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Master Thesis

Self-presentation and distinction on Tinder

How to portray oneself on a dating app trying to find 'the one'

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Abstract and Keywords

Since the invention of the Internet, part of our social life exists online. Catching up with friends, looking for jobs but also the search for a relationship is now taking place online. After the first mobile phone app was developed, it did not take long for the first dating app to become available. Though Tinder was not the first dating app, it currently is one of the most used dating apps with over 50 million users everyday.

When looking for a partner, one has preferences for what he or she likes in a partner as well as preferences for looks. As individuals prefer to be surrounded by others with the same social position, and same cultural taste. Therefore it makes sense people look for partners of the same social position on dating apps. Based on the distinction theory by Bourdieu, people in different social classes have different ways of distinguishing themselves, showing to which layer they belong or trying to pretend to belong to a higher class than they actually do. The act of distinguishing oneself, and possible pretending to belong to a higher class, can be linked to the theory of self-presentation by Goffman. Self-presentation and impression management is the basis of any dating app. It is interesting to see how people from different social strata portray themselves, aiming to attract people of similar social class and the main question of this research therefore states: What is the relationship between educational level and online self-presentation of male Tinder users, (age 25-35) in the Netherlands?

For this research the two concepts, distinction and self-presentation have been combined, aiming to contribute to the on-going discussion on the relevance of Bourdieu's distinction theory. By observing and testing various theoretical concepts, this research provides insight on the reproduction of social inequality through online dating, as people tend to date others from the same social class. Furthermore, it translates the theory by Goffman into a concept of online self-presentation, which is interesting since social life is more and more taking place online. The relevance of this research for society, is the on-going use and still growing popularity of dating apps like Tinder, of which many aspects are not fully explored yet.

Self-Presentation | Online Dating | Tinder | Distinction | Social class

Preface

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1. Introduction

Back in the days, people usually met their significant other for example in school or at the local bar. However, with the advent of the first online dating website match.com, the phenomena of dating has changed a lot as people could now look for a potential partner online. After this website, more websites followed such as OKCupid in the early 2000s. In 2012, as a result of the invention of mobile applications, the dating app Tinder was launched. Tinder is one of the best known and worldwide used dating apps nowadays. With the emergence of online dating, people's dating behaviour has changed drastically. So drastically that these days, one-third of the couples who are getting married in the United States met online (Ortega & Hergovich, 2017).

When looking for a partner, one has preferences for what he or she likes in a partner as well as preferences for looks. With the use of an app like Tinder, the first layer of this selection process has been simplified. As individuals prefer to be surrounded by others with the same social position, and same cultural tastes according to Savage & Prieur (2013), it makes sense for people to look for partners of the same social position on dating apps. Savage & Prieur (2013) mention people tend to look for a potential partner with a similar socio-demographic background (also cf. Ward, 2016).

Based on the distinction theory by Bourdieu (1984), different layers of society can be observed. He described these layers or classes as it can also be called, as the lower class, middle class and high class. People in these classes or layers have different ways of distinguishing themselves, showing to which layer they belong or trying to pretend to belong to a higher class than they do. The lower class is referring to the working class, people with the smallest income and lower education compared to the higher classes. The middle class is, as the name says, the group between the lower and higher class and prefers to present themselves as higher-class. However, this is against the wishes of the highest or also called dominant class, who want to distinguish themselves from all lower classes. They portray their social and cultural capital, which will be discussed later in this research, consisting of for example knowledge of art, classical music. The way people portray themselves, making clear what group they belong to or wish to belong to, combined with the idea of people looking for a partner of a similar socio-demographic background, makes it appealing to observe their self-presentation on dating apps. It shows we are not aiming for inclusivity, as we tend to look for a partner of the same social class.

When talking about social relationships and capital, which is explained more elaborately in the theory section below, Goffman's (1959) theories offer exciting insights on

the topic. According to Goffman, people try to influence how others perceive them through the manipulation of appearance, behaviour and the setting. Looking at the art of dating from a Goffmanian perspective, it is interesting to see how people from different social strata portray themselves, to attract people with the same social position. For this research, self-presentation is operationalised in leisure activities, cosmopolitanism, bodily modifications and status symbols.

A theoretical framework has therefore been created as a base for this research, drawing from theories by Bourdieu (1984) and Goffman (1959) in order to answer the research question; **What is the relationship between educational level and online self-presentation of male Tinder users, (age 25-35) in the Netherlands?** On Tinder, people can construct their impression by consciously choosing photos and text for their profile¹. When creating an account, one can upload six photos in total, as the app is a very visually based medium, as well as provide information in a biography. Tinder recently added a new option, which made it possible to fill in the level of education and occupation as a separate section, which is visible at first sight when a new profile is shown. This recent addition of these elements illustrates the relevance of these items in society as they indicate someone's social position.

Self-presentation and impression management is the basis of any dating app. It is interesting to see how people from different social strata portray themselves, to attract people with the same social position. To answer the research question, a quantitative content analysis has been performed. By using a semi-random sampling method, as Tinder uses unknown algorithms in their app, data of Tinder profiles have been collected. The reason for only collecting data of male users is due to ethical issues involved with this research, which will be elaborated on in chapter three. As little quantitative research has been done on online dating apps, the collection, as well as analysis of the data, has been done explorational, which is discussed in chapter 3.

¹ The biography section on Tinder gives people the opportunity to portray their social status more explicitly. On the first 'page' of the profile, you can scroll through the different photos. One then can decide to swipe to the left, which means you are not interested in the person shown, swipe to the right if you would like to match with the person. Once swiped right, when the other person has as well, you gain the possibility to chat. Another option is to view the whole profile and see if the person has a biography, a linked Instagram account, a personal Anthem, a linked Spotify account, similar Facebook friends or close connections or similar interests which are linked via Facebook, and decide to swipe left or right after viewing the whole profile

The relevance of this research can be found on both a social and sociological level. Concerning the social context, Tinder is very popular, but it can be questioned if people are aware of their behaviour on these apps and the behaviour and presentation of others. As the online dating scene is quite a new research area, all new information is valuable as it helps to understand the working of the apps and the behaviour of people. From a sociological point of view, this research adds to the on-going discussion on the relevance of the distinction theory. The classic distinction theory by Bourdieu (1984) has been one of the most used theories by sociologists over the years. How relevant is the concept of the social class still in the 21st century? By observing the extent of status portrayal, this research provides insight on the reproduction of social inequality through online dating as people tend to date others from the same or slightly higher classes according to Savage and Prieur (2013). Furthermore, it translates the theory by Goffman into a concept of online self-presentation, which is interesting since social life is more and more taking place online. Self-presentation is not restricted to the area of dating apps but also takes place at other online platforms such as Facebook and Instagram, to which new insights found in this research could provide useful and refreshing. Goffman's (1959) theories have been employed multiple times for research into (online) dating (Couch & Liamputting, 2008; Ellison, Heino, Gibbs, 2006; Ward, 2016; Hancock & Toma, 2006). However, to this date, it has not been linked to the theory by Bourdieu to see to what extent cultural and economic capital can be observed within the self-presentation of online dating profiles. With this research on Tinder profiles and the portrayal of people, the relationship between these theories has been explored.

2. Theoretical Framework

This theoretical framework is based on the theory of self-presentation by Goffman (1959), the social distinction theory by Bourdieu (1984), renewed ideas on social class and social distinction in current society (Friedman, 2012; Savage et al. 2015; Sullivan & Katz-Gero, 2007), and previous research on online dating apps (Gibbs, 2006; Ward, 2016; Hancock & Toma, 2006). This research aims to answer the research question; what is the relationship between educational level and online self-presentation of male Tinder users, (age 25-35) in the Netherlands? The literature review provided the base for the creation of a codebook and was used as a guideline for the data collection (see appendix 1). The codebook is divided into four main groups, leisure activities, cosmopolitanism, the bodily modification and status symbols. These four topics will be discussed in this framework in relation to the theory.

2.1 The concept of self-presentation and online dating

Erving Goffman (1959) is most known for his theory of self-presentation. He argued how people manipulate the setting, their behaviour and their appearance in order to control or guide others' impressions. The classic theory was created based on face-to-face communication in the offline world. When talking to someone directly, it is possible to observe how one is perceiving the information that is being shared. Does the person like it, agree or disagree? Based on this, one can decide to alter the story or reformulate their opinion on something to leave a more positive impression. For example, two people are on a date and discussing the food they like. The man says he knows a really good steak restaurant, aiming to impress his date with his good taste. When the date then responses she is a vegetarian, he then mentions how he is actually not often eating meat himself, and continues how he knows an excellent vegetarian restaurant with a particular dish they serve their which is really good. However, if his date would have responded excited on the stake restaurant, he could have continued telling about the best steak he ever had, aiming to impress her even more. When talking face-to-face, the subtle facial expressions, the tone of voice and body posture make it easier for someone to interpret the opinion of the other without using words. However, the dating scene and other social engagements are no longer only taking place offline in the 'real world'. Online, interactions and self-presentation are not the same due to many differences and lack of the just mentioned observable elements such as tone of voice and facial expressions.

The emergence of dating apps like Tinder introduced a new way of getting to know people in the surroundings. Dating is a very common motive for using an app like Tinder,

though other motives could be entertainment, friendship, and travel advise when swiping on holiday and finding 'hook-ups' (Ranzini & Lutz, 2017). Research performed by Ward (2017) on Tinder, also suggests users vary in their motives of using Tinder. She conducted multiple interviews with users, and some of her interviewees claimed to be 'not seriously looking for a relationship' or not anymore, nevertheless enjoyed the dating process and the entertaining aspect of Tinder as well the ego-boost they would get from using the app. Toma et al., (2008. p. 1024) mention; "The more online daters desired a face-to-face relationship, the more honest they reported being in their online interactions". So the self-presentation is influenced by the intention of the user, but according to Ranzini and Lutz (2017), the honesty of the information and authenticity of the profile is also influenced by the self-esteem of the user.

This authenticity is also addressed by Duguay (2017, p. 351) who mentions in his article 'Dressing up Tinderella': "Since mobile dating intensifies the need to confirm that potential dates are not misrepresenting themselves and are safe to meet in person, Tinder's success indicates that it has allayed these concerns regarding the authenticity of its users". According to Toma et al., (2008), deception and lying on online dating profiles is observed but only at a small scale. However, Couch and Liamputting (2008) mention, based on information from participants answer to the question; 'what the worst thing is about online dating?' is the number of fake profiles, lies and misleading pictures. Fake profiles and lies thus occur; however people are capable of detecting it.

Since the emergence of Goffman's' (1959) theory and the creation of the Internet, sociologists have translated his ideas to make it applicable to the online world. According to Toma and Hancock (2010), the self-presentation in the online dating world is about controlling how others perceive you, as you want to impress and attract people online. The main goal is finding a date while being analysed by so many other online dating app or website users. There is, however, a difference based on the intentions of the user, does one want a long-term and serious relationship or something short-term with a lot of different people. This difference has an effect on the portrayal. A person who is after something serious will be more realistic and honest in its profile compared to one who only wants to have as many short-term interactions, with the primary goal of having sexual intercourse, as possible (Whitty, 2007). Trying to explore this manipulation of the image portrayal on dating apps, Ward (2016) performed qualitative research with the central question "What are the pre-match impression management practices of Tinder users? (Ward, 2016, p. 1648)". According to Ward, and in line with previous research on dating apps (Ellison et al., 2006), people try to portray themselves in a way, according to their ideals, aiming for authenticity. The conception

of presenting oneself in the best possible manner is based on people's ideas of what 'ideal' means, created by norms, values. According to Savage and Prieur (2013), one will present oneself in a way to attract similar kinds of people.

When creating an online profile on a dating website or application, the user has the option to select the most flattering photos as well as combining it with a text, which is easily enhanced compared to the reality (Toma & Hancock, 2010). One often occurring type of photo on a Tinder profile is a 'selfie'. A selfie is a photograph, which is taken by the person itself from up close, usually by holding one's phone in the hand while taking the photo (Qiu et al., 2015). As part of self-presentation and manipulation, it is interesting to know attractive people usually portray more photos compared to less attractive people. Also, less attractive women try to enhance their attractiveness more compared to less attractive men. According to Toma & Hancock, (2010, p. 346) "men value physical attractiveness in women more and, perhaps more interestingly, women respond to men's preference through self-presentation choices made in the online dating context". This is less significant the other way around. Still, the use of deceptive self-enhancement usually stays limited, in particular when one's goal is real life interaction. People are aware that faking too much could lead up to false expectations which is not a good start for a first date and a possible relationship.

