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Master's thesis  
Influencing the Buying Decision Process  
a B&O Play Case Study



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## Abstract

With the emergence of social media, the internet landscape has changed dramatically over the course of few years. However, the literature of online consumer behavior has not been able to follow with the change and as such there is a growing need for new knowledge in the field.

The purpose of this research is to investigate different sources of influence and their effect on the consumer buying process, in relation to portable speakers. B&O Play is chosen as the case company and their target group, is the main population studied in the research.

The research uses a sequential exploratory design, with the first phase studying sources of influence in 2 focus groups, while the second phase investigates whether the results can be generalized to a larger sample through a questionnaire.

The results of the study show that professional reviews are found to be a big influence for a large share of respondents, while blogs are found to be of little influence to a large share of respondents. Further research, might explain the reasons for respondents answers and give a deeper insight into the populations attitudes towards influencers.

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## 1. Introduction

Despite the rapid increase of online shopping the literature on consumer buying behavior has been slow to follow suit. As such there is a growing need for new knowledge in the field of online consumer behavior and further research in the area has been requested (Close and Kukar-Kinney, 2010; Herrero and San Martín, 2012). Furthermore, with the emergence of social media and the ever-increasing difficulty of attracting consumer attention, it has become even more relevant to understand the buying decision process consumers undergo online. With the introduction of web 2.0 and the arrival of a semantic web 3.0 (Garrigos-Simon et al., 2012), it is critical to continually research online consumer behavior and test whether theories still hold or need to be modified in order to still be valid.

With the growing trend of ad-avoidance (Anderson and Gans, 2011) and the increase of online noise, it has become increasingly difficult for producers to market their products to consumers online. Moreover, recent studies have shown a shift in media going from paid media to earned and social media (Macnamara et al., 2016). In order for companies to meet the competition they will have to adapt accordingly and change the way they communicate with their target consumer. In order to do this, they will have to learn how their target consumer acts online and what influences have an effect on him. Not only is it relevant to know how the consumer can be influenced, but also when he can be influenced in order to make an optimal marketing strategy.

Research reports indicate that the portable speaker market is on the rise with close to 20% growth rate internationally, with Beats Electronics, Bose, LG Electronics, Samsung Electronics, and Sony in the lead (Technavio - discover market opportunities, 2016). In this growing market, B&O Play was chosen as a case company along with its line of portable speakers. B&O Play was chosen due to its recent launch of its innovative portable speakers A1 & A2 that aim to change the portable speaker market, by not only delivering a premium product, but also giving the consumer an experience, that goes beyond the physical features of the product.

However, it is not every consumer that pursues this kind of experience in a portable speaker and therefore B&O Play seeks to target a segment designated “urban creative professionals” (UCPs) as they are young, educated people who live in or near major cities in Denmark and are profiled as having an

outgoing personality and seeking social affirmation (B&O Play, 2016).

Hence, based on the case company of B&O Play this paper aims at uncovering new knowledge as well as challenging findings in the literature. Moreover, the segment of UCPs and their consumer behavior will be investigated in relation to their online decision process and how it can be influenced.

### 1.1 Problem identification

The aim of this master thesis is to investigate online consumer behavior in relation to portable speakers and explore which influencers affect the consumers' decision buying process at various stages. The research will take its departure in the case company of B&O Play and its line of portable speakers and thus the target population will be based on the B&O Play's target group of costumers. The purpose of the research is to gain insights into online consumer behavior and see whether the discovered trends and findings from the literature are generalizable to sample of the target population.

The main research question is formulated as follows:

*In regard to portable speakers, which sources of influences affect UCPs during the buying decision process and how influential are professional reviews compared to other influencers?*

To answer the research question, the following six sub questions will be considered:

- How does B&O Play categorize their target consumer?
- What is the demographic composition of B&O Play's target group?
- Which sources of influence affect UCPs consumer behavior in regards to portable speakers?
- Are professional reviews or blogs most influential in UCPs' buying decision process when considering portable speakers?
- Do UCPs perceive professional reviews as more influential than customer reviews when considering portable speakers?
- Do UCPs perceive professional reviews as more influential than advice from friends and family when considering portable speakers?

## 1.2 Delimitations

This thesis will focus on the buying decision process of USPs in regards to portable speakers. As such this thesis, does not take other B&O Play products into consideration such as earphones or stationary speakers. The research focuses on the Danish market and will not gather primary data from other markets, yet some comparison with other markets might be made during analysis. The research will be focused on the population of B&O Play's target group, and therefore will not be a research of the average Danish consumer.

The thesis only aims at researching how the consumer is influenced in his buying decision process up to the point of purchase, and thus the focus is only on the first four stages of the buying decision process.

The research is primarily exploratory, even though the second phase includes a deductive approach with hypotheses tests, it does not seek to find any correlations between variables or to find data explaining answers of respondents. It serves merely to test the generalizability of trends & patterns from the focus groups and in the literature. Thus, it is not in the scope of this thesis to explain why influencers have an effect on the consumer's decision process.

## 1.3 Definitions

### *Portable speaker*

Based on the findings of the focus groups, portable speakers in this research are defined as speakers that are small enough to carry around in one hand and that are able to run on batteries. They can connect to smartphones and other media devices via either Bluetooth or jack stick.

### *Source of influence*

Sources of influence can come from people such as a friend's recommendation or can come in the form of other sources such as the opportunity to hear a portable speaker for oneself.

### *Influencers*

Unlike "sources of influence" influencers are always people, and defined as: "Individuals who have the



power to affect purchase decisions of others because of their (real or perceived) authority, knowledge, position, or relationship.” (BusinessDictionary.com, 2016)

#### *Professional reviewer*

As there does not exist a precise term for professional reviewers, the definition used in this research will adopt the definition of a critic in regards to portable speakers. “a professional judge of art, music, literature, etc.” Examples can be speaker technicians, tech journalists or other audio experts (TheFreeDictionary.com, 2016).

#### *Professional review*

Review written by a professional reviewer of portable speakers. Typically posted online on YouTube online magazines, or on professional review sites such as Trustedreviews.com

#### *Customer review*

Unlike a professional review, customer reviews can be written by anyone. Typically posted on Facebook, webshops, or on customer review sites such as Trustpilot.com

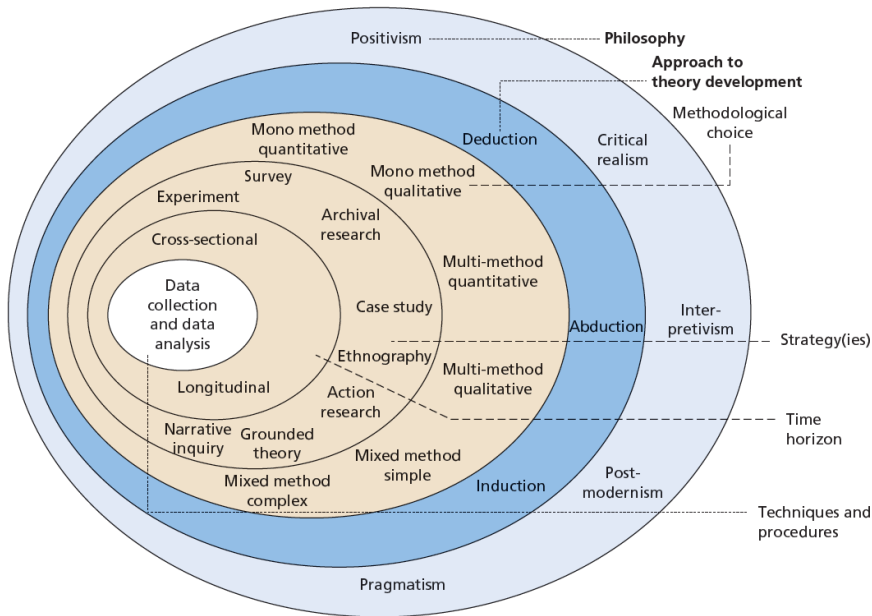
#### *Blog*

A blog is defined as “a website containing a writer's or group of writers' own experiences, observations, opinions, etc., and often having images and links to other websites.” (Dictionary.com, 2016)

## **2. Methodology**

According to Saunders et al. (2015) conducting business research is divided into different layers, starting with the choice of research philosophy and ending with data collection and analysis. Using this framework (Figure 1), it is possible to structure the research and make conscious and reflective choices about research design and methods grounded in the researcher's approach and research philosophy. By dividing the research process into layers, it enables the researcher to reflect over his values and his approach to theory development giving him valuable insight into his choice of methodological approach.

**Figure 1: The research 'onion'**



**Figure 4.1** The research 'onion'  
Source: © 2015 Mark Saunders, Philip Lewis and Adrian Thornhill

## 2.1. Research Philosophy

The first layer of Saunders et al.'s (2015) research onion deals with research philosophy, and the researcher's ontological, epistemological, axiological assumptions. Yet some scholars argue that it hurts the business management discipline to have a multiplicity of diverging research philosophies and as such it would be better if there were a unification of all business research under one strong research methodology (Knudsen and Tsoukas, 2003). This paper, however takes a pluralist approach and to explore how the different research philosophies align with my values I have used the reflexive tool HARP designed by Saunders et al. (2015).

### 2.1.1 Pragmatism

Based on my reflections using the HARP tool I have decided to adopt a pragmatic research philosophy. Pragmatism is based on the foundation that concepts and theories are only relevant if they enable action (Kelemen and Rumens, 2008). Therefore, this paper is more interested in the practical application of the research conducted and how its new strategic insights into the marketing of B&O's product

portfolio will facilitate a new and improved marketing strategy. The ontological assumptions are that multiple realities exist and are constructed through practical effects of the utilization of knowledge, and that no single point of view can ever give the entire picture (Saunders et al., 2015). As such there are many ways to tackle a research problem and epistemological pragmatism embraces a wide variety of different types of knowledge and methods. Going forward, the research in this paper will make use of the data collection methods that are relevant and practical in their specific contexts, whether they are qualitative or quantitative will depend on the knowledge to be obtained and the resources available. The axiological assumptions are that as a researcher it is inevitable for me to not have an impact on the research conducted. The research undertaken will be based on my doubts and beliefs and will be biased by my values and interaction with respondents. Thus, a purely objectivistic approach is not possible nor desirable, instead a balance between a subjectivistic and objectivistic approach will be taken, while I will strive to constantly take a reflective stance on how I as researcher will affect the research.

## 2.2 Choice of methodological approach

The choice of methodological approach represents both a choice of a type of research design as well as the type of data to analyzed in order to find answers to the proposed research questions. The research philosophy of pragmatism bases its choice of methodological approach on practical solutions capable of answering the research question (Saunders et al., 2015).

To best answer the research question a mixed methods design was chosen. The mixed methods design allows a flexibility in choosing multiple methods to explore different aspects of the research question. Furthermore, the usefulness of multiple methods has been advocated within business management as it can provide the scope for a richer approach to data collection, analysis and interpretation (Saunders et al, 2015) and can overcome weaknesses associated with using single or mono method design (Bryman, 2006). The type of mixed research design chosen was the sequential exploratory design. The design is sequential in its collection and analysis of data, resulting in an initial phase of collection and analysis of qualitative data followed by a phase of quantitative data collection and analysis (Saunders et al, 2015). Hence, the findings from the exploratory qualitative phase can then be used to test hypothesis and generalize the findings on a broader sample.

### 2.2.1 Sequential exploratory design

The qualitative phase constitutes of an interview with a marketing manager from B&O Play as well as data on their target group, in order to learn more about the target group and how B&O Play views their target consumers' beliefs and attitudes. Two focus groups are then created with participants matching the characteristics of B&O Play's target group. The purpose of the focus groups is to explore their attitudes and beliefs to get a better understanding of B&O Play's target segment. Furthermore, the focus group aims at exploring the participants' consumer behavior and see if there are any trends to be found. The first phase of the sequential method is thus inductive in its nature as it seeks to identify themes and patterns. Qualitative research commencing with an inductive approach enables according to Saunders et al. (2015) *“an approach to theory development, where a naturalistic and emergent research design is used to build theory or to develop a richer theoretical perspective than already exists in the literature”*. Seeing as there exists theory on consumer behavior, but no theory on consumer behavior when buying portable speakers in the Danish market, the first phase allows for richer theoretical perspective.

Based on the findings of the initial exploratory research, the second phase of data collection aimed at generalizing the findings from the qualitative data. Hence, a survey was designed and structured to investigate these findings and related findings found in the literature review on a broader sample. Many interesting findings were found in the focus groups, however due to the limited nature and composition of a survey, it was decided to focus on investigating influencers effect on the buying decision process. Consequently, it was possible to reduce the number of questions and make a shorter survey allowing for more respondents, while still having enough data to test 6 different hypotheses. The second phase of the research searches to reject or accept hypothesis and generalize the data of the initial phase. As such the second phase is deductive in nature as it puts forward a set of hypotheses that are tested and if the results of the analysis are consistent with the premises the theory is corroborated (Blaikie, 2010).

### 2.3 Validity, reliability & generalizability

When collecting and analyzing the data, it is important to ensure that the findings are reliable and valid. Furthermore, it is important to take into consideration whether the findings of the study are generalizable, and if so under which circumstances. (Saunders et al., 2015)

During the research, measures have been taken in order to enhance validity, reliability and generalizability. These considerations will be addressed throughout the paper every time they are relevant. As such the following is not an exhaustive list of the considerations made, but rather an overview of the general measures taken in order to heighten validity, reliability and generalizability.

### 2.3.1 Reliability

In quantitative research reliability refers to the ability for other researchers to replicate the processes and results of the research (Leung, 2015). Therefore, every part of the quantitative data collection has been described in detail and a questionnaire guide has been included in Appendix 1, making it easy for other researchers to test whether the results can be replicated. Qualitative data, on the other hand can be more difficult to replicate as the nature of data collection is less structured. Instead the essence of reliability in qualitative research lies in consistency (Ibid.). Consequently, an interview guide and a discussion guide for the focus groups have been provided, as well as audio recordings of all the qualitative data.

### 2.3.2 Validity

Validity refers to how successful the research was in achieving what it set out to achieve and is also linked to the credibility and authenticity of the research. (Saunders et al., 2015). An important aspect in maintaining validity is that the research design is sufficiently rigorous. More specifically it is important that the procedures used in the research measured what they were supposed to measure. An example of measures made in order to heighten validity can be seen under the construction of the survey. To ensure that participants understood the questions correctly a pilot study was conducted in order to learn how the questions were to be formulated, for easy understanding. Furthermore, the questionnaire was made in Danish instead of English to reduce risk of misunderstanding of the questions.

### 2.3.3 Generalizability

Concerning the generalizability of the results it is important to take into account what was examined and under what circumstances. Generalizability also concerns the transferability of the findings in the study to other populations with a different composition. Therefore, it is important to remember that this

study mostly focused on consumer behavior in regards to the purchase of portable speakers, and thus the findings might not be generalizable to consumer behavior with other products. Furthermore, a note of caution should be issued in generalizing the findings of this research, since the population tested was young educated people living in or near major cities in Denmark. Hence, when generalizing to other populations they should be of a similar composition to ensure higher generalizability.

## 2.4 Primary & secondary data

### 2.4.1 Primary data

Primary data is collected by the researcher himself for the specific purpose of answering the research question. The data from the interview, the focus groups and the survey are all collected by the researcher in order to answer the research question and can thus be categorized as primary data. The advantage of primary data is that information is gathered specifically in relation to the research undertaken, and can therefore provide more accurate answers than collecting data from other studies with different research questions and designs (Saunders et al., 2015).

### 2.4.2 Secondary data

Secondary data, is data that have been used by the researcher but which has been collected from another source. Accordingly, the researcher has not been involved in the data collection himself, and the approach and purpose in which the data has been collected would likely have been different, if the researcher could have taken part and been able to tailor it specifically for his own research. Therefore, secondary data is not always as useful in answering the research question.

The main advantage of secondary data is that it helps save time and money, as it is often easier to access and is readily obtainable, whereas primary data will need time and resources in order to be collected. Accordingly, secondary data can be used to supplement primary data. An example of secondary data used in this research, is the data received from B&O Play describing UCP target group in the in-house report.

### 3. B&O Play's target group

The target group of B&O Play is designated as *urban creative professionals* (UCPs) according to an in-house report from B&O Play (2016). The people in this segment are characterized by a youthful approach to life, they live life at its fullest and are not content with just living an ordinary life. For these consumers, it is vital to have the freedom to be spontaneous and even though they are likely to have a demanding work at day, they want to be able to do whatever they want in the evening and weekends. To UCPs a unique and memorable experience is as valuable as acquiring luxury and premium products (B&O Play, 2016).

#### 3.1 Urban creative professionals lifestyle

The segment consists of young adults between 20-45 years. There is a slight overweight of males in the group, yet many women can be seen having the same lifestyle. UCPs tend to live in big cities or in close proximity to one, and often lives very active lives mainly outside of the home. Furthermore, they are ambitious and see themselves as accomplished individuals and while they view themselves as successful, they are still in the pursuit of more progress and success. UCPs are very social and often use their time with friends, meeting up at restaurants, bars and taking part in other social events around town (B&O Play, 2016). Many adopt the “*work hard play hard*” mentality, as they are determined and ambitious in their endeavors while still wanting to make the most out of their life. Most of the people in this segment are generally not at the stage of life where they have established a family. However, there is a subset of the segment that is at the beginning of establishing their own family but is still attracted to brands that target the young lifestyles of the UCPs (Ibid).

