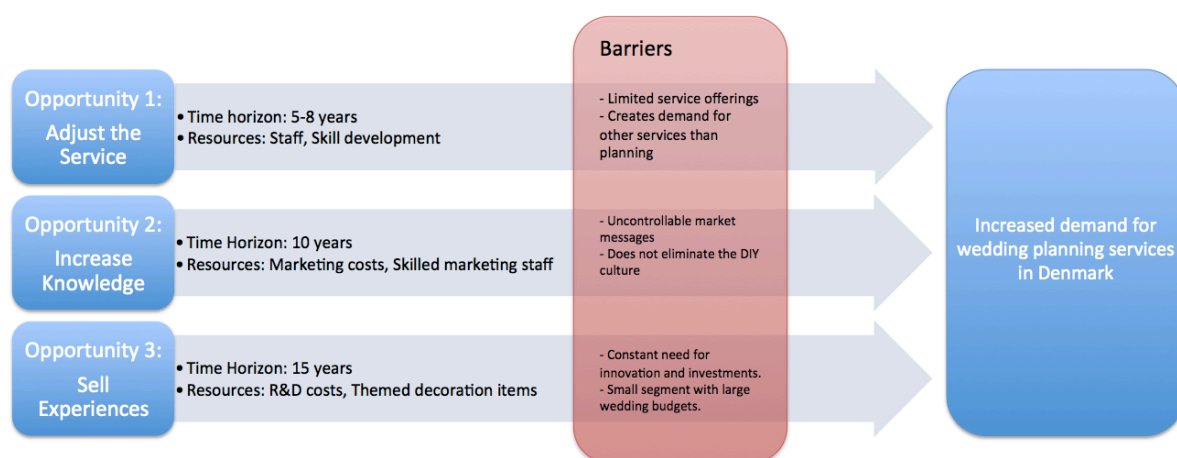
Pine and Gilmore (1999) wrote, *"When a person buys a service, he purchases a set of intangible activities carried out on his behalf. But when he buys an experience, he pays to spend time enjoying a series of memorable events that a company stages – as in a theatrical play – to engage him in a personal way."* (p. 2). If a wedding planning company goes all in on selling theme weddings, they need to innovate their service offerings constantly, because once they have sold one Game of Thrones wedding, no one else in that consumer's network will buy the same service because of the need for distinctiveness.

As we found, consumers do not want their wedding to look like anyone else's. And here the use of social media would actually challenge the wedding planner because if they share pictures from the theme weddings they plan, the consumers who see it might like the idea but not want to have the same kind of wedding because someone else has already done it, and their friends might also have seen the Facebook post and find it unoriginal if a couples copies the idea. Furthermore, as it was found that only a few people in Denmark have very large wedding budgets, the consumer segment that would buy a full-package theme wedding is anticipated to be very small. It would require additional costs in research and development of new experiences. Furthermore, the wedding planner might need to invest in new equipment for theme decorations. Even though the experience economy is not a new phenomenon, it is assessed that it would take at least 15 years before wedding planners can offer experiences that are exceptional enough to cause the demand for wedding planning services to increase.

9.4 Sum up of Discussion

In the above, it has been discussed what wedding planners can do in order to increase the demand for their services among Danish consumers and suggestions have been made. The three opportunities are illustrated in Figure 9.1 below. The figure illustrates the estimated time horizon and required resources to utilize each of the opportunities. Utilizing the opportunities should lead to an increase in demand that is high enough to make the industry attractive for COMPANY to enter. Barriers that can hinder this are also included in the illustration.

Figure 9.1



Source: Authors' creation

It is now interesting to look at how likely it is that wedding planners will follow these recommendations and that demand will increase. First of all, it is worth mentioning that our findings are based on the analysis of only 11 consumer interviews, and therefore are not generalizable to the Danish population. Second of all, the limited amounts of industry data, means that industry analysis was to a large degree based on the data collected in two interviews with wedding planners Betina Sjöholm Rønne and Sofie Brink. Lastly, the insights to Danish consumer culture in the wedding industry was based on interviews with the three CCT professors Søren Askegaard, Kira Strandby, and Hanne Pico Larsen. Even though they have researched consumer culture in Denmark and the US, and Askegaard and Strandby have written about weddings specifically, none of them had researched wedding planning specifically, and there is little official data about Danish consumer culture or -behavior to back up the professors' statements. These limitations should be taken into account when reading the findings of this thesis.

That being said, it was found throughout this thesis, that there are some available opportunities for wedding planners to increase the demand for their services in Denmark. These were discussed in the sections above. However, it was found that *Danish consumer culture has high barriers that challenge consumers' adoption of wedding planning services, and this is not something that is likely to change in the nearest future*. Several wedding planning companies have tried to enter the market, but only a few have lasted more than a few months, which shows that it is a tough industry for new businesses, and supply has exceeded demand. The Wedding Company, which has been regarded as the first and leading wedding planning company in Denmark, has recently been declared bankrupt (Ambrosius, 2017). This is alarming news for the industry. When the most well known company (known from the TV shows *Bryllupper for millioner* and *Købmænd på første klasse*) goes bankrupt, it seems unlikely that other companies can succeed.

On the other hand, the bankruptcy supports the findings that Danes want low-key weddings, and wedding planners should adjust their services to fit this need and target the larger consumer segment of people with "normal", down-to-earth weddings. This is because The Wedding Company targeted high-end consumers who wanted lavish weddings. This is also the way the company was portrayed in the TV show, and other wedding planning companies seem to suffer from this image, as Danish consumers perceive wedding planning as an expensive, luxurious

service for wealthy people only. This enhances the need to increase consumers' knowledge about the services as was discussed in the section above.

However, regardless of how much consumers learn about the wedding planning service and how affordable the service might be, *it does not seem that there is a profitable market for the service in Denmark*. This is mainly because of the Danish consumer culture that praises DIY and personalization. Low-key weddings are the norm and people are afraid to deviate too much from the taste regime. Brides-to-be enjoy planning their wedding and are afraid to leave the responsibility to others. This makes it difficult for wedding planners to create value for consumers. Therefore the demand for wedding planning services is unlikely to increase within the next couple of years, and *we would not recommend COMPANY to enter the Danish wedding planning industry*.

10.0 Conclusion

Now that we have outlined the different opportunities that wedding planners should consider, and discussed how likely it is that the demand for wedding planning services will increase, the following section will conclude the main findings from this thesis in order to answer our research question;

How can wedding planners increase the demand for their services among Danish consumers?

Investigating the Danish wedding industry from a consumer culture perspective resulted in the understanding of barriers that cause low demand for wedding planning services in Denmark. It was found that the lack of knowledge among Danish consumers was a major challenge for wedding planning companies.

In order to increase the demand for wedding planning services, wedding planners must understand consumer needs and offer value propositions that match these. This should be done through interactions with individuals and target segments on social media. This way wedding planners can educate consumers about their services and they can tailor their service offerings to individual needs. This is important because Danish consumers have a strong wish for personalization and distinction of their weddings. Furthermore, it is important that the wedding is not too fancy. Therefore wedding planners need to challenge consumers' perception that wedding planning services can only be used for big, expensive weddings.

It was also found necessary to adjust the wedding planning services to fit Danish consumer culture. The strong DIY culture and consumers' wish to plan their wedding themselves means that wedding planning services to a large extent are unfit for the Danish market. However, if wedding planners utilize the DIY culture and find a way to co-create value, consumers might see the benefits of using their services, which will cause demand to increase. In the last section of Part 4, a marketing mix was developed, and it is suggested that a new wedding planning company follows those recommendations and targets the identified target market in order to reach consumers and increase demand for their services. However, it is important to note that the cultural barriers that were found throughout this thesis make it difficult for wedding planners alone to increase demand. An increase in the demand for wedding planning services

also requires a cultural change, which is dependent on many different factors that are out of the control of wedding planners. This means that *wedding planners can do their part of fitting their service to Danish consumers' needs, but this alone will not cause a noteworthy increase in the demand for wedding planning services.*

11.0 Reflections and Further Research

The aim of this thesis was to understand why there is low demand for wedding planning services in Denmark and whether and how this can be changed. We hope this thesis has provided a thorough understanding of Danish consumers' attitude towards wedding planning services and the factors that influence this. Furthermore, the thesis has given a qualified prediction of what the Danish market for wedding planning services will look like in the future.

This thesis found that there is only a very small market for wedding planning services in Denmark and the demand is unlikely to increase. Danish consumer culture was found to be the main barrier for the industry to grow in Denmark. It should be kept in mind, that this thesis took a cultural perspective on the area of research using Consumer Culture Theory as the foundation for analysis. This focus naturally influences the findings, and the subject could have been approached from many different angles.

Also it would be interesting to look at how long it took wedding planning services to gain popularity in the US or if the wedding planning industry is bigger in Denmark's neighbor countries, Sweden and Norway. This comparison could provide information about how likely it is for the demand of wedding planning services to grow, and how long it should take.

This thesis primarily used two of the four CCT domains, but it could have been interesting to apply the other two domains; *Mass-mediated Marketplace Ideologies and Consumer's Interpretive Strategies* and *The Socio-historic Patterning of Consumption*. Investigating the research question from all four domains would have resulted in a more thorough understanding of how consumer culture influence demand, the reasons behind this, and how marketing messages have and can influence consumer culture. This might have enabled us to develop more specific marketing suggestions. However, as demand was found unlikely to increase, this might not provide any useful results.

Part 6

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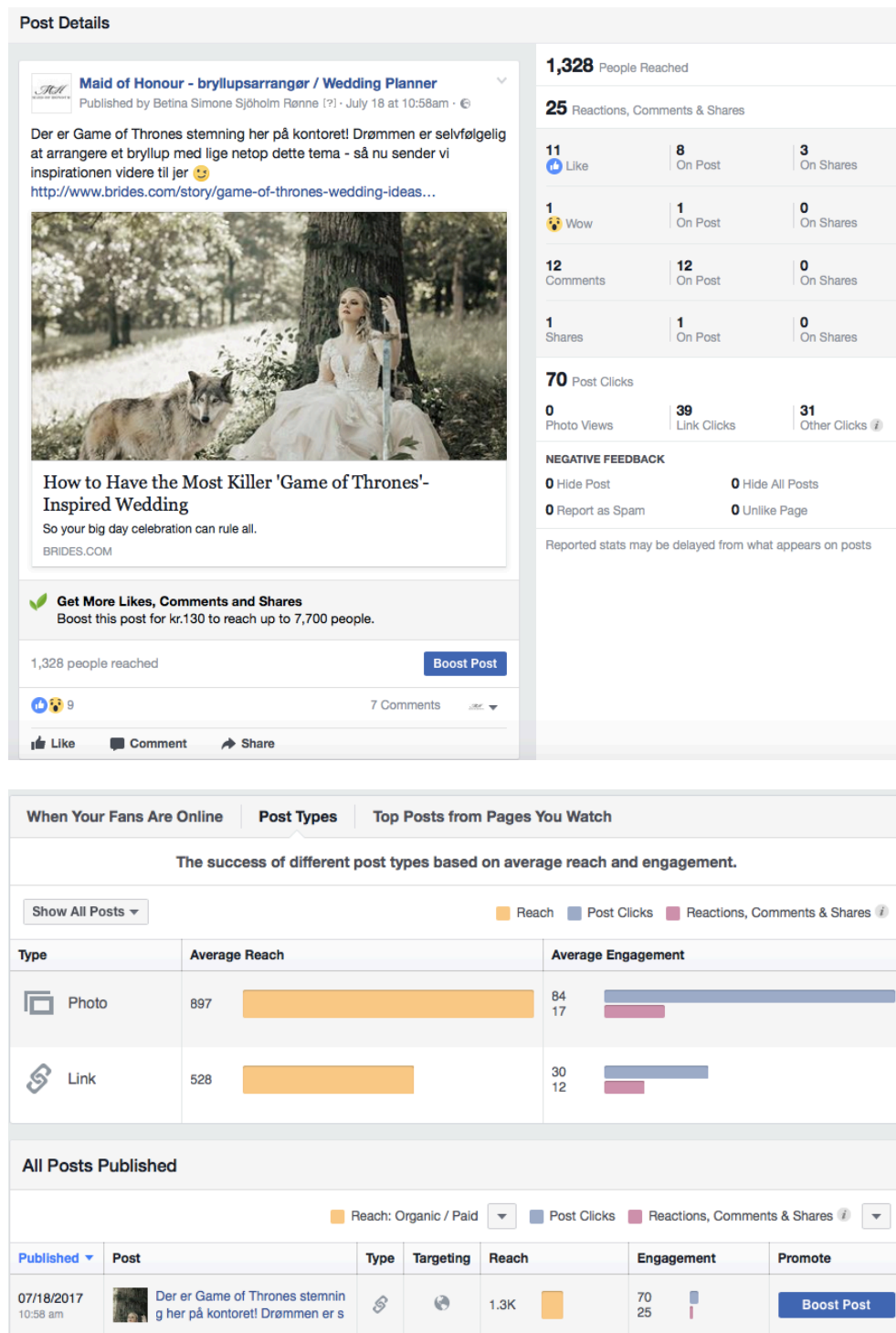
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13.0 Appendices

Appendix 1: Facebook Insights



Source: Maid of Honour's Facebook Insights Retrieved July 21, 2017.

Appendix 2: Interview recordings

Interview recordings are uploaded as separate audio files in Digital Exam and on USB stick with the printed version of the thesis.

Appendix 3: Interview Summaries - Consumers

Interview, Amalie, 2017

March 26, 2017.

The interview was conducted through Skype and lasted 24 minutes. Both Amalie and her fiancé, Kristopher participated in the interview. Amalie has worked with Luna Bo Christoffersen in the wedding planning company, Maid of Honour. She has also worked for the wedding planning company Brink Bryllup.

Demographics

Age: Amalie is 23 years old and Kristopher is 30 years old.

Place of residence: Amalie lives in Vanløse, Copenhagen and Kristopher lives in Oxford, England. (Kristopher was born in England, but was raised in Germany, where he lived for 11 years. He has been living in England for the last 19 years).

Primary occupation: Amalie is a student and Kristopher works as a financial analyst.

Their total yearly income is around 500.000 kr. before tax.

The wedding

Wedding date: June 24, 2017.

It is the first wedding for both of them.

Church wedding.

Location: Blokhus (Amalie's parents' summer house).

Number of guests: 85

Wedding budget: 150.000 kr.

Price per cover: 375 kr.

When asked to describe how they would like their wedding, Kristopher said he would like it to be jovial and happy. Amalie said she would like it to look formal and beautiful, but she would like the atmosphere to be relaxed. They want it to look traditional, but feel relaxed. They want people to be down to earth and have a good time. The theme of the wedding is very romantic

and the dress code is formal wear morning suit. The wedding will include a combination of English and Danish traditions, and there will be guests from all over Europe.

The couple wanted the wedding to be including and wanted their guests to be participants rather than spectators. Kristopher found it easier to mention the things that were not important to them rather than the things that were. For example, the wedding dance was not important to the couple, but it was important for their family, so they were not sure whether they will do it or not. They did not feel pressured to do it, but they considered doing it because they see their wedding as a family event, and they would like to integrate the things that mean something to their family, and not just the things that are important to themselves. Kristopher put it this way: *"We want as many people to be involved in the day as possible"*.