As Tinder and other dating apps are semi-public in the sense that a profile is needed to see other profiles, the app creates, what Goffman (1959) calls a front stage, where users can 'perform'. Users can apply filters such as age and geographic distance, which are highly limited options when trying to search a significant other with the same cultural preferences and social position. These terms will be discussed elaborately below (chapter 2.2). This creates the need to portray oneself in a certain way to attract a possible partner on these types of platforms. Compared to the options one has for looking for a partner in the real/offline world, this differs a lot as in the real world a place or venue can be chosen, which already could create a selection. Going to a venue with a dress code, for example, shuts out a group of people who do not like to dress up, don't have the money for these type of clothes or have no interest in people who enjoy going there. This selection cannot be made on a dating app like Tinder, where all users are thrown on the same stack as everyone else. The selection is made differently by self-presentation. The way one presents oneself can attract or repel other users. Besides the difference of 'selecting' others, the online presentation of the self is more static compared to the offline world. This is due to the limited possibilities of presenting oneself via photographs to show what one looks like and usually only describe oneself verbally in the biography. This information can be changed of course by altering the text or changing the

photos but compared to real life, where one can actively and dynamically alter the presentation of oneself, this is limited. During a face-to-face conversation, the reaction of the other is taken into account for altering the self-presentation for the best outcome (Toma & Hancock, 2010).

When looking for a partner, one has preferences for what he or she likes in a partner as well as preferences for looks. With the use of an app like Tinder, the first layer of this selection process has been simplified. As individuals prefer to be surrounded by others with the same social position, and same cultural tastes according to Savage & Prieur (2013), it makes sense for people to look for a partner of the same social position, and similar socio-demographic background, on dating apps (also cf. Ward, 2016). In order to attract similar kinds of people, one will present oneself in a particular way. Goffman's (1959) theories have been employed multiple times for research into (online) dating (Couch & Liamputting, 2008; Ellison, Heino, Gibbs, 2006; Ward, 2016; Hancock & Toma, 2006), however, has to this date not been linked to the theory by Bourdieu to see to what extent the theory on distinction, including cultural and economic capital and social class plays a role within self-presentation of online dating profiles. Therefore the theory by Bourdieu will be discussed next, linking the concept of self-presentation to the theory by Boudrieu (1984) and the relation to the online dating scene.

2.2 Social class and notions of capital in society

As mentioned in the introduction, the theoretical framework for this research discusses the distinction theory based on the initial theory by Bourdieu (1984), one of the most accepted theories by sociologists over the years. Bourdieu (1984) aimed to understand social inequality within society and linking cultural taste to social class and argued economic capital, the possession of money or forms of capital, is not the most important factor for the reproduction of social class. Social class is the position one has within society and according to Bourdieu (1984) society can be divided into three groups: the dominant class, the middle class and the dominated class. These classes differ in the possession and consumption of different forms of capital: social capital, economic capital and cultural capital. According to Bourdieu (1984), these forms of capital are responsible for the reproduction of social inequality.

However, there are certain societies, where the reproduction of social inequality is not a matter of different forms of capital. In these types of societies, it is just not possible to climb the social status ladder, as society is organised based on castes and one stays in the cast one is born in. In this system, a small-town boy will stay a small-town boy. This system

differs however for Western or capitalistic societies where society is based on social class, as it is possible to gain social status and climb the social ladder (or move downwards). Through education and success in the work field, one can climb the social ladder, which is also referred to as social mobility. According to Friedman (2012, p. 469) “Typically, this mobility is upward—with respondents beginning life with relatively low cultural capital but then accumulating capital by attending university and/or gaining professional or higher-managerial employment”. Cultural capital is the manifestation of classifying taste practices, and it can be described in many forms. Bourdieu (1986, p. 17) defined the concept by describing three forms of cultural capital, namely embodied, objectified and institutionalised. With embodied cultural capital he determined how one is capable of perceiving, for instance, art or classical music. Is someone comfortable walking around in a museum of modern art and capable of having a conversation about a classical music piece? The possession of books, paintings or other artworks is referred to as objectified cultural capital, as these are tangible objects of culture. The possession of academic qualifications is described as institutionalised cultural capital, for education is usually obtained in an institution or academy and is linked to higher social classes. All together these three form the concept of cultural capital. One can show certain knowledge of artworks for example or hang obtained diplomas on the wall, have a large number of books by ‘classical’ sociologists or poetry to show their amount of cultural capital. Usually, these forms of capital are all possessed together by a person, though one can possess for example somewhat more embodied capital than institutionalised capital and little objectified capital. However, this is not very common as they are linked with each other.

Portraying embodied capital is a way people distinguish themselves from others as people from lower classes usually feel less comfortable talking about art or classical music (Friedman, 2012). However, this is also the case for a group, discussed by Friedman (2012), named the ‘upwardly mobile’. People belonging to the group grew up with low cultural capital, but have the potential to expand this and gain higher cultural capital. However, this is problematic in itself as they “lack the ‘natural’ confidence to communicate legitimate taste as embodied cultural capital (Friedman, 2012. p. 467)”. For people who do feel comfortable portraying cultural capital, it is, therefore, a way to distinguish themselves from others in conversations. They can also portray it for example online by putting these topics on their Linked-In profile or show themselves reading a classic poetry book on a photo on their Tinder profile.

All three forms of cultural capital, embodied, objectified and institutionalised, are connected to each other as Katz-Gerro (1999, p. 637) argues “we know that cultural

consumption is conditioned to a greater extent by other factors, mainly education, and that income usually does not cancel out racial, class, and generational effect". Social class is being used to describe a group of people who share the same status and are in the same layer of society. This means they have similar levels of wealth and power. Katz-Gerro furthermore argues how living in a city is also connected to a more highbrow consumption compared to residents of rural areas: "Lifestyle and culture tastes as expressions of cultural resources are markers of social distinction and social status" (1999, p. 639). As mentioned, through education and success in the work field one can climb the social ladder, which is also referred to as social mobility, and when climbing the ladder and accumulating capital, one will also gain economic capital (Friedman, 2012).

Cultural and economic capital is not just about possessing it, but also about portraying it. Especially cultural capital is used for symbolic boundary drawing (Michael, 2017). Veblen (1894, 1899) wrote about how the elites like to differentiate themselves from others by conspicuous consumption and a particular way of dressing. He was very much interested in the contrasts between people and how people try to differentiate themselves from others. This is referred to as the concept of conspicuous consumption, by which is meant the act of buying, consuming and portraying the possession of certain goods (Veblen, [1899]1994). However Trigg (2001), argues for a more nuanced look on conspicuous consumption as the concept of conspicuous consumption, described by Veblen, is too restrictive due to different lifestyles people have and therefore differ in the way they consume. Though quite similar to Veblen, Bourdieu believed the Elites use their economic- and cultural capital to "maintain an invisible boundary between themselves and lower classes, and second, to perpetuate class distinctions intergenerationally" (Alexander, 2003, p. 229). Savage and Prieur (2013) mention the constant shift of what is used to distinguish oneself from others. Knowing a good restaurant is, or classical composers is no longer enough for the elites to distinguish themselves. Savage and Prieur (2013, p. 257) quote Holt (1997, p. 103-104) who already in the 90's argued: "In other words, to express distinction through embodied tastes leads cultural elites to emphasise the distinctiveness of consumption practices themselves, apart from the cultural contents to which they are applied". What was perceived new and 'cool' yesterday might be out-dated today. For the elites, it is therefore not just about the portrayal of expensive goods and objects but more so about showing of knowledge and being up to date of new hotspots such as restaurants, upcoming designers and other more subtle forms of portraying their cultural and economic capital. Linking this to online dating, portraying cultural activities such as visiting a museum and sharing pictures of this activity in one's

profile or clearly defining one's education or employment can be seen as ways to distinguish oneself from others and possibly put people off who are not feeling comfortable with it or lack interest in the subject. Furthermore showing one's status is related to all forms of capital. One can show his cultural capital by portraying knowledge on autonomous modern art, portraying social capital by uploading a selfie on Instagram with a famous politician or actor and showing economic capital by visibly wearing expensive brands².

The embodiment of cultural capital seems very useful for portraying a specific version of oneself in the online dating world. One can 'fake' the possession of high cultural capital or much economic capital online, for instance when posting a picture of yourself posing with a fancy car that's parked in the street of flaunting through the exhibition space of Kunsthall. Yet when the dating then moves from online to offline, the maintenance of the 'show' may become rather complicated and can lead to exposure of the actual social class of a person. Friedman (2012) mentions how the lack of 'natural' confidence, when it comes to legitimate taste, as embodied cultural capital, can be problematic when trying to come across as someone with an embodied high cultural capital. In the case of Tinder, showing a photo of oneself in front of a highbrow painting could result in unfulfillable expectations when attracting someone, which entails a high cultural capital. Based on research done by Whitty (2007), people tend to stay close to the truth on their dating profiles to avoid situations like this. For this research, it means that people portraying cultural capital are most likely truthfully possessing it, and based on the concept by Savage and Prieur (2013) are looking for people with similar interest and (somewhat) an equal amount of cultural capital.

According to Savage and Prieur (2013), the classic distinction theory by Bourdieu is still relevant in current society although the concept of cultural capital should be seen as something that is more fluid and changes slightly over time. Society is not a set entity; it is in constant motion and so is cultural capital and what is perceived as cultural capital for that reason. According to Michael (2017), high-potential young business professionals value social capital more while they are less concerned with the portrayal of cultural capital. Savage and Prieur (2013, p. 262) advice a more full range approach: "To be sure, the identification of distinguishing practices and preferences do not necessarily turn these attributes into cultural capital. For an asset to serve as a capital in a Bourdieusian sense, it should be linked to

² As it has proven to be difficult finding specific forms of status symbol portrayal within different social classes, this research therefore has been chosen to take a more explorational way of analysing the portrayal of status symbols of Tinder users, as discussed in chapter 3.3.4.

legitimacy, convertibility, and domination, and this link has to be shown...”. Many scholars have ignored the necessity of fluency for cultural capital and argue the theory to be invalid or out-dated while others claim the theory is still very relevant but need a more fluent approach such as Savage and Prieur (2013).

2.3 Engagement and social class in the 21st century

Society has changed since Bourdieu (1984) wrote his theory on distinction. In what ways are engagement and social class structured nowadays in the 21st century? As mentioned above, Savage and Prieur (2013), argue a more fluent approach to the concept of cultural capital and advice a more wide range approach. Savage et al. (2015) propose a new way of looking at society and letting go of the old division of lower, middle and upper classes. They furthermore state how culture is playing a part in the inequality that can be found in current society. Cultural inheritance, the institutionalised form but also cultural taste for example, still gives symbolic power in current society (Savage et al., 2015). There is, however, an essential factor; the way cultural capital is recognised by people or actually not recognised influences the perception of class. For positioning oneself and others within society in a particular class, the economic capital is no longer enough to define class.

Savage and Prieur (2013) and Savage et al. (2015) are not alone in slightly adjusting and rethinking the theory of distinction by Bourdieu (1984). One of today's most often used concepts when discussing cultural capital, cultural consumption and distinction is the concept of the cultural omnivore. The concept of omnivorousness was first defined by Peterson and Simkus (1992) who argued the idea of homology in cultural stratification to be out-dated. After introducing the concept, a number of scholars researched the concept of omnivorousness in diverse cultural fields and a number of countries and argued it was applicable (Bryson, 1997; Warde et al., 1999; Holbrook et al., 2002; Emmison, 2003). According to Sullivan & Katz-Gero (2007, pp. 133) “omnivorousness is usually regarded as relating to the range of cultural taste”. The concept of the omnivore tries to explain the broader interest and taste of people from higher classes who no longer concern themselves with solely highbrow activities and interests. This means someone could have an interest in modern art and classical music as well for example reality-TV and popular music, which is perceived as something typical for the lower class.

However, some aspects of the concept of the cultural omnivore can be questioned. Savage and Prieur (2013) claim the idea of ‘omnivorousness’ and ‘emerging cultural capital’ as insufficient when trying to explain layers and classification within society and it is still

connected to the cultural and economic capital. Sullivan & Katz-Gero (2007) revisited the concept of omnivorousness into the concept of voraciousness. They argue that previous studies on omnivorousness are too focused on what people consume rather than the way individuals consume. In their research on voracious cultural consumers, the aim was “(...) to address the temporal aspect of cultural omnivorousness, which, we argued, is manifested both in a wide band of cultural tastes and in a voracious frequency of cultural participation (Sullivan & Katz-Gero, 2007, p. 133)”. The results show patterns of highly educated individuals with an insatiable thirst for all sorts of leisure activities, not fitting their schedules. Their activity level was not higher due to having more money or more time compared to those possessing lower educational levels. Sullivan & Katz-Gero (2007. p. 133) argue this voraciousness is being used by these individuals “(...) as a status marker, a cultural boundary, and a sign of social exclusion”. The ‘fast life’ phenomena in relation to engaging in diverse cultural actives, depicting an omnivorousness as well as voracious pattern and profile are possibly the new form of distinction and cultural exclusion for the higher class.