#### 3.2 Educated consumers

The UCPs view themselves as thoughtful and knowledgeable individuals and so they will seek out brands that match this perception. They will take informed choices among the brands they choose and will not latch onto the obvious choices. As such these consumers can be viewed as educated consumers, meaning that they are more sensitive to bad press regarding a brand or any drawbacks with a certain product. Furthermore, they typically have or are pursuing college educations (B&O Play, 2016). UCP's will often seek out information about the product prior to a purchase, the information

they find about the product is positive or else they might be turned away. The consumers are likely to attribute varying degrees of reliability upon the information received based on the source of the information. The information directly from the company will be perceived less reliable as the company may be positively biased when communicating about their products. On the other hand, information received from bloggers will be viewed as more reliable and even more so if they are specialized in the area. In these cases, the ethos of the blogger will add even more reliability to his or her statements regarding the product (Ibid.). Another highly regarded resource of information is that received word-of-mouth from friends and family who themselves have had the opportunity to try the brands products. UCPs look for brands with depth in the stories they tell and this is coupled with certain intelligence in the way they make luxury purchases. This intelligence is closely related to a particular conscious trait and the search for depth in brands thereby extends to the product itself. UCPs actively seek out products with uniquely distinguishing capabilities and a promise of longevity, since they attribute a sense of premium value in products that can stand the test of time (Ibid.).

### 3.3 Profiling the UCPs lifestyle

The spending habits of UCPs reflect their lifestyle. When a UCP buys a product, it is often driven by a sense of rewarding themselves and can be viewed as a form of self-indulgence. They have the mindset that they are successful and thus have earned a luxury product that is as perfect as themselves. What they spend their money on varies greatly from individual to individual depending on personal interests and when the purchase takes place. Still, there are some general patterns affecting the UCPs buying behavior both in terms of how they buy and what they buy (B&O Play, 2016). Male UCPs are more likely to make fewer, but larger purchases over the course of a year. These purchases will often be gear and gadgets associated with a hobby such as golf clubs, a watch or a motorcycle. Women tend to make smaller but more frequent purchases, typically within apparel and accessories. The women's buying behavior are more likely to be linked with buying accessories for specific events such as weddings or vacations. Of the two sexes, males are much more likely to purchase portable speakers (Ibid.). Another characteristic associated with the whole segment is that they are more inclined on spending money on experiences than products, and the products they do buy enable them more or better experiences. The experiences they use money on can be smaller experiences that season the everyday, like concerts or



good restaurants. Yet, UCPs are also very fond of investing in major experiences such as adventurous travel or attending major cultural events such as big festivals or marathons (Ibid.).

### 3.4 Targeting the UCPs

B&O Play aims at targeting the UCPs through enduring magic (Beoplay, 2016a). UCPs view “magic” as something highly personal, and find enduring magic in products and experiences that feel individual to them. At the same time, enduring magic is likely to be found in new experiences and the products that facilitate these new experiences. New experiences generate memories, and memories are an essential component of what UCPs associate with enduring magic B&O Play, 2016. UCPs tend to be more interested than other segments in products and experiences that help create social affirmation. They are highly social by nature and often find interest in the social leisure activity. Here it is not only important to have products that can facilitate magical new experiences, moreover it is important that the products will also generate some degree of recognition and admiration from their peers. This could for example be by owning a particularly advanced mountain bike to go off-road biking with friends or being the one who can introduce a new artist to a music-loving circle of friends. For enabling B&O Play to target UCPs they will have to produce premium products that UCPs will want to show to their peers and receive admiration for. The UCPs see themselves as thoughtful and intellectual consumers, and this is reflected in how and where they find magic (Ibid.).

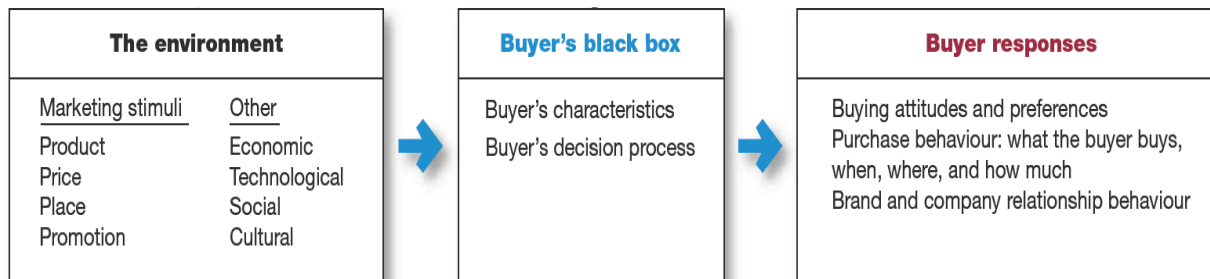
## 4. Literature review

### 4.1 Consumer buying behavior

The basic principal of consumer behavior is to pay a cost in exchange for a benefit in the form of a product or service that is worth equally or more to them, than the cost incurred (East et al., 2013; Cooper, 2010). Consumer buying behavior is a specific part of a consumer’s behavior and refers to the buying behavior of final consumers (Kotler et al., 2016). Moreover, the focus of this research revolves around the decision and buying process of the consumer and how and when the consumer can be influenced by exterior variables that alter the outcome of their purchasing decision.

#### 4.1.1 The consumer's black box

The consumer's characteristics and decision process can be viewed as a black box as shown in Figure 2, which is difficult to access for other people (Kotler et al., 2016).



**Figure 2: Kotler et al. (2016): 'The model of buyer behavior'**

Additionally, it might be difficult for the consumer himself to fully comprehend what external stimuli caused him to make a certain buying decision (Ibid). Included in the consumer's black box are his attitudes, preferences, brand engagements and relationships. The box functions in two steps: The first step is subconscious and describes how the consumer's characteristics influence how he perceives and react to stimuli from the environment. The second step of the consumer's black box, describes the consumer's decision process itself and how it affects his buying behavior (Kotler et al., 2016). This step can vary greatly from consumer to consumer and from product to product, and even if two consumers' characteristics align.

This research acknowledges the importance of the first step of the model and how consumers' varying characteristics can affect how they perceive external stimuli differently, yet this chapter will focus on the second part of the model concerned with the consumer's buying decision. The characteristics of the target consumers in this research is discussed in the section describing the B&O Play's target group.

#### 4.1.2 Psychological factors

When looking at the consumer's buying decision process it is relevant to examine the underlying psychological factors that come into play. These include among others the consumer's motivations, attitudes and beliefs.

The strongest of these factors is the motivation for buying a product (Svatosova, 2013), and as such it is relevant to examine which motives influence a consumer to purchase a portable speaker. The motivation to buy a product can at times arise from biological needs, such as hunger or thirst. However, often our needs are not just biological but psychological such as the need for recognition, esteem or belonging. When a need reaches a certain level of intensity it will push the individual to seek action to attain satisfaction for the need. At this level of intensity, the need is categorized as a motive or a drive (Kotler et al., 2016).

#### 4.1.3 Freudian motivation theory

In the psychology literature there are different theories pertaining to motivation albeit with differing categorization of the underlying psychological mechanisms and how they shape our decisions. Sigmund Freud (1910) presumed that there are three layers of consciousness in the mind: the conscious, the preconscious and the unconscious. Furthermore, he indexed peoples' personality into superego, ego and id. The superego and ego are the only parts of the personality that reach the conscious level whereas the id remains deep in the unconsciousness and is inaccessible. The id operates on the pleasure principle thus if the id achieves its demands we experience pleasure otherwise we become dissatisfied (Freud, 1910). According to Freud, people are mostly unconscious and do not comprehend how their psychology interferes with their behavior. Moreover, his theory proposes that consumers' buying decisions are affected by subconscious motives that the consumer himself does not fully understand (Ibid). As such, the research design of the motivation research in the focus groups undertaken during the writing of this paper, was constructed to slowly reveal information to the participants, to probe and reveal their hidden subconscious motivations.

However, many aspects of Freudian motivation theory are out of date as his work is more than hundred years old and psychodynamic theory has evolved considerably since then (Westen, 1998). Furthermore, the idea of unconsciousness has been contested seeing as human behavior can be observed while human mental activity has to be inferred. This idea of unconsciousness and the transference phenomenon, have been researched and been validated in the fields of cognitive psychology (Bradley et al., 2005).

#### 4.1.4 Maslow's hierarchy of needs

Another theory trying to explain how motivation is rooted in human psychology, is Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1943). In particular Maslow sought to understand why people's needs differ and how they are related. According to Maslow, human needs can be arranged in a hierarchy, as seen in Figure 3, with physiological needs such as hunger and thirst at the bottom, ascended by safety needs, social/love needs, esteem needs and self-actualization needs at the top (Maslow, 1987; Solomon, 2009).

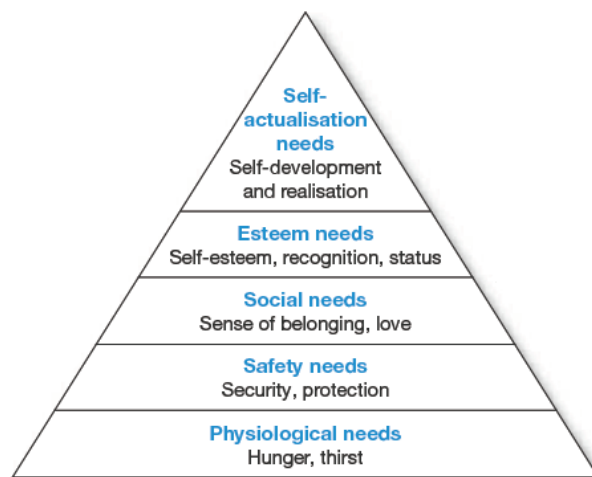


Figure 3: Maslow's hierarchy of needs

Needs are arranged in order of potency, and the higher needs thus only become apparent after the lower levels of the pyramid are satisfied. As written by Maslow (1943) *“Physiological needs are the most pre-potent of all needs. What this means specifically is, that in the human being who is missing everything in life in an extreme fashion, it is most likely that the major motivation would be the physiological needs rather than any others. A person who is lacking food, safety, love, and esteem would most probably hunger for food more strongly than for anything else”*.

Looking at consumers' buying decision in relation to portable speakers with Maslow's hierarchy in mind, the need for speakers would be in the higher levels of the pyramid. A portable speaker might be desired in relation to social needs in order to fit in with a group, or to impress a loved one. Still, it is more likely to be rooted in the esteem needs pertaining to self-esteem, recognition and status. This is

even more likely with high priced luxury portable speakers with a premium brand such as speakers sold by B&O Play, since these brands are associated with high status, and can fuel the buyer's self-esteem. As such it is important to realize for producers of portable speakers that these drives lie at the core of a consumer and are important to address in their marketing and promotion of their products in order to influence their consumer behavior.

Yet, Maslow's hierarchy of needs model has its drawbacks, and it has proven difficult to find empirical evidence of the hierarchy (Hall and Nougaim, 1968). Moreover, it can prove difficult to distinguish where a need such as listening to music is to be placed in the pyramid, and the obtainable insights into the consumer behavior might be sparse. It can be used as model to understand the basic needs involved in human behavior, but seeing as the target segmentation for portable speakers are assumed to be in the higher steps of the pyramid, it is more interesting to dive further into what specific motivations they might have for portable speakers and how these can be influenced.

#### 4.1.5 Complex buying behavior

Looking into the different kinds of buying behavior some are more complex than others. The consumer goes through different buying processes, when buying groceries compared to when they buy a house. A major factor in differentiating buying processes is the level of involvement the consumer has with the product he is about to buy. The level of involvement increases if the purchase is expensive, risky, rare, or highly self-expressive (Kotler, 2012). Another factor is the amount of perceived difference between brands.

	High involvement	Low involvement
Significant differences between brands	Complex buying behaviour	Variety-seeking buying behaviour
Few differences between brands	Dissonance-reducing buying behaviour	Habitual buying behaviour

Figure 4: Henry Assael in Kotler et al. 2012: Four types of buying behavior

As shown in Figure 4 high involvement and significant differences between brands, equates a complex buying behavior, whereas lower involvement and less differences between brands results in other buying behavior. This research however will focus on complex buying behavior as the purchase of a portable speaker is seen as being part of complex buying behavior. This is due to the relatively high presence of the following involvement factors: expensive price, rare purchase, highly self-expressive product. Furthermore, the portable speaker market is highly saturated and there exists a number of different brands with various attributes and values.

#### 4.1.6 Stages of the buying decision process

There are five stages of the consumer's buying decision process. As seen in the figure below (Figure 5) the first stage in the process is need recognition followed by information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision and postpurchase behavior. A consumer passes through all stages of the buying decision process every time a purchase is made (Kotler, 2012). In routine purchases the decision process is short and some stages may be skipped. However, in more complex buying situations such as with portable speakers each stage takes more time, and the consumer undergoes a more thorough decision process.

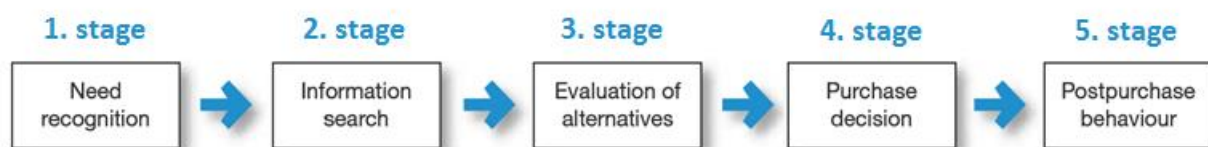


Figure 5: Kotler et al (2012): Buyer decision process

The first stage of the buying decision process is need recognition and can be triggered by either internal stimuli, such as hunger or external stimuli such as an advertisement or a recommendation from an influencer. In a study of students' online shopping behavior, a large majority of US and Irish students were found to discover a need recognition online (Comegys and Brennan, 2003). In this research, the external stimuli are particularly relevant and how influencers can lead consumers directly to a portable speaker, maybe even bypassing some of the subsequent stages or positively influencing them during

the evaluation of alternatives.

The second stage of the buying decision process is the consumers' information search. In this part of the decision process the consumer has realized his need for a product and is motivated to search for more information. Still, this step might be short or skipped entirely if the need is urgent or routine and the product is near at hand and can be purchased. If this is not the case, the need is stored in the memory of the consumer and the consumer will either immediately or at later time begin to seek out further information regarding the product. In relation to portable speakers, the consumer might realize the need for a portable speaker, when on a vacation or while hanging out in the park, yet the possibility to buy speaker in these situations will be limited. Instead, the consumer might start searching the internet for more information on speakers, ask a friend about their preferences or seek out guidance in an electronics store.

The third stage of the buyer decision process happens when the consumer uses information obtained from the second stage to evaluate various alternative brands and products. The evaluation of alternatives will vary greatly from purchase to purchase, and will depend on the individual consumer as well as the specific buying situation (Kotler, 2012). Some consumers might use logic to try and narrow down which attributes are most important for them and choose the product that comes closest to being the optimal candidate, while others might use intuition or gut-feeling to make the decision.

The use of intuition over logical thinking might seem like a poor choice when making a complex buying decision. However, Dijksterhuis (2004), inspired by Sigmund Freud, proposed the unconscious thought theory, stating that complex buying decisions made unconsciously are superior to decisions made consciously. In a series of experiments, Dijksterhuis (2004) tested participants buying decisions in relation to purchasing apartments. The research found that participants using unconscious thinking were less likely to base their decision on a few relevant attributes, but instead formed a more global judgement based on much more information (Dijksterhuis, 2004). Nevertheless, researchers have criticized unconscious thought theory heavily, and challenged its very existence (Newell and Shanks, 2014). A meta-study conducted in 2008 found no correlation between unconscious thinking and better decision making (Acker, 2008). Furthermore, a recent meta-study from 2015, the largest of its kind,

concluded that the methodology of Dijksterhuis's (2004) research was flawed and that there could be found no reliable support for his claims (Nieuwenstein et al., 2015). Hence, the research of this paper will not delve further into unconscious decision making, but will instead presume that consumers make conscious decisions.

The fourth stage is where the consumer ultimately makes his purchase decision, which is usually made when the consumer is in the store, it being online or offline. Generally, the consumer will buy the most preferred product based on his information search and evaluation of alternatives undertaking in stage two and three, however sometimes last minute factors may come into play. If for example you are in the store with a friend or a relative, he or she might persuade you to choose a different product in the last minute than you had originally thought about. It might also be that unexpected situational factors arise such as the preferred product being out of stock or only being available in a different color scheme than preferred. These factors may end up influencing the consumer to make a different purchase than their initial search of information and evaluation of alternatives would have led them to.

The fifth stage of the buying decision process is after the point of purchase and relates to the consumers' evaluation of the purchase. In this stage consumers compare their previous expectations with the perceived value of the product they have obtained. Consumers might experience cognitive dissonance (Telci et al., 2011) at this stage when they think about the other products they might have bought instead and their advantages. This feeling might be extensive if the acquired products performance is markedly worse than anticipated, and this can turn out to be harmful for the producer of the product. Firstly, consumers will remember this bad experience and be less inclined to purchase products from the same brand again. Secondly, consumers might tell friends and family to avoid the brand, and might even go as far as sharing their bad experience via customer reviews or posts directly on the producers Facebook page, attacking both the producers owned and shared media. The fifth stage will however not be examined in the quantitative research but its effects will be used to describe consumer behavior.



#### 4.1.7 Summary

These five stages are a framework to evaluate customers' buying decision process. However, it is not necessary that customers use every stage, nor is it necessary that they proceed in any particular order. For example, if a customer feels the urge to buy chocolate, he or she might go straight to the purchase decision stage, skipping information search and evaluation (Kotler, 2012). In this research the focus will be on the first four stages of the buying decision process and the fifth stage that considers post-purchase behaviour will not be investigated directly. Yet, the concept of post-purchase behavior and cognitive dissonance experienced in this stage will be taken into account as an explanation for consumer behaviour.

### 4.2 Influencer Marketing

#### 4.2.1 PESO media strategy

There are a number of different ways media can be used to influence the consumer. Additionally, there are various different actors having ownership of the media that reach the target consumer and different resources need to be utilized in order to activate consumers. Media content has in recent literature been categorized into four quadrants (Figure 6), and referred to as the PESO model in academic research (Luttrell, 2014; Bayles, 2015; Thabit, 2015). Originally, marketing has focused on paid and owned content but as the landscape for marketing has become increasingly complex the ability to affect the consumer's decision process with these types of media content have proved more and more difficult (Pringle and Marshall, 2011).