The next question was how the couple would like their guests to describe their wedding afterwards, and Kristopher instantly said *"memorable"* and Amalie wanted the guests to think *"God, that was a good party!"*. The biggest worry for both of them was that the guests would be bored during the wedding. They mentioned three things that were of high priority in order to give people a good time: Music, food, and alcohol.

The couple finds most inspiration for their wedding from weddings they have attended, but also from Pinterest and Youtube. They realize that most weddings have a lot in common (e.g. a white dress), but they are not worried that their wedding is going to be too similar to other weddings.

Amalie's mom helps a bit with the wedding planning, but since Amalie has worked as a wedding planner herself, she does not need much help, and she likes to be in control of the wedding and she knows what she wants. Kristopher also helps, but says it is not easy, because he lives in England and does not speak Danish fluently. They have not considered hiring a wedding planner, because she wants to do it herself, and because it is too expensive. However, they have considered hiring a coordinator to coordinate the wedding day and make all the ends come together.

When asked about their attitude towards wedding planners in general, Amalie said she thinks they are good to have, and they said that there is good ones and bad ones. Amalie said it is useful for people who do not know what they want and people who do not enjoy the planning process

and need someone to help them relax throughout the process. She also thinks that wedding planners in Denmark are a bit overpriced.

Even though Amalie has worked as a wedding planner herself, she said that other people's opinions actually can influence her decisions about the wedding. As an example, she initially did not want a wedding cake, but as some friends told her they found the cake extremely important, it made her reconsider whether she wanted a cake or not. She said she is only influenced by other people's opinions because she wants to please everybody, so she is open to include traditions that are important to the guests. On the contrary when it comes to the style of the wedding, she is set on what she wants.

The interviewees do not think that hiring a wedding planners says something about people. People who use wedding planners simply budget for it because they feel that they need it. Kristopher made a point that we do not know about people's private situations, and maybe they are just too busy to plan their wedding themselves. He said it is no different than hiring people to do other services such as decorating one's house.

Amalie said that hiring a wedding planner is a bit of a luxury, but she also said that some people just do not know what they want or just want to be able to relax at their wedding, so she understands who people do it, even the ones who do not have a huge wedding budget.

Amalie has worked for both Brink Bryllup and Maid of Honour and she told us that she could see a difference in the two customer segments. Brink Bryllup had more wealthy customers than Maid of Honour, whereas Maid of Honour's customers were mostly people who did not have enough time to plan their wedding. She said Brink Bryllup's service is more expensive than Maid of Honour's. However, Amalie said that it is not possible to identify a consumer segment of people who will hire a wedding planner.

We went back to the interviewees' general attitudes towards buying services. They both said that they preferred to do most things themselves because they could save money, but mostly because they both took pride in- and enjoy doing things themselves, e.g. Kristopher brews his own beer as a hobby. They both said that after the wedding, knowing that *"I did this myself"* would be amazing.

Approval from interviewee:

Fra: **Amalie Bach Kristensen** amaliebachkristensen@gmail.com
Emne: Re: Interview Summary
Dato: 2. apr. 2017 kl. 13.24
Til: Luna Bo Christoffersen luna.bo@hotmail.com

Hej Luna,

Det var så lidt. Vi godkender interviewet :-)

Med venlig hilsen,

Amalie og Kris

On 31 Mar 2017, at 13:18, Luna Bo Christoffersen <luna.bo@hotmail.com> wrote:

Kære Amalie og Kristopher

Mange tak fordi vi måtte interviewe jer.

Her er vores interview summary, som I kan læse igennem og lade os vide, om I godkender det.

Tak og god dag.

Venlig hilsen

Oulfat og Luna
<Interview Summary Amalie and Kristopher.pdf>

Interview, Birgitte, 2017

March 29, 2017

The interview took place over Facetime and lasted 15 minutes

Demographics

Age: Birgitte is 31 years old and her future husband is 30 years old.

Place of residence: They live in Ringsted.

Primary occupation: Birgitte works as a teacher and he is a physiotherapist.

Their total yearly income is around 300.000 kr. before tax.

The Wedding

Wedding date: June 17, 2017.

It is their first wedding.

Church wedding.

Location: In Faaborg (At restaurant *Det Hvide Pakhus*).

Number of guests: 55

Wedding budget: 75.000kr.

Price per cover: 740 kr.

They have tried to stay within the budget and Birgitte says that she does not feel like she had to give something up. When asked to describe how the wedding should be, she said that she wants it to be simple, but still elegant and romantic. Not too luxurious, their goal was though that everything should be taken care of for them and they could just show up on the day. So the food and decorations are done for them.

The guests should describe the wedding as romantic and a bit elegant, but mostly as cozy. They should have a great time and Birgitte hopes that when they think back at the wedding, they remember it as a great party and a cozy day. They have tried to achieve this by having a toastmaster who is responsible for some tasks and to have some breaks in between the speeches and so forth. They have a few things planned at certain times, but still they have chosen not to have a tight schedule.

When it comes to traditions, she cares about most of them and has included them all in the wedding, also she wants to have a tradition from Jutland where they stand in a circle at the end and sing a song together. She thinks it is cozy to do that, so she wants to try to include it in their wedding. They are very traditional she said.

She has been inspired by her sister's wedding and has been to wedding exhibitions and just talked to different people and done some research on the internet. She is also a member on the Facebook group "Bryllupssnak", where she gets ideas or asks people for input. However it is mainly their own ideas and what they have thought of and what suits them the best. The interviewer asked if it was something specific from her sister's wedding that inspired her but she said it was the whole wedding. For example how they were sitting etc. and actually they were sitting by round tables, however this was not possible to do at their location. Instead it is going to be the traditional table arrangement, but she does not mind that much even though she had a different picture in her head.

Their parents help them with a few things for example the rice bags, and her husband's family is going to decorate the church. Besides this, Birgitte and her future husband are doing all the planning themselves.

They have not considered using a wedding planner since it is too expensive and they do not want to spend money on it. If it was not for the money, Birgitte believes it is more appropriate to have a wedding planner if the couple had some big plans for the wedding with lots of small details that needed to be taken care of. But in their case, they are keeping it very simple so she feels it is unnecessary to have a wedding planner since they can handle it themselves. So she believes it would be a good idea only if they have had a lot of guests and many details. She does not feel like she is missing it, but who knows, maybe at the last minute she will.

Her attitude towards wedding planners is neutral but leaning against a positive and she thinks it is good for people who need the help so they do not get stressed out.

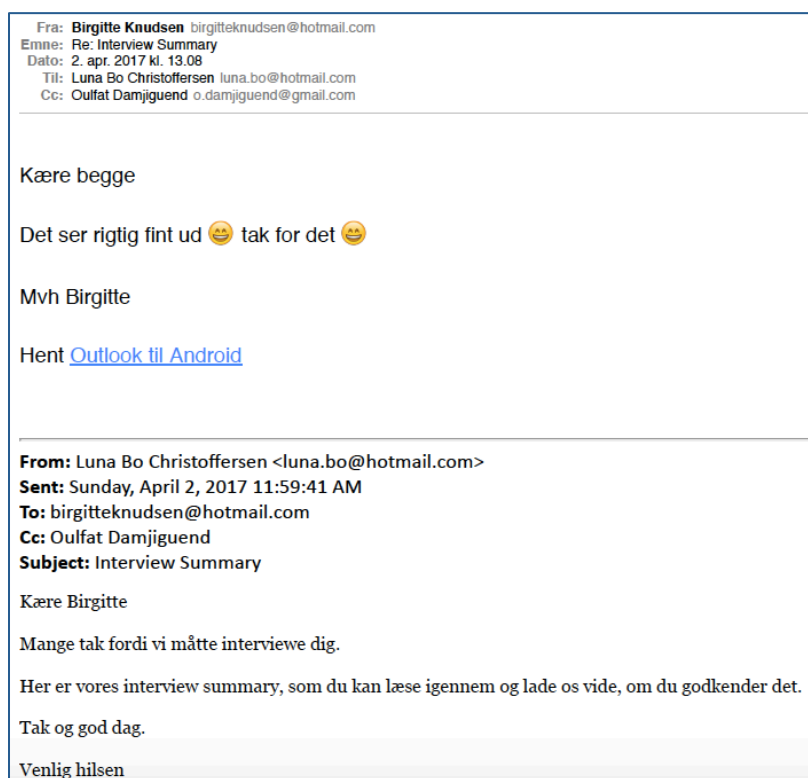
She mainly knows about wedding planners from American movies, where they are focused on all the small details such as where the ice sculpture should be placed and so forth. Therefore it is difficult for her to know about the service that they actually offer, especially since she does not know anyone that has used a wedding planner.

When asked about others' opinions, Birgitte said that if some of the closest people said something, she would have it in mind, but most importantly they want to get the things that matter for her and her future husband. But still they would listen to others and for example they have tried to take into account that it was easy for her future husband's grandparents to get to their wedding. But when asked whether the Facebook group could affect her opinion on something, she then said that it could not. She believes that many of the group members care about too many details, for example her and fiancé had laughed when someone posted a picture of a pillow for the rings. They think it is too weird and they would never have thought about a small detail like that.

She has asked questions in the group, but she only takes it into consideration if she thinks it is useful advice. They are not trying to be creative, so they have ordered the invitations on the internet, and the decorations are taken care of by the restaurant.

If others use a wedding planner, Birgitte thinks it shows that they want a perfect wedding and maybe that they are very busy and therefore do not have the time to go into details. She does not think it is a bad thing, but it also shows that they want to spend money on it. When asked if she thinks it is only rich people who use wedding planners, she said that she thinks it might also be people who cannot really afford it but still wants to try it, but mainly she thinks it would be rich people. However she is not sure since she does not know anyone who have used a wedding planner.

Approval from interviewee:



Interview, Christina, 2017

April 28, 2017

The interview took place over Facetime and lasted 29 minutes

Demographics

Age: Christina and her future husband (Martin) are both 27 years old.

Place of residence: They live in Gentofte (They are both from North Jutland but have lived in Gentofte for 2 and 3 years respectively).

Primary occupation: Christina is off work sick and Martin drives freight trains.

Their total yearly income is around 800.000 kr. before tax.

The wedding

Wedding date: September 16, 2017.

It is their first wedding.

Church wedding.

Location: In North Jutland (Dronninglund Kirke, because she was baptized and confirmed there).

The party will be held at Dronninglund Slot (Castle)

Number of guests: 35

Wedding budget: 80.000kr.

Price per cover: 1190 kr./person.

Since they live far from the location, they have chosen to pay others to do everything for them and the only thing they have to do is to put place cards on the tables. Dronninglund Slot is responsible for most things e.g. setting tables, decorations, food, and so on. It is important to Christina and Martin that the guests do not have to do anything besides eating, drinking, and having fun. Christina has been to another wedding 2 years ago where the guests had to help with different things and she thinks that they missed out on many things at the party then. Therefore her and Martin have done all the planning themselves and she feels that the wedding becomes more personal when she takes time to get exactly the things she wants.

She has gotten inspiration from wedding exhibitions, the Internet, Facebook groups, and Instagram. In the beginning she was a bit influenced by others' opinions but now she feels like it is their wedding. As an example she wanted something red with her wedding dress and the girl who was with her to buy it did not think it was a good idea, but Christina did not care since she is the one who will be wearing it.

When asked to describe the wedding, Christina said she hopes that the guests leave with a feeling that they lacked nothing, so it is important that they have enough food and drinks. She

wants it to be elegant and classy, but at the same time casual. The guests should not feel like they are forced to come in long dresses just because it will be held in a castle. So Christina and Martin have made sure that the guests know that. Furthermore they have not spent too much money on decorations, as it should not be too lavish.

They are getting married on their 7th year anniversary, so they want to show people that they are even more in love with each other now than they were 7 years ago and that they want to spend the rest of their lives together. They often say that they do not want the 7-year itch, so instead they will get married.

Christina thinks that all traditions are important, but mainly the wedding waltz. They have been practicing for a while, so it is important for her that they get to dance more than half a minute.

If the guests were asked about the wedding, she hopes that they say it was the best party ever and Christina said that *"there should be so much love that people almost puke"*. So she wants her guests so leave the party with a full stomach and no doubt that this love will last forever.

They have not considered hiring a wedding planner since Christina is a control freak, she said. She would have a hard time trusting that the person is doing a good job. She even talked with the personnel in the castle about coming the day before the wedding to make sure that everything looks good. She also thinks that Martin would feel like he was not part of the planning if they had a wedding planner and it is important for Christina that he is included in the planning process and that he also has some tasks. Furthermore she says that since they are from North Jutland, she said they have the mind-set that they should not pay for something if they can do it themselves. However, she said, a wedding planner might be able to make the wedding even better since they might have better ideas than herself. But they think that the money they do not spend on the wedding can be used on the honeymoon, so therefore she will rather save the money that a wedding planner would cost. If she was working fulltime she might have chosen a wedding planner if she did not have time to plan the wedding herself.

Christina said that having a wedding planner would be helpful since they can keep track of deadlines and everything, and planning a wedding can be stressful at times. Furthermore you have the opportunity to talk to someone and get help with ideas and how to make the wedding

more personal. Though she said their Jutland heritage means that they see it as money down the drain.

She does not know anyone who has used a professional wedding planner, but she would think it was cool. Furthermore she would think that it must have been expensive to have a wedding planner. But if people can afford it, she believes it is a good idea, as a wedding planner will help you make the wedding more personal. It is also kind of “Hollywood-like” to have a wedding planner, as seen in movies where the wedding planner takes care of everything. Christina says that she probably will be a bit concerned during the party about for example if Camilla (her sister and toastmaster at the wedding) has control of the speeches and whether Martin is drinking enough water or if he is drinking too much beer and so on. She thinks all these worries could have been avoided if they had someone to take care of everything, so the Christina does not have to think about it.

The interviewer asked Christina if she thinks of the phrase “Hollywood-like” in a positive or negative way. Christina then says that it depends where you are from. Her parents would think it is a waste of money to hire a wedding planner whereas her friends would think it is cool and people who know Christina, and how stressed she can get, would say it is a good idea. Especially the last month before the wedding she will not be fun to be around, as she tends to double check if not triple check every detail.

She has heard a bit about wedding planners at the wedding exhibitions, but she has not heard that much about it in Denmark. If she considered using one, she would Google it and spend a lot of time reading about them and call them etc. The only thing she knows is that they help you plan the wedding, but she does not know exactly which services they provide.

If she researched wedding planning services online, she would focus on the price and service offerings. However even if they had the money to hire one, she would not be able to plan her wedding with someone if she thought the person was annoying. Also, if they did not listen enough or she felt that they did not want to give her exactly what she wants, she would get annoyed.

The interviewer asked how they are making the wedding personal and why it is important to them and Christina said that they like being different and it should be clear and obvious to the guests that it Christina and Martin's wedding. They have chosen to have a lot of red details in the wedding and she has also bought red shoes instead of white as she thinks white is too common. They believe that their wedding will be more memorable if it is different than others.