Savage et al., (2015), argue for a slight different concept of leisure engagement. They argue it is not voraciousness that is being used as a status marker but: “involve actively going out into the public world of cultural institutions (Savage et al., 2015. p. 66)”. The distinction is being made of higher educated people with more economic capital to be interested in more actively public engaged leisure activies such as visiting museums, theater but also going to the gym and other activities which are percieved as more popular and commercial, compared to those of lower classes with lower education levels and lower economic capital. The lower classes are more engaged in activities that are not public, more passive and cost less money such as watching netflix and getting take-away instead of going out for dinner (Savage et al., 2015). According to Savage et al., (2015, p 66) “Those with more money and good educational qualifications are much more extensively involved across a range of leisure pursuits compared to those without these resources” and those of lower educational levels, with less economic capital to have a lifestyle “(...)being largely conducted privately or in the close bosom of family and friends, have less of a public profile (2015. P. 67)”. Where Sullivan & Katz-Gero (2007) argue for voraciousness and the ‘fast life’ concept of distinction, Savage et al., (2015) put more emphasis on the portrayal of all sorts of leisure, actively public engaged as a form of distinction. Like Friedman (2012) they argue lower educated classes lack confidence to participate in activities where cultural capital is expected, such as visiting an art gallery or museum, where those who already poses cultural capital seem to accumulate it by participating in active engaged and more public leisure.

Another way to distinguish oneself is by adopting a cosmopolitan ethos or ‘state of mind’. According to Jansson (2012, p. 137), this means “a willingness to engage with the Other, and, on the other hand, a willingness to recognise and problematize the orientation and background of one’s own cultural identity”. This involves an interest in other cultures, taking shape in the act of travelling to countries, which have a different culture to one’s own. Also, the act of learning languages, moving abroad for a job and visiting important buildings such as temples and other landmarks related to specific cultures and religions. Being open towards other cultures asks for reflexivity, which requires knowledge and has been linked to people possessing a high level of cultural capital (Savage and Prieur, 2013).

Within the different layers of society, distinction is not only taking place on a cultural or economic level but also in the field of physical presentation. Besides visible sub-cultures, there are various ways in which people from different layers of society dress, aiming to distinguish themselves from others or show they belong to a specific group. This is not new, as throughout history people have been used to classify others based on clothing. Companies with a specific status, for example, offices and banks demand particular ways of dressing from their employees such as wearing suits, dresses and closed shoes. For these types of jobs, visible body modifications such as piercings and tattoos are commonly asked to be covered, as it does not fit the image of the company.

By selecting a particular type of clothing, hair, make-up and possible body modifications, a person shows him or herself to the world. Tranter and Grand (2018, p. 1) mentioned, based on their research on body modification in Australia, “We find body modifications to be more prevalent among younger, less educated, working-class, non-conservative Australians”. Furthermore, men are more likely to have tattoos compared to women who are more likely to have body piercings, apart from earrings. The findings and amount of people with tattoos in Australia are similar to the number of people with tattoos and findings of previous research conducted in the United States of America. This makes it assumable the outcomes of both researchers, applies to other Western countries such as the Netherlands.

There are, however, a growing number of female celebrities with tattoos. Tranter and Grand (2018, p. 3) mention; “Nevertheless, negative discourses remain in research positioning women with tattoos as deviant, unattractive, unprofessional and lower class”. Tattoos have been associated with the working classes throughout history, and the research conducted by Tranter and Grand (2018) shows people living in public housing are eight times more likely to have tattoos. Also, a person whose father has a lower occupational status is

more likely to have tattoos compared to those from higher status backgrounds. There is a relation to educational level as they argue: "Those who planned to attend university after finishing school are less likely to have piercings and tattoos (2018, p. 11)". According to Bourdieu (1984), taste corresponds to educational levels and social class. This idea seems to be still relevant when looking at the results of the research done by Tranter and Grand (2018) showing how tattoos are still perceived as and related to, lower social layers of society.

Irwin (2003) has a more nuanced look on this idea of tattoos for lower classes as she found in her research more and more people from higher social classes use tattoos to distinguish themselves and collect them like art collectors collect art: "(...) elite collectors and tattooists are demonstrating their cultural capital and using it to construct themselves as superior to those with less cultural capital. In addition, they are relying on devices that demarcate larger social class distinctions to establish boundaries between themselves and others (Irwin, 2003, p. 50). They see tattoos as a way to flaunt their knowledge of fine arts. Possible reasons for these very different findings and ideas on tattoos and status might be that the status shift of tattoos is still happening, and maybe differences can be observed within different age layers of society on the opinion on tattoos.

Not only bodily modifications are related to social class, but physical appearance is as well, though it also contributes to overall health and not just appearance. According to Stuij (2015) both the preference for sports, as well as the intensity of participation, are related to social class. People from higher classes usually participate more in sports than people from lower classes. Stuij (2015) describes this by using the theory by Bourdieu on the 'habitus'. According to Bourdieu, behaviour is directed by the habitus, which is "an internal 'system' based on a durable internalisation of all sorts of habits, 'as society is written into the body' (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 63 cited by Stuij, 2015, p. 780)". According to Stempel (2005), the higher classes tend to participate in sports like aerobics, moderate levels of weight training without showing off their muscles and strength too much. They furthermore like competitive sports "that restrain violence and direct physical domination to draw boundaries between themselves and the middle and lower classes (Stempel, 2015, p. 428)". The portrayal of self-discipline and the winning mentality while staying civilised is what the dominant class aims to show when it comes to exercising. Uncontrolled strength is perceived as uncivilised. This applies to, for example, a bodybuilding type of physique, which is related to lower classes and martial arts such as kickboxing.

2.4 Stating the hypotheses

The theoretical framework demonstrates the likeness of social class, which is in this research measured as the level of education, influencing the portrayal and engagement of leisure activities, pursuing and portrayal of a cosmopolitan lifestyle and attitude, portraying bodily modifications and the portrayal of different types of status symbols. This in order to enhance self-presentation on dating apps, and to attract people of the same social class and those with similar interests. Based on this theoretical framework, hypotheses have been created based on the four theoretical concepts, aiming to answer the research question; **what is the relationship between educational level and online self-presentation of male Tinder users, (age 25-35) in the Netherlands?** In order to test the theoretical concepts, leisure, cosmopolitanism, bodily modification and status symbols, have been operationalized, which is discussed in chapter 3.3. The hypotheses stated for this research are:

2.4.1. Leisure engagement

As discussed in section 2.3, the engagement of various leisure activities, tend to be perceived as connected to different level of education due to the common behaviours and presentation of people of different social layers. In order to test the two concepts, voraciousness and the idea of active and passive engaged activities, three hypotheses have been created:

H1: Individuals of lower educational levels portray and include significantly more passive engaged leisure activities on their Tinder profiles compared to those with higher levels of education.

H2: Individuals of higher educational levels portray and include significantly more actively engaged leisure activities on their Tinder profiles compared to those with lower levels of education.

H3: Individuals of higher educational levels portray and include significantly more voracious leisure activities on their Tinder profiles compared to those with lower levels of education.

2.4.2. Cosmopolitanism

As discussed in section 2.3, portraying a cosmopolitan lifestyle or characteristics, tend to be perceived as connected to higher level of education due to the common behaviours and presentation of people of different social layers. The hypothesis therefore states:

H4: Individuals of higher educational levels significantly more often portray a cosmopolitan

lifestyle on their Tinder profiles compared to those with lower levels of education.

2.4.3. Bodily modification

As discussed in section 2.3, the possession of tattoos and piercings, tend to be perceived as connected to lower level of education due to the common behaviours and presentation of people of different social layers. The hypothesis therefore states:

H5: Individuals of lower educational levels significantly more often portray a higher amount of bodily modification on their Tinder profiles compared to those with higher levels of education.

2.4.4. Status symbols

As explained in section 2.2, the portrayal of various status symbols, tend to be perceived as connected to different levels of education. As explained in chapter 3.3.4., in order to identify different types of status portrayal of Tinder users, a factor analysis was performed, which resulted in stating two hypotheses on the portrayal of status symbols:

H6: Individuals of lower educational levels significantly more often portray materialistic and conspicuous status symbols on their Tinder profiles compared to those with higher levels of education.

H7: Individuals of higher educational levels significantly more often portray subtle status symbols on their Tinder profiles compared to those with lower levels of education.

3. Method and Research Design

The theoretical framework combined with previous research on online dating resulted in the overarching research question: **What is the relationship between educational level and online self-presentation of male Tinder users, (age 25-35) in the Netherlands?** The above stated hypotheses were created aiming to answer the research question. In order to test the hypothesis, a research method was chosen which will be discussed below as well as the ethical considerations involved with this research, the operationalization of the theoretical concepts and the data collection and analysis of the data.

3.1 Choice of method and ethical considerations

As mentioned in the introduction, with Tinder, people can construct their impression by consciously choosing photos and text. Tinder recently also added the option to fill in the level of education and employment, giving people the opportunity to portray themselves in a way that indicates their social status. In return they can attract people from the same social-demographic background what people like (Savage & Prieur, 2013, Ward, 2016). Most previous research on online dating is of qualitative nature and is mostly build on the theory on self-presentation (Couch & Liamputting, 2008; Ellison, Heino, Gibbs, 2006; Ward, 2016; Hancock & Toma, 2006). In order to add new information to the field of social distinction, combining this with the concept of self-presentation, with the extension of Tinder showing education and employment in ones profile this research is based on a quantitative content analysis of the Tinder app.

For this specific research and data collection, there has been chosen to only collect data of male users by using a female profile. It would have been interesting to also collect data from female profiles but as the researcher of this thesis is female, this would have asked for the creation of a fake profile, which is ethically more questionable. The other possibility of including homo sexual females in this research has been put aside, as the female researcher is heterosexual and the data collected of female homosexual tinder users might differ from heterosexual profiles which could not be controlled and also as the information that would be collected and the data of the males could prove difficult to compare with each other. As this is a somewhat smaller research therefore has been chosen to only research male tinder users of a small age group of a certain region in order to compare the profiles and draw conclusions based on the data. Even though recommendations are usually saved for the discussion part of a thesis, it would be interesting to compare female profiles with those of men and bi-sexual / homosexual preferences and see if there are differences in self-presentation.

As there was no possibility of collecting information of 500 profiles with informed consent, the ethics of this research have been carefully thought through and handled with care. One of the choices that were made was to create a true female profile, consisting of the real name and age of the researcher herself, showing a personal photo of the researcher. As mentioned by Salmons (2018, p. 11) “Researchers need to consider how to present themselves via the Internet in order to sensitively maintain professional boundaries online”. Therefore this profile was linked to her phone number instead of Facebook so no mutual Facebook friends would be shown as this provided extra privacy for the owners of Tinder profiles as well as the researcher and during the process no profiles were swiped to the right. This means that no matches occurred as for a match both the female and male user have to swipe to the right, giving each other a ‘like’ before a conversation can be started. Important to mention is the swiping to the left, which is rejecting a profile, is not visible by the person being rejected. This does not lead to a notification or anything else possibly harming the user. Furthermore as Tinder does not allow using data scraping tools or copying information from profiles, the decision was made to collect the coded data in an excel file (Tinder, n.d.).

By using categories/variables such as ‘number of photos in total’ and ‘number of photos posing in nature’, ‘number of selfies’ data of the profiles based on the photos and text was collected. By collecting data this way, the terms of use have not been violated and the created data-set will not be made public providing anonymity for the user profiles that are part of the dataset. Furthermore, no individual or sensitive data is reported in the results section as the data has been grouped to run tests on in SPSS, which leaves out the possibility to track down single users. The type of data that has been collected also does not involve sensitive information that could do harm when collecting and users of Tinder are made aware that their profiles are being viewed by others. As is mentioned by Townsend & Wallace (2018, p. 13) “... the platform is popular with those under the age of 18, who may be dishonest about their age or use a misleading photograph”. This has been of the reasons to set the age limit at 25-35, hopefully excluding the under age children creating a fake profile. Before starting the data collection, the researcher chose to leave out profiles that seemed fake, occurred more than once or were used for advertisement. Furthermore, since the research did not include personal contact with users, the possibility of under age users using fake profiles would not harm the user; it could at most provide untrustworthy data.