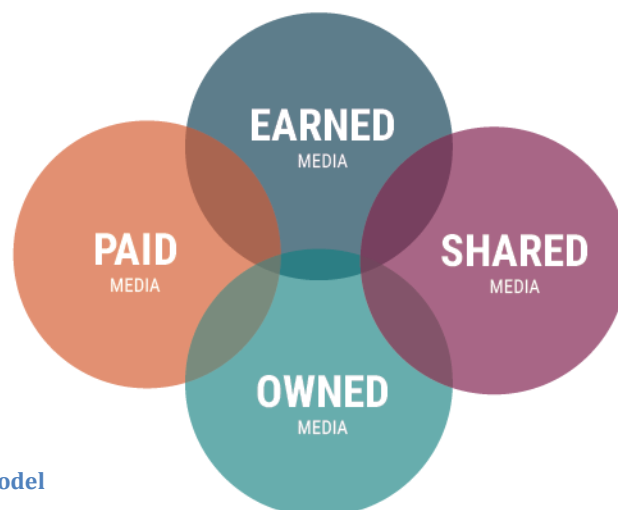


Figure 6: The PESO model

One problem with paid and earned content is the consumer's suspicion towards the message sent in advertisements, or the specifications presented by producers. Consumers are more skeptical than ever and are keen to spot and disregard information from paid and earned content (Brown and Hayes, 2008). Furthermore, recent research shows that consumers' trust to traditional advertising is declining while recommendations from friends still hold high credibility (Nielsen 2015a).

Another problem facing paid content is the increased ad-avoidance seen in consumer behavior and the emergence of ad-avoidance technologies that allow customers to filter out ads while browsing online (Anderson and Gans, 2011). Seeing as consumers spend an increasing amount of time on the internet it has become vital to seek new ways to influence consumers online.

#### 4.2.2 From PESO to SOEP

In a recent study researchers from Sydney, Singapore and Germany (Macnamara et al., 2016) argue that a shift is happening from the traditional media to digital media especially social media. Their findings showed that 72.8 % of practitioners expected earned and owned media to be of growing importance in the coming years, arguing the increase of social media expands the opportunities for two-way communication between producers and consumers. However, owned media experiences an enlarged risk as consumers now have the opportunity to write negative comments directly on the producers Facebook page for everyone to see resulting in "shitstorms" that can happen in an instant and be devastating for a company's brand.

However, earned media content does not share these risks in the same way because third parties, such as bloggers, journalists or reviewers, earn the content. Furthermore, earned media can also be attributed to recommendations from friends or family, which travels by word-of-mouth, and consumer opinions posted on the internet. These two types of media content are exceedingly important as they have been found to be the most trusted types of media information (Nielsen 2015b).

#### 4.2.3 Influencers

Looking deeper into earned online media, consumers use most of their time online on social-media,

video content and blogs (Pringle and Marshall, 2011), hence these are of particular interest for companies trying to make an impact on consumer buying behavior. Sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube have millions of visitors every day and are huge platforms that companies can use to reach customers. The emergence of big data allows companies to use paid content that is specifically tailored to reach their targeted consumer segments based on their likes and dislikes. However, it is difficult for companies to use and benefit from owned and shared media, as it has to go through a third-party.

One way companies can try to increase earned media is by engaging in influencer marketing. Influencers can be defined as individuals who have an impact on the diffusion of information in interpersonal networks (Gladwell 2002; Goldenberg et al. 2009). The problem with this definition of influencers is that it does not address the level of impact needed for an individual in order to be characterized as an influencer, meaning every individual who impacts the flow of information can be categorized as an influencer.

Thus, it is important to make a distinction between influencers such as friends and family that influence each other in small interpersonal networks, as opposed to celebrities, blogs and other big influencers who can reach a much bigger audience. Moreover, influencers can be described as individuals who:

*“Exhibit some combination of desirable attributes—whether personal attributes like credibility, expertise, or enthusiasm, or network attributes such as connectivity or centrality— that allows them to influence a disproportionately large number of others, possibly indirectly via a cascade of influence”*  
(Bakshy et al., 2011)

Influencer marketing can be seen as lying in between earned and paid media as shown in Figure 7 (Hall, 2016). Mostly, influencers are viewed as being part of earned media, but seeing the rise of sponsored content on blogs and on YouTube, influencer marketing has become a mix of the two. This gives firms a direct access to promote their products via influencers, adding their credibility to the message and sharing it through the influencer’s network. This is often done via blogs where the blogger is paid to write about a product or service, and is then required by law to disclose that the content is sponsored (Hall, 2016).

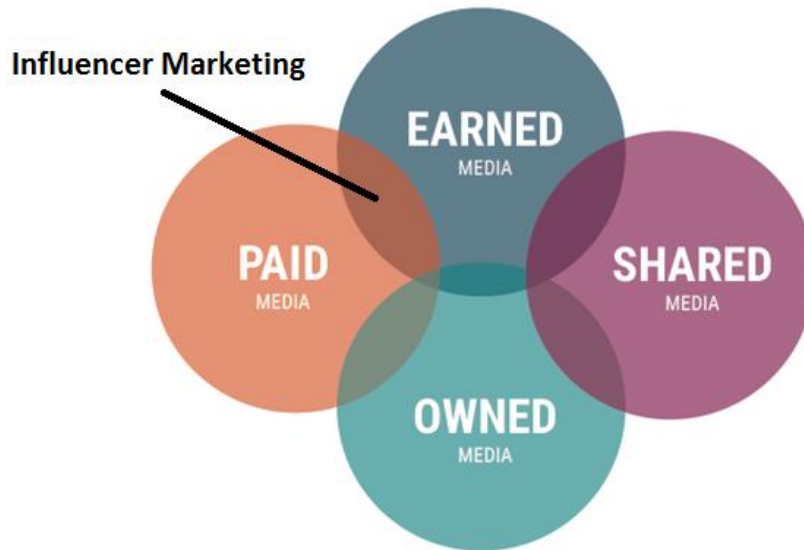


Figure 7: The PESO model including Influencer Marketing

The downside of paid influencer marketing is that it reduces credibility as bloggers have to state which blogposts are sponsored and which are not, reducing the effect of the message the consumer receives. Instead, firms can try to focus on earned influencer marketing by creating partnerships or sending out products to bloggers and professional reviewers. In this way, companies increase their chance of getting products exposed via earned media without being sponsored and thus heightening the credibility of presented products. However, the company has less control over how the influencers portray their products to customers, and they may even portray them negatively, seeing as a blogger or a professional reviewer would lose credibility among his followers if he only praised every product, without mentioning flaws and drawbacks.

#### 4.2.4 Bloggers as influencers

With the emergence of web 2.0 the way consumers interact online has changed dramatically and become more erratic and harder to predict. The decision process of consumers may increase greatly online as consumers have the opportunity to search for a wealth of information and evaluate many different products and brands from the comfort of their home. However, being met with such a wealth of different information increase the possibility of finding conflicting statements and causing cognitive

dissonance in the consumer (Telci et al., 2011). Moreover, the growing amount of online information also increases the amount of online noise making it harder for consumers to sort in relevant information.

With the advent of blogs as a new online media Mutum & Wang (2011) argue that the traditional linear model of the consumer buying process is that “it assumes the consumer as living in a vacuum and looks at them as problem solvers.” According to Mutum & Wang (2011) the linear model does account for the interaction among consumers and the influence of blogs:

*“For example, consumers may suddenly come across a new gadget that has just been launched on a gadget blog. While going through the specifications and deciding whether to buy it, the reviews and comments or other customers regarding this gadget is readily available and can be used to help make the decision there and then.”* (Mutum and Wang, 2011).

In this case the blog might then influence the entirety of consumers’ decision making process, diminishing the length of the process considerably. Furthermore, several studies have had similar findings showing recommendations from blogs to be positively correlated with the consumers purchasing decision (Park et al., 2007) and showing that blogs have an influence on multiple stages of the consumer buying process (Hsu et al., 2013).

## **5. Qualitative research**

### **5.1 Interview**

#### **5.1.1 Research problem and purpose**

In order to learn more about B&O Play’s activities regarding portable speakers on the Danish Market, I have conducted an interview with the Channel Marketing Manager in the Nordics, Marianne Bentsen. The main purpose of the interview is to gather information on B&O Play’s target market in Denmark. This will include information on where and how B&O wish to distribute their portable speakers and whom they categorize as their target segment. Secondly, the interview aims at uncovering which parameters B&O Play seek to optimize in order to match their offerings with the target consumer’s

needs, and thirdly which opportunities and challenges B&O Play encounters in the Danish portable speaker market.

#### 5.1.2 Selection of B&O Play interviewee

The reason I chose to interview Marianne Bentsen is because she is specialized in the Danish market and has vast knowledge about the target group in Denmark as well as strategic insight into how B&O seeks to reach their core audience. In this regard, she is the best suited person in B&O Play to provide me with the information I seek. Furthermore, it is more likely that she will be able to set aside time for an interview than the CEO or the CMO, while still possessing the required in-depth knowledge of the company's marketing operations.

#### 5.1.3 Research design

I have chosen to make a non-standardized and semi-structured interview. The semi-structured nature of the interview will guide the interviewee to stay on track while still providing the interviewer with the possibility to inquire further on relevant topics. The interview was conducted in Danish as this was the preferred language of the interviewee.

The interview was structured into 3 sections. The first section covered the target group of customers and how B&O defined this segment. It consisted of a broad opening question asking about the general composition of B&O Play's target group and then a subset of more specific questions asking about the segment for portable speakers and examples of use cases. The second section opened with a question asking about the unique selling points of B&O Play's portable speakers. From there on the follow-up questions asked about the specific parameters of interest, and how B&O Play communicated their products unique selling points to the customer. The third and last section of the interview opened with asking the interviewee how big B&O Play's market share of portable speakers is in Denmark. Following up, the interviewee was asked about the possibilities of expansion in the market and the competitors' position in the market.

The interview was conducted as a phone interview as this was the most practical way for the

interviewee to participate as she did not have time for meeting in person. This meant that it was not possible to read the interviewee's facial expressions and body language, resulting in the interviewer being unable to detect small gestures that may hint at hidden information. However, it made the recording of the interview easier and of better sound quality as the entire interview could be recorded via an app on the phone.

#### 5.1.4 Results

The nature of the semi-structured interview, gives the possibility of the interviewee answering questions ahead of time before they have been posed, and as such some sub-questions from the interview guide were not asked and new questions were instead conjured in the spur of the moment. Still, the overall structure of the interviews 3 sections was maintained. Sometimes the answers spanned over more than one section, but for clarities sake I will go through the results of each section one by one. To hear all of the questions and answers, the the recording has been included.

##### 5.1.4.1 Section 1 – target group

In the first section regarding the composition of B&O Play's target group, Marianne answered that B&O Play seeks to target a segment they describe as "Urban Creative Professionals". Whereas B&O targets the upper class from 45 and up, B&O Play seeks to target a younger segment between 20-45 years hoping to introduce the B&O core brand earlier into the customers' life and thereby gaining a lifelong customer. When asked more specifically about how they targeted the portable speaker market, she said that they did not have sufficient data to do so since a large number of their sales were from third party vendors. However, they did have specific use cases in mind for each of their products which they explained as going from more portable to more powerful. The A1 was the most portable, being able to be carried and listened to on the go while biking or hiking, and could be loud enough for a group of 10-15 people. The A2 was a bit less portable, but could still be used for events such as picnics or on vacation and be loud enough for a party of 15-25 people. The last and loudest of B&O Play's portable speakers is the Beolit 15, which is ideal for bigger parties with more than 25 people the downside being it is bigger and heavier than the other two. Its usage is thus more likely to be around the house and on the terrace, and less on the go.

#### 5.1.4.2 Section 2 – unique selling points

Asked about B&O Play's speakers' unique selling points, Marianne said that they focused on 3 aspects: signature sound, great design and superb craftsmanship. These 3 assets combine to the slogan *make beautiful music* which gives their products a unique quality that none other can deliver. When asked about which specific parameters she thought were relevant to the customer she said that their target consumer was above all interested in quality, and therefore the internal speaker components and the external materials had to all be of superb quality and combined in a functional and fashionable design. Parameters such as price and loudness were of less consequence since they wanted to deliver the best possible experience. In her experience, it was important to communicate this to the consumer as directly as possible. As a result, they have introduced "Active Displays" in shops that carry B&O Play speakers, where customers can hear the products for themselves and to display the high quality of their products. Furthermore, they try to engage with their potential customers through events such as "Design and Dine" and "VIP evenings" at Magasin and Illum. At these events, they send out a B&O promoter with the goal to "sell like hell". They also try to engage with their target segment through partnering with small intimate concerts and festivals such as the Heartland festival since urban creative professionals are well represented at these events. They do not yet have such a big online presence but Marianne admits that there is a potential in working more closely with bloggers.

#### 5.1.4.3 Section 3 – the portable speaker market

Lastly, I asked how big a market share B&O Play possessed of the Danish portable speaker market. Unfortunately, she did not have market data for the Danish market but only data obtained by GFK in England, France and Germany. However, she stated that B&O Play's two main competitors on the speaker market were Bose and Beats. According to her Bose is a premium brand, which is associated with high sound quality and innovation, yet it is not a very hip brand and rather boring. Bose's design is not fashionable and does not live up to today's standard, rather it is made out of cheap plastic materials that are neither durable nor aesthetically pleasing. Beats design on the other hand is at a very high level, and their products sell based on their design and the brand value created by the association with the famous rapper Dr. Dre. When asked about the opportunities to expand in the portable speaker



market Marianne mentions B&O Play's opportunity lies in the niche market with high quality sound and fashionable design. She points out that their tagline *make beautiful music* is aimed at capturing this specific market.

## 5.2 Focus groups

The purpose of the data collection through focus groups was to gain an insight into the buying behavior of groups of people matching the profile of urban creative professionals. One of the reasons that focus groups were selected for the method of data collection is that they give the opportunity to reveal pre-held views and gain a higher level of insight into the participants' shopping motives and attitudes towards the products (Kotler et al., 2016). Another reason is that other methods such as questionnaires or interviews lack interaction between participants, which can be crucial as it makes respondents discuss and reflect upon their statements. Thereby enabling the participants, the opportunity to further elaborate on their views. Two separate focus groups were conducted under similar circumstances to get a horizontal set of observations that could be examined and the results compared. Minimizing the differences between the two focus groups gives the possibility to see if there are general trends in the participants' buying motives and behavior, without it being attributed to differences in age, sex, social status or income. More importantly, it is beneficial that the focus groups are conducted with a comparatively homogeneous group in order to elevate the equality of contributions to discussion among participants (Masadeh, 2012).

### 5.2.1 Selection of participants

The participants included in the focus groups were chosen through non-probability sampling, based on whether or not they could be described as urban creative professionals. As such only participants in the age category 20-30 years were chosen to partake in the focus groups. Even though the age range for urban creative professionals ranges from 20-45 years no participants over the age of 30 were included in the focus groups. This was done so as not to inhibit each individual's possible contribution since a group with large age differentiation would mean the participants would be less likely to feel at ease and thus less likely to express their own opinions (Saunders et al., 2015). If more time and resources had been available it could have been interesting to have made separate focus groups for both ages 20-30

and 30-45 and then comparing the results of the different age groups. However, time constraints and difficulty in finding participants in that age group that matched the UCP criteria meant it was not possible.

Regarding residency, only participants who were located in the Copenhagen area were included, since UCP's normally live in urban environments in big cities. Furthermore, all participants had Danish nationality seeing as this study concentrates on the Danish market, and to allow the conversation to flow smoothly in Danish. Both focus groups consisted solely of males, who are the primary consumers of portable speakers, and to make the groups more homogenous. Again, if more time had been available, it would have been interesting to include focus groups of female participants or mixed sexes. All of the subjects in groups were students at Copenhagen University, except for 1 person in each group whom both had finished their masters in economics and now had a full-time job. This meant that there was a slight difference in income between the one outlier in each focus group who had the salary from a full-time job, whereas the rest of the participants had a lower income from SU and student jobs. Considering social status all of the participants fit into the same category of students some of them knowing each other beforehand. This enabled the discussion to flow more effortlessly, and to make every point be heard as participants were less afraid of voicing their opinions in an atmosphere where they felt safe (Ibid).

### 5.2.2 Selection of time & place

The time and place of both focus groups were selected to fit the participants schedule and were arranged in a relaxed setting. This was done in order to get the participants to partake in the focus group and make them feel comfortable, as this would increase quality of the data gathered (Saunders et al., 2015). Therefore, the time of both focus groups were held after 17:00, so the participants were able to attend after work or study. The first focus group was held on a Friday in a relaxed environment at 20:00. Participants had been provided with dinner so they were not hungry and thus were less likely to be agitated or become impatient during the duration of the discussion. This ensured more fruitful insights as participants were less likely to withhold questions or insights in the hope of ending the focus group sooner. The second focus group was conducted on a Monday at 17:15 at a café. Participants were provided with a single beer as a refreshment during the focus group to lighten the mood and help get

the discussion going. At both focus groups the participants were seated around a table with the researcher standing at the end of the table and posing the questions. No interruptions occurred, yet the background noise encountered at the café where the second focus group took place might make answers difficult to distinguish on the audio recording. To minimize this problem, the researcher repeated participants' answers aloud in close proximity to the recording device.

### 5.2.3 Focus group research design

In order to structure the focus groups and have a similar discussion about the same topics and to ensure a level of consistency in the two focus groups a discussion guide (Appendix 2) was prepared beforehand (Saunders et al., 2015). Using the guidelines of Saunders et al. (2015) and Pearce (1998) a “moderately structured discussion” approach was chosen, dividing the focus group sessions up into major topics each with a primary question and a subset of follow-up and propping questions. Consequently, the discussion guide was structured into 3 main parts, with the first two parts taking up a bit more time than the last part, as participants had unintentionally already raised a number of points related to the questions in the last part during discussions of the first two parts.

#### 5.2.3.1 Moderator technique

Each part starts with an open question that encourages discussion. the moderator then asks additional probing questions either to the group as a whole or to specific participants in order to get them to elaborate on their response. The reason for asking multiple probing questions is to take further steps up the “ladder of abstraction” reaching more complex topics and uncovering more deeply rooted buying motives in participants (Wagner, 2007). Furthermore, inquisitive body language is used to lead participants on.