They have also made goodie bags for the guests with perfume and they will present it by saying they do not want to smell their sweat and plasters for their feet and so on. It should be fun and it is important to make the guests laugh. Martin is good at making people laugh and especially Christina's family will make a lot of embarrassing comments and speeches, and this should all be part of a wedding. Earlier this year they went to a wedding where the bride had chosen not to have any songs or speeches and Christina thinks it was so boring and it was just like any other party. So Christina and Martin are looking forward to their wedding, and to all the fun and embarrassing moments that they are sure will occur.

Approval from interviewee:

Fra: **Christina Kristiansen** sti2204@hotmail.com

Emne: Re: Interview Summary

Dato: 7. maj 2017 kl. 12.54

Til: Luna Bo Christoffersen luna.bo@hotmail.com

Hej Luna og Oulfatj

Det ser helt rigtigt ud :)

Held og lykke med opgave.

Hilsen Christina

From: Luna Bo Christoffersen <luna.bo@hotmail.com>

Sent: tirsdag, maj 2, 2017 2:07 PM

Subject: Interview Summary

To: <sti2204@hotmail.com>

Cc: Oulfat Damjiguend <o.damjiguend@gmail.com>

Kære Christina,

Mange tak fordi vi måtte interviewe dig.

Her er vores interview summary, som du kan læse igennem og lade os vide, om du godkender det.

Tak og god dag.

Venlig hilsen

Oulfat og Luna

Interview, Clara, 2017

April 21, 2017

The interview took place over Facetime and lasted 18 minutes.

Demographics

Age: Clara is 25 years old and her future husband (Jakob) is 21 years old.

Place of residence: They live in Copenhagen NV.

Primary occupation: They are both students.

Their total yearly income is around 300.000 kr. before tax.

The Wedding

Wedding date: They aim to have the wedding at some point within year 2018.

It is their first wedding.

Church wedding.

Location: Maybe Fyn or Copenhagen – Most likely Copenhagen.

They are considering having the party in a garden.

Number of guests: 50

Wedding budget: max. 50.000kr.

Price per cover: Unknown.

Since they are trying to keep it as cheap as possible, they have considered making the food themselves or maybe get a friend to cook for them. Furthermore they will also make their own decorations, invitations, etc.

When asked how she wants the wedding to be, Clara said that it should be a great party, and casual, so not too formal.

The wedding should signal that they are two people who love each other. It should be thought through but still be casual. Most importantly, she hopes that people can see the love between her and Jakob.

If the guests were asked after the wedding about what they think, Clara hopes they will say that it was a beautiful day and that love was in the air and that they got good food and had a great party and maybe also had a hangover the next day. In general, that they just had a blast.

When it comes to traditions, it is important to her that it is in a church even though it is not important to Jakob. Furthermore, the speeches and songs are also a part of it, but the rest is not that important to her.

Clara has been inspired by blogs and other places on the Internet. However she would never buy the wedding magazines, as she thinks that would be way too much. She has also asked her parents about their wedding to see whether there is something that she could repeat. She has been to a wedding a long time ago, but they are the first ones to get married in their circle of friends so she does not really have other weddings to compare to.

Of course everyone wants their wedding to be unique, Clara said, but she does not mind getting inspiration from others and then try to do something similar her own way.

Right now they are doing the wedding planning themselves, and get some help from their closest family. However, she mentions that it would be great to have a wedding planner, but unfortunately they cannot afford it. But if she had had the money, she would definitely have hired a wedding planner. The advantage of having a wedding planner, Clara said, is that they have an overview and since Clara is busy studying, it would be great if her and Jakob could come up with ideas and someone else could make it happen for them. Especially right before the wedding to make sure that everything is taken care of.

Clara does not know anyone who have used a wedding planer before, so she only knows about wedding planners from American movies. Her impression from this is that they are very dedicated and really want everything to succeed. So she really thinks that hiring a wedding planner is money well spend, especially if a couple wants to avoid fighting because they are stressed out about planning the wedding. However she does not believe it is that common in Denmark to use a wedding planner, but still she has a good impression of the service they offer. If people use a wedding planner, Clara believes that it signals that they are busy people that need someone to help them out.

She has not watched the TV show “Bryllupper for millioner”, but she hopes and believes that it is also possible to have a great wedding with a lower budget than the ones in the TV show. Maybe the dress will be cheaper etc., but this should not be the focus of the wedding, so money is not

the most important thing to Clara. However, if they had had lots of money, Clara said, she would have loved to have a destination wedding.

She does not let other people's opinion influence her. It is their wedding so they make all the decisions.

Approval from interviewee:



Interview, Ditte, 2017

April 13, 2017

The interview took place over Facetime and lasted 13 minutes. Both Ditte and her fiancé Tommy participated in the interview.

Demographics:

Age: Ditte is 26 years old and Tommy is 28 years old.

Place of residence: They live in Skjern.

Primary occupation: Ditte works as an auditor and Tommy works for Arla.

Their total yearly income is around 500.000 kr. before tax.

The wedding:

Wedding date: June 3, 2017

It is the first wedding for both of them.

Church wedding

Location: an old manor house in Skjern

Number of guests: 65

Wedding budget: 150.000 kr.

Price per cover: 360 kr. (drinks not included).

When asked how they would like their wedding to be, Tommy said “great, cosy, and fun” and Ditte added “relaxed and not too fancy” and also said “cosy and down-to-earth, and they would like the party to go on till the sun rises”. They would like their guests to see Ditte and Tommy’s love for each other and notice that they have spend a lot of effort on the planning and decorations for the wedding. Ditte also said that she hoped the guests could see that everything is organized and under control.

We asked what they think their wedding says about them, and they said they aimed at making a consistent theme throughout the wedding invitations, place cards, decorations, and so on. They are making all these things themselves. Ditte and Tommy find inspiration for their wedding on Facebook, Bryllupsklar.dk, Pinterest, and wedding fairs. They also get inspiration from friends’ weddings.

Ditte cares the most about wedding traditions and rituals and they include some of them in the wedding e.g. they sleep separately the night before the wedding, she wears a white dress, her dad walks her down the aisle, and they are going to kiss when the guests click their glasses at the dinner.

Ditte and Tommy handle most of the wedding planning themselves with a little help from their mothers. They have not considered hiring a wedding planner, and Ditte said she likes to be creative and handle the planning process herself. She also said that they had not expected the

wedding to be as comprehensive as it turned out. She said that if they had known how comprehensive it would be, or if they needed ideas for the wedding, that might have made them consider using a wedding planner. However she likes to be in control of everything around the wedding, so she said that if they had used a wedding planner, she might have had a hard time leaving the responsibility to that person.

When asked about their general attitude towards wedding planners, they do not have an immediate answer, but they remembered having watched “Bryllupper for millioner”, which gave them the impression that wedding planners need to keep cool while coordinating a lot of things at the same time and be able to differentiate the different weddings from each other.

Regarding the service that wedding planners offer, Ditte said she imagines that it is useful for a lot of people who are not very creative or do not have a clear idea of how they would like their wedding to be – or, she said, someone who knows what they want, but not how to realize it.

We asked if they feel influenced by other people’s opinions, and they said yes – especially other people’s evaluation of other weddings they have attended. This can help them avoid the things that did not work well at other weddings and incorporate the things that were a success. Tommy added that they might get ideas from other weddings and then make their own twist to it so it becomes more “them”. They are not worried that their wedding will be too similar to their friends’ weddings because they have a unique location for their wedding and it is a long time since they went to a wedding. Ditte and Tommy would not like it if their wedding is too easily comparable to other weddings in their network, because then people will judge their wedding compared to other weddings. So they would like their wedding to be different from other people’s weddings so it is harder to compare and so it does not end up in a competition of whose wedding was the best. The most important thing to Ditte and Tommy is that it is their day and that they think it was the best wedding.

We asked what it says about people if they hire a wedding planner, and Ditte answered that it is completely up to them, and there can be many reasons to hire a wedding planner e.g. one does not have the energy or capability to plan their wedding, or it is simply easier for them to hire someone to do it. She thinks it is completely fine if people choose to hire a wedding planner.

Approval from interviewee:

Fra: Oulfat Damjiguend o.damjiguend@gmail.com
Emne: Fwd: Interview Summary
Dato: 14. aug. 2017 kl. 10.35
Til: Luna Bo Christoffersen luna.bo@hotmail.com

----- Videresendte meddelelser -----
Fra: Ditte Madsen <dittegl@hotmail.com>
Dato: 14. august 2017 kl. 10.19
Emne: Re: Interview Summary
Til: Oulfat Damjiguend <o.damjiguend@gmail.com>

Hej 😊

Det er godkendt

Mvh Ditte

Den 14. aug. 2017 kl. 09.58 skrev Oulfat Damjiguend <o.damjiguend@gmail.com>:

Kære Ditte

Mange tak fordi vi måtte interviewe jer.

Her er vores interview summary, som du kan læse igennem og lade os vide, om I godkender det.

Tak og god dag.

Venlig hilsen

Luna og Oulfat

<Interview Summary - Ditte and Tommy.pdf>

Interview, Karina, 2017

April 13, 2017

The interview took place over Facetime and lasted 21 minutes.

Demographics

Age: Karina is 25 years old and her future husband is 30 years old.

Place of residence: They live in Herning.

Primary occupation: Karina is studying and her future husband is a nursery teacher.

Their total yearly income is between 100.000-200.000 kr. before tax.

The Wedding

Wedding date: August 11, 2018

It is their first wedding.

Church wedding.

Location: In Henne kirke. The party will be in Restaurant Stausø.

Number of guests: To the reception it is possible to have up to 200 guests since she has a big family, but for the party they will be around 75 people.

Wedding budget: 85.000kr.

Price per cover: 450kr.

When asked to describe how the wedding should be, Karina said that it should be casual and since the reception will be held in her parents' yard, there will be lots of games, punch and wedding cake. The entertainment will be casual and they do not want long speeches, as they prefer that that guests come up with challenges and games etc.

The guests should describe the wedding as fun and gorgeous but not luxury. They are not interested in using a lot of money on decorations and so forth. The most important thing is that the couple is having a good time and the guests too. When it comes to traditions and rituals that are important to her, she said that there are a few such as the wedding waltz, the bridal bouquet that the grooms buys and afterwards it will be placed on a grave and some other traditions, but not the one with the veil.

She has found inspiration on Pinterest and in Facebook groups, where she mainly gets inspiration from others' posts. However she did post something once about her wedding dress and she felt that people were very helpful and they gave her good advice. For the moment no one helps them plan the wedding, but later on she knows that her two sisters would love to help out and her parents too is involved since the wedding will be held in their yard.

They discussed using a wedding planner if they were interested in having a huge wedding, but since they wanted a casual wedding with as few elements as possible they decided not to have one. Moreover she thinks it is cozy to plan things and they have plenty of time before the wedding and lots of people who would love to help them. Furthermore she explains that even though she does not see herself as a control freak, she might be one in this case.

When asked if her family helps her with the planning she said that she is taking them with her when trying wedding dresses, her sisters are doing research about bands and her parents are redoing their entire garden. The interviewer then asks what she would appreciate by having a wedding planner if she had had a huge wedding and Karina thinks that it would be that wedding planners have an overview. Especially since there are a lot of details, and if she had to work and at the same time write her bachelor project it would be hard to keep the overview if the wedding was going to be extravagant.

When asked about her attitude towards wedding planners, she said that she thinks it is fantastic that they can help the ones who need it or the ones who just do not feel like doing it themselves. However she does not have any impression of the service they offer, since she has not really investigated it. Though her impression right now is that they do a tremendous job for you, since Karina and her future husband just held a birthday party for 80 people and this was quite exhausting.

She has heard about wedding planners in movies, and when the interviewer asked whether she has been influenced by the movies she said that she probably had. Though this was not in a positive direction, because in the movies they were very pushy, however she takes it with a grain of salt.

Then she was asked whether she feels influenced by other people's opinions, she said it means a bit but not that much. As an example they considered not having dinner music, however some were against this and now Karina feels like they are right. She also went to a wedding exhibition with her two sisters who are not afraid of saying what they think and Karina had to get used to saying her own opinion, since she is usually a people pleaser.

Karina does not know anyone who has used a wedding planner. Though if someone chooses to hire one then she thinks it just means that they want the planning to be in the best hands. The interviewer asked if she had seen the TV-show about Danish wedding planners and what impression she got. Karina said that she got the impression that they wanted the absolute best for the couples, and that they were extremely busy.

Approval from interviewee:

Fra: Oulfat Damjiguend <o.damjiguend@gmail.com>
Dato: 13. april 2017 kl. 15.19
Til: karinapoulsen22@hotmail.com
Cc: Luna Bo Christoffersen <luna.bo@hotmail.com>

Kære Karina

Mange tak fordi vi måtte interviewe dig.

Her er vores interview summary, som du kan læse igennem og lade os vide, om du godkender det.

Tak og god dag.

Venlig hilsen

Luna og Oulfat

Fra: Karina Jull Poulsen <karinapoulsen22@hotmail.com>
Dato: 18. april 2017 kl. 12.14
Til: Oulfat Damjiguend <o.damjiguend@gmail.com>

Den er godkendt! God fornøjelse med opgaven! :)

Med venlig hilsen
Karina Jull

Interview, Lea, 2017

March 24, 2017

The interview took place over Facetime and lasted 13 minutes.

Demographics:

Age: Lea is 22 years old and her future husband is 27 years old.

Place of residence: They live together in Frederiksberg, Copenhagen.

Primary occupation: They are both students.

Their total yearly income is around 100.000 - 150.000 kr. before tax.

The Wedding:

Wedding date: July 28, 2018

It is the first wedding for both of them.

Church wedding (Lindevang Kirke).

Location: Banquet facility in Rødovre.

Number of guests: 35-40

Wedding budget: 100.000 kr.

Price per cover: 1049 kr.

When asked to describe her wedding, Lea answered that it should be romantic and different. In order to achieve this, they have chosen to opt out speeches and they are doing something funny with the wedding waltz. The goal is for them to create an unforgettable day for the guests, and therefore it should not be like other weddings.

When it comes to rituals and traditions, she said that she is forced to have the bridal bouquet even though she hates flowers. Her mom and mother-in-law also want to do something in their apartment, however this is not that important for the bride and groom.

Their inspiration has been from the Facebook group “Bryllupssnakken”, however it is mainly Lea who gets the inspiration and she then tells her future husband.

The reason that they want a church wedding is because Lea believes that there is something bigger than us even though she is not that religious. Her future husband does not care.

When asked about who helps them plan the wedding, she said that they get help from her mom, her friend and mother-in-law. Pernille, a friend of Lea, helps her with the invitations, since Lea wants to do it herself. Her mom helped find the banquet hall, but the couple do not get any financial help.

Lea has considered using a wedding planner as she thinks it is nice not to have to worry about all the details, but her future husband disagreed. He was worried that if they hired a wedding planner it would get too big, and he wants to have it low-key with the closest friends and family only. The reason that Lea would want a wedding planner is because it is a luxury thing and she describes herself as a luxury girl. Her attitude towards wedding planners is positive and she thinks it very cool to have one, and she has heard that they do a great job and are good at meeting your needs. She has a friend who used a wedding planner and she recommended her

the same one. When asked about the service that wedding planners offer, she said that they have an overview, which can be hard sometimes for oneself. Furthermore she said that her family is not that rich, and by using a wedding planner they would see her as richer than them, which she likes. Even though her wedding is not that big, she still wants it to be pretty and that her family thinks that she really did make it count. So for her she likes to signal wealth and surplus in some way, even though this might be a bit mean, she says.