The possibility of untrustworthy data could not be excluded, as there is no way of finding out if all the information of the users is true. However, since this research is on self-presentation and distinction on Tinder, the possibility use of fake information and fake photos

is also an option for self-presentation and does therefore not cause a problem in this research. Furthermore as Whitty (2007) described, people on dating apps with serious intentions are usually honest about themselves and the information provided while others with more short-term goals might portray a better version of themselves. In any case, when a real life encounter is the aimed goal, the reliability of the profile can be assumed to be high. The term 'Catfish' is used when someone is not who he or she portrayed to be online when meeting in real life and this usually does not fulfil the aimed goal of most users of online dating apps. Therefore the information collected for this research is mostly perceived to be trustworthy or slightly enhanced, as people aim for the best representation of oneself, which is still useful as this research is about self-presentation. Therefore all of the collected data can be used for testing the hypothesis.

3.2 Set up of research, data collection and sample

This research has been set up based on theory, creating three main categories; leisure, cosmopolitanism and bodily modification, which has been added with the smaller category; status symbols. These categories were used to create a codebook (appendix 1) and served as a base for the data collection. Research by Miller (2015) on profiles of homosexual men looking for possible partners and with other intentions, was used as inspiration for the data collection and content analysis as well as the guidelines on content analysis by Bryman (2012). During the process of writing the theoretical framework, exploration swiping was done to see what could be observed on the profiles of male users.

During this time, notes were made of reoccurring types of photos such as black and white photos, selfies, showing six-packs, photo's while working out in the gym, posing in front of planes or famous buildings etc. Combined with the literature review at the same time, certain categories were decided to emphasise more during the creation of the categories due to their relevance for this research. Furthermore, the profiles were analysed explorational.

The unit of analysis is the individual male Tinder user, who are interested in women. The age range set for this research is chosen to include men between ages 25-35. This ensures they are further on in their lives, have completed education or are close to finishing. Furthermore this is also the age range the Centraal Bureau voor Statistiek uses for their educational grouping (CBS, 2018). The set distance range for this research was put at a 30kilometers radius with The Hague being its central point.

In order to test the above-mentioned hypothesis, a quantitative content analysis has been performed. By using a semi-random sampling method, as Tinder uses unknown algorithms in

their app, data of 500 Tinder profiles has been collected. The collection of these profiles was done carefully over the period of 9 days in total, at different times of the day, as Tinder might show different profiles based on time and online activity of users. The schedule can be found in appendix 2.

3.3 Operationalization of theoretical concepts

Based on the categories, 123 variables were collected from all 500 profiles. In order to measure the theoretical concepts leisure activity, cosmopolitanism, bodily modification and portrayal of status symbols, an index variable of each concept was computed. The specific variable of each concept measures different dimensions of the concept and has been based on the literature discussed in chapter 2. The independent variable in this research is the *level of education*. Out of the 500 users, about one third (34.20%) gave information on their *education level*.

3.3.1. Leisure engagement

Research by Sullivan & Katz-Gero (2007) on leisure activities show patterns of highly educated individuals with an insatiable thirst for all sorts of leisure activities. The activity level was not higher due to having more money or more time compared to those possessing lower educational levels. Sullivan & Katz-Gero (2007) argue this voraciousness is being used by these individuals as a new form of distinction and cultural exclusion for the higher class.

However, as mentioned in chapter 2.3, Savage et al., (2015), argue is not voraciousness that is being used as a status marker for those with higher educational levels and economic capital, but leisure activities, which involve actively going out into the public. According to Savage et al., (2015) those of higher classes, possessing more cultural and economic capital are more actively public engaged leisure activities such as visiting museums, theatre, the gym, compared to those of lower classes with lower education levels and lower economic capital. The lower classes are more engaged in activities that are not public and cost less money such as watching Netflix and getting a takeaway. Where Sullivan & Katz-Gero (2007) argue for voraciousness and the ‘fast life’ concept of distinction, Savage et al., (2015) put more emphasis on the portrayal of all sorts of leisure, actively public engaged as a form of distinction. For the operationalization of the concepts on leisure, the division was made to test on passive and active engaged leisure activities, which were observed by Tinder users, using the gathered literature for grouping different variables, making it able to test the stated hypotheses (see chapter 2.4).

Passive engaged leisure

Based on the research by Savage et al., (2015) the collected data was explorational analysed, in order to group different leisure activities together that would represent passive engaged leisure fitting to the concept of Savage et al., (2015). The level of *passive engaged leisure* of users was measured by counting how many of the photos included a *skyline* or *music*. In addition to that, the self-description text was analysed for cues referring to *passive engaged leisure* activities. The variables related to *passive engaged leisure* activities are *TV/Netflix*, *Movies*, *Reading*, *Music Listening*, *Music Making*, *Music mentioned general*, *Gaming*, and each one counted as one more characteristic. The scale, which was created, measures the level of *passive engaged leisure* identifying individuals who score comparably higher on the scale portray more *passive engaged leisure*. The scale proves to be weak with a *Cronbach's alpha* of 0.39, but was still used for the analysis as theory (see chapter 2.3) provides reliable ground to do so.

Active engaged leisure

Based on the research by Savage et al., (2015) the collected data was explorational analysed, in order to group different leisure activities together that would represent active engaged leisure fitting to the concept of Savage et al., (2015). The level of *active engaged leisure* activities of a users was measured by counting how many of the photos included *Nature*, *a Landmark*, *Festival*, *Concert*, *Sports Game*, *Amusement Park*, *Teamsport*, *Cardio*, *Gym*, *Skating*, *Art*, *DJ*, *Restaurant*, *Café/Club*, *Zoo/Safari*, *nature other*. In addition to that, the self-description text was analysed for cues referring to *active engaged leisure activities*. The variables related to *active engaged leisure* activities are *Nature*, *Art*, *Festival*, *Concert*, *Restaurant*, *Café/Club*, and each counted as one more characteristic. The scale, which was created, measures the level of *active engaged leisure* identifying individuals who score comparably higher on the scale portray more *active engaged leisure*. The scale proves to be weak with a *Cronbach's alpha* of 0.41, but was still used for the analysis as theory (see chapter 2.3) provides reliable ground to do so.

Voracious leisure engagement

Based on the research by Sullivan & Katz-Gero (2007) on voraciousness, the collected data was explorational analysed, in order to group all leisure activities together that would represent voracious leisure fitting to the concept of Sullivan & Katz-Gero (2007). The level of

voracious leisure engagement of a users was measured by counting how many of the photos included characteristics of *Nature, Landmark, Skyline, Diving, Festival, Concert, Sports Game, Amusement Park, Teamsport, Cardio, Gym, Surfing, Marshall, Skydiving, Wintersport, Skating, Art, Creative other, DJ, Cooking, Restaurant, Café/Club, Zoo/Safari, Nature other*.

In addition to that, the self-description text was analysed for cues referring to voracious leisure engagement. The variables related to voracious leisure engagement are *Nature, TV/Netflix, Movies, Reading, Music Listening, Music Making, Music mentioned general, Gaming, Festival, Concert, Restaurant, Café/Club, Hobby*, and each counted as one more characteristic. The scale, which was created, measures the level of voracious leisure engagement identifying individuals who score comparably higher on the scale portray more voracious leisure activities. The scale proves to be weak with a *Cronbach's alpha* of 0.52, but was still used for the analysis as theory (see chapter 2.3) provides reliable ground to do so.

3.3.2. Cosmopolitanism

As one way to distinguish oneself is by adopting a cosmopolitan ethos or ‘state of mind’, meaning one having an interest in other cultures, taking shape in the act of travelling to countries (Jansson, 2012). This also involves the act of learning languages, moving abroad for a job and visiting important buildings such as temples and other landmarks related to specific cultures and religions and being open towards other cultures asks for reflexivity, which requires knowledge and has been linked to people possessing a high level of cultural capital (Savage and Prieur, 2013). Based on the research by Jansson (2013) and Savage and Prieur (2013) on cosmopolitanism, the collected data was explorational analysed, in order to group all characteristics involved with cosmopolitanism together. In order to define characteristics of cosmopolitanism, the concept has been operationalized by measuring how many photos included the topics: *Travel, Skyline and Landmark*. In addition to these variables, the self-description text was analysed for cues referring to cosmopolitanism. The variables related to cosmopolitanism are: *Number of languages spoken, Traveling and Expat* and each counted as one more characteristic. The scale, which was created, measures the level of cosmopolitanism, identifying individuals who score comparably higher on the scale portray more cosmopolitanism characteristics. The scale proves to be weak with a *Cronbach's alpha* of 0.50, but was still used for the analysis as theory (see chapter 2.3) provides reliable ground to do so.

3.3.3. Bodily modification

The portrayal of bodily modification in this research focuses only on the tattoos and piercings. According to research performed by Tranter and Grand (2018) body modifications are more common among younger, less educated, working-class, non-conservative Australians. Tattoos have been associated with the working classes throughout history, and the research conducted by Tranter and Grand (2018) shows people living in public housing are eight times more likely to have tattoos. Based on the research by Tranter and Grand (2018), and Irwin (2003) who has a more nuanced look on those having tattoos, on tattoos and piercings, the collected data was explorational analysed, in order to group to define characteristics of bodily modification. The concept has been operationalized by measuring how many photos included *Tattoos and Piercings*. In addition to these variables, the self-description text was analysed for references of *tattoos and piercings* and each counted as one more characteristic. The scale, which was created, measures the level of bodily modification, identifying individuals who score comparably higher on the scale, portraying more bodily modification. The scale proves to be weak with a *Cronbach's alpha* of 0.16, but was still used for the analysis as theory (see chapter 2.3) provides reliable ground to do so.

3.3.4. Status symbols

Based on the theory on status symbols (see chapter 2.2) different types of status portrayal can be observed as economic capital is not just about possessing it, but also about portraying it. Veblen (1894, 1899) wrote how elites like to differentiate themselves by conspicuous consumption and a particular way of dressing using the concept of conspicuous consumption, by which is meant the act of buying, consuming and portraying the possession of certain goods (Veblen, [1899]1994). Bourdieu believed the elites use their economic capital to “maintain an invisible boundary between themselves and lower classes, and second, to perpetuate class distinctions intergenerationally” (Alexander, 2003, p. 229). Savage and Prieur (2013) mention the constant shift of what is used to distinguish oneself from others. Knowing a good restaurant is, or classical composers is no longer enough for the elites to distinguish themselves. Savage and Prieur (2013, p. 257) For the elites, it is therefore not just about the portrayal of expensive goods and objects but more so about showing of knowledge and being up to date of new hotspots such as restaurants, upcoming designers and other more subtle forms of portraying their economic capital

Literature on the portrayal of economic capital is not clear on what exactly is perceived conspicuous or more typical lower class portrayal of status symbols, or what could

be seen as a more subtle/elitist portrayal of status symbols. It was therefore decided to perform a factor analysis, in order to define different types of status portrayal of Tinder users, on the variables related to goods and portrayal of economic capital activities, measuring the amount of photos (and text, in the case of restaurant visits) depicting *a person in a car, with a car, in a suit, the total amount of brands shown* and pictures taken in a *restaurant*. The factor analysis (table 4.4.1) shows that two factors can be extracted as factor one describes people who are more focussed on portraying materialistic status symbols, which could also be seen as a portrayal of more conspicuous economic capital, whereas the second factor identifies the portrayal of more subtle status symbols. Therefore it was decided to group the portrayal of status symbols into conspicuous status symbols and subtle status symbols.

Conspicuous status symbols

In order to define characteristics of conspicuous status symbols, the concept has been operationalized by measuring how many photos included *a person in a car, with a car* and *the total amount of brands shown*, each counted as one more characteristic. The scale, which was created, measures the level of portrayal of conspicuous status symbols, identifying individuals who score comparably higher on the scale, portraying more conspicuous status symbols. The scale proves to be weak with a *Cronbach's alpha* of 0.15 but was still used for the analysis as theory (see chapter 2.2) provides reliable ground to do so.

Subtle status symbols

The other group portraying subtler status symbol portrayal, the level of subtle status symbol portrayal of users was measured by counting how many of the photos included photos portraying the Tinder user *in a suit* and *at a restaurant*. In addition to that, the self-description text was analysed looking for references to *restaurants*. Every photo or text reference counted as one more characteristic. The scale, which was created, measures the level of subtle status symbol portrayal, identifying individuals who score comparably higher on the scale, showing more subtle status symbol portrayal. The scale proves to be weak with a *Cronbach's alpha* of 0.13 but was still used for the analysis as theory (see chapter 2.2) provides reliable ground to do so.

3.4 Data collection and sample

In order to test the suggested hypotheses to be reliable, a sample of 500 Tinder profiles, from male Tinder users age 25-35, were collected. The collection as well as the analysis of the

profiles was done exploratory. The codebook was created based on the literature review, aiming to translate the concepts of coding by Bryman (2012, Chapter 13), to this particular research. The codebook was adjusted a little during the collection in order to describe the variables in a more clear way.