For example, by raising an eyebrow, the moderator might indicate that he has not fully understood the participant's answer and edge him on to further explain his reasoning. These steps are then repeated for each topic in order to climb to the top of the ladder of abstraction and gain the highest amount of insight. With this method, the UCP's consumer fundamental shopping motivation can be discovered

since it uncovers the underlying reasons of why certain attributes or expected consequences are desired (Freud, 1910).

The author of this paper was also chosen as the moderator of both focus groups, which might indicate that the data received would lack reliability. However, Nassar-McMillian & Borders (2002) argue that it is necessary for the researcher himself to be the moderator of the focus group, seeing as he has the required knowledge about the subject enabling him to make the group maintain its focus and thus extract the correct data. Prince & Davies (2001) state that moderators who: *“display an intrinsic interest with the research topic, overt friendliness, a sense of humour, ... and a willingness to listen are more likely to encourage participants to share their experiences”*. Consequently, the author of this paper opted for an open and light moderator style that encompassed the aforementioned qualities. Furthermore, the moderator sought to manage the flow of the discussion by inhibiting dominant players via reduced eye-contact, while drawing other shier participants into the discussion through gesturing or direct follow-up questions addressed to them specifically.

#### 5.2.3.2 Selection of speakers

Firstly, two speakers were selected from B&O Play’s lineup of portable speakers, since B&O Play is the case company used in this research. Out of B&O Play’s lineup of 3 portable speakers the A1 & A2 were chosen to be included in the handout as these 2 speakers are the newest and most portable speakers, whereas the Beolit 15 is older and less portable (Beoplay, 2016b). The reason two speakers were incorporated from B&O Play instead of one was to hear the focus group compare the two and thus get a deeper insight into their attitudes towards B&O Play’s portable speakers.

Secondly, two comparable speakers to B&O Play’s A1 & A2 were chosen from both Bose and Beats as these are B&O Play’s main competitors according to the information obtained from the interview with B&O Play Channel Marketing Manager. Each speaker was chosen to be comparable to the speakers selected from B&O Play to get a more even discussion and to more precisely uncover the participants attitudes to different speakers. Thus, Bose’s Soundlink Mini II and Beat’s Pill+ were chosen as they had the same, size, coloration and price range as B&O Play’s A1 & A2. If the selection of the speakers

in the handout had been more heterogeneous, participants might favorize one speaker over another due to coloration or size, and it might derail the discussion. Another important reason these 4 speakers were chosen was due to their availability and comparability on the biggest webshop in Denmark [www.elgiganten.dk](http://www.elgiganten.dk) (MyNewsDesk, 2015). Since UCPs do most of their shopping on the internet (Handa and Gupta, 2014) and seeing as Elgiganten is the most popular webshop when it comes to buying consumer electronics, it is likely to assume that a big part of B&O Play's consumers compare alternative products on their site. Thus, all information regarding price, specifications and pictures of the speakers were collected from [www.elgiganten.dk](http://www.elgiganten.dk) to show the information that the consumer was most likely to see and to avoid positively biased information collected from the producers' own home sites.

#### 5.2.3.3 Design of handouts

The first handout given to the participants were a picture of each speaker (Appendix 3). The pictures depicted each speaker in white and each speaker was printed on a sheet of A4 so that it was easy to see all the details of the speakers and compare them without taking coloring into account. There was no text on the handout except for a number on each picture from 1-4 to make it easier for participants to distinguish the speakers from one another, yet without explicitly revealing the brand or product name of each speaker. This was done in order to hear the participants' raw perception of the speaker without them being biased based on attitudes towards specific brands or products. However, the brand's logo could still be seen on the products themselves, giving the participants the opportunity to eventually identify the brands and producers of each speaker. The brands of the products could have been removed via photo manipulation prior to being printed on the handouts, yet this was seen as too big of an alteration of the pictures and might have eschewed the participants' attitudes towards the speakers.

After the participants had discussed the first handout for some time, the second handout (Appendix 4) was passed around to each participant. The second handout showed pictures of the speakers identical to the first handout, but this time technical specifications were attached to each picture detailing data such as battery life, size, output effect and connection type. The reason for omitting this information in the first handout was to see how much of an impact the technical specifications would have on the

participants perceived value of the different speakers. Providing the participants with a wealth of technical specifications for each speaker gave them the possibility to compare each speaker more thoroughly, and gave the researcher the opportunity to observe which specifications were of importance, based on the discussion. The specifications for each speaker was retrieved from [www.elgiganten.dk](http://www.elgiganten.dk) to ensure homogeneity. Moreover, the specifications listed are the same that consumers use to compare products with via Elgiganten's comparison tool (Elgiganten, 2016). An example of 3 of the speakers used in the focus group can be seen in Appendix 5. Furthermore, retrieving data from a third-party retailer minimizes the bias of the specifications listed compared to retrieving the data from the producer's website.

Lastly, a third hand-out was given to the participants, which listed the price of each speaker. The price was revealed as the last information to evaluate the price sensitivity of the participants, and to see if their attitudes towards the speakers would change as a result. The prices were also acquired from [www.elgiganten.dk](http://www.elgiganten.dk) where it was made certain that none of the speakers were on sale or had any discounts, so that the price shown to the participants was the regular price of the speakers.

#### 5.2.3.4 Group thinking

One of the shortcomings connected with using focus groups as a data collection method is group thinking. Turner & Pratkanis (1998) describes this problem as collective rationalization and "the incomplete survey of alternatives and objectives" (Turner and Pratkanis, 1998). The problem especially manifests in groups with few strong dominant members and many less interactive and shy members. In these cases the dominant members will drive the discussion and it will become less nuanced as a result. In both of the two focus groups dominant members were present, but rather than a few dominant members, many of the participants discussed freely and argued for different points. However, sometimes a dominant member would get a lot of exposure while other participants would say little to nothing. In these situations the moderator would via body language turn their attention from the dominant member to members less in focus in order to hear their opinion and minimize group thinking. Another measure that was used to counter the negative effects of group thinking was to conduct two different focus groups with different members and group dynamic, but still same homogenous

composition. Thus the different results of the groups can be compared independently and the effects of group thinking will not carry over from one group to the other.

### 5.3. Results from the qualitative research

The following section will discuss the results obtained from the focus groups and will present it in a manner that follows the discussion guide that was used to conduct both focus groups. The discussion guide consists of three main topics with a number of sub-questions to elaborate the participant's views. The main topics are as following: 1. Defining portable speakers, 2. Comparison of portable speakers, and 3. Brand comparison. To maintain clarity points and arguments from the participants will be listed in the segments where they are relevant and thus might not always be listed in chronological order. As an example, if a participant during discussion of the focus groups' first topic brings up an argument that is thematically related to the third topic, the result will be listed under the third heading instead.

#### 5.3.1 Topic 1 – Defining portable speakers

The first topic of the focus group opened with asking the participants what they thought about portable speakers. In both focus groups the participants thought of portable speakers as speakers you were able to carry with you outside of your home and thus were not dependent on being plugged to a wall socket but could run on batteries, yet a few participants also thought of using them in their homes. Regarding the size of the speakers, participants in both groups were more divided. Some participants pictured a boombox sized speaker while others pictured a smaller speaker you could hold in the palm of your hand. Furthermore, it was discussed if a portable speaker would run on Bluetooth or be plugged in by cable, and which would be most advantageous.

Moving further into the discussion they were asked what they saw as the 3 most important aspects of a portable speaker. In both focus groups battery life was the first aspect that all participants agreed on was important. Apart from battery life however there was initially not much consensus regarding which aspects were most important. In the first focus group participants mentioned: design, sound quality and being able to play loud as important aspects. The same aspects were mentioned in the second group as well as durability. However, in both groups participants argued that the different aspects' importance

varied largely depending on the usage purpose of portable speaker. If they had bought the speaker to bring on a festival, durability, loudness and battery life were important and sound quality, size and design less so. Whereas if they bought with everyday use in mind, size, design, sound quality and battery life would be of higher importance.

### 5.3.2 Topic 2 – Comparison of portable speakers

In the second topic, the participants were given 3 sets of hand-outs (Appendix 3, 4 & 5) that showed 4 pictures of different speakers: A1, A2 from B&O Play, Pill+ from Beats and Soundlink Mini II from Bose. The first hand-out showed only pictures of the speakers, the second showed technical specifications and the third showed the price of each speaker. Firstly, two speakers were selected from B&O Play's lineup of portable speakers, since B&O Play is the case company used in this research. Out of B&O Play's lineup of 3 portable speakers the A1 & A2 were chosen to be included in the handout as these 2 speakers are the newest and most portable speakers, whereas the Beolit 15 is older and less portable (Beoplay, 2016b). The reason two speakers were incorporated from B&O Play instead of one was to hear the focus group compare the two and thus get a deeper insight into their attitudes towards B&O Play's portable speakers.

Secondly, two comparable speakers to B&O Play's A1 & A2 were chosen from both Bose and Beats as these are B&O Play's main competitors according to the information obtained from the interview with B&O Play Channel Marketing Manager. Each speaker was chosen to be comparable to the speakers selected from B&O Play to get a more even discussion and to more precisely uncover the participants attitudes to different speakers. Thus, Bose's Soundlink Mini II and Beat's Pill+ were chosen as they had the same, size, coloration and price range as B&O Play's A1 & A2. If the selection of the speakers in the handout had been more heterogeneous, participants might favorize one speaker over another due to coloration or size, and it might derail the discussion. Another important reason these 4 speakers were chosen was due to their availability and comparability on the biggest webshop in Denmark [www.elgiganten.dk](http://www.elgiganten.dk) (MyNewsDesk, 2015). Since UCPs do most of their shopping on the internet (Handa and Gupta, 2014) and seeing as Elgiganten is the most popular webshop when it comes to buying consumer electronics, it is likely to assume that a big part of B&O Play's consumers compare



alternative products on their site. Thus, all information regarding price, specifications and pictures of the speakers were collected from [www.elgiganten.dk](http://www.elgiganten.dk) to show the information that the consumer was most likely to see and to avoid positively biased information collected from the producers' own home sites.

#### 5.3.2.1 Topic 2.1 – Handout 1

When shown the pictures of the 4 different speakers the participants in the second focus group were not impressed, with one of them commenting they all looked bad. Another participant stated that the speaker marked as number one (B&O Play's A1) looked like a smoke alarm: *"it really looks like a smoke alarm, and I think everyone here agrees."* In the first focus group participants were also generally dissatisfied with the design of the speakers, and some participants also noted that the A1 looked like a smoke alarm or an ice hockey puck. A participant in focus group 2 described the speakers as follows *"speaker 1 (Beoplay A1) and 2 (Beoplay A2) looks like cheap garbage ... this one (Beats Pill+) would look cheap if it didn't say Beats on top of it, whereas I know a friend who has the fourth speaker (Bose Soundlink Mini II) and Bose is a quality brand"*. The same participant had not yet realized that the first two speakers were from B&O Play and when asked why he thought the speakers from B&O Play looked like cheap garbage, the participant wavered and said that it might not be bad design as such *"I don't necessarily think it's bad design ... Speaker 1 (A1) and 2 (A2) take more chances in terms of design and I guess it is not that bad after all"*. This is an interesting remark as the participant originally thought the quality of the design of the speaker looked bad and cheap, but when confronted with the brand of the speaker the consumer changed his statement to be less harsh. This might be due to the consumer thinking that the design might be in good taste after all since it is made by a premium brand often associated with high quality design (Belen del Rio et al., 2001).

Both groups noted that they found the fourth speaker as the most appealing and many participants in both groups said that they did so because they associated the Bose brand with high quality and value for money. Furthermore, the design of the speaker seemed functional and looked like a proper speaker, while the Pill+ looked cheap and the A1, and A2 looked weird and illogical. However, participants in both groups were on the fence whether they would buy one at all. From the first focus group: *"I wouldn't buy a single one of the speakers. My phone would likely play just as loud"*, *"I would*

*definitely choose speaker 3 or 4 but I don't know if I would buy one at all". From the second focus group: "Even if I was going to buy a portable speaker I wouldn't pick any of them, but if I had to pick one I would choose speaker 4".*

#### 5.3.2.2 Topic 2.2 – Handout 2

After receiving the second hand-out containing the technical specifications some participants noted that the B&O Play speakers could only play mono and that you could view the output of the speakers. Mostly, participants argued that specifications were not that relevant at all when deciding to buy a speaker. From focus group 1: *"I think it is typical for electronics to list a lot of technical specifications, which when it comes down to it are irrelevant for what you really want" "To be honest I think that all of these specifications are 100 percent useless. It all comes down to the design".* Still some participants argued that sound quality and battery life were essential, and mentioned that they were now more interested in the speakers from B&O Play as they both claimed a battery life of 24 hours compared to Pill+ 12 hours and the SoundLink Mini II's 10 hours of battery life, so in this aspect the specifications were helpful in choosing between the speakers. From focus group 1 *"24 hours of battery life is a huge advantage ... I would probably choose either the SoundLink or the A2" "I hadn't given the A2 much thought but given the battery life I might consider it now"* Yet, when the participants later were asked if the specifications had made them change their mind on their view on the speakers, they still had mixed feelings. From focus group 2: *"I still don't know if what we have seen is relevant. The focus has mostly been on battery life and size" "Yeah and I still feel we are missing reviews and price ... looking at design A2 looks better than the SoundLink, but I have the feeling that A2 will be twice as expensive. Which in itself would be a deal breaker"* In both focus groups the participants were also skeptical about the validity of the specifications, and criticized how the specifications were listed or the measuring technique used by the producers. From focus group 1 *"The specification that lists RMS watt is useless. Using RMS is the worst way to measure speaker and in reality it only utilizes 2 or 4 watt".* Moreover, many participants in both focus groups would like a professional reviewers opinion on the specifications and their validity. From focus group 2 *"Normally I would check some reviews and see if battery life is actually 24 hours ... I mean they always list the maximum battery life, but then when the reviews come in, it might be only 20 or 18 hours in reality."*

### 5.3.2.3 Topic 2.3 – Handout 3

When the participants were introduced to the price of each speaker they were generally surprised by the price. Most participants in the second focus group thought the prices were higher than they had expected. From focus group 2: *“That’s more than I would pay for any of them”* *“That is a lot of money!”*. However, one participant said he thought the prices were lower than he had expected, and another participant thought that the prices were as he expected. *“That’s funny, I was just about to say that it was rather cheap, but that’s probably because I have a full-time job”*, *“I guess that is what you could expect from B&O ... but the Bose speaker is in a price range I would accept”*. This is interesting as it shows that the participant with a full-time job is less price sensitive, which might be due to his larger monthly income than the other participants.

The participants in the first focus group were also pretty dismissive about the high prices:

Focus group 1: *“I wouldn’t buy any of them”*, *“It has to be under 1000 kr. at least”*, *“Maybe if it was 500 or 700”*. Some of the participants argued that the price was not justifiable compared to other speakers, and that they would need more convincing to pay a premium price: *“For what they are asking you can get a really good stationary speaker ... You could get a nice set of stereo speakers for 800 kr”*, *“ I would say that the price is definitely too high just based on the specifications presented ... the other day I saw a similar speaker to only 50 kr. and I wouldn’t think they would be worse”*. One participant even pointed out that the speakers were not meant for them: *“B&O Play is targeted at people from 30 and older. They would never target us since we are too frugal”* This comment from one of the participants is interesting, as B&O Play actually aims to target UCPs from 20-45 years (Bentsen 2016). Nevertheless, according to nearly all the participants the prices were too steep, especially for the participants who did not have a full-time job.

When asked which speaker the participants would prefer taking all things into account including price, most participants still preferred Bose, especially those participants that had a positive view of the Bose brand or who had previous experience with Bose speakers. From focus group 2: *“I would definitely choose the Bose speaker ... it’s a combination of it being cheap and that I know the brand”*, *“For me it really depends on the reviews! I mean, it all comes down to what the reviews say! ... If the Dr. Dre*

*speakers (Pill+) received higher marks than the Bose speakers, then I would buy them”.*

Many participants in the first focus group also pointed out, that it was difficult for them to make a decision without having heard the speakers themselves. From focus group 1: *“Some speakers sometimes list features such as Bass Boost, but then when you actually hear them it sounds terrible”, “To summarize we are missing the opportunity to hear them ... we can read the frequency range, but we can’t measure the sound quality from that”.* The opportunity to hear the speakers for themselves would be relevant in determining, which speaker a participant would consider buying. Moreover, the participants stressed that it was difficult to judge sound quality through technical specifications as they were too complex to understand properly or misleading. Yet, it is difficult if not impossible to hear the speaker over the internet, instead requiring the consumer physically entering a store to witness the sound quality for themselves. Interestingly, the inability to hear the speakers was not brought up in the second focus group, where participants instead focused on the lack of review scores. Seeing as it is difficult to quickly gain a proper insight into the sound quality of a portable speaker, and as the participants mistrust or don’t understand the technical specifications, they rely on their own or other people’s experience with the product when deciding on which product to buy

### 5.3.3 Topic 3 – Brand comparison

At this point in the session most of the participants had already indicated their views in relation to several of the brands presented. In addition, some participants were growing tired and lost their concentration. Therefore, the last part of the focus group was shortened in both groups and in particular in the second focus group to alleviate the participants of further inquiry. In the first focus group participants knew the B&O brand but when asked about B&O Play many had never heard of it before, while a few knew of it, they didn’t know exactly how it was related to B&O. From focus group 1: *“No”, “Not at all”, “I think I might have heard of it”, “isn’t it sort of a sub-brand of B&O but in a price range for normal people?”.* When the participants were asked, what they perceived was the difference between B&O and B&O Play they were divided in how it differed: *“B&O Play is more portable”, “B&O Play offers a cheaper line of products that are also of inferior quality”, “I feel it’s the same quality as B&O”, “Well, you can’t have cheaper products at the same level of quality, so that can’t be true”.*

When asked about their relationship with Bose the participants were divided as well. While some participants knew Bose very well, others had never heard of them. From focus group 2: *“I know them, and associate them with quality”, “I have never heard of Bose at all”, “Me neither”*. In the first focus group some participants who knew of Bose were more skeptical and said that they thought of Bose as a common brand and did not think it was associated with beautiful design but rather something you could buy in a supermarket *“When I think of Bose, I think of a product that I could see on sale in Føtex”*.