When planning the wedding, the only opinions that matter are hers and her future husband's. "It is OUR day", she said. They only tell the details to the three persons that are helping them a bit and the rest only know the date.

When asked what she thinks about people who use a wedding planner, she answered "Respect to them". If her future husband had said yes, then she would definitely have had one too. The interviewer asked her if she had seen the TV shows about Danish wedding planners e.g. "Bryllupper for millioner". Though Lea said she had not, she said that was a good idea and maybe she could then persuade her future husband to hire a wedding planner.

Furthermore she said that they are going to a wedding exhibition in January. They are quite far with their wedding planning and mainly they are missing the "fun parts". Lea wants something different, but she is still not sure what it should be. For example she is not that interested in an orchestra, she wants something more festive, however hiring a DJ is also very common, she said. So she is still trying to come up with something different.

Approval from interviewee:



Interview, Lisbeth, 2017

April 26, 2017

The interview took place over Facetime and lasted 21 minutes.

Demographics

Age: Lisbeth is 31 years old and her future husband (Kevin) is 29 years old.

Place of residence: They live in Helsingør.

Primary occupation: Lisbeth is store manager in Vero Moda and Kevin is an independent carpenter.

Since Kevin has his own company, she does not know how much their total yearly income is, however she gets around 360.000 kr. before tax.

The Wedding

Wedding date: In 2018

It is their first wedding.

Church wedding.

Location: Nivå Kirke. The party will be held in an old barn (Rosendal in Ålsgårde) or they might skip the party and instead go on a long honeymoon to Thailand.

Number of guests: 70

Wedding budget: No budget (however she does not want to exceed 80.000kr).

Price per cover: Unknown

When asked about the budget, Lisbeth said that they do not have a budget, since she feels like if there is something that they really want to have, they should have it regardless of the cost. However she makes lots of research on the Internet to get an idea of the different prices and when she needs inspiration she also uses Google. Furthermore, she has also been a member of the Facebook wedding groups, however since their wedding was postponed until 2018, she decided to leave the groups, but she will join them again later on, when it is closer to their wedding date.

She does not want their wedding to be formal with big round tables where people have to sit and eat a fancy 7-course meal and wait for the food to be served. Instead she wants a garden party theme with sunshine and green grass, and it has to be rustic and romantic. It should have a loose atmosphere and they want to have a buffet and tapas.

If the guests were asked about the wedding she hopes that they would say that it was cozy. She does not have any expectations for the wedding so she will not be disappointed if people do not dance or something else. Thus she only wants them to have fun and feel comfortable.

When it comes to traditions, she says that they are not that religious, but she still wants something “old, new, blue and borrowed”. They might also dance their first dance before midnight, however if it will be past midnight that is fine too.

Lisbeth is the one planning the wedding and she has realized how much work it takes. They will get food catering from a different place than Rosendal since Lisbeth wants to make sure that they get what they want. It is very time consuming she says, but she still wants to do all the planning herself. The interviewer asked her whether she enjoys doing all the planning or if she does it to make sure that she gets what she wants, and Lisbeth said that it is both. She does not think that men have the same dreams about some specific flowers etc., however she has always dreamed about planning her own wedding since she was little.

She has considered using a wedding planner when she was at a wedding exhibition, however she thought that it of course costs some money, so she is still considering having a little bit of help,

though she would also love to plan it herself. She would also love to be a wedding planner herself, so in the end it will probably just be her planning the wedding.

The reason why she has considered having a wedding planner is because she spends so much time doing research whereas a wedding planner probably already has some connections that might be helpful and they already know how much the different things cost. Furthermore it would be nice to have someone to keep track of all the different things that they have to bring to the location such as cakes, DJ, etc.

Her attitude towards wedding planners is positive and she wishes that it was more common in Denmark, however she is aware of the fact that it can be expensive. However, she thinks that it is better to pay someone else to do it for you and then use less energy on it yourself. In her case though, she has always dreamed about planning her own wedding, but if she ever gets married again, she said, she would not plan it herself.

She does not think that hiring a wedding planner says something about a couple. She thinks that it is more common in other countries but “normal” people like herself, she says, can still use wedding planners. It just shows that they trust other people to do it, but it does not have to mean that they have a lot of money.

She has heard about wedding planners in movies and also seen the Danish TV-shows with wedding planner Christel Winther. She also knows couples who have used a wedding planner and she could see how the bride was relaxed at her own wedding. She believes that this is very important, since it is a very short day so one should enjoy every single moment of it.

Finally she was asked if other people’s opinion had an influence on her wedding planning and she said that Facebook groups for example are very helpful when it comes to getting an idea of the prices and asking people for advice and recommendations.

Approval from interviewee:

Fra: Lisbeth Juelsgård Hansen juelsgaardlisbeth@gmail.com
Emne: Re: Interview Summary
Dato: 3. maj 2017 kl. 16.38
Til: Luna Bo Christoffersen luna.bo@hotmail.com

Godkendt!

Sendt fra min iPhone

Den 2. maj 2017 kl. 14.09 skrev Luna Bo Christoffersen <luna.bo@hotmail.com>:

Kære Lisbeth

Mange tak fordi vi måtte interviewe dig.

Her er vores interview summary, som du kan læse igennem og lade os vide, om du godkender det.

Tak og god dag.

Venlig hilsen

Oulfat og Luna
<Interview Summary Lisbeth.pdf>

Interview, Marie, 2017

March 29, 2017

The interview took place at CBS Kilen and lasted 50 minutes.

Demographics

Age: Marie is 35 years old and her future husband, Rune, is 35 years old.

Place of residence: They live in Frederiksberg.

Primary occupation: Marie works as head clerk at Skat and Rune is a project manager within IT.

Their total yearly income is around 1 mio. kr. before tax.

The Wedding

Wedding date: December 16, 2017.

It is their first wedding.

Church wedding.

Location: In Vejle (Mønholm Kirke, because she was baptized there). The party will be in Horsens as this was the best fit for their needs (Scandic Bygholm Hotel).

Number of guests: 100

Wedding budget: 150.000kr.

Price per cover: 1000 kr.

It was important for them that it was a place where people could stay overnight, since many of their friends come from different places around the world.

When asked to describe the wedding with a few words, Marie got very emotional and said that it is something that means a lot to her. So they want to have a good day with the people that they care about. She does not understand people who have a dress code, as in her opinion people can show up in Bermuda shorts and Santa Claus costume if that is what they want. She really does not care about stuff like that, as long as they show up to the party. They try to make the wedding cozy and she is quite fond of the Christmas holiday thus this will be a big part of the wedding theme. To mix the wedding with Christmas is the ideal thing for her, so she does not care much about anything else.

The food also needs to taste good but does not have to be gourmet food or something fancy. They have been inspired by a wedding then attended in Slovakia, where the schedule was tight in the beginning so they finished eating at 8pm already and then the dancing started and so on. Therefore it is important for them that it is going to be a party and not a long dinner, so with lots of dancing and mingling. As she thinks it gets boring when it is too stiff.

They are also doing something creative with the table plan, and when they walk into the church, a family member will be playing classic guitar. She has known for years which songs should be played. So they have a few things planned but still in a way that is not very formal.

She also enjoys doing most of the things herself, so it is not something that you see everywhere. She is sewing her own wedding belt, veil, bag and makes her own invitations and menu cards. However the place cards which is going to be Christmas baubles was too hard to write on so she had to order them instead. Yet she is making small boxes for the Christmas baubles so the guests can take them home. Also she is making Christmas hearts as she wants people to write a greeting to them and hang it on the Christmas tree so it works as a guestbook. Even the wedding cake will not be traditional as it is going to be a Croquebouché, which is shaped like a Christmas tree.

The interviewer then asked Marie why she does all these thing herself, and she said that she thinks it is fun and she enjoys it. She also makes her own accessories and if she could, she would also have sewed her own wedding dress, but that is said to bring bad luck. Besides the fun of doing all this, she also believes that it shows her commitment to the wedding. However she has decided that it should not be a stress factor, so she makes the things that she wants to do, and if she does not make it in time, then it is okay. So it should not stress her, especially since time is limited.

If the guests were asked about the wedding, Marie hopes they would say that it was fun and that it was a good party. She has been to many weddings where she thinks it is too protracted and boring for the quests. Especially that people sit around round tables and you can only talk to the ones besides you since the others are too far away. For her it is not about the decorations even though it looks good with the round tables.

Marie and Rune are making a Facebook group where the guests can write if they have any song requests, so the DJ can play them at the wedding and then automatically create a party mood when the guests recognizes their favorite songs. The entertainment is going to be in between the dance breaks. So they are expecting it to be a great party and would get disappointed if it does not turn out that way.

When asked about which traditions are important to them, she said that her future husband cares about that the wedding is held in the same church that she was baptized. She does not dare to sew her own dress and she also wants keep the traditions with something old, new, blue and borrowed, since she is a bit superstitious. However there are also some traditions that she does not want to include such as cutting the veil.

She has been to many weddings so she has learned what she liked and what she disliked from these. Furthermore she is in a Facebook group for brides but this is mainly just for fun and to compare ideas. She thought that she was going to buy a used wedding dress, but it turned out that she bought a new one from a store even though this was not the plan. However it was not expensive at all, she said.

Marie does all the planning herself and her future husband had a few things to say. However since he is paying for the wedding, she feels like she has to go through the ideas with him.

The have not considered using a wedding planner because Marie wants to do it herself, and she has considered becoming a wedding planner herself. But she would never pay someone to do it for her, as she wants to be in control of the entire process. She is afraid that she does not get what she wants if others do it for her, and that it would get too expensive. She said that she enjoys planning it herself, especially since she has had this dream for many years, and dreamed about the day she would get married. However she does not need a princess wedding, but there are some things that she has put lots of thoughts in.

Her attitude towards wedding planners is that it would be too expensive in Denmark, so it would probably be half of the wedding budget. So it would mainly be for rich people that might not have the time to do it themselves and who do not enjoy doing it. However she does not believe that wedding planning as a business will get as big as in the US ever. She does not know anyone who would consider hiring a wedding planner, because it is just too expensive and unnecessary to have.

The idea she has about a wedding planner is that they are like the ones from American weddings but she does not think that it is that hard to plan a wedding in Denmark. She has never been to a real extravagant, princess wedding, as it is in the US. This type of wedding is for jet setters and does not belong here in Denmark. She does not think that Danes have this kind of needs, since “Janteloven” is part of the Danish mind-set. People do not show off like that in Denmark, unless you are Royal and it is expected of you. Danish weddings are usually in a yard or regular inn and are very low key.

So she believes it is not a Danish thing to hire a wedding planner and even though she would love to be a wedding planner herself, she does not think the demand is high enough. However she is not sure if she is right, as she is aware of the fact that we are getting more and more Americanized.

Marie has tried to Google wedding planners in Denmark, and she could only find 2-3, and she found some wedding planner courses for around 2-3000kr. However she thought it was not

enough to start up this type of business. They only had a few reviews, so she does not think that the market is big enough. No one she knows would even consider having a wedding planner.

The interviewer then asked Marie if she has seen the Danish TV show “Bryllupper for millioner” and explains that it is about Danish wedding planners and some of them arrange weddings abroad. Marie then says that it makes sense that it is abroad. So you should have been a first mover if you wanted to have this type of business in Denmark or have the right connections, she said.

If others use a wedding planner, she does not believe it is a negative thing since not everyone thinks it is fun, and if they have a busy life then it makes sense to get some help. Lots of people pay others to do different things for them so why not do the same with wedding planning. However, from her point of view, it is an unnecessary expense, as other things she has chosen to cut away from the budget. For example the driving, the expensive bridal bouquet, photographer for only a few hours instead of the whole day etc. She is not going to buy shoes for only that night, but instead some black dancing shoes that she can use afterwards too. Other things have also been cut out, but only things that do not mean that much too her. Marie said she could have easily planned a wedding for 500.000 kr. if she had the money. However the only things that matter are that it is a good party and that there is a Christmas tree. Furthermore she wants the planning to be fun and cozy and not stressful which is the reason why she started planning early on.

Approval from interviewee:



Interview, Nina, 2017

April 14, 2017

The interview took place over Facetime and lasted 31 minutes. Both Nina and her fiancé Mikkel participated in the interview.

Demographics

Age: Nina is 27 years old and Mikkel is 30 years old.

Place of residence: They live in Frederiksberg.

Primary occupation: Nina is a student and Mikkel works as a Service Management consultant.

Their total yearly income is around 475.000kr. before tax.

The Wedding

Wedding date: May 13, 2017.

It is their first wedding.

Civil Marriage (Københavns Rådhus).

Location: The party will be held at KEA (Københavns Erhvervsakademi).

Number of guests: around 80

Wedding budget: 70.000kr.

Price per cover: Unknown.

When asked about the price per cover, Nina said that they will make most of the food themselves, however they have hired someone to bring and cook the meat, since it is important to them that the meat is delicious. The rest will be homemade because they wanted to save some money.

When describing their wedding, they want it to be cozy, fun and a special day. It also has to be casual and different than other events such as birthday parties. But most importantly it has to be fun for the guests and for the couple. However they are not interested in having a lavish and extravagant wedding. In order to achieve a casual atmosphere they have written in their invitation that the dress code is festive, without any specific requirements. Furthermore they have tried to make it as cheap as possible in order to be able to invite as many people as possible.

The interviewer then asked if they would have preferred to have the wedding in a castle if they had endless money, and they both said no. It is important to them that it is held in Copenhagen, but if they had a higher budget, they would not do as much themselves, e.g. they would buy all the food. However, Nina would still make the wedding cake herself, because she thinks it is fun and she enjoys doing it. They also said that they would have spent more money on a band, if they had endless amounts of money.

The wedding should show their love for each other. They have not thought that much about what they would like to express, but they just see it as a “party of love”. Mikkel then said that people who have their wedding in a castle and post cake-tasting-photos on Instagram at La glace and such things try to signal something special, however in their case these are things that they do NOT want to signal. We asked them to elaborate on what they did not want their wedding to signal, and they said *“princess, castle, and “look at how many times we have been to cake tastings*

at La Glace"". They do not have this type of needs, and most importantly, it should be a casual wedding where everyone can participate. Therefore, Nina and Mikkel hope their guests will say that they had a great time and a big hangover the next day.

When it comes to traditions they do some of them even though they are not that important to them, for example the order of the speeches and the most important traditions are that Mikkel does not see Nina's wedding dress, and they do not sleep together the night before.

Pinterest has inspired Nina and in general she did some research on the internet.

Nina has not been to any weddings before and Mikkel has been to a few, but many years ago. The interviewer asked then if Mikkel has thought about those weddings when planning his own, and he said that he definitely had since he believes that you always compare to the things that you have experienced before. Some of the things he thought were good ideas and other things he did not want at their own wedding. However it is not important for them that their wedding is different from others, besides the things that he did not like from other weddings.

They are one of the first ones to get married in their group of friends, so it makes it easier for them not to have other weddings to compare to. However they said that in a couple of years when most of their friends will get married, then they are probably going to want their weddings to be a bit different so there is not too much repetition at each wedding.