The collection was done over a period of two weeks on different times. This was done in order to avoid possible algorithms of Tinder influenced by the time of the day or day of the week. For example it might be possible Tinder shows more profiles of users who are online and in order to keep the collection as random as possible, it was therefore decided to divide the collection over multiple days, ranging from weekdays as well as weekend days. As Kingsday was in between days on which the collection took place, it might be possible the sample contains (more) tourists than it would have a different time in year. However, most users were perceived to be Dutch, the possibility of tourists, has not harmed the sample or provided unusable data. The schedule of the data collection can be found in appendix 2.

3.5 Analysis of data

In order to test the hypotheses, ordinary least square linear regression analysis has been used for estimating the relationships among variables (Field, 2013), in this case *education level* as the independent variable and portrayal of the operationalized theoretical concepts as the dependent variable. For this research all levels of high school have been grouped for they are not profound enough to use separately. The levels of education have been treated as an interval/ratio variable for the regression tests. High school education is group number one, MBO is number two, HBO including Art Academy and Conservatory are number three, University general and bachelor are number four, University Master, PhD and Post-Doc are number five. As the level of education is rank ordered, one being the lowest number and five the highest, transforming this variable into continuous '*years of education*' for the analysis would have not made the analysis more precise or accurate. Besides performing ordinary least square linear regression tests, three independent sample t-test (two way) were performed for the concepts of leisure to check the correlation, and a factor analysis was done for status symbols. Furthermore the scatterplot of standardized predicted values verses standardized residuals, were observed to see if the data met the assumptions of homogeneity of variance and linearity checking if the residuals are normally distributed.

4. Results

A sample of 500 male Tinder users was collected for the creation of the dataset. The most common *age* out of the 500 Tinder users between the ranges 25 to 35 of *age* was 27 ($M = 28$, $SD = 2.77$). From these 500 men, 22 users had a *paid profile*, which gives users the opportunity to hide their *age*, km distance and lets them ‘swipe’ at longer distances compared to normal users. This resulted in 19 missing cases for the variable *age*. Due to the wide variety of *occupations* within the dataset, it was chosen to also create a variable, which represented providing or not-providing information on ones *occupation*. In total, out of the 500 users, a little less than half (46.80%) provided information on their *occupation*. However this variable has not been used for any tests as the independent variable *education level* was more suitable for answering the research question. Furthermore 60.6% of users provided information in the *biography section*, ranging from emoticons, a few words to very extensive texts containing information on the user. Most often, users uploaded six photos on their personal profile (24%), which is also the maximum amount a user is able to upload ($M = 4$, $SD = 1.57$). Overall, 78.2% of all users had one or more *selfies* ($M = 2$, $SD = 1.39$), 18.2% of user added an *anthem* to their profile ($M = 0.18$, $SD = 0.39$) and 12.8% connected their profile to their personal *Instagram account* ($M = 0.13$, $SD = 0.33$).

For this research the variable representing the obtained (or currently obtaining) *education level* was of great importance. Out of the 500 users, about one third (34.20%) gave information on their *education level* ($M = 1.14$, $SD = 1.67$). In total 1.20% of the users proclaim having obtained high school (grouped as number 1), 3.80% obtained MBO (grouped as number 2), 14.00% HBO including art school and conservatory (grouped as number 3), 12.40% University without specification and Bachelor (grouped as number 4), and 2.80% of users obtained a University Master/PhD/Postdoc degree or is currently following education on this level (grouped as number 5). This however is not representative for the Dutch male population age 25-35, based on data provided by the Centraal Bureau voor Statistiek (BCS, 2018). Though the grouping of education levels of the CBS (2018) slightly differ from the *education level* groups that have been created for this research, it can be stated the *education level* is higher for the sample of Tinder users, than on average in the Dutch male population age 25-35. This might be explained as Tinder users with a lower education level wish to keep this information to themselves, in order to enhance their self-presentation. As Tinder does not have a high class, highly educated status, or a paid-membership-only or scanning policy like apps such as The Inner Circle, Tinder users are expected to represent people from all layers of

society. The small amount of users in this sample mentioning lower levels of education is therefore not likely to be caused by their absence but might have to do with an act of enhanced self-presentation by consciously not portraying this piece of information, where the higher educated users are consciously using their obtained education level as a way to enhance their self-presentation by portraying it. This might explain the amount of Tinder users with high education levels within this sample.

With this in mind, the wish to answer the research question; what is the relationship between educational level and online self-presentation of male Tinder users, (age 25-35) in the Netherlands? is interesting based on the provided information on education level of Tinder users already. However in order to explore the relation more and aiming to answer the research question, the hypotheses have been tested and will be discussed separately in this results section as well as addressed in relation to the theory in the discussion chapter (5).

4.1 Presentation of active leisure activity engagement on Tinder

In order to test the hypotheses, regression analysis was performed to see the extent the level of education influences the portrayal of passive, active and voracious leisure activities. The three regressions analyses have been performed separately but are shown in one table in order to compare the results more efficiently. The tested hypothesis state:

H1: Individuals of lower educational levels portray and include significantly more passive engaged leisure activities on their Tinder profiles compared to those with higher levels of education.

H2: Individuals of higher educational levels portray and include significantly more actively engaged leisure activities on their Tinder profiles compared to those with lower levels of education.

H3: Individuals of higher educational levels portray and include significantly more voracious leisure activities on their Tinder profiles compared to those with lower levels of education.

Table 4.1.1

Ordinary least square linear regression on passive leisure, active leisure and voracious leisure activities

* Note: all three tests on leisure activity were done separately

Model	B	Std. Error	t	F	P	R2
Constant: Education grouped	.039	.006	7.097	11.664	.000	.023
Leisure passive	.009	.003	3.415		.001	
Constant: Education grouped	.072	.005	14.378	28.872	.000	.055
Leisure active	.013	.002	5.373		.000	
Constant: Education grouped	.054	.004	15.417	37.081	.000	.069
Leisure voracious	.011	.002	6.089		.000	

The three concepts of leisure were tested on correlation with an independent sample t-test, which proved to be significant (see appendix 3). However, the predictive power of all three is weak, which will be discussed in chapter 5.

4.1.1. Passive engaged leisure

Ordinary least square linear regression analysis was conducted based on the computed dependent variable *passive engaged leisure activity*, as has been described in chapter 3.3.1, and *education level* as independent variable. *Education level* was found to have a significant effect on the level of *passive engaged leisure* portrayed ($F(1, 498) = 11.664$, $p < 0.001$). The regression model is thus not useful for predicting the passive engaged leisure activity, as the predictive power is positive, where it was expected to be a negative number. The predictive power is very weak with an $R^2 = 0.023$. The scatterplot of standardised predicted values versus standardised residuals (appendix 3), showed that the residuals were not normally distributed, which is expected with a small $R^2 = 0.023$. This indicates that *education level* is an unreliable predictor for the portrayal of *passive engaged leisure* in the population. Tinder users' predicted portrayal of *passive engaged leisure* is equal to $0.038 + 0.009$ (*education*

grouped) when *education* is measured by its level. Tinder users portrayal of *passive engaged leisure* increases for every *level of education* by 0.009 (*B*). *Education* has a significant, weak association with the number of *voracious leisure engagement* presented on Tinder profiles, $b^* = 0.151$, $t = 3.415$, $p < 0.001$, 95%.

Based on this analysis, the hypothesis; individuals of lower educational levels portray significantly more passive engaged leisure activities on their Tinder profiles compared to those with higher levels of education, is rejected.

4.1.2. Active engaged leisure

Ordinary least square linear regression analysis was conducted based on the computed dependent variable *active engaged leisure* activity, as has been described in chapter 3.3.1, and *education level* as independent variable. *Education level* was found to have a significant effect on the level of *active engaged leisure* portrayed ($F(1, 498) = 28.872$, $p < 0.001$). The regression model is thus useful for predicting the portrayal of *active engaged leisure* activities however the predictive power is very weak with an R^2 of 0.055. The scatterplot of standardised predicted values verses standardised residuals (appendix 3), showed that the residuals were not normally distributed, which is expected with a small $R^2=0.055$. This indicates that *education level* is a reliable predictor for the portrayal of *active engaged leisure* activity in the population. Tinder users' predicted portrayal of *active engaged leisure* activities are equal to $0.072 + 0.013$ (education grouped) when *education* is measured by its level. Tinder users portrayal of active engaged leisure activity increases for every level of education by 0.013 (*B*). *Education* has a significant, weak association with the number of *active engaged leisure* activities presented on Tinder profiles, $b^* = 0.234$, $t = 5.373$, $p < 0.001$, 95%.

Based on this analysis, the hypothesis; individuals of higher educational levels portray and include significantly more actively engaged leisure activities on their Tinder profiles compared to those with lower levels of education, is accepted.

4.1.3. Voracious leisure engagement

Ordinary least square linear regression analysis was conducted based on the computed dependent variable *voracious leisure engagement*, as has been described in chapter 3.3.1, and *education level* as independent variable. *Education level* was found to have a significant effect on the level of *voracious leisure engagement* portrayed ($F(1, 498) = 37.081$, $p < 0.001$). The

regression model is thus useful for predicting the portrayal of *voracious leisure engagement*, however the predictive power is very weak with an R^2 of 0.069. The scatterplot of standardised predicted values verses standardised residuals (appendix 3), showed that the residuals were not normally distributed, which is expected with a small $R^2=0.069$. This indicates that *education level* is a reliable predictor for the portrayal of *voracious leisure engagement* in the population. Tinder users' predicted portrayal of *voracious leisure engagement* are equal to $0.054 + .011$ (education grouped) when *education* is measured by its level. Tinder users portrayal of *voracious leisure engagement* increases for every *level of education* by 0.011 (B). *Education* has a significant, weak association with the number of *voracious leisure engagement* presented on Tinder profiles, $b^* = 0.263$, $t = 6.089$, $p < 0.001$, 95%.

Based on this analysis, the hypothesis; individuals of higher educational levels portray and include significantly more voracious leisure activities on their Tinder profiles compared to those with lower levels of education., is accepted

4.2 Portrayal of cosmopolitanism on Tinder

In order to test the hypotheses, regression analysis was performed to see the extent the level of education influences the portrayal of cosmopolitan habits and characteristics.

H4: Individuals of higher educational levels significantly more often portray a cosmopolitan lifestyle on their Tinder profiles compared to those with lower levels of education.

Table 4.2.1

Ordinary least square linear regression on cosmopolitanism

Model	B	Std. Error	t	F	P	R2
Constant: Education grouped	.192	.016	12.279	31.530	0.000	0.060
Cosmopolitanism	.043	.008	5.615		0.000	

Ordinary least square linear regression analysis was conducted based on the computed dependent variable of cosmopolitanism, as has been described in chapter 3.3.2, and *education level* as independent variable. Level of education was found to have a significant effect on the level of cosmopolitanism portrayed ($F(1,498)=31.530$, $p<.001$). The regression model is thus useful for predicting the cosmopolitanism portrayal however the predictive power is very weak with an R^2 of 0.060. The scatterplot of standardised predicted values verses standardised residuals (appendix 3), showed that the residuals were not normally distributed, which is expected with a small $R^2=0.060$. This indicates that education is a reliable predictor of to portrayal of cosmopolitanism in the population. Tinder users portrayal of cosmopolitanism are equal to $0.192 + 0.043$ (education grouped) when education is measured by its level. Tinder users portrayal of cosmopolitanism increases for every level of education by 0.043 (B). Education has a significant, weak association with the portrayal of cosmopolitanism on Tinder profiles, $b^* = 0.244$, $t = 5.615$, $p <0.001$, 95%. Based on this analysis, the hypothesis; individuals of higher educational levels significantly more often portray a cosmopolitan lifestyle on their Tinder profiles compared to those with lower levels of education, is accepted

4.3 The presentation of the bodily modification on Tinder

In order to test the hypotheses, regression analysis was performed to see the extent the level of education influences the portrayal of bodily modifications.

H5: Individuals of lower educational levels significantly more often portray a higher amount of bodily modification on their Tinder profiles compared to those with higher levels of education.