Most participants had heard of Beats by Dre but associated the brand with cheap products and low quality. From focus group 2: *“Of what I’ve heard about Beats it’s overpriced and it shouldn’t be very good quality compared to the price”, “I fully agree”*. When asked if they had anything positive to say about beats, participants struggled to find anything positive to say *“They are made by Dr. Dre ... If you like Dr. Dre then I guess it’s a plus?”*.

Lastly, there was some small-talk summing up the topics talked about in the focus groups and asking participants’ if they had any final points. Here participants in both focus groups brought up the relatively uselessness of the provided specs, as they were too difficult to understand and many participants felt that besides the brand, price and design they did not really have an idea of how the speakers where different or which they would be most interested in. When asked how they would then decide, many participants said they would search for professional reviews made by trusted review sites who tested speakers regularly and consequently had the technical knowhow on which aspects were important and whether the portable speakers had high value for money. Comparing the importance of a professional review to hearing the speaker for themselves many participants said professional reviews were much more important than hearing the speaker for themselves. Focus group 2: *“For me I would say (professional) reviews weigh one hundred percent and hearing the speaker for myself weighs zero percent. It is really really really rare that I go into a physical store to check out a product. Reviews from professionals you trust are alfa and omega!”*, *“I would also rather see a professional review than hearing it myself or having advice from friends. I think they know more about the products and they are good at comparing different products as well”*.

## 6. Quantitative Research

### 6.1 Purpose

The purpose of the questionnaire was to ascertain whether the preliminary consumer behavior trends discovered in the focus groups could be generalized to a sample of the UCP population, and to test to whether the findings of the literature could be corroborated or challenged. Furthermore, the quantitative research sought to test 6 pre-defined hypotheses comparing professional reviews with other influencers.

### 6.2 Sampling and execution of quantitative research

#### 6.2.1 Sampling

A sample is a smaller amount of people taken from the entire population. Sampling is necessary in order to gain quantitative insights into a population when resource and time constraints make it impossible to survey the entire population. In order for the data collected in the sample to be compared with the population, the composition of the sample is needed to be representative of the population (Saunders et al., 2016). Hence, it is important prior to collecting the data, to have knowledge about the population composition so that the representative sample of the population can be found.

#### 6.2.2 Target population

According to data retrieved from an in-house report at B&O Play (2016) the population of the UCP segment is estimated to be age 20-45, consisting of 60 % males and 40 % females, and living close to or in a major city in Denmark. Furthermore, they have or are pursuing a higher education and profiled as being outgoing, social trendsetters who value experiences. The demographic data can be adjusted to match the population, yet it will be difficult to sort in respondents based on whether or not they are profiled as “outgoing, social trendsetters”. Therefore, respondents in the questionnaire will not be selected based on this profile, however the participants in the focus groups were picked to match the profile.

#### 6.2.3 Distribution & execution of quantitative data collection

The time frame for distribution and collection of the data from the online survey was set to 2 weeks. The distribution method was a link to Google forms with an online self-administered questionnaire. The link was shared via Facebook in a number of different groups that contained members that

matched the target population, in order to gain a large sample of respondents that matched the target population.

## 6.3 Research design

### 6.3.1 Questionnaire type selection

Among the many different types of questionnaires the web questionnaire was chosen as the quantitative data collection method and was created using Google Forms. This type of questionnaire was chosen due to a number of advantages; in particular, the ability to collect data from a large sample size with relatively few resources in a short period of time. With other types of questionnaires such as face-to-face, telephone and postal questionnaires the resources and time required to obtain and analyze data from a large sample, would be comparatively much greater (see Appendix 6) (Saunders et al., 2015, p. 441). Moreover, these types of questionnaires would require more than one researcher to distribute and collect the questionnaires in order to achieve a large sample size (Blumberg et al., 2011). Another advantage is that the probability of contamination and distortion of respondents' answers are higher with other types of questionnaires. The contamination might arise in the case of mailed questionnaires as the respondent could consult others or in a structured interview the answers might be distorted by the interviewer. Furthermore, the coding and handling of data takes much less resources as Google Forms enables the researcher to download the data as a spreadsheet for further statistical analysis.

### 6.3.2 Self-administered questionnaires and non-response error

The web survey allows the participant to answer completely anonymously, which heightens the answers' authenticity and reduces cognitive comfort (Wright, 2006) as the participant does not need to worry about their answers being viewed as "correct". However, it also heightens the probability of non-response errors and random completion of the survey as participants do not feel "watched" and may encounter fatigue or may not feel that their answers will make a difference. In order to minimize non-response error the questionnaire was programmed so that respondents could not advance to section 2 & 3 if they had not answered all the questions. In order to minimize fatigue in respondents, the length of the questionnaire was reduced, so that it could be completed in a few minutes, and the most interesting questions were asked first, leaving demographic questions last. The survey was structured into 3

sections to make the survey more easily digestible, with question regarding portable speakers listed first and demographic questions listed last to encourage participation and reduce cognitive comfort (Ibid.).

Another issue with self-administered surveys is the author's inability to explain questions to participants or to add follow-up questions. In order to counter these issues the comprehensibility of each question was heightened by writing the survey in Danish, since the target population is people living in Denmark. Furthermore, the wording of each question was pilot tested among a small sample of people meeting the criteria for UCPs. The feedback from people who pilot-tested the survey was used to structure the questionnaire and the wording of the questions. Thus, the probability of misunderstanding the questions posed in the final survey were minimized. The web survey does however not offer the possibility for follow-up questions from the researcher or for the participant to elaborate his or her answers. Yet, seeing as the purpose of the survey is to use statistical analysis to test predefined hypotheses, the inclusion of follow-up questions would make the design irregular and complicate the data handling. Although, if more time and resources had been available it could have been interesting to have participants explain their choices in order to gain a deeper understanding of their motivations.

#### 6.4 Questionnaire structure & design of questions

The questionnaire started with an introduction to the subject being researched and thanking participants for taking their time to answer the questions. Furthermore, participants were given a short explanation about the concepts and titles used in the questionnaire such as portable speakers, bloggers, professional reviewers and customer reviews. This heightened validity of respondents' answers since it insured that participants answered in the same context and did not differ based on different assumptions on how the questions should be understood.

The questionnaire itself was divided into 3 sections. The first section aimed at investigating how long consumers would spend searching for information regarding portable speakers and their online decision process in regard to portable speakers. The second section of the questionnaire was designed to investigate consumers' attitudes to different influencers and test 6 hypotheses regarding perceived



differences in amount of influence from various sources. The third and last section of the questionnaire was designed to gain demographic data on the participants in order to make sure the sample of participants was representative of the population of UCPs.

Each answer in the questionnaire was given on a modified Likert scale from 1-6. The reason for constructing a scale with an even number of options was to omit a neutral response from participants, forcing them instead to take a stance. When faced with difficult or complex questions participants might seek cognitive comfort and choose a neutral response to avoid the effort associated with making an informed decision (Braver, 2016).

Based on the data collected from the focus groups, it was found that few participants had previously bought a portable speaker before, and few were currently interested in buying a portable speaker. With this in mind each question except question 2 in section 2 started with: “If you were to purchase a portable speaker...” This allowed for every respondent to answer every question, whereas if the questions had referred to previous purchase experiences a great deal of respondents might not be able to answer as they had none.

#### 6.4.1 Section 1 –Information search and online decision process

The first question sought to investigate the amount of time consumers used searching for information when buying a portable speaker, since using a long time searching and evaluating brands might indicate that consumers engage in complex buying behavior (Kotler et al., 2016) when looking for portable speakers. Figure 8 shows the layout of the questionnaire as it was presented to respondents, with the only change being that it has been translated from Danish to English.

## Portable Speaker Questionnaire

If you were to purchase a portable speaker, how much time would you use searching for information about speakers and evaluating brands?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
A very small amount of time	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	A very large amount of time

If you were to purchase a portable speaker, would you search for information on the product online?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Very unlikely	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very likely

Figure 8: Layout of the questionnaire

Questions 2-5 in section 1 asked respondents how likely they were to use the internet to discover, search for information, evaluate and purchase portable speakers. The goal of these 4 questions was to examine how many consumers use the web in the first, second, third and fourth stage of the buying decision process when buying portable speakers. The fifth stage was omitted as, it lies after the point of purchase and is not a part of the quantitative data collection.

The design of the questions was loosely based on the design used in a study of students' online shopping behavior in USA and Ireland (Comegys and Brennan, 2003), to see if their findings could be replicated to some extent in Denmark. By adapting questions from the Irish study, it allowed reliability to be assessed and generalized (Saunders et al., 2015).

#### 6.4.2 Section 2.1

The second section comprised of 6 questions. As with the first section each answer is given on a 6 point Likert scale. However, the first of these questions stands out from the rest of the questionnaire as it asks respondents how much impact 6 different influences have on their choice of a portable speaker, forcing respondents to answer on a Likert scale for each influence. Even though this question is rather complex and thus more likely to cause fatigue and cognitive discomfort in respondents, it is important in order to test hypothesis on the different perceived impact of influencers on consumers. To diminish the chance of participants not finishing the questionnaire, the question was posted in the start of the second section so that participants who had already completed approximately half of the questionnaire would know they had nearly completed the questionnaire. If the question had instead been in the beginning of the first section, respondents might have feared that there would be more of these complex questions in the coming sections and exit the questionnaire immediately.

#### 6.4.3 Section 2.2 – Hypothesis'

The purpose of the first question was twofold. Firstly, it included a descriptive research element in investigating the distribution of answers regarding online and offline influencers. Secondly, it provided the possibility to test specific hypothesis on consumers' attitudes to different influencers.

Before the construction of the questionnaire a set of hypotheses were made. Blaikie (2010) lists a number of sequential steps, when undertaking a deductive approach, the first being the creation of a set of hypotheses that are able to be tested. The hypotheses were constructed based on the findings of the two focus groups and the findings in the literature review. (Hsu et al., 2013;) (Hsu et al., 2013; Park et al., 2007; Mutun & Wang, 2010) .

The first hypothesis is based on data gathered from the focus groups, as many participants stated that positive professional reviews weighted higher than hearing the speaker for themselves. Thus, it is hypothesized that more consumers would perceive professional reviews to have a bigger amount of influence on their choice of speaker than hearing it for themselves.

### **Hypothesis 1**

*The share of respondents rating professional reviews as having higher influence than hearing the speaker for themselves is higher than the share of respondents rating hearing the speaker for themselves as having higher influence than professional reviews*

The second and third hypothesis are made to test a discrepancy between the data collected in the focus group and literature review. In the focus group, participants claimed that the most important influence was professional reviews, while Nielsen (2015b) states that recommendations from friends and family along with online customer reviews are the most influential. Hence, it is hypothesized that when buying portable speakers more consumers find professional reviewers to have a bigger amount of influence in their choice of speakers than friends, family and online customer reviews.

### **Hypothesis 2**

*The share of respondents rating professional reviews as having higher influence than friends and family is higher than the share of respondents rating family and friends as having higher influence than professional reviews*

### **Hypothesis 3**

*The share of respondents rating professional reviews as having higher influence than online customer reviews is higher than the share of respondents rating customer reviews as having higher influence than professional reviews*

Based on the literature on blogs and their influence of the decision buying process (Hsu et al., 2013) it was interesting to investigate blogs' influence on consumers when buying portable speakers. Seeing as recommendations from blogs are shown be positively correlated with the consumer's decision to purchase (Park et al., 2007) it was interesting to see if blogs had a greater influence on consumers than professional reviews in certain parts of the decision buying process. As consumers use blogs routinely they are usually presented for new products (Hsu et al., 2013) and thus it was assumed that blogs would have a bigger influence during the first stage of the buying decision process than portable speakers.

Therefore, it was hypothesized that a bigger part of respondents would find it more likely to discover an interest in portable speakers on blogs than via professional reviews.

#### **Hypothesis 4**

*The share of respondents rating it more likely to discover interest in portable speakers on blogs than via professional reviews is higher than the share of respondents rating it more likely to discover interest in portable speakers via professional reviews than on blogs*

In section 2 questions 3-7 were included in order to test hypothesis 4, 5 & 6, and thus gain insight into blogs' impact on the various stages of the decision process. Firstly, questions 3 & 4 asked respondents to judge how likely they were to discover interest in portable speakers on blogs (question 3) and via professional reviews (question 4), wording the questions identically in order to retrieve data to test hypothesis 4. However, question 2 was also included to investigate blogs' influence on need recognition but in a more general context by asking participants if they generally discovered interest in new products on blogs. The reason for including question 2, was to see if participants might generally discover interest in products they are presented for on blogs, even though they might not discover interest in portable speakers they are presented for on blogs.

The last part of section 2 sought to test the differences in perceived influence of professional reviews and blogs during stage 2 & 3 of the buying decision process. Thus, questions 7-10 asked respondents how likely they were to use blogs and professional reviews to search for information for portable speakers and evaluate them.

Hypothesis 4 was made on the grounds that blogs are followed habitually and professional reviews are first relevant when need recognition is already established. However, it would seem more likely that participants searching for information and evaluating different speakers, would be more inclined to use professional reviews than blogs. Findings from the focus group showed that participants found it easier to find relevant information by searching for reviews on portable speakers and to use them to compare

different products and brands. Consequently, it is theorized that more people would use professional reviews to search for information and evaluate portable speakers.

### **Hypothesis 5**

*The share of respondents rating it more likely to use professional reviews to search for information on portable speakers than blogs is higher than the share of respondents rating it more likely to search for information on portable speakers on blogs than using professional reviews*

### **Hypothesis 6**

*The share of respondents rating it more likely to use professional reviews to evaluate different portable speakers than blogs is higher than the share of respondents rating it more likely to evaluate different portable speakers on blogs than using professional reviews*

#### **6.4.4 Section 3 – Demographic data**

The last section of the questionnaire contained demographic questions. The purpose of gathering demographic data was to ensure that the sample data was representative of the population. Hence, 5 questions asked participants about their sex, age, level of education, city of residence and yearly income. The data gathered from section 3 can then be compared to the data obtained from B&O Play characterizing the population of UCP's to ensure reliability and generalizability of the findings. (Burns and Bush, 2010)

Demographic questions were purposely put last in the questionnaire for two reasons. Firstly, you would like to start the questionnaire with interesting questions directly related to the subject to engage participants and increase the likelihood of completion of the survey. Furthermore, respondents are suspicious of initial questions that do not clearly relate to the subject of the survey (Mitchell and Jolley, 2012). Secondly, people are increasingly reluctant to provide demographic data, so by putting the demographic questions at the end people are more likely to be at ease and thus more willing to answer demographic questions (Burns and Bush, 2010).

## 6.5 Results from the quantitative research

The subsequent chapter will discuss the results of the questionnaire, starting with a presentation of the demographic data collected in section 3, following with the findings of section 1 & 2 as well as tests of hypothesis 1-6. The demographic data represents the distribution of all the data collected in the sample.

### 6.5.1 Demographic data

A total of 164 respondents answered the survey with each respondent answering every question. Each of the demographic variables included in the questionnaire will be presented and it will be discussed if some respondents need to be removed in order for the sample to be representative of the population.

(Saunders et al., 2015)

### 6.5.2. Gender distribution

The distribution between the sexes was equally divided between male and female respondents with 82 of respondents being male and 82 being female (Figure 9). Even though the gender distribution of the population of UCPs includes a higher share of males than females, no female participants were removed from the sample. Instead, the correction technique of weight adjustment was utilized in order to heighten representability of the results from the questionnaire (Muthen and Satorra, 1995). Since the estimated population distribution of males and females was 60 % male and 40 % female the sample was weighted accordingly to better represent the target population.

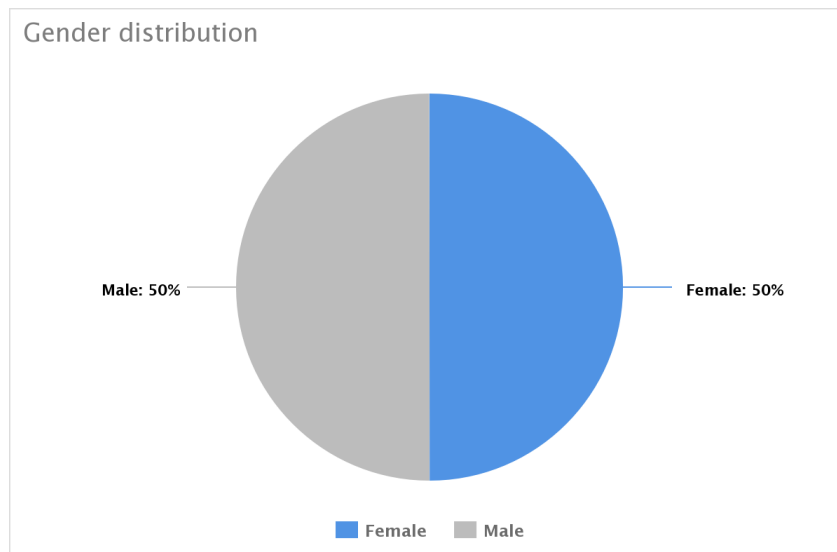


Figure 9: Gender distribution

### 6.5.3 Age distribution

The age distribution was mainly younger people with 63,4 % of respondents being 18-30 years and 88,4 % of respondents being 18-45 years. Figure 10 shows a histogram of the respondent's age distribution. As previously stated the population of the sample is taken from the population of the segment of UCPs. The age for this segment is 20-45 years so we remove 14 of the respondents that were found to be older than 45 and 4 of the respondents that were younger than 20.