When asked about who helps them with the wedding, Nina said that mainly she is the one planning it. Though Mikkel and their parents help with different tasks. Their friends will also be helping out on the days before the wedding.

They have not considered using a wedding planner, since Nina thinks it fun to plan everything. However she understands people who chose to use a wedding planner, as there are so many things that need to be in place before the wedding. Mikkel have not even considered it, especially since it would not fit into their budget.

They do not know anyone who has used a wedding planner, however they know a friend who went to a wedding in France, which was a 3 days' stay and the marrying couple had used a wedding planner. Nina believes that people who uses a wedding planner probably have lots of

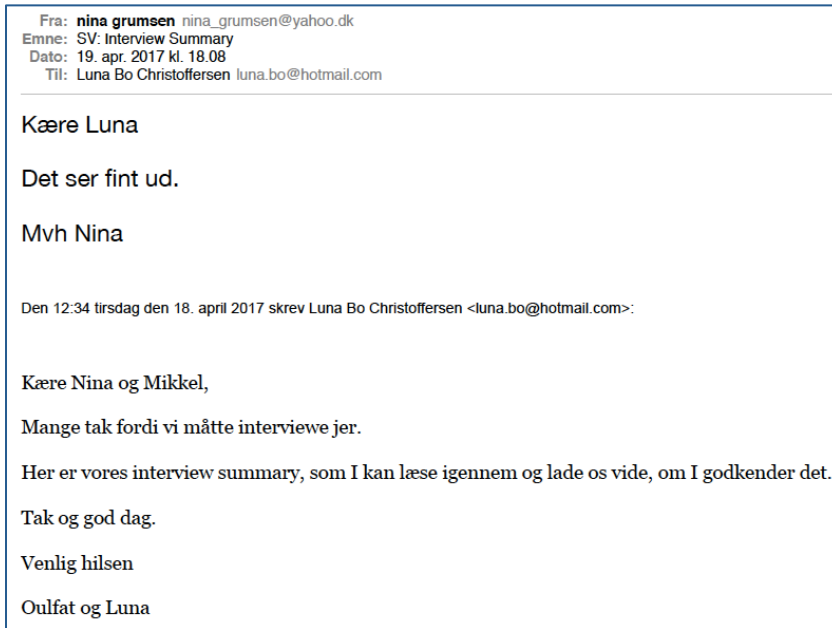
money or at least choses to spend a lot of money on their wedding and that they are very busy. When the interviewer asked what she would think if some of her friends used a wedding planner, she said she understands the ones who need the help especially if they do not enjoy planning things and feel it is too hard.

When asked what could make them use a wedding planner, Mikkel said that would be if they planned a huge wedding and worked too much. However Nina would still enjoy planning it herself, though if they had children she might have needed some help. So right now they do not have any regrets, but who knows, maybe it would be quite stressful the days leading up to the wedding, they said.

Nina has watched “Bryllupper for millioner” and Mikkel also thinks of wedding planners as those who plan weddings for millions of kroner. Thus the TV show has influenced them to think that it is only people with a very large budget, but it has not influenced their opinion of the service that wedding planners offer. Nina also believes these people from the TV show are a bit crazy, since one time the bride was unhappy with the band even tough it was an awesome band, so she switched to a DJ. So they think that it says more about the people hiring a wedding planner than it says about wedding planners.

Finally, they were asked how important other’s opinions are to them, and Nina said not that important, and that she has been aware of who might interfere too much. So she has been good at not letting them influence her wedding planning too much.

Approval from interviewee:



Interview, Søsser, 2017

March 24, 2017

The interview took place over Facetime and lasted 25 minutes.

Demographics

Age: Søsser is 52 years old and her future husband is 53 years old.

Place of residence: Kolding.

Primary occupation: Søsser is on early retirement and her future husband is a blacksmith.

Their total yearly income is around 400.000 kr. before tax.

The Wedding

Wedding date: June 23, 2017.

It is Søsser's second wedding and her future husband's first one.

Civil marriage.

Location: In Horsens in some of their friends' garden.

Number of guests: 75

Wedding budget: 15.000 kr.

Price per cover: around 100 kr.

The reason why they are having their wedding in Horsens is because their wedding is not traditional, since Søsser is an alternative therapist and the wedding is going to be characterized by this. The wedding will be different since the guests will be forming a circle before the bride walks in and the bride and her two children will be standing in the middle of this circle. She then walks in with 4 drums, one for north, one for south, one for west and one for east. The persons with the drums are other alternative therapists that she knows and this ceremony symbolizes the 4 corners of the world. After the ceremony each guest will get a little bottle with some non-alcoholic drink and one by one they have to make a toast for the couple.

The budget is low because Søsser said that she knows a lot of people who will help her sew the dress and do her hair and makeup etc. Their wedding rings will also be the same way so all the big expenses are not necessary. She also said that she is also a florist and therefore knows another florist who will make her bridal bouquet, however she cannot influence how it is going to be. When asked about the food she said it will be homemade and they buy the groceries when it is cheap and so forth in order to make it as cheap as possible.

When asked to describe how she wants the wedding to be, she said that it should be relaxed and have a good atmosphere and the guests should feel at ease. They try to achieve this by including friends and family who know how they want it and help them with the planning and so forth. Her brother will cook the food and she knows that he wants her to keep calm and not be concerned about anything on the wedding day.

The next question was what they want the wedding to signal and she said that they have had some turbulent and difficult years, especially since Klaus (her future husband) has not lived with someone before. Now they are ready to take the next step in their life together and towards fellowship and comfort of solidarity. She mentions that her daughter who is 17 years old have chosen to take Klaus' middle name so all three of them have the same name. Her father just had to accept it, however she is not that close with him. They are doing this to show that they are in this together and to show some strength and most importantly for love.

If the guests had to describe the wedding afterwards Søsser hopes that they would say that it was cozy and casual. She remembers from her first wedding that she did not have time to talk to all the guests, so this time she has chosen to prioritize time to talk to each and every guest.

When it comes to rituals and traditions, she says that they have talked about the basic ones for example that Klaus does not see the wedding dress and that he orders the bridal bouquet etc. These are things that Klaus wants to have and that she thinks is not that important, however when thinking about it, she realized that it also means something to her that he does not see the wedding dress before the ceremony.

Besides this, they were inspired by another wedding to do the circle because the circle means something to them especially as she is an alternative therapist. The wedding they attended that was quite similar to their own, and the rest they have just talked about. She has also gotten ideas from Pinterest. She has made her own invitations and place cards. She has not been to any wedding exhibitions.

The next question was about who helps them plan the wedding and Søsser said that no one does, they do it themselves. They just delegate the different tasks that need to be done, and then she does not have to worry about it anymore and trusts that others are taking care of it. If they end up without an appetizer or something else on the day, then they just have to deal with it, she said. Her brother, mom, and sisters are the ones taking care of the food, so this will not cost anything.

Søsser would have considered a wedding planner if they had had a bigger budget. If they could have afforded it, she would have done it, not so much for herself, but mainly for her family so they did not have to do so much for them.

Søsser thinks that using a wedding planner is a good way to relieve some of the practical stuff that has to get done. Thus is it a very good idea and interesting to see what they can come up with as she has seen on the TV shows. So she would definitely recommend it, especially to her sister's wedding that almost fell through, so she could have really needed a wedding planner.

She also believes that the service that wedding planners offer is good and that you get it the way that you want. It is like with photographers, you should not try to save on this, as she believes the service will be bad if it is too cheap. The interviewer then asks Søsser if she thinks there are some wedding planners that are too cheap, but Søsser does not know as she has only experienced it with photographers. Though if she was going to use a wedding planner, she would not choose the cheapest one. Another important aspect for her is that the wedding planner should have a good human connection. She has heard about wedding planners on the TV shows and in Facebook groups.

She would only leave some of the tasks to a wedding planner. For example, since she is a florist, she would not leave that to anyone else than herself. However she would not mind if the wedding planner did other practical stuff and e.g. found a food caterer. If their budget was high enough then of course this would be the way to do it, she said. Especially for people who do not have the opportunity that she has with her family and friends helping out, however she does not see herself as a burden for them. She also thinks that her closest friends and family members know her and Klaus' needs and how they want things to be. Especially her brother, she believes, is a good listener so she once told him that he would be a great wedding planner or event planner in general, since this is not his first time helping at a wedding. If she did not have him, she would have had to figure out something else, and then she would not mind if she had to pay for it. The interviewer then asked if Søsser would mostly appreciate someone who is good at listening to their wishes and one who has an overview of everything. Søsser said yes, but especially so she does not have to worry about colors and all the other small details.

The next question then was if others' opinions have an influence on their wedding planning. She laughs and says that they keep the details very secret, only very few people know about the circle etc. Some family members are quite annoyed that they do not know anything. Thus they are not affected and since Klaus have not been married before, there are certain things that he knows exactly how they should be. Some things he does not care about, but there are also many things where he is part of the planning.

The interviewer asked where they got the idea about the circle, and Søsser explains that it symbolizes the 4 corners of the world and circles play a big part in her job, but besides this they have been to a wedding where they did the same thing. Klaus got the idea from there and Søsser

has always worked with circles so it was in harmony. The couple who did the same thing is also coming to Søsser and Klaus' wedding.

Then she was asked whether she knows anyone who has used a wedding planner, but she said that unfortunately she does not. If people she knows used a wedding planner, she would think it is very cool, because people have busy lives. Luckily for her she stays at home even though she has some other things she has to take care of. But she thinks it is a good idea if people asked her, unless they have others to help them out with the wedding.

Finally she was asked if she was surprised how much work it takes to plan a wedding, even though she has tried it before. She says that she is used to host parties as she has held 2 confirmations for 80 guests each time, and they are having an 18th birthday party in august so she is not surprised how much work it takes, but instead she is surprised about the difference, since she has gotten some mental issues that makes it difficult for her to deal with too many things at once. She can feel the difference from the last confirmation were she could do everything herself, but she knows that she has become better at delegating the different tasks.

Approval from interviewee:

Fra: **Søsser Petersen** soesser64@hotmail.com
Emne: RE: Interview Summary
Dato: 31. mar. 2017 kl. 16.10
Til: Luna Bo Christoffersen luna.bo@hotmail.com

Hej
Det er godkendt . Super godt
God weekend

Sendt fra min Samsung-enhed

----- Oprindelig meddelelse -----
Fra: Luna Bo Christoffersen <luna.bo@hotmail.com>
Dato: 31/03/2017 15:13 (GMT+01:00)
Til: soesser64@hotmail.com
Cc: Oulfat Damjiguend <O.damjiguend@gmail.com>
Emne: Interview Summary

Kære Søsser

Mange tak fordi vi måtte interviewe dig.

Her er vores interview summary, som du kan læse igennem og lade os vide, om du godkender det.

Tak og god dag.

Venlig hilsen

Oulfat og Luna

Appendix 4: Interview Summaries – CCT Professors

Interview, Askegaard, 2017

Interview with Søren Askegaard, Professor in Consumer Culture Theory.

February 15, 2017.

The interview was conducted through Skype and lasted 40 minutes. We had sent Søren the following questions on e-mail 5 days before the interview, so he had an idea of the subject and direction for the interview. The questions were:

1. Kan man sige, at der findes en dansk og en amerikansk consumer culture?
2. Hvad karakteriserer den danske consumer culture?
3. Hvad karakteriserer den amerikanske consumer culture?
4. Mener du, at der er nogle forskelle mellem dansk og amerikansk consumer culture, som kan forklare hvorfor det er mere normalt og mere udbredt at bruge professionelle bryllupsarrangører i USA end i Danmark?
5. Eller er der forskelle i de to nationaliteters kultur, der kunne forklare hvorfor brugen af bryllupsarrangører er mere udbredt i USA end i Danmark?
6. Hvad mener du ellers kunne være grunden er til at der er lav efterspørgsel på bryllupsarrangør-services i Danmark?
7. Tror du at det vil blive mere udbredt at hyre bryllupsarrangører i Danmark, eller er det simpelthen en service, som ikke passer ind i den danske consumer culture?
8. Hvad tror du det ville kræve for at det blev mere udbredt at hyre en bryllupsarrangør i Danmark?

Søren started out on his own giving an introduction to the emergence of Consumer Culture Theory and went on to addressing the first question. He stated that there are some obvious differences between American and Danish culture, but he argued that making a clear distinction between American and Danish consumer culture is too simplified a way to look at it. Some things are universal while some habits or cultural artefacts are local. He argued that all modern cultures today are “Glocal” meaning that they are both global and local at the same time. The term “Glocal” describes how consumer culture cross national borders and influence each other

across countries. Søren suggested that when trying to define a culture, it is more useful to look at cultures of “webs of meaning” (cf. Clifford Geertz: The interpretation of Cultures) rather than individual cultural elements such as a national dish or a national holiday. These elements are often used to define what it means to be Danish or American, but actually they do not say a lot about the meaning or reasons for a certain behavior. Therefore it is more useful to investigate systems when attempting to understand consumer culture.

Even though Søren did not agree that Danish and American consumer culture can be clearly defined as two heterogeneous concepts, he explained and exemplified some characteristics that separated the two consumer groups from each other. He said that one of the most obvious differences between Danish and American culture might be individuals’ relationship to authorities. In Denmark and the Nordics, people have a high level of trust in authorities and it is okay for the authorities to be highly involved in the private lives of the citizens. In America on the other hand, people do not have the same trust that the authorities have their best interests at heart and work to protect its citizens. Also Søren sees a difference between Danes that value collectivity and Americans who have more individualistic values. This topic is also addressed in Søren and Kira’s article “Weddings as Waste”, where they write that “(...) we didn’t expect to find evidence of the lavishness and waste described by Otnes and Pleck (2003) , given the protestant background and societally embedded egalitarianism that values equality over competition.” Søren elaborates on this point saying that the want for things or events to be as big, beautiful, lavish, and luxurious as possible does not give “social credit” in Denmark the same way it does in America. Actually, he says, that it is frowned upon in many Danish and Nordic contexts. He says that this is one of the general conditions that are important in order to understand the difference between Danish and American consumer culture. When it comes to weddings, this general condition is evident in Danish consumers’ wish for a happy, cozy, and personal wedding rather than an opportunity to show off by hosting a big, lavish wedding.

Then we shifted focus to talk about the concept of paying for services, where Søren made the point that it is much more common and accepted in the US to hire people to provide services that people do not want to do themselves such as house cleaning and lawn mowing. This has something to do with the structure of labor, wage-levels and tax systems. In the US the wages for service professionals are lower and services are therefore accessible to larger consumer segments. He argues that the service economy is growing in Denmark, but not nearly at the same level as the US. As life becomes a project of self-realization, it becomes more acceptable to get

the best out of it and pay others to do the boring everyday tasks, in order to get more time to do the things you enjoy. Søren explains that in Denmark, people have distanced themselves from a hierarchical society where the lower- and middle class citizens work hard for people of the upper class. But in the neo-liberal market economy that has evolved since the 1980's, it is no longer seen as very problematic to pay others to provide services for you. Søren says it has become a bit more acceptable to pay others to do things for you and it does not necessarily divide people into social classes where some are better than others. In the US, on the contrary, it is completely unproblematic to pay others to do the "dirty work".