Table 4.3.1

Ordinary least square linear regression on bodily modification

Model	B	Std. Error	t	F	P	R2
Constant: Education grouped	.068	.011	6.118	1.410	.000	.003
Bodily modification	-.007	.005	-1.187		.236	

Ordinary least square linear regression analysis was conducted based on the computed dependent variable of bodily modification, as has been described in chapter 3.3.3, and *education level* as independent variable. Level of education was found to not have a significant effect on the level of Bodily modification portrayed ($F(1,498)=1.410$, $p<0.236$). The p value is insignificant and the regression model is thus not useful for predicting the portrayal of bodily modification. Furthermore the scatterplot of standardised predicted values versus standardised residuals (appendix 3), showed that the residuals were not normally distributed, which is expected with a small $R^2=0.003$. This indicates that education is not a reliable predictor of to portrayal of bodily modification in the population. Based on this analysis, the hypothesis; individuals of lower educational levels significantly more often portray a higher amount of bodily modification on their Tinder profiles compared to those with higher levels of education, is rejected. A possible explanation for rejecting this hypothesis will be discussed in chapter 5.

4.4 Status symbols

As mentioned in chapter 3.3.4. different types of status portrayal were identified by performing a factor analysis on the variables measuring the amount of photos (and text, in the case of restaurant visits) depicting *people in a car, with a car, in a suit, the amount of brands shown* and pictures taken in a *restaurant*. The analysis showed two factors could be extracted.

4.4.1

Factor analysis on status symbols

	Components	
	1	2
Posing in car	.661	-.048
Posing with car	.491	-.018
Restaurant	-.390	.397
Amount of Brands	.598	.089
Restaurant (text)	.267	.617
Suit	-.125	.769

Based on the theory and factor analysis, two hypotheses have been stated:

H6: Individuals of lower educational levels significantly more often portray materialistic and conspicuous status symbols on their Tinder profiles compared to those with higher levels of education.

H7: Individuals of higher educational levels significantly more often portray subtitle status symbols on their Tinder profiles compared to those with lower levels of education.

In order to test the stated hypothesis and the concepts, two OLS regression test were performed which are shown in *table 4.4.2*.

Table 4.4.2.

Ordinary least square linear regression on status symbols

* Note; both tests on status symbols were done separately

Model	B	Std. Error	t	F	P	R2
Constant: Education grouped	.480	.029	16.340	8.761	.000	.017
Status conspicuous	-.043	.014	-2.960		.003	
Constant: Education grouped	.123	.014	8.523	10.103	.000	.020
Status sophisticated	.023	.007	3.178		.002	

4.4.1 Conspicuous status symbols

Ordinary least square linear regression analysis was conducted based on the computed dependent variable conspicuous status symbols, as has been described in chapter (3.3.4), and *educational level* as independent variable. *Educational level* was found to have a significant effect on the level of conspicuous status symbols portrayed ($F(1, 498) = 8.761, p < 0.003$). The regression model is thus useful for predicting the portrayal of conspicuous status symbols however the predictive power is very weak with an R^2 of 0.017. The scatterplot of standardised predicted values verses standardised residuals (appendix 3), showed that the residuals were not normally distributed, which is expected with a small $R^2=0.017$. This indicates that education is a reliable predictor of to portrayal of conspicuous status symbols in the population. Tinder users' predicted portrayal of conspicuous status symbols are equal to $0.480 + -0.043$ (education grouped) when education is measured by its level. Tinder users portrayal conspicuous status symbols decreases for every level of education by -0.043 (B). Education has a significant, weak association with the number of conspicuous status symbols portrayed on Tinder profiles, $b^* = -0.131, t = -2.960, p < 0.003, 95\%$. Based on this analysis, the hypothesis; individuals of lower educational levels significantly more often portray materialistic and conspicuous status symbols on their Tinder profiles compared to those with higher levels of education, is accepted.

4.4.2. Subtle status symbols

Ordinary least square linear regression analysis was conducted based on the computed dependent variable subtle status symbols, as has been described in chapter 3.3.4, and *educational level* as independent variable. *Educational level* was found to have a significant effect on the level of subtle status symbols portrayed ($F(1, 498) = 10.103, p < 0.002$). The regression model is thus useful for predicting the portrayal of subtle status symbols however the predictive power is very weak with an R^2 of 0.020. The scatterplot of standardised predicted values verses standardised residuals (appendix 3), showed that the residuals were not normally distributed, which is expected with a small $R^2=0.020$. This indicates that education is a reliable predictor of to portrayal of subtle status symbols in the population. Tinder users' predicted portrayal of subtle status symbols are equal to $0.123 + 0.023$ (education grouped) when education is measured by its level. Tinder users portrayal subtle status symbols increases for every level of education by 0.023 (B). Education has a significant, weak association with the number of subtle status symbols portrayed on Tinder profiles, $b^* = 0.141, t = 3.178, p < 0.002, 95\%$.

Based on this analysis, the hypothesis; individuals of higher educational levels significantly more often portray subtitle status symbols on their Tinder profiles compared to those with lower levels of education, is accepted

5. Discussion and Conclusion

The emergence of dating apps like Tinder has given people the opportunity to look for a possible partner online. By using an app, the first layer of this selection process has been simplified. As mentioned in chapter 2, individuals prefer to be surrounded by others with the same social position, social class, and same cultural tastes according to Savage & Prieur (2013). People of different social classes have various ways of distinguishing themselves, showing to which class they belong. This concept of people of various classes distinguishing themselves, combined with the idea of people looking for a partner of a similar socio-demographic background, makes it interesting to observe their self-presentation on dating apps. Self-presentation and impression management is the basis of any dating app. It is interesting to see how people from different social strata portray themselves, to attract people with the same social position and this was the start of this research aiming to answer the question; What is the relationship between educational level and online self-presentation of male Tinder users, (age 25-35) in the Netherlands?

The theoretical framework discussed the theory by Goffman (1959) on self-presentation and how this has been applied to previous research on online dating. It furthermore explored the distinction theory by Bourdieu (1984) and how sociologists in the 21st century apply his theory on society with alterations. Combining these theories, the theoretical concepts of leisure activities, cosmopolitanism, bodily modifications and status symbols were explored and operationalised. The portrayal of these concepts on Tinder profiles has been researched by performing a quantitative content analysis as explained in chapter 3. As the amount of quantitative research on dating apps is limited, it has been an explorational research with certain limitations, which will be discussed after the findings.

5.1 Summary of findings

The tested hypotheses have been reported in chapter 4 and will be discussed in relation to the literature, aiming to explain the outcomes and possible unexpected results and specific flaws, as the more general limitations are discussed in section 5.3.

5.1.1. Leisure engagement

The tested hypotheses on leisure engagement were based on the concepts and research performed by Savage et al., (2015) and Sullivan & Katz-Gero (2007). The first hypothesis, stating; individuals of lower educational levels portray significantly more passive engaged leisure activities on their Tinder profiles compared to those with higher levels of education,

has been rejected. Based on the OLS regression analysis, there is a significant effect of the level of education on passive leisure engagement; however, this is opposite to what as Savage et al., (2015) argued. It appears that even passive leisure activities are more often portrayed by higher educated Tinder users, while it was expected to have a negative effect where the higher educated, the less one would portray passive leisure activities. As the other two hypotheses on active and voracious leisure have been accepted, as they are both significant, the question of the most accurate concept of leisure portrayal is raised. As the R^2 is very small, the actual predictive power of level of education on the portrayal of leisure should be perceived with caution. Nevertheless, as the passive engaged leisure activities have proven to be portrayed more often by those with a higher level of education, it could be argued the concept by Sullivan & Katz-Gero (2007) on voraciousness and the ‘fast life’ concept of distinction seems to be more relevant and reliable for male Tinder users. Portraying all sorts of leisure activities, showing one has an active life, and being involved in various things such as team sports, going to amusement parks but also mentioning to enjoy Netflix, could be a way to attract a broader range of people as well as portraying an active lifestyle. As a form of self-presentation, the portrayal of these various activities could also be a tactic to come across as more authentic as has been explained in chapter 2.1., is something users of dating apps strive towards.

However, the rejection of the hypothesis on passive leisure might also be a result of those with higher educational levels, having a more ‘complete’ profile. By this is meant for a user to portray the maximum of six photos, depicting various scenes on these photos instead of only bathroom or car selfies, and providing an elaborate biography. Due to limited time, it has not been possible to investigate this possibility, though it might be another possible explanation for the rejection of the hypothesis on passive leisure.

5.1.2. Cosmopolitanism

Portraying a cosmopolitanism lifestyle is related to higher cultural capital and belonging to a higher social class. Speaking multiple languages, travelling across the world, visiting important landmarks and being open towards cultures and religions asks for reflexivity, which requires knowledge (Jansson, 2012., Savage and Prieur, 2013). Based on the accepted hypothesis, individuals of higher education levels significantly more often portray a cosmopolitan lifestyle on their Tinder profiles compared to those with lower levels of education.

Though the hypothesis is accepted based on the significant outcome of the OLS regression analysis, the R^2 was very weak, meaning the predictive power of education level on portraying cosmopolitanism is not strong. Furthermore, it must be mentioned that the selected variables, based on the operationalisation of cosmopolitanism as explained in chapter 3.3.3., could have used a stronger theoretical base in order to possibly come to a higher *Cronbach's alpha* as well as higher predictive power. A factor analysis has been performed during the operationalisation, which resulted in excluding variables such as skydiving and posing with a plane for they appeared to weaken the *Cronbach's alpha* even more and did not fit with the variables that were grouped in the end.

5.1.3. Bodily modification

The hypothesis stating: Individuals of lower educational levels significantly more often portray a higher amount of bodily modification on their Tinder profiles compared to those with higher levels of education was rejected as no significant results were found between level of education and the portrayal of piercings, tattoos or mentioning these two forms of bodily modification in the biography section. This is in contrast with the findings of Tranter and Grand (2018, p. 1) who mentioned, based on their research on body modification in Australia, "We find body modifications to be more prevalent among younger, less educated, working-class, non-conservative Australians". They mentioned the outcomes of their study were comparable with research done in the United States, which raised the expectation of these findings to apply to other Western countries. Research by Tranter and Grand (2018) shows people living in public housing are eight times more likely to have tattoos.

According to Bourdieu (1984), taste corresponds to educational levels and social class and tattoos and piercings, are according to Tranter and Grand (2018) still seen as deviant even though more and more celebrities get tattoos. Here might be a possible explanation for the insignificant outcome, as it could be that in the Netherlands, the opinion on tattoos under male Tinder users age 25-35 is more positive towards tattoos due to a slow mind shift on tattoos and possibly other bodily modifications. This is in line with the more nuanced look on tattoos by Irwin (2003), as she found more and more people from higher social classes use tattoos to distinguish themselves and collect them like art collectors collect art. According to Irwin (2003) people show off their cultural capital and knowledge of fine arts by collecting tattoos of highly appreciated artists. The possible reasons for the rejection of the hypothesis might be that within the Netherlands, the status shift of tattoos under young adults is more evolved than the research conducted in Australia and the US. A small remark must also be made as the

sample size might have influenced the results, for only a small number of Tinder users had tattoos and piercings or mentioned this in their biography.

5.1.4. Status symbols

As mentioned, finding specific literature on the portrayal of economic capital, and more explicitly the portrayal of status symbols, was challenging. Within this research, the theoretical concept on conspicuous consumption by (Veblen, [1899]1994) were used as his concepts fit with those of Bourdieu, who believed the elites use their economic capital to “maintain an invisible boundary between themselves and lower classes, and second, to perpetuate class distinctions intergenerationally” (Alexander, 2003, p. 229). As mentioned, Savage and Prieur (2013) argue there is a constant shift of what the elites use to distinguish them from lower classes. For the elites, it is not just about the portrayal of expensive goods and objects but more so about showing of knowledge and being up to date of new hotspots such as restaurants, upcoming designers and other more subtle forms of portraying their economic capital.

Both hypotheses on the portrayal of status symbols have been accepted, for the outcome of the OLS regression analysis was significant. The factor analysis helped to divide two types of portrayal. The outcome of the OLS should be interpreted with caution for they are weak in their predictive power. As appears, Tinder users with lower education levels, portray more status symbols, which are more directly perceived as the portrayal of economic capital such as wearing brands and portraying the possession of a car on their profile. For those with higher educational levels, it appears the portrayal of economic capital is done on a more subtle level, by wearing suits and showing photos of themselves in a restaurant. Savage et al., (2015) refer to this as a more actively engaged leisure activity, which requires more economic capital and is therefore also linked to those possessing higher education levels and cultural capital.

However, it would be interesting to have a more elaborated literature basis on which a broader operationalisation of the concept of status symbols would be done, analysing more aspects of the portrayal of status symbols by Tinder users.