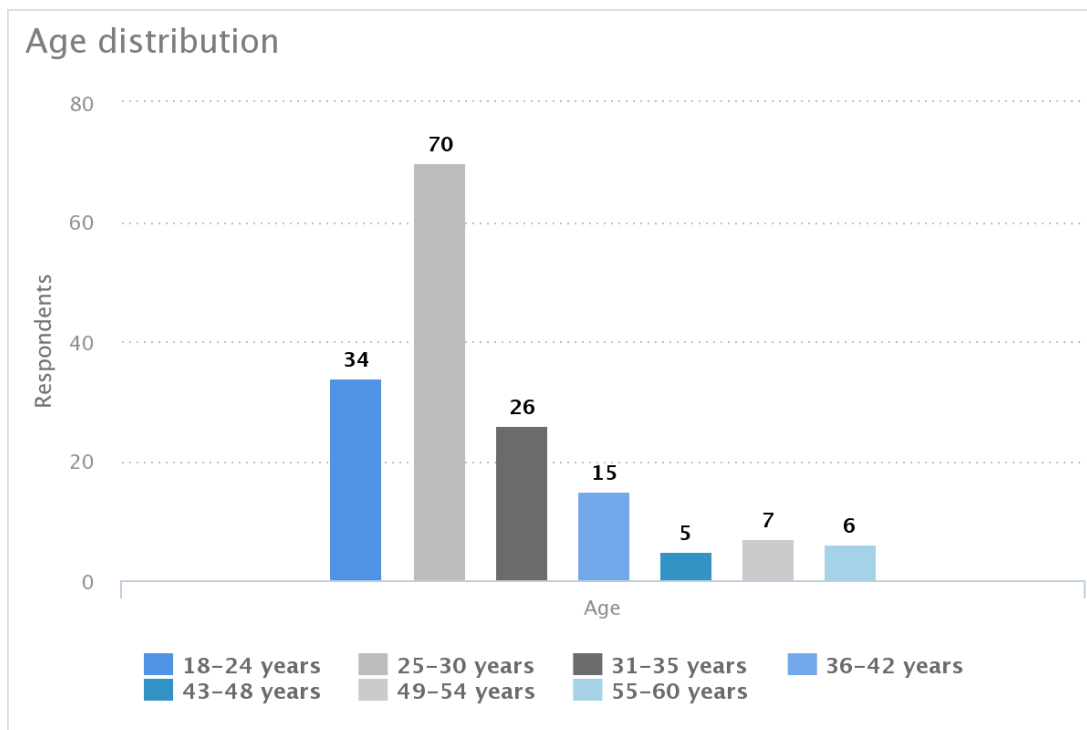


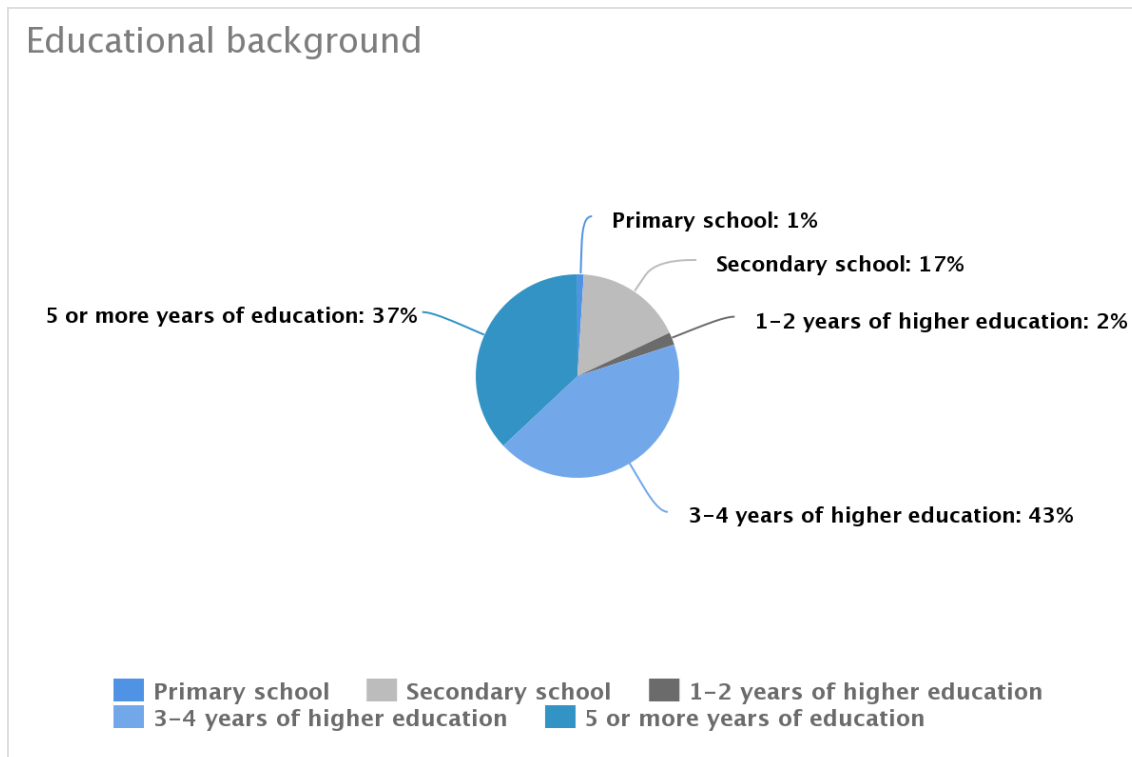
Figure 10: Age distribution

### 6.5.4 Educational background

Looking at the distribution of respondents' educational background, it was found that a big part of the respondents had some form of higher education (82.2%). A lesser part had listed secondary school (17.%) as their most recent finished education and 2 respondents had listed primary school. Seeing as UCPs are described as studying or having completed higher education, the respondents who had listed primary school were examined to see if they were part of the population of UCPs. The first respondent



was only 18 years old, and had therefore already been discarded. The second respondent however was 33 years old and was removed too. As the respondent had not even completed secondary school it seemed unlikely that the respondent was currently studying a higher education. Figure 11 shows a figure of the respondents educational distribution.



**Figure 11: Educational background**

#### 6.5.5 Residence of respondents

An overwhelming majority of respondents stated their city of residence as one of the 3 largest cities in Denmark (78.1%) the majority of all respondents living in Copenhagen (70.7%). Of the respondents living outside of the 3 major cities, most lived in other large cities such as Esbjerg (2.4%), or lived in the suburbs close to one of the major cities (16,4%). As such most of the respondents qualified for being considered “urban”. Nevertheless, 3 participants were discarded since they lived in a small town

far from a major city, and 2 participants were discarded as they answered living in Zealand instead of a city. Figure 12 shows a figure of the respondents residence distribution.

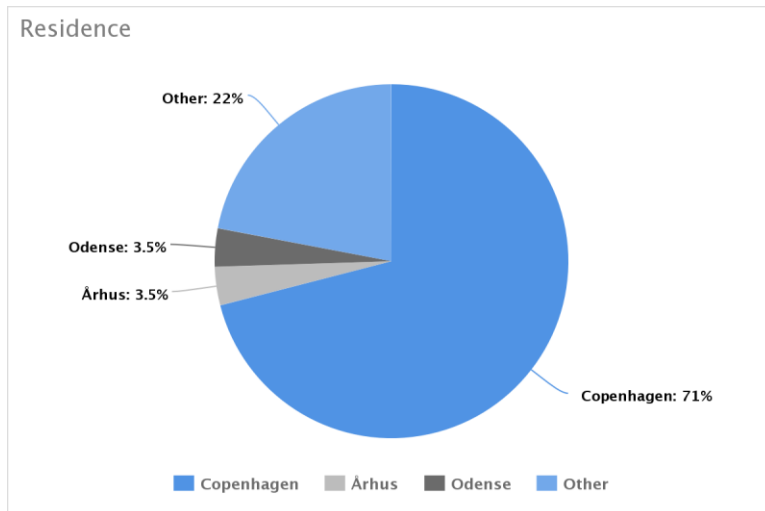


Figure 12: Residence

#### 6.5.6 Yearly income

The last question asked respondents to estimate their yearly income before taxes. The distribution is fairly evenly spread between the 6 categories, as seen in figure 13, showing a similar distribution found in the population for UCPs (B&O Play, 2016). No respondents were removed based on their yearly income, as there was no minimum or maximum thresholds set for the population.

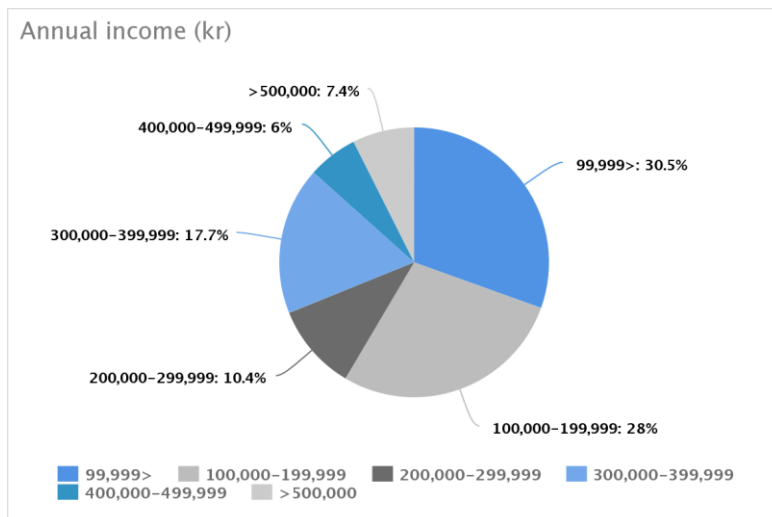


Figure 13: Annual income

### 6.5.7 Summary

Out of 164 respondents 24 respondents were discarded, due to not representing the population of UCPs and thus the following results of section 1 & 2 will only be based on the answers from the remaining 140 respondents. In addition, the distribution of males and females in the sample did not match the distribution of the population, so weight adjustment was used to increase representability.

#### 6.6.1 Findings in section 1

Regarding the time used to search for information and evaluate different portable speakers, respondents generally answered they would use a large amount of time with the mode being 5 (32,9%) on a Likert scale from 1 to 6. Furthermore, 68,3% of respondents answered 4,5 or 6 while only 31,7% answered 1,2 or 3, with the least number of respondents choosing 1. The representation of the answers can be seen in Figure 14.

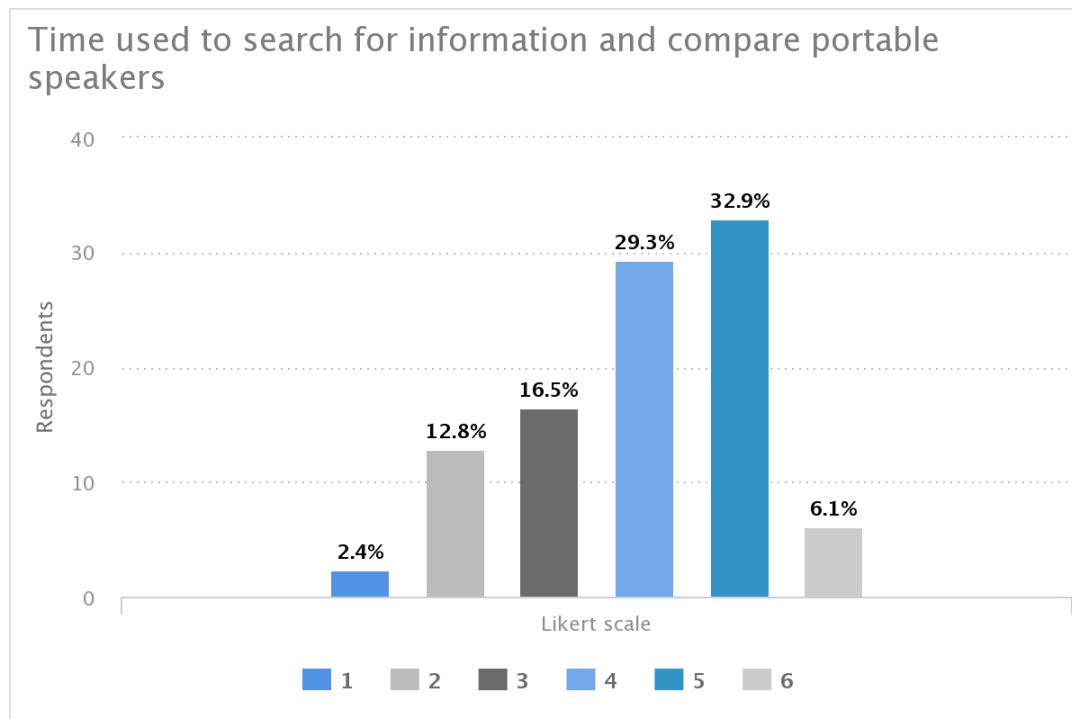


Figure 14: Question from the first section of the questionnaire

The findings might indicate that consumers undergo a complex buying decision process when looking to buy portable speakers (Figure 15). The complex decision process could be attributed to consumers viewing portable speakers as a high involvement purchase and find significant differences between speaker brands (Kotler et al., 2016). However, this is just speculation as the findings only show that consumers use a long time searching for information and does not show whether this is due to high involvement or high perceived significance among different brands.

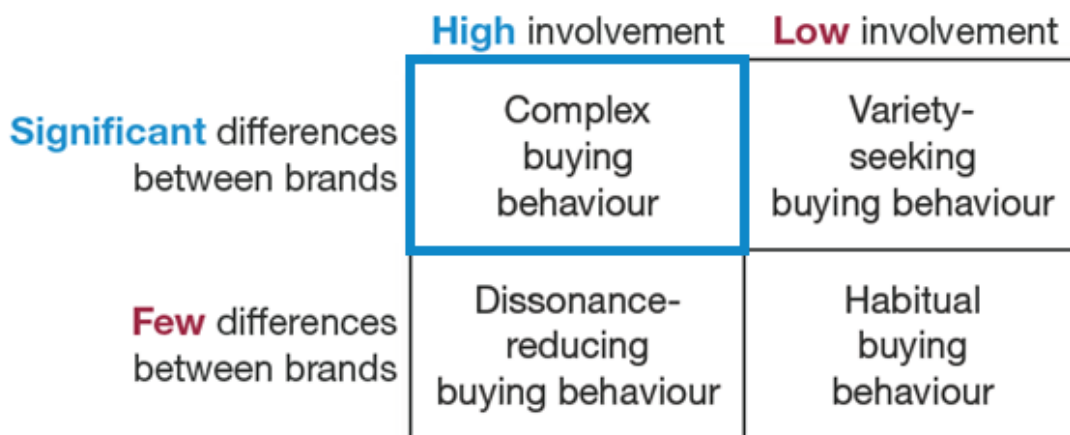


Figure 15: Henry Assael in Kotler et al (2016): Four types of buying behavior

Another explanation could be that the long time searching for information could be a trait attributed to the population of the UCPs as they are highly educated individuals most of them having or pursuing college educations. Furthermore, the findings are based on respondents' own perception of the time they use searching for information, which may be vastly different from the actual time spend. Besides, "a very long time" does not give any indication of how much time has been spent, and some participants, might feel that 30 minutes is a very long time while others may feel 120 minutes constitute a very long time.

Alas, the reason for a big share of respondents stating they use a long or a very long time searching for information and evaluating alternative products, cannot be concluded as the findings do not provide data on which variables are correlated herewith.

#### 6.6.1.2 Comparing results with USA & Ireland

The findings of questions 2-5 in section 1 sought to investigate respondents' likelihood to use the internet in different stages of the buying decision process in relation to portable speakers.

Since these questions were adapted from the study on online shopping behavior in Ireland & USA (Comegys and Brennan, 2003), it is interesting to compare the findings. However, there are two big differences in the design and sampling between the survey undertaken in Ireland & USA and the survey in this paper.

Firstly, the sample studied in USA & Ireland was different since participants were self-administered by a randomly selected sample of undergraduate students from two colleges in Massachusetts and Dublin, respectively. The sample in this research was also self-administered, but it was not distributed specifically to college students and the sample was modified to best represent the population of the UCP segment. Despite the differences, it could still be assumed that the samples are somewhat similar since both contain a big share of respondents who are young, educated students that live in an urban area. Regrettably, the study in Ireland & England did not contain demographic data so it was not possible to compare the two samples' demographic composition.

Secondly, the aim of the study in Ireland & USA was to study general online shopping behavior in relation to the five stages of the buying decision process. Whereas the aim of questions 2-5 in section 1 of this research, was to study the first four stages of the buying decision process specifically in the event of buying portable speakers. Furthermore, the respondents in the Irish/American answered on a 3-point scale (Frequently, sometimes or never), while respondents in this research answered on a 6-point scale. To try and alleviate this issue, the findings will be grouped when compared, hence comparing the share of respondents answering 5-6 (Very likely) in this study with the share answering 3 (Frequently) in the Irish/American study, and so forth.

Accordingly, the comparison of the findings of the Irish/American study to the findings of this research must be taken with a grain of salt, as there are some differences in the design and structure of the surveys, as well as the sample and execution.

The findings in relation to Q2 in section 1 show that 52.6% of respondents answered 5 or 6 and thus were very likely to discover interest in a speaker online with 5 being the mode (32,5%). 37.3% answered 4 or 3 and 10.1% answered 1 or 2 with 2 being the least common answer (2,9%).

The results show a general perceived likelihood of discovering interest in portable speakers online which is higher than the findings of the Irish/American study. Here only 18,6% of respondents answered 3 compared to 52,6% of respondents answering 5-6, instead a greater deal of respondents answered 2 (69,1%) corresponding to answering 3-4 (37.3%) in the questionnaire in this research.

These differences are interesting as respondents in this study were specifically asked for the likelihood of them discovering interest in portable speakers online, and as such it was assumed that a share of respondents would not answer low scores due to not being interested in portable speakers at all. As such it could be presumed that these respondents would answer higher when asked if they generally discovered products online, and as such more respondents would rate shopping motivation online more likely. Yet, this is not the case. One reason for this discrepancy could be the differences in samples, while another reason could be that the Irish/American study was conducted 14 years ago in 2003 (Comegys and Brennan, 2003) and since then the share of consumers using the internet to discover new products may have increased.