When asked if this is the way it will also go in Denmark where it becomes more and more acceptable, Søren says that it is not a linear process. Many factors affect the development of consumer culture, so it would be wrong to assume that we will see all the same trends and developments in Denmark as we see in the US. However, in the short term, Søren predicts that Danes will use services more and will no longer see it as a way of taking advantage of other people.

We then zoomed in on the wedding industry and Søren addressed the question of whether it will become more common to use wedding planners in Denmark. He says that even though Danes might become more used to buy services, there are other things that can stand in the way of Danish couples wanting to hire a wedding planner. Søren argues that the focus or purpose of the wedding can be very different and that in Denmark it is more important to have a personal than a beautiful lavish wedding. This however might be changing as the new generation starts to get married. This generation might focus more on having a big, picture-perfect wedding that will look good on social media, than on having a very personal wedding. But Søren still emphasizes the Danes' wish for personal events and uses the personal songs that some people write for- and sing at special occasions, as an example for this. He argues that the need for personalized and "hyggelige" events is a major obstacle for the growth of wedding planning businesses in Denmark. At the same time, he acknowledges that there could be a consumer segment in Denmark that are more interested in having a big "Hollywood-style" wedding and therefore would be more likely to hire a wedding planner. He explains that these consumers can be found among both high-income and low-income consumers, but he thinks that the middle-class consumers would rather plan the wedding themselves.

We end the interview with a talk about weddings from three CCT domains:

1. Consumer identity projects
2. Marketplace cultures
3. The socio-historic patterning of consumption

The socio-historic patterning that influences the use of wedding planners is the institutional frameworks for consumer culture in the US, which includes freedom, marketplaces, and service purchases in many contexts. In Denmark, these frameworks are based on equality, less individualization, and focus on family and collectivity.

The domain of consumer identity projects is also relevant. Søren argues that if a wedding is seen as a status project, it is natural to hire a wedding planner to ensure that everything is perfect and maximizes status. If, on the other hand, the wedding is an identity project, it is difficult to outsource the planning of it, as it might not reflect the exact identity of the wedding couple.

Marketplace cultures: Is there a market for this type of services?: Much less in Denmark than in the US. Wedding planning services are more visible in the US marketplace, so consumers are aware of the service and are reminded from TV and other channels that the service exists. Søren says that it is not just a question of visibility and marketing, because the service in Denmark is thought of as impersonal and “Americanized” in a negative sense. In addition, he says that Danes want to do it themselves in order to make it personal, and there is a negative attitude towards standardized solutions when it comes to weddings.

Approval from interviewee:

Fra: Søren Askegaard aske@sam.sdu.dk
Emne: SV: Interview Summary
Dato: 1. mar. 2017 kl. 11.18
Til: Luna Bo Christoffersen luna.bo@hotmail.com

SA

Kære Luna

Fint. 😊

Med venlig hilsen

Søren Askegaard
Professor, Institut for Marketing & Management

Stueleder, Market & Management Anthropology

Tlf. [+45 6550 3255](tel:+4565503255)
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Fra: Luna Bo Christoffersen [<mailto:luna.bo@hotmail.com>]
Sendt: 1. marts 2017 10:53
Til: Søren Askegaard
Cc: Oulfat Damjiguend
Emne: Re: Interview Summary

Kære Søren

Mange tak. Jeg har rettet, og håber du vil godkende vedhæftede dokument.

Mange hilsner
Luna

> Den 28/02/2017 kl. 15.07 skrev Søren Askegaard <aske@sam.sdu.dk>:
>
> Kære Luna
>
> Fin opsummering
>
> Blot et par kommentarer (se vedlagte)
>
> Held og lykke med arbejdet
>
> Med venlig hilsen
>
> Søren Askegaard
> Professor, Institut for Marketing & Management
> Stueleder, Market & Management Anthropology
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>
>
>
> —Oprindelig meddelelse—
> Fra: Luna Bo Christoffersen [<mailto:luna.bo@hotmail.com>]
> Sendt: 21. februar 2017 09:36
> Til: Søren Askegaard
> Cc: Oulfat Damjiguend
> Emne: Interview Summary
>
> Kære Søren,
>
> Mange tak fordi vi måtte interviewe dig.
>
> Her er vores interview summary, som du kan læse igennem og lade os vide, om du godkender det.
>
> Tak og god dag.
>
> Venlig hilsen
>
> Oulfat og Luna
>
> <Interview Summary - Søren Askegaard.docx>

Interview, Larsen, 2017

Interview with Hanne Pico Larsen, Professor in Consumer Culture Theory. Hanne was born in Denmark but has studied and worked in the US for 15 years.

February 27, 2017

The interview took place at her office at Solbjerg (CBS) and lasted 27 minutes. We sent Hanne the questions beforehand and they were:

1. Kan man sige, at der findes en dansk og en amerikansk consumer culture?

2. Hvad karakteriserer den danske consumer culture?
3. Hvad karakteriserer den amerikanske consumer culture?
4. Hvordan kommer man, indenfor CCT, frem til hvad der karakteriserer disse to consumer cultures?
5. Mener du, at der er nogle forskelle mellem dansk og amerikansk consumer culture, som kan forklare hvorfor det er mere normalt og mere udbredt at bruge professionelle bryllupsarrangører i USA end i Danmark?
6. Eller er der forskelle i de to nationaliteters kultur, der kunne forklare hvorfor brugen af bryllupsarrangører er mere udbredt i USA end i Danmark?
7. Hvad mener du ellers kunne være grunden er til at der er lav efterspørgsel på bryllupsarrangør-services i Danmark?
8. Tror du at det vil blive mere udbredt at hyre bryllupsarrangører i Danmark, eller er det simpelthen en service, som ikke passer ind i den danske consumer culture?
9. Hvad tror du det ville kræve for at det blev mere udbredt at hyre en bryllupsarrangør i Danmark?
10. Kan du anbefale os noget litteratur eller nogle CCT modeller, vi kan bruge i arbejdet med emnet?

To the first question, Hanne states that she does not believe that there is such thing as a Danish and an American consumer culture, since she claims that Danes are as good consumers as Americans are. Therefore it is hard to say that they are different from each other. Even though we are more homogenous in Denmark, whereas in the US there is a wider spectrum, she still believes that Danes and Americans are quite similar when it comes to consumer culture.

When asked about the characteristics of the Danish consumer culture, she said that Danes believe that Americans are much heavier consumers, but this is not true as Danes consumes a lot too.

The interviewer then asks whether Danes and Americans consume for different reasons. Hanne claims that the difference is in how we get rid of our things after use, for example whether we throw it out or give it away. In Denmark she thinks that people think more about how to give it away, whereas in the US people just throw it away maybe, however she is not sure. After her

stay in the US she still does not think that there is much difference between the US and Denmark, so she does not think that Danes are that much more conscious than Americans.

She also mentioned that she has not been to that many weddings in Denmark, and that in the US there are some sharp rules and rituals. The engagement ring should cost three times monthly pay, but she does not believe that we have the same rules in Denmark.

Even though Danes do not talk about the price on engagement rings and so forth the same way as in the US, Hanne states that the status still lies in the ring.

In the US the woman gets the “rock”, which should as aforementioned cost 3 months’ pay. Hanne’s husband asked her if she also wanted the “rock” but she said, “No, I’d rather have a couch”. We do not have that status in Denmark, and some people also get married without a ring.

The difference between Danish and American weddings is also in the amount of guests, as in the US the parents for example invite 200 guests to the reception. In Denmark however the couple does not make it bigger that they can afford, Hanne says. We have extremely small weddings in Denmark compared to other places.

Hanne describes how the weddings in the US are also shorter as it is usually the ceremony and then a 2-hour reception and then everyone go home. In Denmark however, we have to go sailing or do some other fun activity, then have a 3-course dinner and then there are speeches, dancing, late night snacks, and suddenly a wedding ends up lasting an entire day. In that way there are some differences.

The interviewer asks about how CCT is used to figure out the different characteristics in consumer culture, and since Hanne earlier mentioned that they had investigated the Scandinavian versus American culture. Hanne said that Arnould & Thompson’s model with the 4 domains is the way to look at it. They tried to investigate whether one was more skeptical or if one wanted something more than something else, so it was part of the identity projects, which is also relevant when it comes to weddings as it is about what you want to show. To take an example she mentioned the juice bar Joe and the Juice. What is Danish about that? she said. It is as successful on 5th Avenue as it is here. So it is hard to say that there are any differences.

She does not believe that Danes use wedding planners and the reason behind that is the status behind doing it all yourself. Not only weddings, but also career, the children, the garden, bake

buns and so forth. There is a taboo in Denmark if someone else does something for you, as it is kind of embarrassing and less original.

The socio-economic aspect also plays a role as it costs much more to get someone else to do it for you. It is more expensive in Denmark compared to the US. Furthermore, in the US they fight over how big the “rock” is whereas in Denmark we fight over how original something is. All Danes could go sailing on the Lakes in Copenhagen, but that is something everyone has done before. So it is all about creating an experience and doing something cool.

Hanne mentions that Emma Gad once said that you should give your guests something in return for attending your party. At Hanne’s wedding they had a Christmas tree and everyone brought some Christmas decorations, so when they left they also had to give them some Christmas decorations that they could take with them.

A wedding is like a theater, but in the US they do not have the same idea. They also often use the standard package whereas Danes try to compete by being more interesting or funnier etc. Not so much on dresses and rings but more on the experience. It is part of the Danish culture to outshine each other on other things than the material goods, since we are so afraid of it. Still Danes are way up there like the others in consuming material goods. Yet Danes would prefer to only have 10 guests and get married on a beach in Thailand instead of having a “normal” wedding with many guests. It has to be different than the others’ weddings. Hanne thinks that it is more legitimate in the US for girls to dream about the big wedding and the big ring etc. and a real princess dream, which we in Denmark believe is a bit ridiculous. Danes would think it is cooler to stand barefoot in a field or something like that. The resources however are the same, she thinks, in both cases.

For question 6, which is about what other factors could explain why wedding planners are more widely used in the US, Hanne says it is because it costs less and it is more legitimate “over there”. Also the Danish culture is about doing everything ourselves, so you cannot just show up to your wedding. Planning is very important not only for weddings but in our lives in general.

When Hanne got married in the US she decided to have the party in Denmark and when she was looking for a wedding dress, everyone told her that it was impossible to get a dress only 1 month

before her wedding. In the US she says you could just go to J.Crew and get a decent wedding dress. In Denmark it is all about the individual. No one even goes to Lilly anymore. So wedding planners should not offer a standard package, she thinks.

When asked if she thinks wedding planning services would become more common in Denmark she says she believes Danes might slowly let go, and let other people do more things for them. Though the market for it is not that big in Denmark, also when looking at how many get married. She also believes that if you have a low budget you do not want to spend money on a wedding planner. Furthermore there is a value in doing it all by oneself, but in the US it is okay to have a nanny, a chauffeur etc.

The interviewer asks if there are any signs of people letting go more and putting responsibility onto others. Hanne then says that it is difficult to say, however she cannot see why not, as we, as an example increasingly let others do our birthday parties. So it could be interesting to investigate why it is different with weddings. Her guess is that it is because it is an identity project and that it has to be so much cooler than the other weddings in the circle of friends.

Finally Hanne recommended an article and was helpful with other references.

Approval from interviewee:

Fra: Hanne Pico Larsen <hpl.marktg@cbs.dk>
Dato: 1. marts 2017 kl. 13.59.57 CET
Til: Oulfat Damjiguend <o.damjiguend@gmail.com>
Cc: Luna Bo Christoffersen <luna.bo@hotmail.com>
Emne: Vedr.: CCT inspiration til speciale

Det ser vist fint ud, og held og lykke

Hanne
From: Oulfat Damjiguend <o.damjiguend@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 1, 2017 11:12:09 AM
To: Hanne Pico Larsen
Cc: Luna Bo Christoffersen
Subject: Re: CCT inspiration til speciale

Hej Hanne

Tak for interviewet, vi sender dig hermed et interview summary.
Du må meget gerne læse det igennem og lade os vide om du godkender det.

God dag
Mange hilsner
Luna og Oulfat

Interview, Strandby, 2017

Interview with Kira Strandby, PhD student at University of Southern Denmark and former Research Assistant at the Department of Marketing & Management

February 21, 2017.

The Interview was conducted through Skype and lasted 16 minutes. Kira has done research within consumer culture theory and is co-author of the article Weddings as Waste (2014). Kira has also written her master thesis on the subject of weddings as consumption.

We sent Kira the questions before the interview, and they were the following:

1. Kan man sige, at der findes en dansk og en amerikansk consumer culture?
2. Hvad karakteriserer den danske consumer culture?
3. Hvad karakteriserer den amerikanske consumer culture?
4. Mener du, at der er nogle forskelle mellem dansk og amerikansk consumer culture, som kan forklare hvorfor det er mere normalt og mere udbredt at bruge professionelle bryllupsarrangører i USA end i Danmark?
6. Eller er der forskelle i de to nationaliteters kultur, der kunne forklare hvorfor brugen af bryllupsarrangører er mere udbredt i USA end i Danmark?
7. Hvad mener du ellers kunne være grunden er til at der er lav efterspørgsel på bryllupsarrangør-services i Danmark?
8. Tror du at det vil blive mere udbredt at hyre bryllupsarrangører i Danmark, eller er det simpelthen en service, som ikke passer ind i den danske consumer culture?
9. Hvad tror du det ville kræve for at det blev mere udbredt at hyre en bryllupsarrangør i Danmark?
10. Kan du anbefale os noget litteratur eller nogle CCT modeller, vi kan bruge i arbejdet med emnet?

To the first question, Kira clearly states that it is possible to talk about an American and a Danish consumer culture, and that there are consumer cultures for all cultures – not just national cultures but also sub-cultures. When describing the Danish consumer culture, Kira says Danish consumers are very discrete and do not show it if we have a lot of money. She also characterizes

Danish consumers as very conforming because they do not want to stand out from the crowd and people within a culture look very similar because they want to fit in.

Kira is more hesitant to characterize the American consumer culture because of the size of the country and population. So American consumer culture cannot be described as a single culture. However Kira says that Danes have a general idea of what American culture is like, and that is that “more-is-more”, things have to be flashy and a little bit “over-the-top”, which she says is in contrast to Danish culture.

To the third question, Kira said that when trying to explain differences in Danish and American wedding habits, it is necessary to look at wedding cultures within the two consumer cultures, as the wedding is a culture in itself. When throwing a wedding, one buys into a new culture and new ideals that are different from one’s “regular” consumer culture. Wedding cultures are very different across national cultures. The wedding ritual is the same in Denmark and the US but the way weddings are communicated in the two cultures is very different. We asked Kira what factors influence wedding culture, and she said an important factor is economy because wedding celebrations are very expensive. So money can have a big influence on how many guests are invited. She also says that American weddings are generally bigger than Danish weddings because a wedding means more in America than it does in Denmark. Americans might feel that their wedding has a great signal value and people will talk about it for many years, whereas Danes tend to see their wedding as “just a party” and therefore are not willing to spend as much money on it. Kira says that this can be explained with the way weddings have been marketed and says that in America love has been marketed as something you can buy, e.g.g diamonds have come to signal love. She says in America there is an idea that “the more money you spend, the more it shows that you love each other”. This, Kira explains is completely opposite to the idea of love in Denmark, where the size of your engagement ring is not something people talk about or care much about. This also has to do with the different attitudes towards money in America and Denmark.