5.2 Answering the research question in relation to theory

As this research aimed to answer the research question; what is the relationship between educational level and online self-presentation of male Tinder users, (age 25-35) in the Netherlands? It can be concluded, with caution due to low predictability outcomes on the

different tested hypotheses; there is a relationship. The effect of ones educational level on the self-presentation of the tree leisure activities, cosmopolitanism and status symbols has proven to be observable on the Tinder profiles of users. However multiple other elements or variables of the collected Tinder profiles self-presentation could have been observed, on which ones educational level might have an influence, such as sports, the concept of foodies (someone who is very interested in exotic, unknown and fancy foods and drinks as a way to distinguish oneself), as well as a more in-depth analysis of the biography text, which contain very rich information.

Even though there is more to discover on self-presentation, distinction and online dating, this research has contributed by adding new knowledge to the sociological field. This is done for it has explored the relation between the distinction theory by Bourdieu (1984), explored by new concepts on distinction in current society, as for example, Sullivan & Katz-Gero (2007) and Savage et al., (2015), with the translated concept of self-presentation by Goffman (1959), on Tinder. As various forms of distinction that are portrayed by Tinder users have proven to be significant, this research reconfirms the idea of the reproduction of social inequality through online dating as people tend to date others from the same or slightly higher classes according to Savage and Prieur (2013). It furthermore confirms the relevance of both sociologists, as both theories of Bourdieu (1984) and Goffman (1959). Though the theories have been updated with some new aspects and findings, the idea of distinction by social classes is still observable by the concept of self-presentation, which has been translated to the online world.

5.3 Limitations of the research and recommendations for future research

With every research, there are limitations and recommendations for future research. One of the biggest limitations of this research has been the small amount of Tinder users who provided information on their educational level. The collected sample existed of a larger group of males age 25-35 with higher education levels than found in the Dutch male population. Furthermore, it would have been interesting and could have provided more reliability, if more than one independent variable would have been used to test the stated hypotheses such as occupation. However, due to time limitations, it was not possible to recode the provided occupations so that it could be tested.

Another limitation is the general number of samples, for 500 users on the 5 billion in total is not very representative. The limited quantitative research performed on dating apps such as Tinder, mostly due to the terms of use by such apps prohibiting the use of data

scraping tools and making the gathering of information a very time-consuming process, left this research to be highly explorational and some decisions on the methodology were based on rational thinking of the researcher, and inspiration of research performed by Miller (2015), and guidance by Bryman (2012), as no fitting examples could be found. This was also the reason for deciding to create a codebook for the data collection, based on literature and exploratory swiping in order to find out what could be observed. For the creation of a codebook, and general information on a content analysis, Bryman (2012) was used. However, now that this has been done, future research can focus more specifically on selecting what elements can be observed on dating apps like Tinder, making it possible to go more in depth based on literature and collecting a larger sample, containing more specific and relevant information.

Another weakness of this research is the lack of information on female Tinder users, in order to test and compare the stated hypotheses. This is therefore also the biggest recommendation for future research, as it would be very interesting to compare the self-presentation and ways of distinction of males and females. Taking it one step further, the sexual preference could also add new knowledge, for it is not known if homosexual or bisexual users of dating apps are comparable to heterosexual users on the concept of self-presentation and distinction.

To conclude; the self-presentation of Tinder users and various ways of distinction, have proven to be a very exciting research topic, asking for more in-depth and extensive exploring, especially as it has proven to be an interesting way for testing the relevance of sociological theories and concepts. Besides this sociological relevance, the relevance for society on continuing the research on dating apps is the on-going use and high popularity of these apps, of which many aspects are not fully explored

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Appendences

Appendix 1 Codebook

CODEBOOK <u>PHOTO CATEGORIZATION TINDER</u>			
CATEGORY	SUB_CATEGORY	CODE	Description
General	Type of photo	Selfie	A photo taken by the person himself from up-close. Often taken from an angle slightly from above.
		Portrait	Different from a selfie as this photo is not clearly made by the person himself, more from a distance with a different angle than common with a selfie.
		Full-body	Full body photo
		Black/White	When the photo shown is black and white
		Filter	A visible filter, for example with fake flowers, sparkles, snapchat ears etc
		Photo2	Photo in which a second person is visible
		Group	A photo with three or more people
Posing	Posing	P. in car	When the person on the photo is sitting in the car.
		P. w. car	When the person on the photo is standing in front/ next to a car
		P. on motor	When the person is sitting on the motorbike
		P. w. motor	When the person is standing next to / in front of motorbike
		P. on scoot	When the person is sitting on the scooter
		P. w. scoot	When the person stands in front of the scooter
		P. animal	When the person on the photo is holding, showing, sitting next to an animal or only showing an animal 1 cat 2 dog 3 fish 4 exotic like a tiger or turtle 5 other 6 horse
		P. nature	When the person is posing in front of nature sight/in nature
		P. landmark	Photo of landmark
		P. skyline	Photo of skyline
		P. pose	Photo of person posing (write down pose)
		P. BodyB	When the person on the photo is flexing his muscles to show of his physique.
		P. sexual	When the person on the photo is making taking on a sexual pose, for example pulling down his pants and boxer, showing his lower belly.
Artistic element(s)	Artistic element(s)	Analog	A photo from an analogue/printed photo (also a photo taken from a polaroid photo)
		Artistic	Write down what makes it artistic like flash, color adjustments, shading, scale
	Weird / funny facial expression	M. face	making a face - 0 no 1 yes

		Am.Brand	amount of brands counted in photos total
	Status symbols	Nr. Brand	total photos on which brands are visible (1 to 6)
Bodily representation			
	Tattoos	Tattoo	When there is a (or more) tattoo visible in the picture (1 small, described as half an arm/leg/25% of back/chest, 2 medium underarm/leg/50% back/chest, 3 big sleeve arm/leg/full back/chest, 4 full cover when bigger than 3)
	Piercings	Piercing	When there is a (or more) piercing visible in the picture, earings not included (1 one, 2 two, 3 three, 4 more than three)
	Showing skin	Skin	Showing skin other than when wearing short trousers or a t-shirt. (1 no shirt, 2 no shirt while wearing swimming pants/workout shorts, 3 underwear, 4 nothing)
	Dressing up	Suit	When the person on the photo is wearing a suit toxido /
Cosmopolitanism			
	Traveling	Travel	A photo in which it is visible the person is traveling. For example showing tropical beaches, Asian Temples, Pyramids.
		Plane	A photo in which a plane is visible or an airport, or the person is sitting in the airplain.
	Flag	Flag	When a flag other than the Dutch one is shown on the photo. (name of country represented by flag)
	Text in photo	Text	When a text is visible on the photo, related to a different country than the Netherlands, saying for example "I love Paris" (name of country mentioned in text)
Leisure activities			
	Festival	Festival	Photo of the person on a festival. Recognizable by the typical festival tents and outdoor stages.
	Concert	Concert	When the person on the photo is in front of a stage where musicians are performing
	Theatre / performance	Theater	When the person is clearly attending a theatre / performance or musical. This can be seen by the stage and actors shown on the stage / posing in front of theatre.
	Amusement park	A.park	When the person is at an amusement park. Having his photo taken in a rollercoaster or in front of another attraction or with a character in for example Disney Land
	Museum / Art	Museum	When the person stands in front of an artwork or is standing in front of or inside a museum.

		Teamsport	When the person is photographed while playing with his team or posing with his team. Amount of photos on which the person is visible playing team sports
	Team Sports	Team-type	When the person is photographed while playing with his team or posing with his team. What sport he is playing. (1 soccer, 2 hockey, 3 footbal, 4 honk/softbal, 5 rowing, 6 other 7 waterpolo 8 golf 9 vollybal 10 basketball).
	Cardio / Endurance sports	Cardio	When the person on the photo is performing a type of cardio or enduring sports such as running or cycling.
	Marshal arts	Marshal-arts	When the person on the photo is performing a type of marshal arts sport
	Fitness	gym	When the person on the photo is finessing or lifting weights in the gym / crossfit
	Music	Music	When the person on the photo is playing an instrument or posing with / in front of an instrument. For example holding a guitar or standing in front of a piano. Playing music with a DJ set is a different category
	Painting	Art	When the person on the photo is painting or drawing
	Gardening	Gardening	When the person on the photo is gardening
	Creative hobbies other	Creative other	When the person on the photo is actively practicing another creative hobby such as spraying graffiti (write down what hobby)
		Cooking	When the person on the photo is cooking, for example standing in front of a stove stirring a pan
	Foodie	Food	When the person on the photo is eating or sitting in front of a well made plate of food. The food is categorized in this category of foodie when it is more special than an ordinary plate of potatoes, vegetables and meat. For example when there has been paid extensive attention to the presentation of the food.
		Restaurant	When the person is visibly sitting in a restaurant
	Drink	Drink	When drinking/posing with drink (1 beer, 2 wine, 3 cocktail, 4 shots, 5 other 6 whiskey 7 coffee)
	DJ	DJ	When playing behind a DJ set
	Zoo	Zoo / Safari	When the person on the photo is at a zoo or an animal park / inside a jeep on safari
	outdoor activities	Nature	When the person on the photo is standing/walking in a nature landscape
	Winter sport	Wintersport	When the person on the photo is standing on skis, snowboard or sitting in an skiing elevator for example. Surrounded with snow.
	Cosplay / costume	Cosplay/Costume	When the person on the photo is dressed in a cosplay or other costume
	Party pic in club or café	Club/Café	When the person is photographed in a café or club setting
Other			
	Army	Army	When the person is wearing a uniform on the photo
	Smoking	Smoking-(type of	When the person on the photo is smoking a cigarette

		smoke)	or a joint for example
	Hand gestures	Hand gesture	For example making a gun with hands or showing the middle finger (1 middle finger, 2 gun, 3 peace, 4 rock and roll/ 5 thumbs up 6 other)
	Religion	Religious symbols	When the photo is showing a clear representation of a religion such as a photo of a Christian necklace or a photo of the Koran

CODEBOOK PROFILE INFORMATION AND <u>TEKST TINDER</u>			
CATEGORY	SUB_CATEGORY	topic / code	Description
General	Education	Education	The educational level of the person : 1 unknown (not findable with google / 2highschool / 3mbo / 4 hbo / 5 uni general / 6uni ba / 7 ma uni / 8phd/ 9 art academy / 10 conservatorium / 11 post doc
	Occupation	Occupation)-Type of occupation	Occupation of the person (write down text)
	Music	anthem	if the person has an anthem on their profile
	Instagram account	Yes/no	When the person has his instagram account attached then fill in yes, if not then no
	Basic information	Interest-(Type of interest)	General interests of the person such as animals
		Trait-(type of traits)	When the person mentions personality traits as kind, humor, sarcasm, trustworthy, sweet etc. (count them)
		fashion	When the person mentiones interest in clothingstyle
		Friends	When the person mentions enjoys spending time with friends
Bodily representation	Fitness	Fitness-(other info)	The description of working out, doing sports, taking care of ones physique or the use of a muscled arm emoticon
	Tattoos	Tattoo	Describing the love or owning a tattoo fill in 1 for yes/no =0
	Physique	Height-yes/no	When the person mentioned his height then fill in 1 for yes, if not then no =0
		Fit	When the person mentions being fit
		Muscular	When the person mentions being muscular
		Tall	When the person mentions being tall
Cosmopolitanism	Language	Language-(amount)	Flag emoticons, short descriptions of languages such as FR/ES/NL/EN, use of multiple languages in one profile text (amount)
	Open-minded	Openminded	Open-mindedness mentioned by person, free-spirit, saposapiens?