The results from the third & fourth questions show that a large share of the respondents would likely use the internet both when searching for information and when evaluating products. 89,3% of respondents answered 5 or 6 in regard to searching for information, the mode being 6 (75%), while 84.3% answered 5 or 6 in relation to evaluating portable speakers online with the mode also being 6 (59,8%). Compared to the Irish/American study, the share of consumers who are very likely to search for information and evaluate products online is again larger in my study. As seen in figure 16 only 33,9 % in the Irish/American study, answered 3 in regards to searching for information on the web and only 20.7% answered 3 in relation to evaluating different on the web.

TABLE 6. Percentage of Students Who Have Conducted Online Information Searches

Student Question: I have searched web sites for information about products and/or services I am interested in.

	TOTAL	US	IRISH
	%	%	%
Frequently	33.9	36.0	30.8
Sometimes	55.4	58.0	52.5
Never	10.7	6.0	16.7

Figure 16: Question on responders searching for information from Comegys and Brennan (2003)

This differences might be due to the time that has passed since the conduction of the Irish/American study as noted earlier, yet it could also be that people are more prone to use the internet to search and evaluate portable speakers than they are with other products in general. An explanation for this (as noted in Q1) might be that consumers engage in complex buying behavior when buying portable speakers and thus more people use the internet to search for information and evaluate products. While when asked about general shopping in the Irish/American study more people might associate the question with habitual buying behavior which they might do more often offline and therefore a smaller share of respondents buying decision process happens online (Figure 17).

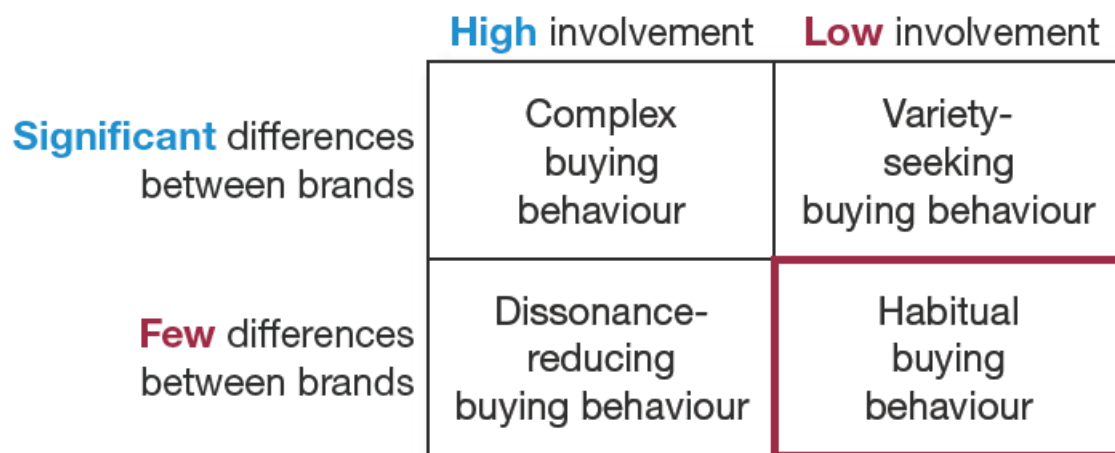


Figure 17: Henry Assael in Kotler et al. 2012: Four types of buying behavior

The findings of the last questions in section 1, show that 39.6% respondents answer 5 or 6 when asked if they would buy the speaker online. This is the smallest share of respondents answering 5 or 6 when comparing to the questions pertaining to the first three stages of the buying decision process. However, the share is still bigger than in the Irish/American study where only 9.5% answered 3. Yet, in both studies the fourth stage which is the final point of the purchase decision, is the least likely for most people to happen online. This might be due to trust issues with online retailers and higher perceived risk with online payment and delivery. Customers might also just find it more convenient to make the purchase in a regular store.

### 6.6.2 Summary

The findings of section 1 show that most respondents would spend a long time searching for information and evaluating different portable speakers online. Furthermore, the results show that most respondents would use the internet when deciding to buy a portable speaker especially during the 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup>, but less so during 4<sup>th</sup> stage of the decision process. Comparing the findings, with the Irish/American study it was found that more people in the Danish sample were likely to use the internet in their decision process than in the Irish/American sample.

### 6.6.3 Findings in section 2

The data from the first question in section 2 was rather comprehensive as respondents were asked to rate how influential 6 different sources of influence would be on their purchase of portable speakers. They were not asked to rank the 6 factors from lowest to highest, as this would not show how the respondents' perceived influential distribution for each sources. Instead, respondents were asked to rate each potential influence on a Likert scale from 1-6 with 1 being no influence and 6 being a great deal of influence.

The 6 different sources of influence consisted of 3 offline and 3 online. The offline factors were: Being able to hear the speaker for oneself, advice from friends and family and advice from a store clerk. The online factors of influence were: customer reviews, professional reviews and blogs.

The two most influential offline factors were: "being able to hear the speaker for oneself" and "friends and family". 73,1% answered 4 or more in regards to influence from friends and family with the mode



being 5 (35,9%) closely followed by 4 (28%). Similarly, 70,1% of respondents answered 4 or more influence to having heard the speaker for themselves, with the mode also being 5 (31,7%). Both of these two factors have a big influence on the purchase of portable speakers for a large part of the sample, and it is hard to say which of the two is most influential. Yet, it can be seen that a larger share of respondents has answered 6 to having heard the speaker for themselves (13,4%) while fewer have answered 6 to friends and family (9,1%). The findings in regards to advice from friend and family corroborate the trends in the literature that have shown word-of-mouth to be very influential on consumer behavior (Nielsen 2015b; Pringle & Marshall 2011; Duncan & Nick 2008).

The third offline influence was advice from a clerk in a physical store, not nearly as many respondents found the clerks advice as influential as the other two factors of influence. Only, 36,6% of the respondents answered 4 or more with the mode being 3 (26,2%) closely followed by 2 (25%).

Looking at the online factors of influence, professional reviews and customer reviews receive a higher share of high scores than blogs. 79.9% of respondents answer 4 or more when asked about the influence from professional reviews with the mode being 5 (42,1%). When asked about the influence of customer reviews 68.3% answer 4 or more influence with the mode being 5 as well (35.9%). The findings align somewhat with the trend found in the literature that consumer reviews have high influence on consumer behavior as 46,9% answer 5 or 6 in this regard. However, 31,7% answer 3 or lower so there is also a subset of respondents that do not see customer reviews as particularly influential.

However, the biggest surprise in the findings was in relation to the influence of blogs on the purchase of speakers. Only 12,8% of respondents answered 4 or higher, with the mode being 1 (40,9%) followed by 2 (28%). Thus, an overwhelming share of respondents found blogs to have relatively little or no influence with 87.2% answering 3 or lower. As such, the findings do not show the same influence on consumers buying decision as previous research has found (Hsu et al., 2013). A reason for this might be that people do not see blogs as a trustworthy place for the presentation of portable speakers, or that respondents simply do not value the input from blogs, when buying portable speakers. People might have looked at blogs as more influential if they had been asked to judge their influence in relation to

the purchase of products related to fashion or cosmetics. Further explanatory qualitative research would have been interesting order to ask participants for the reasons that they did not perceive blogs as influential on their purchase decision, to get a better understanding of their reasons.

The remaining questions aimed at uncovering respondents' attitudes towards blogs and professional interviews in the first 3 stages of the decision-making process. However, to examine if respondents might answer differently when introduced in general to new products on blogs compared to being introduced to portable speakers, respondents were first asked if they generally discovered interest in new products on blogs, and then asked if it was likely that they would discover interest in a portable speaker on a blog.

It was assumed that more people would use blogs to discover interest in other products than specifically portable speakers and as such it was assumed that a larger share of respondents would answer 4 or higher on the first question. However, this was not the case as 17,7% of respondents answered 4 or more to the first question and 18,9% answered 4 or more on the second question. This is rather peculiar as it seems some respondents have answered that they would be likely to discover interest for a portable speaker on a blog but would not generally discover interest in products on blogs. This along with the results from question 1 in section 2 brings forth further evidence contradicting the findings of other research that states that blogs are influential in the first stage of the consumer decision process by introducing the consumer to new products (Hsu et al., 2013; Mutum and Wang, 2011). However, unlike question 1 in section 2, the findings of this question show that most respondents do not generally discover interest in products on blogs, making the findings more generalizable as they were not specifically asked in regards to portable speakers. An explanation for these results might be that the survey was self-administered and thus respondents who were already interested in portable speakers might be more likely to answer the survey since they found the subject interesting.

## 6.7 Test of hypothesis

The test of hypothesis serves to examine whether it can be concluded that one share of respondents (Group A) is significantly bigger than another share of respondents (Group B). It does so by testing if

there is sufficient evidence against the null-hypothesis to reject it (Blaikie, 2009). The null-hypothesis that was tested in the following 6 hypotheses, was that the share of respondents for Group B was equal to or bigger than Group A, whereas the alternative hypothesis was that Group A was bigger than Group B. As such the hypothesis tested can be written as follows:

$$H_0: \text{Group A} \leq \text{Group B}$$

$$H_A: \text{Group A} > \text{Group B}$$

In order to construct Groups A & B, all 140 respondents answers to a given question was compared to another question. Each respondents' answers to the two questions were then compared, and from this 3 groups were created. The first group consisted of the share of responses who answered a higher value on the Likert scale to the first question than the second. The second group consisted of respondents who answered the same value to both questions. The third group then consisted of the respondents who answered a higher value to question 2 than question 1. The second group which consisted of respondents who answered the same value is not a part of the test, instead it is tested whether the first group is significantly bigger than the third group. As such it is these two groups that will be denoted A & B and for each of the following hypotheses, it will be described what Group A & B consist

### 6.7.1 Hypothesis 1

The first hypothesis sought to test whether the share of respondents who rated professional reviews as having a higher influence than hearing the speaker for themselves (Group A) was larger than the share of respondents rating hearing speakers for themselves as more influential than professional reviews (Group B). This is seen in Figure 18.

HYPOTHESIS 1			CONFIDENCE LEVEL	
	Share	STD.A	LOWER	UPPER
Group A	45.4	0.49941267	44.4	46.4
Group B	30.7	0.46256516	29.7	31.6
	T-test			
	X	14.7		
	$\mu$	0		
	STD (sigma)	0.86233339		
	Z-score	17.0745173		
	P-value	2.1326E-37		

Figure 18: Test of hypothesis 1

The t-test shows that the null-hypothesis is rejected, and that Group A (45,4% of respondents) is indeed significantly bigger than Group B (30,7% of respondents). With a P-value less than 0.001 the difference is proven to be significant and not due to random chance. Thus, the alternate hypothesis is accepted as a bigger share of respondents rated professional reviews more influential.

This shows that the findings of the focus groups were generalizable when tested in a bigger sample, as most respondents seem to think that professional reviews have a bigger influence on them than hearing the speaker for themselves. This might be due to the complexity of the product as consumers do not even judge their own hearing of the speakers to be as valuable an influence as a professional review. Another reason might be that professional reviews test the speakers for an extended period of time and can therefore also test the longevity of the products features such as battery-life, usability and endurance, giving a fuller picture of the product than just hearing the sound. A third reason might be that consumers may not trust that the speaker will sound as good in their home as it sounded in the store or might be afraid of experiencing cognitive dissonance post purchase given that the product might not live up their expectations. To alleviate this it might be reassuring to hear a professional reviewer before deciding, and thus reducing the chance of cognitive dissonance.

### 6.7.2 Hypothesis 2

The second hypothesis, on the other hand sought to test whether the share of respondents who rated professional reviews as having a higher influence than advice from friends and family (Group A) was larger than the share of respondents rating advice from friends and family as more influential than professional reviews (Group B).

The T-test showed a Z-score of 27,25 and a p-value less than 0.001. Group B consisted of 24.5% of respondents and Group A consisted of 45.4% of respondents which is, incidentally exactly the same share as Group A had in hypothesis 1. As such the null-hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted concluding that more respondents rated professional reviews as having higher influence on their purchase decision of portable speakers than advice from friends and family.

These findings generalize the findings found in the focus groups where most participants found professional reviews as being more influential than advice from friends and family, as almost double as many respondents from the questionnaire found professional reviews to be more influential. However, it challenges the findings in the literature (Nielsen 2015b) that state that family and friends' advice and consumer reviews are the most influential. The reason for respondents viewing professional review as more influential might be that they are perceived as having more knowledge about the products and can give a detailed explanation of portable speakers' drawbacks and benefits. Moreover, a professional reviewer might also have higher credibility than friends & family due to his knowledge about the subject, and as such their recommendations are based on a thorough analysis while a family member or friend might simply recommend it, because he likes the product.

### 6.7.3 Hypothesis 3

The third hypothesis, tested whether the share of respondents who rated professional reviews as having a higher influence than online customer reviews (Group A) was larger than the share of respondents rating advice from online customer reviews as more influential than professional reviews (Group B). Group A consisted of 44.2% of the total number of respondents while Group B consisted of 20.9%. Again, the T-test provided enough evidence to reject the null-hypothesis with a Z-score of 30.11 and a P-value less than 0.001. Hence, it can be determined that a larger group of respondents rated professional reviews more highly than online customer reviews.

Again, the findings from the focus groups are generalized to a broader sample of the population, as over double as many respondents rate professional reviews as more influential than online customer reviews. And again, these findings challenge findings in the literature (Nielsen, 2015b) that have placed advice from friends and family and consumer reviews as the most influential. Many consumers might view professional reviews as more credible than consumer reviews, since they have more knowledge about the portable speakers, and seeing as the portable speakers can be viewed as a fairly complex product respondents might not trust customer reviews as much, since they may not have a deep understanding of the product's value. Furthermore, a professional reviewer might be better at presenting the different aspects of a portable speaker and explaining the meaning and importance of

different specifications such as MHz and Watt output.

#### 6.7.4 Hypothesis 4, 5 & 6

Where the previous three hypotheses, were tested based on data gathered from Question 1 section 2, the following 3 hypotheses will be tested based on 3 sets of paired questions that constitute the last six questions in section 2 of the questionnaire. Respondents were asked how likely they were to discover, search for information, and evaluate portable speakers with 3 questions in regards to blogs and 3 questions in regards to professional speakers. Consequently, it was possible to test which of the two influencers respondents found to be most influential in each of the three stages of the buying decision process. It was theorized that blogs would be most influential at the first stage while professional reviews would be more influential at the second and third stage.

The fourth hypothesis tested whether the share of respondents rating it more likely to discover interest in portable speakers on blogs than via professional reviews (Group A) was higher than the share of respondents rating it more likely to discover interest in portable speakers via professional reviews than on blogs (Group B).

Unlike the first 3 hypotheses this test could not prove the proposed hypothesis, that more respondents perceived blogs as more influential than professional reviews in the first stage of buying decision process. Even though the t-test provided a p-value much less than 0.001 the Z-score was negative at -58.69 indicating that Group B > Group A rather than the other way around and therefore the null-hypothesis could not be rejected. This also becomes evident when looking at share of respondents, as the share of Group B consist of 61.3% whereas Group A only consists of 16.6% of the respondents.

Looking at the sizes of the shares in the two groups it might have been obvious to test for the opposite hypothesis; that professional reviews would be more influential than blogs. However, this would be considered post hoc theorizing as the hypothesis would have been formulated after the data had been collected and not prior, as the other 5 hypotheses had (Jaccard and Jacoby, 2010). The major issues in regards to this practice are that it capitalizes on chance relationships and it gives the researcher an opportunity to generate an explanation after the fact, making the theory arbitrary. Yet, others argue that

post hoc analysis can be beneficial and might provide the researcher with a more robust theory, as long as the data is consistent with the explanation (Ibid.). As the chosen research philosophy for this project has been a pragmatic approach and seeing as the data is pretty consistent with an overwhelming amount of respondents rating blogs influence low in this question, I choose to use the results from the testing of the fourth hypothesis to further explain how influencers affect the buying decision process, albeit I acknowledge that I had not foreseen this data distribution.

Hypothesis 5 & 6 tested whether the share of respondents rating it more likely to search for information (5) or evaluate (6) portable speakers on blogs than via professional reviews (Group A) was higher than the share of respondents rating it more likely to search for information (5) or evaluate (6) in portable speakers via professional reviews than on blogs (Group B)

They both rejected the null-hypothesis with a Z-score of 144.59 (Hyp 5) and 183.86 (Hyp 6) and p-values less than 0.001. In hypothesis 5 Group A consisted of 76.5% and Group B of 10.4% while in hypothesis 6 Group A consisted of 89.6 % and Group B of 5.5% of respondents. Thus, the alternative hypothesis can be accepted for both hypothesis 5 & 6.

The findings show the same results as in the focus group, showing that a very large share of respondents would prefer searching for information and evaluate portable speakers via professional reviews as opposed to blogs. This might be due to blogs not being associated with portable speakers or it may be that consumers do not view blogs to be credible since they may fear that they present sponsored portable speakers and thus portray them in an overly positive manner. As earlier stated it may also be that consumers view professional reviewers as more credible and knowledgeable, and being better to present the relevant technical information. In regards to evaluating different portable speakers, many professional reviewers usually make articles or videos comparing similar products and discussing their different flaws and advantages, making it much easier for consumers to evaluate different portable speakers.

## 7. Conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to investigate the consumer behavior of UCPs in relation to buying portable speakers. More specifically, the research aimed at investigating the first four stages of the buying decision process in relation to the purchase of portable speakers and how influencers could affect different stages of the decision process. Another aim of the research was to test whether professional reviews were perceived to be more influential than other influencers. To answer the research question each of the 5 sub-questions will be considered in order.

The first sub question *“how does B&O Play categorize their target portable speaker customer?”* was answered via a semi-structured in-depth interview with Channel Marketing Manager Marianne Bentsen, who answered that B&O Play’s target group are described as “Urban Creative Professionals” that are people between 20-45 years. However, they used this target group for all of their products and did not have a niche target group for portable speakers. The demographic composition of the UCP population was provided (B&O Play, 2016) and UCPs were profiled as outgoing trendsetters with a need for social affirmation.