We move on to question 6 about what could explain why few couples hire wedding planners in Denmark. Kira says she thinks it is because it is expensive to hire a wedding planner in Denmark. But she also says, that in her study of weddings, she found that one of the things people cared most about was that they made a lot of things themselves. She said people got credit for doing things themselves rather than buying things. One of the worst things people could do was to buy

a package wedding because it was impersonal. Kira actually says that she thinks in Denmark, hiring a wedding planner is a sign of failure because it shows that you were not able to do it yourself. However, she says that some people do hire wedding planners because they work too much to have time to plan their wedding themselves. She says the people who hire a wedding planner are most likely in the same consumer segment as people who have au pairs. People who work a lot and spend their energy on other things than their private life.

Kira says it will take a radical change of attitude in Denmark before the demand for wedding planner services will increase. It needs to become more okay to spend money on a wedding planner and to not do everything yourself, but Kira says such a change in attitude is far away from today. We asked Kira what she thinks could cause such a change in attitude and who would be able to promote it. Kira answers that wedding planners might be able to affect attitudes by emphasizing how personal their service is, but she still thinks that consumers would not be proud of hiring a wedding planner and would not want to tell people that they got help from a wedding planner. This is, Kira says, unless you belong to a social class where it is normal to use a wedding planner. Kira says that if one of her friends told her that she had a wedding planner, Kira would think that the wedding was less personal and feel like it was not really her friend's wedding, but just the wedding planners style and ideas.

Kira mentions that the only place she has seen Danish wedding planners in on Danish TV shows, and these shows gave her the impression that the bride herself just arrives to the wedding like all the other guests and has had not impact on the creation of the wedding. Kira thinks that this makes the wedding less romantic and refers to Eva Illouz's book about romance: "Consuming the Romantic Utopia" (1997) which presents four criteria for something to be romantic. One is that for something to be romantic, you need to make sacrifices. Another one is that it needs to be separated from other thing, which means that including a wedding planner into your wedding will make it less romantic than if it is just the marrying couple.

Finally we asked for more inspiration within the CCT paradigm and Kira was helpful with references and she suggested using netnography in our data collection, which she has done on the website bryllupsklar.dk.

Approval from interviewee:

Fra: **Kira Strandby** kira@sam.sdu.dk

Emne: Sv: Interview Summary

Dato: 5. apr. 2017 kl. 18.47

Til: Luna Bo Christoffersen luch12ac@student.cbs.dk

Cc: Oulfat Damjiguend o.damjiguend@gmail.com

KS

Hej med jer :)

Det ser rigtig fint ud! Jeg har lige en opklarende kommentar til hvorvidt bryllupper i USA betyder mere end i Danmark:

Det betyder ikke nødvendigvis mere, men noget andet end det gør i Danmark. Det har noget med kulturen at gøre. Herhjemme handler det lidt mere om symbolikken, end pengene. Vi kommunikerer på et andet sprog, med nogle andre symboler. Men i sidste ende handler det alt sammen om kærlighed og romantik (og social status ;)

Prøv i den forbindelse at læse Rooks (1986) artikel om ritualer fra JCR. Der står noget om ritualer som i kan bruge.

God fornøjelse med specialet!

De bedste hilsner,
Kira

Fra: Luna Bo Christoffersen <luch12ac@student.cbs.dk>

Sendt: 5. april 2017 18:08

Til: Kira Strandby

Cc: Oulfat Damjiguend

Emne: Interview Summary

Kære Kira

Mange tak fordi vi måtte interviewe dig.

Her er vores interview summary, som du kan læse igennem og lade os vide, om du godkender det.

Tak og god dag.

Venlig hilsen

Oulfat og Luna

Appendix 5: Interview Summaries – Wedding Planners

Interview, Brink, 2017

Interview with Sofie Brink, Wedding Planner and owner of Brink Bryllup.

April 12, 2017

The interview was conducted over the phone and lasted 18 minutes. The interview was guided by the following questions:

1. Hvad er dit indtryk af danskernes brug af en bryllupsarrangører?
2. Hvor mange bryllupsarrangører er der i DK?
3. Hvem henvender de forskellige bryllupsarrangører sig til?
4. Hvordan mener du, at markedet for bryllupsarrangører har udviklet sig siden 2001?
5. Hvordan oplever du generelt, at de danske forbrugeres attitude til bryllupsarrangører er?
6. Hvorfor tror du, det er sådan?
7. Hvordan oplever du generelt at attituden til bryllupsarrangører er fra andre i bryllupsbranchen?
8. Hvorfor tror du, det er sådan?
9. Hvorfor tror du ikke brugen af bryllupsarrangører er ligeså udbredt i Danmark som i USA?
10. Tror du, dette vil ændre sig?
11. Hvad tror du, kunne få flere danskere til at hyre en professionel bryllupsarrangør?
12. Er der nogle forskelle på amerikanske og danske bryllupper, der gør det mere oplagt for amerikanske brudepar at hyre en bryllupsarrangør?
13. Hvilke dele af servicen oplever du, at danskerne gør mest brug af, når de hyrer en bryllupsarrangør?
14. Hvilket kundesegment interesser sig mest for bryllupsarrangører?
15. Hvordan markedsfører du din virksomhed?
16. Hvilken markedsføringsmetode mener du, er mest effektiv for din virksomhed?
17. Hvilke selling points, føler du, virker bedst i forhold til at skaffe nye kunder? (Både overfor folk, som ikke har taget kontakt til dig, og folk, som du allerede er i dialog med)
18. Hvad ser du som den største udfordring (f.eks. kendskab, interesse, ønske, handling eller lignende)?
19. Hvad er det sværeste ved at skaffe nye kunder?

20 . Hvor mange bryllupper du med til at arrangere årligt?

21 . Hvad tror du, der skal til for at det bliver mere normalt for danskere at bruge bryllupsarrangører?

To the first question, Sofie said that the use of wedding planners in Denmark is increasing. Sofie is not sure how many wedding planners there are in Denmark, but she mentioned that she knows about 4, which are her own company, The Wedding Company, TwoHearts, and Maid of Honour. She added that her impression is that a lot of women, after their own wedding, want to work as wedding planners, but does not have any clients besides their own friends and family.

We asked which consumer segments the 4 professional wedding planners target, and Sofie said that Maid of Honour and TwoHearts are pretty simple and work with smaller budgets, whereas The Wedding Company aim to be more American. Sofie herself and Brink Bryllup target a Nordic segment of consumers who like the Scandinavian style and have good taste and large budgets.

When we talked about the development of the wedding industry, Sofie told us that she started in 2012 and has experienced a growing market for wedding planners e.g. there are more wedding planners at the wedding fairs which indicated that there is a market for professional wedding planners. She also said that she experiences a bigger interest for the wedding planning services, and that she has more customers every year.

We asked about Danish consumers' general attitude towards wedding planners and Sofie said that people who understand what wedding planner do are positive towards it, but people who do not understand the service have negative attitudes. So there is a big challenge in the consumers' lack of knowledge about wedding planning services. We asked Sofie what she thinks it would take for this to change, and she said she wished someone would write articles or produce TV shows that showed what professional wedding planning is really about. She thinks that the TV show "Bryllupper for millioner" gave a terrible and wrong image of what professional wedding planning is all about. She says even the name of the show is misleading as only a few Danish weddings actually cost millions of kr. According to Sofie, the average Danish wedding costs around 100.000 kr. She says that the idea that weddings should cost a million kr. can actually scare some customers, even though the weddings she plans cost around 250.000 kr.

on average, which is more than most Danish weddings. Even though Sofie has planned 58 weddings since 2012, only 3 of them cost more than 1.000.000 kr.

Then we asked about the attitude towards wedding planners among other wedding professionals, and Sofie said they are positive towards her because she is good at her job and most professionals see her service as a help. Only a few venues find it annoying if the couple wants to make changes to the way the venue normally runs wedding parties.

We went on to talk about the USA and why it is more common to use wedding planners than it is in Denmark. Sofie's immediate answer was that Americans spend more money on their weddings. She did not think that it will become normal for Danes to spend extreme amounts of money on their wedding, as some people do in the US. She said that most of her customers start with a budget of around 180.000 kr. and it is difficult to convince them to raise that limit. We asked if she thought that more and more Danes will use wedding planners in the future, and she agreed, but it will still be way smaller budgets than in the US. She thinks the Danish and American wedding industries are not comparable because of the big cultural and financial differences. We mentioned that some people view professional wedding planning as an American concept, and Sofie did not seem to appreciate this and said that her service is just like the service of an undertaker, a realtor, or a lawyer and not something that can be classified as American. She says, that her service, like the above mentioned are all something that people could do without, but the question is whether they want to, and whether they are willing to pay for it.

We asked what usually makes couples hire a wedding planner, and Sofie said it is usually that they are busy and therefore choose to spend money on a wedding planner rather than spend time to plan the wedding. When asked to characterize the segment of consumers who hire a wedding planner, Sofie said that they work a lot, they are money-rich but time-poor, and many of them have just started a family which is also time consuming.

When we talked about what parts of the wedding planning service is most popular, Sofie answered without hesitation that it is the on-the-day coordination of the wedding. Consumers appreciate having a person at the wedding who has the big overview and ensures that everything runs smoothly. She said that there are definitely some customers who are a bit

uncomfortable leaving the responsibility of their wedding to her, especially the ones who she helps with the planning process and not just the coordination on the wedding day. She also said that this might keep some couples from hiring a wedding planner because they think they have to buy a full-package wedding and that a wedding planner will create his or her dream wedding and not the wedding that the couple wants. However this is NOT the case, she said.

In terms of marketing, Sofie exhibits her company at wedding fairs and she uses Google Adwords, Facebook advertising and uses all social media. She says Instagram and her website are the most effective channels for Brink Bryllup. The best selling point, Sofie says, is that the first meeting is non-committal. The first meeting is a chance to make consumers feel comfortable and to see if their personalities fit each other. In addition, Sofie says that she does not sell package solutions, which is something that differentiates her from competitors and that her customers appreciate. For Sofie, the hardest part of getting new customers is when people have a negative idea of what wedding planners do and just assume that her service is a rip off.

We asked Sofie what she thinks it will take for the service of professional wedding planners to become more common in Denmark. She answered that it will come natural with time and she can feel that a majority of her customers this year have heard about her from someone their network. She says word-of-mouth is one of the most effective ways to acquire new customers.

Finally, we asked Sofie if she experienced that customers were embarrassed or shy to say that they used a wedding planner. Her answer was a clear “no”.

Approval from interviewee:

Fra: **Sofie Brink** brinkbryllup@mail.com
Emne: **Re: Interview Summary**
Dato: 17. apr. 2017 kl. 12.19
Til: **Luna Bo Christoffersen** luch12ac@student.cbs.dk
Cc: **Oulfat Damjiguend** o.damjiguend@gmail.com

Den er hermed godkendt :)

Held og lykke med opgaven.

Med venlig hilsen,
Sofie Brink

Bryllupsarrangør
Brink Bryllup

M +45 5072 7674
brinkbryllup@mail.com

www.brinkbryllup.dk
www.facebook.com/brinkbryllup
www.instagram.com/brinkbryllup
www.pinterest.com/brinkbryllup

Den 12. apr. 2017 kl. 20.38 skrev Luna Bo Christoffersen <luch12ac@student.cbs.dk>:

Kære Sofie

Mange tak fordi vi måtte interviewe dig.

Her er vores interview summary, som du kan læse igennem og lade os vide, om du godkender det.

Tak og god aften.

Venlig hilsen

Oulfat og Luna
<Interview Summary - Sofie Brink.pdf>

Interview, Rønne, 2017

Interview with Betina Sjöholm Rønne, Wedding Planner and owner of Maid of Honour I/S.

February 16, 2017

The interview took place at Maid of Honour's office in Hørsholm and lasted 33 minutes. The questions were:

1. Hvad er dit indtryk af danskernes brug af en bryllupsarrangører?
2. Hvor mange bryllupsarrangører er der i DK?
3. Hvordan mener du at markedet for bryllupsarrangører har udviklet sig siden 2001?
4. Hvordan oplever du generelt at de danske forbrugeres attitude til bryllupsarrangører er?
5. Hvorfor tror du det er sådan?
6. Hvordan oplever du generelt at attituden til bryllupsarrangører er fra andre i bryllupsbranchen?
7. Hvorfor tror du det er sådan?
8. Hvorfor tror du ikke brugen af bryllupsarrangører er ligeså udbredt i DK som i USA?
9. Tror du dette vil ændre sig?
10. Hvad tror du kunne få flere danskere til at hyre en professionel bryllupsarrangør?
11. Er der nogle forskelle på Amerikanske og Danske bryllupper, der gør det mere oplagt for Amerikanske brudepar at hyre en bryllupsarrangør?
12. Hvilke dele af servicen oplever du at danskerne gør mest brug af når de hyrer en bryllupsarrangør?
13. Hvem interesserer sig for bryllupsarrangører?
14. Hvordan markedsfører du din virksomhed?
15. Hvilken markedsføringsmetode er mest effektiv for din virksomhed?
16. Hvilke selling points føler du virker bedst i forhold til at skaffe nye kunder? (Både folk som endnu ikke har taget kontakt og som allerede har)
17. Hvad er den største udfordring i forhold til at skaffe nye kunder?
18. Hvor mange danske bryllupper (hvor brudeparret bor i DK) er du med til at arrangere årligt?

The first thing Betina said was that there is not that many people in Denmark who use wedding planners. Her guess was that around 100-150 couples hire a wedding planner every year. In addition to this, some wedding locations have wedding coordinators that assist couples who get married there. When asked how many wedding planners there are in Denmark, Betina mentioned her own company, Maid of Honour, and the competitors, and how many weddings she thinks they plan yearly:

- Christel Winter (large market share)
- TwoHearts (max 10)
- Brink Bryllup (5-10)
- Wedding Deluxe (0)
- Company in Helsingør (?)
- Up-coming (1-2)
- Maria Lyng (only takes weddings at Sonnerupgård Gods, around 10-20)
- There are other wedding planning companies, but they target foreign customers.

We went on to talk about the development in the Danish wedding industry since Christel Winther started the first wedding planning company in Denmark, Wedding4you, in 2001. Betina explains that the Danes have become more aware that the service exists in Denmark. Also there has been a shift in the customer segment. Wedding planners are no longer just hired for the big, expensive weddings, but also for weddings with a budget that is a little higher than average. Betina also experiences more and more people who want to become wedding planners and new companies are emerging.

Betina has especially at wedding fairs felt how the level of awareness has increased. When Maid of Honour first had an exhibition at a wedding fair, she received questions from visitors like “what is that?”, “why would I need that?”, and “are there really wedding planners in Denmark?”. Today, she says, she can feel that more people know about wedding planners and some even say that Maid of Honour is “exactly what they had been looking for”. Also more people search for wedding planners on Google, which shows that they have at least heard about it and might even consider hiring one. Also in online forums, more people ask each other which wedding planner they used. So Betina says it is clear that there is a bigger interest from the consumers and that they search for wedding planners themselves.

When asked about Danish consumers’ general attitude towards wedding planners, Betina said that a lot of them have a negative attitude towards wedding planners. She says the consumers can be divided into three groups based on attitude:

- The ones who think wedding planning is a great service and have positive attitudes.

- The ones that do not have an opinion about wedding planners and think it is fine for those who want and can afford the service.
- The ones who have a strong negative attitude towards wedding planners and think the service is ridiculous and only for the wealthy.

She says that the third group of consumers has become smaller, which she can for example feel at the wedding fairs. Even just two years ago, more consumers than today said that they would definitely NOT hire a wedding planner and that were very dismissive to the idea. She thinks this can be explained by the number of suppliers and services available. Today there are more wedding planners offering services to the more “normal” consumers with an average wedding budget. She also mentions that wedding planning service is more popular in Copenhagen and Northern Zealand than in the more rural areas like Jutland. People from the Copenhagen area shows more interest in Maid of Honour’s services, and she says that people who want a traditional, low-key, Danish wedding are very unlikely to hire a wedding planner and likely to have a negative attitude towards them.

Betina suggests that the difference in attitudes depend on whether consumers are traditional or modern. The former cannot see the purpose of hiring a wedding planner, as they keep their wedding simple and low-key. The latter, who join the trend of individualizing and personalizing the wedding with creative details, have a bigger need for wedding planning services as their weddings become very extensive and difficult to plan.

Betina also mentions that the increasing number of wedding planners in Denmark and the TV shows about wedding planners have increased consumer awareness and made more consumers curious to know more about the services and prices in the market. In a side note, she says that the TV shows might have given the impression that wedding planners are only for wealthy people, but regardless of this, it has increased consumer awareness. Besides TV, Betina talks about how a lot of wedding inspiration comes from American and English websites - countries where it is normal to have a wedding planner.

We then talked more about the trend of personalization and Betina says people care more and more about every individual detail and for example “save-the-date” cards has become very popular and something almost everyone wants. She says that “do-it-yourself barn weddings” are very popular right now, where the couple rents a barn and organizes everything themselves.

This actually increases the need for a wedding planner to coordinate all the details on the wedding day and make sure everything plays together and works out as intended. The couples do not want to stress over this on their wedding day or to decorate the barn themselves, so these services are in high demand in Maid of Honour. Less customers look for a full wedding planning service, where everything is planned and arranged by the wedding planner. Betina thinks this is because customers want a personal wedding and want to be involved in the wedding planning process. She predicts that this will not change in the near future because consumers will continue to want a personal wedding and not a standard solution.

We asked Betina how the attitude towards wedding planners is among other businesses in the wedding industry and she said this also depends on how traditional suppliers are and that some of the older players in the industry see wedding planners as a threat and find the service unnecessary. Betina says that especially in churches, can the staff feel that wedding planners threaten their territory. Also at wedding locations who have their own package solutions can see wedding planners as a threat instead of, as Betina sees it, an extra help. On the contrary, in cases where customers rent only a location (such as a barn) and organize everything themselves, the letter often appreciates the wedding planner's work as it decreases their workload. She also mentions that some location owners who do not have package solutions contact Maid of Honour to propose a partnership where Maid of Honour can help plan and coordinate for the couples who rent their location. The suppliers that provide products or services before the wedding day such as wedding dress shops, bakeries, and jewellers, generally have a positive attitude towards wedding planners.

We returned to the topic of competition, and Betina said the competition is very tough and there is a very cold relation among the Danish wedding planners where no one talk to each other. This, she says is different within other supplier groups in the wedding industry, such as photographers and musicians who have a big network and communicate with each other. Betina says that the biggest wedding planning companies fight over the customers but still respect each other. She says competition is tough because the customer base is as small as it is. The competition is for example visible in that companies copy each other a lot and offer the same services. This forces customers to choose wedding planner based on who they like or which website looks the best. Betina does mention that Christel Winther has a higher level of awareness because she has been on TV and that she still mainly targets wealthy consumers. She says that because only a few Danes have used wedding planners, there are only few reviews

available online, which makes it hard for consumers to choose a wedding planner based on customer reviews on for example Trustpilot or Facebook.

The interviewer unintentionally asked a leading question about the biggest challenge for wedding planners in Denmark, and Betina agreed that the biggest challenge is customer acquisition rather than providing a satisfying service. She says all their customers have been very satisfied and only a few have been less satisfied because of unrealistic expectations. Betina sees the lack of differentiation among wedding planning services is one of the things that makes it difficult to get new customers.

We move on to compare the use of wedding planners in USA and in Denmark. Betina suggests that wedding planners in the US have been faster to cater to the trend of personal weddings and also the “normal” size of a wedding in different cultures. She says in Denmark there is a long tradition for a simple wedding with the wedding ceremony and a dinner in the nearest village hall (as an example to describe the simplicity of Danish wedding traditions). Now more people wants bigger weddings, which could be an effect of the financial crisis coming to an end, so people can afford to have a big wedding. Betina predicts that the concept of professional wedding planning, like many other American concepts, will become more widespread in Denmark within the next 10 years. For this to happen, Betina says that time and money are important factors. If people have more money, they can throw bigger weddings, and if people work more, they will have less time to plan their wedding.

When we asked about differences between American and Danish weddings that cause more American couples to hire a wedding planner, Betina clearly states that it is the scope of the weddings. In the US, people want bigger and more comprehensive wedding with voluminous flower decorations and more small details such as favor boxes for the wedding guests. She continues and says that she sees this trend of small personal details grow in Danish weddings within the last couple of years.

When it comes to consumer segments, Betina says it is not possible to identify consumer segments based on personal characteristics, but rather in the type of wedding consumers wish to have. Also income is not necessarily an indicator of how likely people are to hire a wedding planner. Some people have a low personal income but choose to spend a lot of money on their

wedding and hire a wedding planner. But Betina says that it does not make much sense for people with a budget below 1000 kr/person to hire a wedding planner.

Regarding the service, Betina tells us that most customers seek help with coordination and preparations/decoration on their wedding day. We asked specifically how Maid of Honour market their services, and that is primarily on the wedding fairs and social media. Betina says they have tried wedding magazines, which had no effect. Google however is effective as there are only a few wedding planners in Denmark which means that the biggest ones automatically rank high on Google. She says word of mouth has also started to bring in customers as Maid of Honour has existed in almost three years now and had customers who have recommended them to others. She is certain that word of mouth marketing will increase with time.

We asked which selling points work best in getting new customers and she said it is the fact that Maid of Honour can help coordinate and have the overview on the wedding day and the fact that they offer tailor-made service solutions that fit the needs of each couple. Betina says the biggest challenge in acquiring new customers is people's attitude towards wedding planners. She says it is very important for Maid of Honour to give every visitor at the wedding fairs a flyer so they can contact her afterwards. This is because many couples contact the company late in their wedding planning process where they already have a lot planned. Betina says that convincing consumers to hire a wedding planner for the whole wedding planning process is a challenge. She also says that if people have planned most things themselves and then suddenly need help cutting their budget, it is hard for a wedding planner to do this if most things are already booked. So it is more ideal for a wedding planner to be involved through the whole process.

Finally we asked how many weddings Maid of Honour plan every year. She says they had around 30 weddings in 2016 and that it seems like they will get more weddings in 2017 and even more in 2018.

Approval from interviewee:

Den 21/02/2017 kl. 10.33 skrev Betina Sjöholm Rønne
<betina@maidofhonour.dk>:
Kære Luna og Oulfat

Selv tak. Interviewet ser rigtig fint ud. Det må I gerne bruge.

God dag til jer!

Mange hilsner fra
Betina Sjöholm Rønne
Bryllupsarrangør / ejer

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www.pinterest.com/maidofhonourdk
<image001.jpg>

-----Oprindelig meddelelse-----

Fra: Luna Bo Christoffersen [<mailto:luna.bo@hotmail.com>]
Sendt: 21. februar 2017 10:19
Til: Betina Sjöholm Rønne <betina@maidofhonour.dk>
Cc: Oulfat Damjiguend <O.damjiguend@gmail.com>
Emne: Interview Summary

Kære Betina

Mange tak fordi vi måtte interviewe dig.

Her er vores interview summary, som du kan læse igennem og lade os vide, om du godkender det.

Tak og god dag.

Venlig hilsen

Oulfat og Luna

Appendix 6: Clarifying E-mail about Price

In order to clarify how much the interviewed consumers knew about the prices of wedding planning services, a follow-up e-mail was sent to all the interviewed consumers. Only 8 of them replied.

Fra: Amalie Kristensen amaliebachkristensen@gmail.com
Emne: Re: Opklarende spørgsmål
Dato: 14. jul. 2017 kl. 14.24
Til: Luna Bo Christoffersen luna.bo@hotmail.com

Hej med jer,

Ja, det var vi.

Mvh,

Amalie og Kris

Sent from my iPhone

On 14 Jul 2017, at 12.46, Luna Bo Christoffersen <luna.bo@hotmail.com> wrote:

Hej,

Mange tak fordi vi måtte interviewe dig til vores speciale. Vi har lige et opklarende spørgsmål, som vi håber, du vil svare på.

Da vi interviewede dig, var du da klar over de danske bryllupsarrangørers priser?

På forhånd tak,

Mange hilsner,
Oulfat og Luna

Fra: Birgitte Knudsen birgitteknudsen@hotmail.com
Emne: Re: Opklarende spørgsmål
Dato: 14. jul. 2017 kl. 14.11
Til: Oulfat Damjiguend o.damjiguend@gmail.com, Luna Bo Christoffersen luna.bo@hotmail.com

Nej har jeg ikke rigtig, kun har jeg hørt fra andre. Aldrig undersøgt det da vi aldrig rigtig overvejede at benytte det 😊

Held og lykke 😊

Hent [Outlook til Android](#)

From: Luna Bo Christoffersen <luna.bo@hotmail.com>
Sent: Friday, July 14, 2017 1:46:33 PM
To: Oulfat Damjiguend
Subject: Opklarende spørgsmål

Hej,

Mange tak fordi vi måtte interviewe dig til vores speciale. Vi har lige et opklarende spørgsmål, som vi håber, du vil svare på.

Da vi interviewede dig, var du da klar over de danske bryllupsarrangørers priser?

På forhånd tak,

Mange hilsner,
Oulfat og Luna

Fra: Christina Kristiansen sti2204@hotmail.com
Emne: Re: Opklarende spørgsmål
Dato: 14. jul. 2017 kl. 13.50
Til: Luna Bo Christoffersen luna.bo@hotmail.com

Hejsa.

Nej vi kendte ikke priserne men vi var overbeviste om at vi kunne gøre det billigere selv, så derfor undersøgte vi det ikke :)

Hilsen Christina.

From: Luna Bo Christoffersen <luna.bo@hotmail.com>
Sent: fredag, juli 14, 2017 1:46 PM
Subject: Opklarende spørgsmål
To: Oulfat Damjiguend <o.damjiguend@gmail.com>

Hej,

Mange tak fordi vi måtte interviewe dig til vores speciale. Vi har lige et opklarende spørgsmål, som vi håber, du vil svare på.

Da vi interviewede dig, var du da klar over de danske bryllupsarrangørers priser?

På forhånd tak,

Mange hilsner,
Oulfat og Luna

Fra: Ditte Madsen dittegl@hotmail.com
Emne: Re: Opklarende spørgsmål
Dato: 28. jul. 2017 kl. 09.28
Til: Luna Bo Christoffersen luna.bo@hotmail.com

Hej

Beklager jeg først svare jer nu.

Nej vi har ikke været klar over, hvad det ville koste og hyre en bryllupsarrangør.

Mvh Ditte

Den 14. jul. 2017 kl. 13.46 skrev Luna Bo Christoffersen <luna.bo@hotmail.com>:

Hej,

Mange tak fordi vi måtte interviewe dig til vores speciale. Vi har lige et opklarende spørgsmål, som vi håber, du vil svare på.

Da vi interviewede dig, var du da klar over de danske bryllupsarrangørers priser?

På forhånd tak,

Mange hilsner,
Oulfat og Luna

Fra: Karina Jull Poulsen karinapoulsen22@hotmail.com
Emne: Sv: Opklarende spørgsmål
Dato: 14. jul. 2017 kl. 13.58
Til: Luna Bo Christoffersen luna.bo@hotmail.com

Hej!

I må stille alle dem, I gider!
Nej, det var jeg faktisk ikke. Jeg har ikke undersøgt det nærmere :)

Med venlig hilsen
Karina Jull
+45 21438473

Fra: Luna Bo Christoffersen <luna.bo@hotmail.com>
Sendt: 14. juli 2017 13:46
Til: Oulfat Damjiguend
Emne: Opklarende spørgsmål

Hej,

Mange tak fordi vi måtte interviewe dig til vores speciale. Vi har lige et opklarende spørgsmål, som vi håber, du vil svare på.

Da vi interviewede dig, var du da klar over de danske bryllupsarrangørers priser?

På forhånd tak,

Mange hilsner,
Oulfat og Luna

Fra: Lisbeth Juelsgård Hansen juelsgaardlisbeth@gmail.com
Emne: Re: Opklarende spørgsmål
Dato: 2. aug. 2017 kl. 07.25
Til: Luna Bo Christoffersen luna.bo@hotmail.com

Hej Luna

Ja jeg har været inde og se priser fra forskellige bryllupsarrangører.

Hilsen Lisbeth

Sendt fra min iPhone

Den 14. jul. 2017 kl. 13.46 skrev Luna Bo Christoffersen <luna.bo@hotmail.com>:

Hej,

Mange tak fordi vi måtte interviewe dig til vores speciale. Vi har lige et opklarende spørgsmål, som vi håber, du vil svare på.

Da vi interviewede dig, var du da klar over de danske bryllupsarrangørers priser?

På forhånd tak,

Mange hilsner,
Oulfat og Luna

Fra: Marie.a@ofir.dk
Emne: Re: Opklarende spørgsmål
Dato: 24. jul. 2017 kl. 08.17
Til: Luna Bo Christoffersen luna.bo@hotmail.com

Hej

Ja, delvist - dem jeg havde fundet og kunne se priserne online på.

Mvh Marie

Luna Bo Christoffersen skrev den 2017-07-14 13:46:

Hej,
Mange tak fordi vi måtte interviewe dig til vores speciale. Vi har lige et opklarende spørgsmål, som vi håber, du vil svare på.
Da vi interviewede dig, var du da klar over de danske bryllupsarrangørers priser?
På forhånd tak,
Mange hilsner,
Oulfat og Luna

Fra: Nina Alimooti Grumsen ninagrumsen@gmail.com
Emne: Re: Opklarende spørgsmål
Dato: 14. jul. 2017 kl. 17.42
Til: Luna Bo Christoffersen luna.bo@hotmail.com

Hej Luna
Nej vi kender slet ikke priserne.
Håber det går godt med specialet.
Bh Nina

Den 14. jul. 2017 13.46 skrev "Luna Bo Christoffersen" <luna.bo@hotmail.com>:

Hej,
Mange tak fordi vi måtte interviewe dig til vores speciale. Vi har lige et opklarende spørgsmål, som vi håber, du vil svare på.
Da vi interviewede dig, var du da klar over de danske bryllupsarrangørers priser?
På forhånd tak,
Mange hilsner,
Oulfat og Luna