The second sub-question *“Which sources of influence affect UCPs consumer behavior in regards to portable speakers?”* was answered in the two focus groups. The participants found sources of influence that affected their purchase decision to rely somewhat of recommendations from friends and family, or knowing the brand of the speaker. In regards to features of the portable speaker, respondents listed battery life, sound quality and the ability to play loud as the most influential. However, many participants stated that the specifications listed on the handouts at the focus group interview were useless as they did not give a clear representation of the speaker and the handouts were not enough to get an idea of which speaker was best. Participants in both focus groups stated that they would have searched for information and evaluated different portable speakers using professional online reviews, and that the review would have weighed heavily in their choice of online speaker.



The third sub-question “*Are professional reviews or blogs most influential in UCPs’ buying decision process when considering portable speakers*” was answered in the quantitative research section of the thesis. Using statistical tests on the quantitative data from the questionnaire it was possible to conclude that more UCPs perceived professional reviews as more influential than blogs in the first three stages of the buying decision process. Even though it was assumed that blogs would be more influential in the first stage of the decision process, the null-hypothesis of hypothesis 4 could not be rejected, and instead the data showed that professional reviews were more influential in every stage tested. Thus, if the sample tested is representative of the UCP population, it can be inferred that more UCPs will view professional reviews as being a more influential source of influence.

The fourth sub-question “*Do UCPs perceive professional reviews as more influential than customer reviews when considering portable speakers?*” was also answered via a statistical analysis of the quantitative data. Again, professional reviews turned out to be perceived as the most influential of the two by a large share of respondents, contradicting evidence found in the literature that customer reviews should have the most influence on consumer buying behavior.

The fifth sub-question “*Do UCPs perceive professional reviews as more influential than advice from friends and family when considering portable speakers?*” was the last answered by the 6<sup>th</sup> hypothesis that was tested on the quantitative data. Professional reviews turned out to be perceived as the most influential for the 6<sup>th</sup> time and was thus the most influential in every hypothesis tested.

At last the main research question can be answered “*In regard to portable speakers, which sources of influences affect UCPs during the buying decision process and how influential are professional reviews are perceived compared to other influencers?*”. Sources of influence may vary from person to person, but based on the findings in the focus group and questionnaire, the source of influence that is particularly important in regards to portable speakers is professional reviews. Other sources that participants found to be of influence were friends and family, costumer reviews and the ability to hear the speaker for themselves. However, people had more mixed opinions of the influence of a store clerk and an overwhelming majority did not find that blogs would have any influence on their decision.

Professional reviews were found as being the most influential in every hypothesis tested, and thus it can be concluded that professional reviews are perceived as being a stronger influencer than any of the other influencers tested.

### 7.1 Further research

There is an opportunity in further researching the respondents' reasons to rate one influencer higher than the other. An explanatory research could be carried out with this purpose, in order to gain a deeper insight into respondents' attitudes towards different sources of influence.

Seeing as this research is mostly based on how respondents perceive influencers, there might be some problems with establishing validity as people might not be able to perceive correctly how influenced they are by different sources of influence. Accordingly, it could be interesting to design a double blinded social experiment that tests how sources of influence affect consumers decision behavior, without relying on the participants perception.

### 7.2 Managerial implications

The results of this paper contradict earlier findings that have shown it could be beneficial for producers to engage in partnerships with bloggers. This at least the case with B&O Play and their target population as they show no interest in blogs influence. However, the findings of the focus group shows that the B&O Brand is not necessarily strong and the designs of their products do not work very well online, at least considering the reactions from both focus groups as participants found A1 to look like a smoke alarm.

Even though the findings did not find reasons to work with bloggers, they still found different influences that were of importance for many people in the target population. As such B&O Play might consider working together with more professional reviewers. Even though these seldom allow sponsored content B&O Play can interact with them in other ways to get achieve more earned media coverage.

Firstly, B&O Play can make sure to send out new portable speakers to professional reviewers ahead of the official release date, allowing the reviewer time to review the product ahead of time generating hype with positive reviews already before release, increasing the chance of pre-orders and lots of share and earned media.

Secondly, B&O Play can perform search engine optimization, trying to get high reviews as visible as possible for potential consumers who might be using search engines during their information search or evaluation of alternatives. Furthermore, B&O might try and optimize reviews of their speakers on YouTube, as people might be more inclined to discover need recognition while casually browsing for videos.

Thirdly, B&O Play may use their owned & paid media to show all of the positive professional reviews they have received and use them during commercials and on their website and Facebook page, in this way they can use the credibility of earned media through channels they can control.

However, engaging with professional reviewers is risky as bad reviews will likely have a devastating effect on sales. Yet, you cannot ban reviewers from reviewing your products, so they will do it with or without your consent. Therefore, it is critical for B&O Play to have a top tier R&D department that can work hard on creating a premium and innovative product, with long battery life, good sound and the ability to play loud.

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## 9 Appendices

**Appendix 1 – Questionnaire**

**Appendix 2 – Interview guide**

**Appendix 3 – Pictures of Beoplay A1, Beoplay A2, Bose SoundLink mini II & Beats Pill+**

**Appendix 4 - Pictures of Beoplay A1, Beoplay A2, Bose SoundLink mini II & Beats PIII+ with specifications**

**Appendix 5 – Comparaison of the three portable speakers from [www.elgiganten.dk](http://www.elgiganten.dk)**

**Appendix 6 – Table of questionnaire pros and cons in Saunders et al. (2015)**

## Appendix 1 – Questionnaire

### 1.1 Hovedspørgsmål:

Q1: Hvis du skulle købe en bærbar højtaler, hvor lang tid ville du bruge på at søge information om højtalere og sammenligne forskellige brands?

Q2: Hvor sandsynligt er det at du ville finde interesse i en portabel højtaler på nettet?

Q3: Hvis du skulle købe en bærbar højtaler, ville du så søge information om produktet over nettet?

Q4: Hvis du skulle købe en bærbar højtaler, ville du så bruge nettet til at sammenligne forskellige produkter, brands, features og priser?

Q5: Hvis du skulle købe en bærbar højtaler, ville du så købe den over nettet?

Q6: Hvor meget indflydelse på dit valg af en bærbar højtaler har følgende forhold?

- Familie og venners anbefaling af højtaleren
- Positive professionelle anmeldelser af højtaleren på nettet
- At du selv har hørt højtaleren hos en ven eller i en butik
- Anbefaling af højtaleren fra en blog du følger
- Positive brugeranmeldelser af højtaleren
- En anbefaling af højtaleren fra en fagperson i en butik

Q7: Bliver du inspireret til at købe produkter, som du bliver præsenteret for på blogs du følger?

Q8: Ville du kunne blive inspireret til at købe en bærbar højtaler, som du var blevet præsenteret for på en blog du følger?

Q9: Ville du kunne blive inspireret til at købe en bærbar højtaler, som du var blevet præsenteret for af en professionel anmeldelse?

Q10: Hvis du skulle købe en bærbar højtaler, ville du bruge professionelle anmeldelser på nettet til at sammenligne forskellige højtalere?

Q11: Hvis du skulle købe en bærbar højtaler, ville du bruge blogs til at sammenligne forskellige højtalere?

Q12: Hvis du skulle købe en bærbar højtaler, ville du søge information om højtalere på blogs?

Q13: Hvis du skulle købe en bærbar højtaler, ville du søge information om højtalere på professionelle anmeldelser?

### 1.2 Demografiske spørgsmål:

Q1: Hvad er dit køn?

- Mand
- Kvinde

Q2: Hvor gammel er du?

Q3: Hvad er din højeste opnåede uddannelse?

- Folkeskole
- STX/HHX/HTX/HF eller lign.
- Kort videregående uddannelse (1-2år)
- Mellemlang videregående uddannelse(3-4 år)
- Lang videregående uddannelse (5 åre eller mere)

Q4: Hvor bor du?

- København
- Århus
- Odense
- Other

Q65: Hvad er din årsindkomst før skat?

- under 99.999 kr.
- 100.000-199.999 kr.
- 200.000-299.999 kr.
- 300.000-399.999 kr.
- 400.000-499.000 kr.
- over 500.000 kr.

## Appendix 2 – Interview guide

### Interviewguide til fokusgruppediskussion omhandlende portable speakers

1. Hvad synes i om transportable højtalere?
  - a. Hvad vægter I højest når i skal købe en transportable højtaler?
    - i. De tre vigtigste ting?
  - b. I hvilke situationer bruger i transportable højtalere?
  - c. Er design vigtigt for jer?
  - d. Er lydkvalitet vigtig for jer?
  - e. Er prisen vigtig?
2. Hvilken af disse højtalere ville i foretrække?
  - a. Først billede uden specifikationer.
  - b. Dernæst billede med specifikationer
  - c. Sidst billeder med pris
  - d. Hvorfor?
3. Hvad forbinder i med de forskellige brands?
  - a. Hvilke styrker og svagheder ser I?
  - b. Hvilke af brandsene ser i som det stærkeste brand?
  - c. Hvilke af de tre brands ser i som det hippeste brand?
  - d. Hvilket brand forbinder i med kvalitet?
  - e. Hvilket foretrækker i?

Appendix 3 – Pictures of Beoplay A1, Beoplay A2, Bose SoundLink mini II & Beats Pill+













Appendix 4 – Pictures of Beoplay A1, Beoplay A2, Bose SoundLink mini II & Beats PIII+ with specifications



Produktanmeldelser	Spørgsmål og svar	Mere information	Specifikationer	Lagerstatus i varehus
Modelbeskrivelse	Produkttype	Bærbar højttaler		
	Modelnavn	Bang & Olufsen BEOPLAYA1NA		
	Produktserie	Speakers		
Lyd	Lydsystem	Mono		
	Udgangseffekt RMS (watt)	2x30		
	Frekvensrespons (Hz)	60-24000		
Tilslutninger	Trådløs lydoverførsel	Ja		
	Wi-Fi	Nej		
	Bluetooth	Ja		
	AUX-indgang (3.5mm)	Ja		
	Stik (3.5mm) til hovedtelefoner	Nej		
	USB-indgang	Nej		
	Micro-USB	Nej		
Software	App tilgængelig	Ja		
	Navn på app	Beoplay		
	Kompatible operativsystemer	Beoplay App supports Android version 5.0 and onwards, IOS.		
	Software-sprog	English		
Funktioner	Fjernbetjening	Nej		
Design, form og placering	Farve	Grå		
Kapacitet, forbrug og strøm	Kører på batterier	Ja		
	Genopladelige batterier	Ja		
	Gennemsnitlig batterilevetid	24		



Produktanmeldelser	Spørgsmål og svar	Mere information	Specifikationer	Lagerstatus i varehus
Modelbeskrivelse	Produkttype	Bærbar højttaler		
	Modelnavn	Bang & Olufsen BEOPLAYA2CG		
	Produktserie	Speakers		
Lyd	Lydsystem	Mono		
	Udgangseffekt RMS (watt)	2x30		
	Frekvensrespons (Hz)	55-24000		
Tilslutninger	Trådløs lydoverførsel	Ja		
	Wi-Fi	Nej		
	Bluetooth	Ja		
	AUX-indgang (3.5mm)	Ja		
	Stik (3.5mm) til hovedtelefoner	Nej		
	USB-indgang	Nej		
	Micro-USB	Nej		
	App tilgængelig	Ja		
Software	Navn på app	Beoplay		
	Kompatible operativsystemer	Beoplay App supports Android version 5.0 and onwards, IOS.		
	Software-sprog	English		
Funktioner	Fjernbetjening	Nej		
Design, form og placering	Farve	Grå		
Kapacitet, forbrug og strøm	Kører på batterier	Ja		
	Genopladelige batterier	Ja		
	Gennemsnitlig batterilevetid	24		



Produktanmeldelser	Spørgsmål og svar	Mere information	Specifikationer	Lagerstatus i varehus
Modelbeskrivelse		Produkttype	Trådløs højttaler	
		Modelnavn	Bose SoundLink Mini II	
		Produktserie	SoundLink Mini	
Lyd		Lydsystem	Stereo	
Tilslutninger		Trådløs lydoverførsel	Ja	
		Wi-Fi	Nej	
		Bluetooth	Ja	
		AUX-indgang (3.5mm)	Ja	
Funktioner		Equalizerindstillinger	Nej	
		Forudindstillet equalizer	Nej	
Skærm/display		Type ur	Nej	
		Dato	Nej	
		Alarmindikator	Nej	
Design, form og placering		Farve	Sort	
Kapacitet, forbrug og strøm		Kører på batterier	Ja	
		Batteritype	Lithium-ion	
		Genopladelige batterier	Indbygget	
		Gennemsnitlig batterilevetid	10	



Produktanmeldelser	Spørgsmål og svar	Mere information	Specifikationer	Lagerstatus i varehus
Modelbeskrivelse		Produkttype	Trådløs højtaler	
		Modelnavn	Beats Pill+	
Lyd		Lydsystem	Stereo	
Tilslutninger		Trådløs lydoverførsel	Ja	
		Wi-Fi	Nej	
		Bluetooth	Ja	
		AUX-indgang (3.5mm)	Ja	
Design, form og placering		Farve	Hvid	
Kapacitet, forbrug og strøm		Kører på batterier	Ja	
		Batteritype	Lithium-ion	
		Genopladelige batterier	Indbygget	
		Gennemsnitlig batterilevetid	12	
Mål og vægt		Højde (cm)	4,60	
		Dybde (cm)	19,00	
		Vægt (kg)	0,31	


## Appendix 5 – Comparaison of the three portable speakers from www.elgiganten.dk

### Sammenligning af produkter

Fjern markering af forskelle

Gå tilbage

Fjern produkt



★★★★★  
Beats Pill+ højttaler - hvid


1 519

Vis produkt

✓ På lager online (50+)

> Trådløs højttaler  
> Bluetooth, Beats Pill+ app  
> Lang batteritid

Fjern produkt



★★★★★  
B&O Beoplay A2 bærbar trådløs højttaler - natural


2 299

Vis produkt

✓ På lager online (100+)

> Bærbar trådløs højttaler  
> 360-graders lyd  
> Op til 24 timers musikafspilning

Fjern produkt



★★★★★  
Bose SoundLink Mini II Bluetooth-højttaler - pearl

1 699

Vis produkt

✓ På lager online (100+)

> Bærbar højttaler  
> Bluetooth-tilslutning  
> Lang batteritid



Modelbeskrivelse			
Produkttype	Trådløs højttaler	Bærbar højttaler	Trådløs højttaler
Modelnavn	Beats Pill+	Bang & Olufsen BEOPLAYA2NA	Bose SoundLink Mini II
Produktserie		Speakers	SoundLink Mini
Lyd			
Lydsystem	Stereo	Mono	Stereo
Udgangseffekt RMS (watt)		2x30	
Frekvensrespons (Hz)		55-24000	
Tilslutninger			
Trådløs lydoverførsel	Ja	Ja	Ja
Wi-Fi	Nej	Nej	Nej
Bluetooth	Ja	Ja	Ja
AUX-indgang (3.5mm)	Ja	Ja	Ja



Appendix 6 – Table of questionnaire pros and cons in Saunders et al. (2015)

Attribute	Web and mobile	Postal	Delivery and collection	Telephone	Structured interview
Population's characteristics for which suitable	Individuals with access to the Internet, often contacted by email	Literate individuals who can be contacted by post; selected by name, household, organisation, etc.		Individuals who can be telephoned; selected by name, household, organisation, etc.	Any; selected by name, household, organisation, in the street etc.
Confidence that right person has responded	High with email	Low	Low but can be checked at collection	High	
Likelihood of contamination or distortion of respondent's answer	Low	May be contaminated by consultation with others		Occasionally distorted or invented by interviewer	Occasionally contaminated by consultation or distorted/invented by interviewer
Size of sample	Large, can be geographically dispersed		Dependent on number of field workers	Dependent on number of interviewers	
Likely response rate <sup>a</sup>	Variable to low, 30–50% reasonable for web within organisations, otherwise 10% or even lower	Variable, 30–50% reasonable		High, 50–70% reasonable	
Feasible length of questionnaire	Equivalent of 6–8 A4 pages, minimise scrolling down	6–8 A4 pages		Up to half an hour	Variable depending on location
Suitable types of question	Closed questions but not too complex; complicated sequencing fine if uses software; must be of interest to respondent	Closed questions but not too complex; simple sequencing only; must be of interest to respondent		Open and closed questions, including complicated questions; complicated sequencing feasible	
Time taken to complete collection	2–6 weeks from distribution (dependent on number of follow-ups)	4–8 weeks from posting (dependent on number of follow-ups)	Dependent on sample size, number of field workers, etc.	Dependent on sample size, number of interviewers, etc., but slower than self-completed for same sample size	
Main financial resource implications	Cost of online survey tool, purchase of list of respondents' email addresses	Outward and return postage, photocopying, clerical support, data entry	Field workers, travel, photocopying, clerical support, data entry	Interviewers, telephone calls, clerical support; photocopying and data entry if not using CATI <sup>b</sup> ; survey tool if using CAPI	Interviewers, travel, clerical support; photocopying and data entry if not using CATI <sup>b</sup> ; survey tool if using CAPI
Role of the interviewer/field worker	None		Delivery and collection of questionnaires; enhancing respondent participation	Enhancing respondent participation; guiding the respondent through the questionnaire and recording responses; answering respondents' questions	
Data input <sup>d</sup>	Automated	Closed questions can be designed so that responses may be entered using optical mark readers after questionnaire has been returned		Response to all questions entered at time of collection using CATI <sup>c</sup>	Response to all questions can be entered at time of collection using CAPI <sup>d</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Discussed in Chapter 7. <sup>b</sup>Computer-aided telephone interviewing. <sup>c</sup>Computer-aided personal interviewing. <sup>d</sup>Discussed in Section 12.2.

Sources: Authors' experience; Baruch and Holtom (2008); De Vaus (2014); Dillman et al. (2014); Oppenheim (2000)