	Religion	Open-religion	When the person mentions an open mind towards all sorts of religions
	Traveling	Travel	Mentioning traveling as an interest or other words like wanderlust related to traveling / seeing the world /mentioning the word nomad
	Expat	Expat	Mentioning being an expat or living in more than one country
Leisure activities	TV / Netflix	TV/Netflix	When the person mentions to enjoy watching Netflix or TV (Netflix and chill however will be categorized as looking for sex)
	Cinema / movies	Cinema	When the person mentions to enjoy watching movies / going to the cinema
	reading	read	When the person mentions an interest in reading
	Museum / Art	Museum / Art	When the person mentions to have an interest in art and or museums
	Foodie	Wine	When the person mentions to enjoy wine
		Beer	When the person mentions to enjoy beer / know a lot about beer / enjoys special beer
		Drinks-general	When the person mentions a drink / 1 beer 2 wine 3 cocktails 4 shots 5 gin tonic 6 coffee 7 other
		Cocktails	When the person mentions to enjoy cocktails
		Gin-Tonic	When the person mentions to enjoy Gin&tonics
		Food	When the person mentions an interest in good food / going out for dinner / cooking
		Veganism	When the person mentions to be a vegan or plant based, has a symbol that represents this
		Vegetarian	When the person mentions to be a vegetarian or plant based, has a symbol that represents this
		Music-listening	When the person mentions to listening to music .
	Music	music making	When the person mentions to play an instrument
		Music-Festival	When the person mentions to enjoy going to festivals
		Music-Concert	When the person mentions to enjoy going to concerts
	Sports	Sports(type)	1 cardio 2 team 3 marshall 4 gym 5 surfing 6 skating/longboarding 7 1other/unkown 8 cycling 9 snowvoarding 10 vollyball 11 squash
	Hobbies	Hobby-(other)	other hobbies than mentioned already

Relationship/intentions	Intentions	Intention-serious	When the person mentions to be looking for a serious relationship / 1 serious
		Intention-Fun	When the person mentions to be looking for fun, nothing serious / 2 fun
		Intention-Sex	When the person mentions to be looking for sex /3 sex
		Intention-noONS	When the person mentions not to be looking for sex (noONS means no one night stands) 4 noONS
		Intentions-Fetish	When the person mentions to be looking for a specific sexual thing / here described as fetish as it is usually domination/bdsm related / 5 fetish
		intentions - other	when an intention is mentioned that differs from the above intentions / 6 other
Other	Smoking	Smoking/Non-Smoking	When mentioning to smoke or not smoking / 0 = not mentioned / 1 = non smoking / 2 = smoking

Appendix 2 Data collection schedule

Data collection schedule

Wednesday 25/04	12:00 - 16:00
Thursday 26/04	09:00 - 13:00
Friday 27/04	x
Saturday 28/04	10:00 - 14:00
Sunday 29/04	14:00 - 18:00
Monday 30/04	18:00 - 22:00
Tuesday 01/05	x
Wednesday 02/05	17:00 - 22:00
Thursday 03/05	09:00 - 15:00
Friday 04/05	18:00 - 22:00
Saturday 05/05	x
Sunday 06/05	14:00 - 18:00
Monday 07/05	10:00 - 14:00
Tuesday 08/05	12:00 - 16:00
Wednesday 09/05	09:00 - 13:00

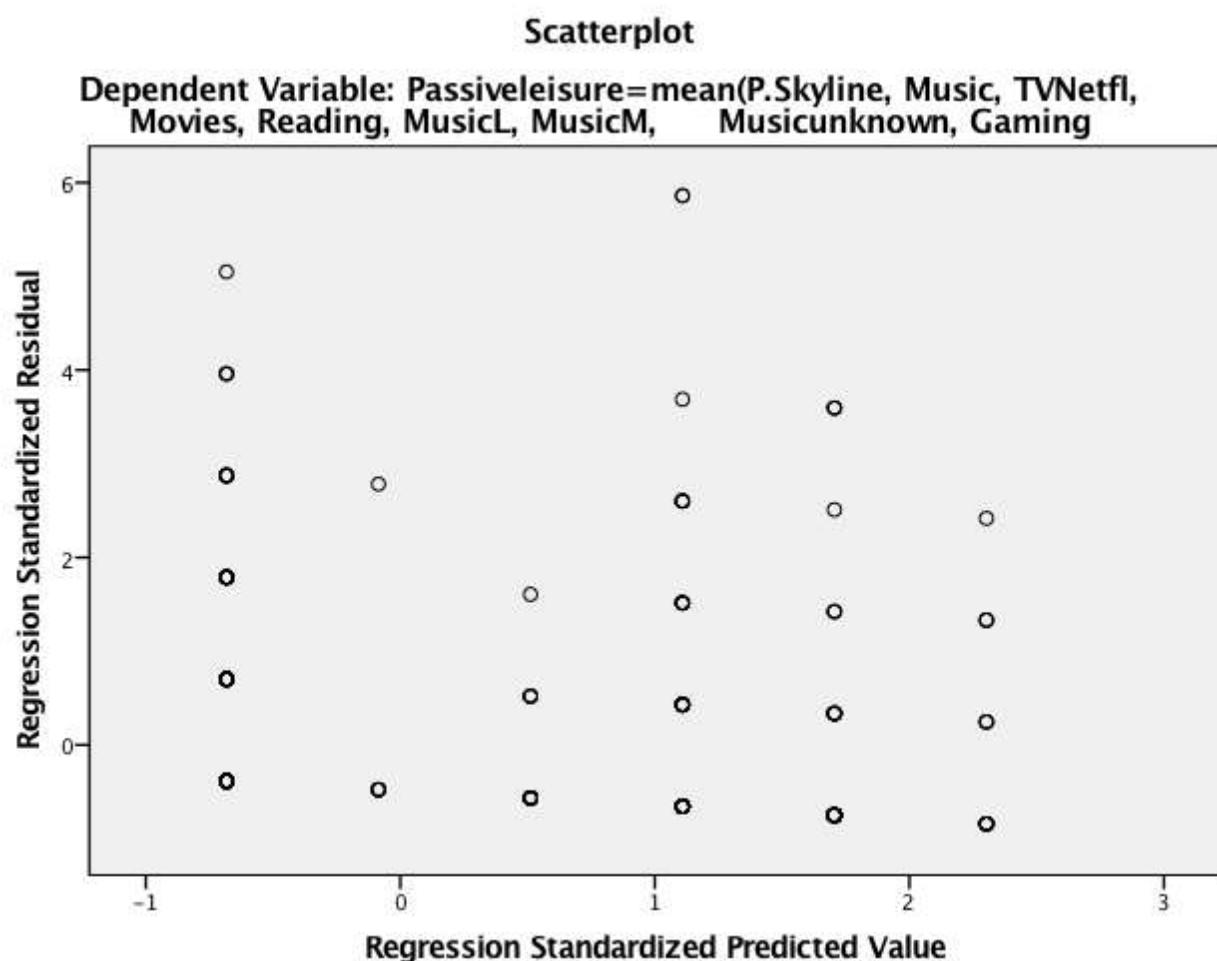
In general, after 2 hours of swiping, a short break was taken.

Appendix 3 tables of content (output SPSS)

* Scatterplots have been checked for the normality of the residuals. Here the standardised residuals (ZRESID) and standardised predicted values (ZPRED) have been used.

As could be expected from the small R², there is no normal distribution which makes clear my tests are not that suitable for explaining the behavior or portrayal of Tinder users even though the outcome of the OLS is significant.

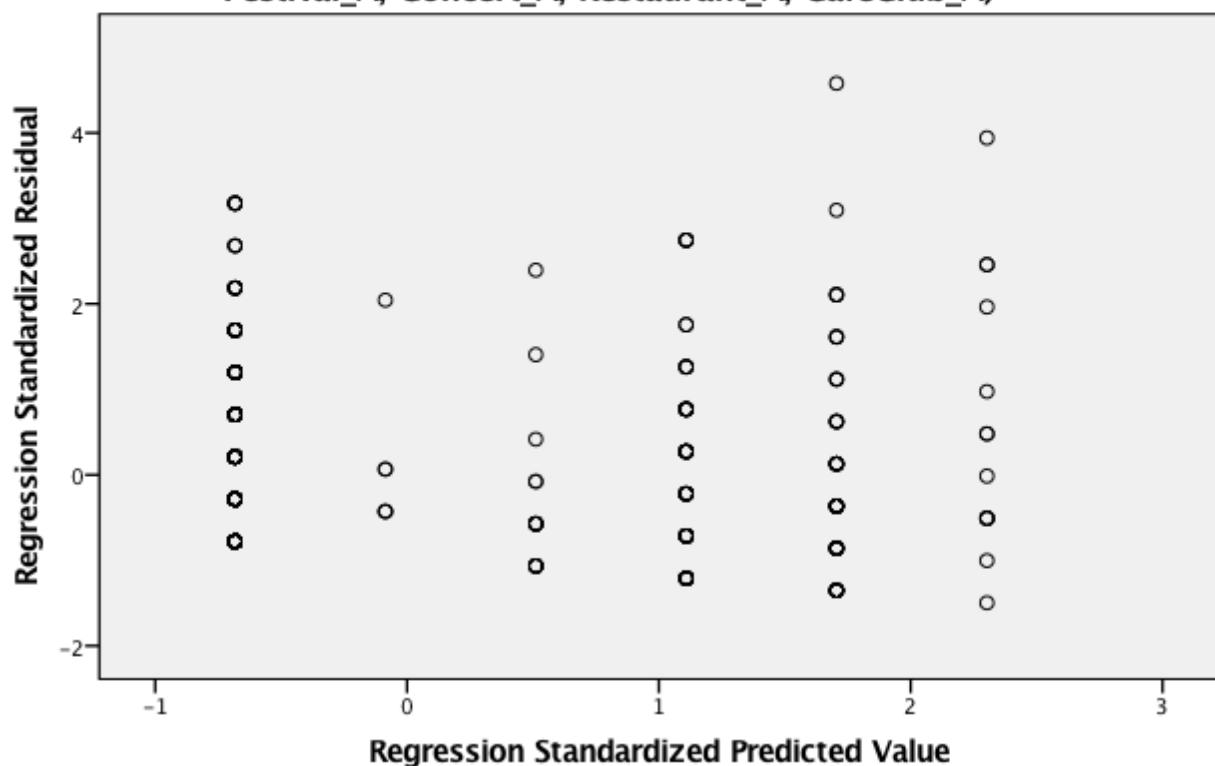
Passive leisure



Active leisure

Scatterplot

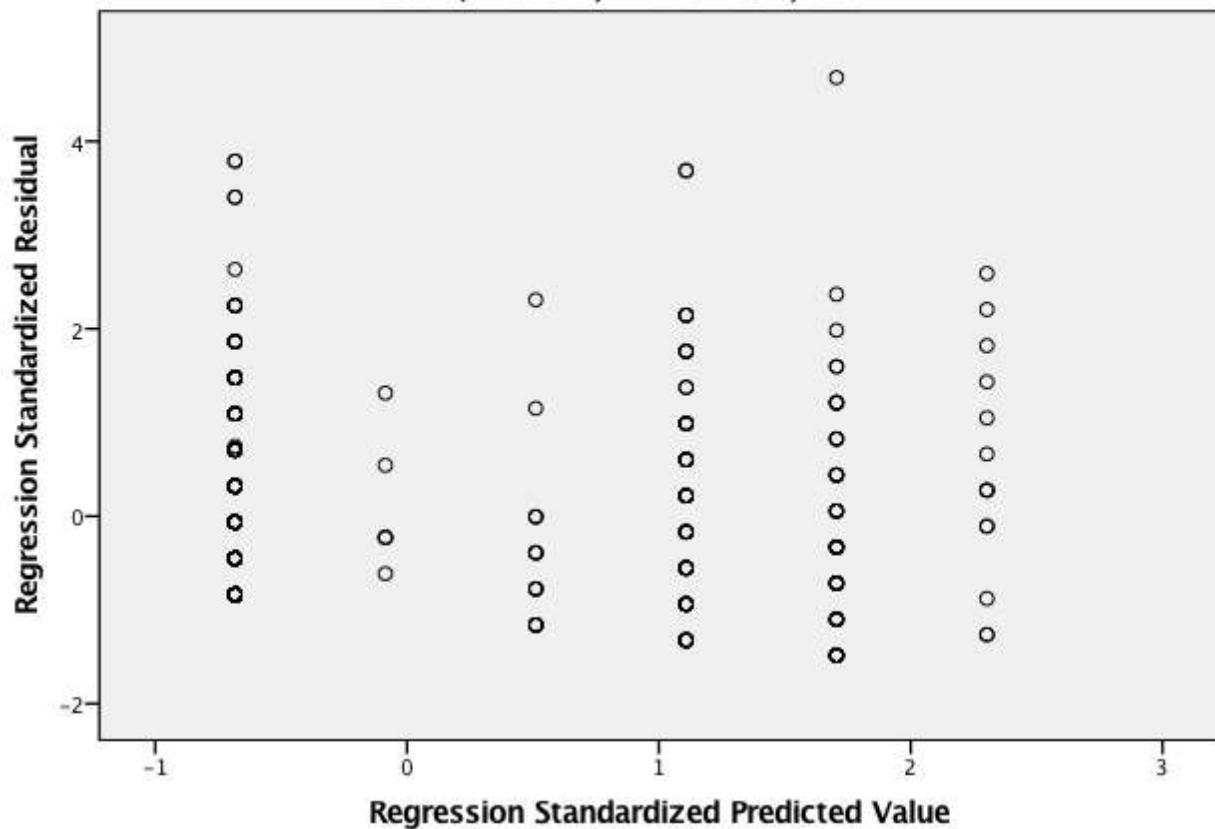
Dependent Variable: Active leisure compute varibale mean(P.nature, P.landmark, Festival, Concert, Sportgame, A.Park, Teamsport, Cardio, Gym, Art, skating, DJ, Restaurant, CaféClub, ZooSaf, Nature, Nature_A, Art_A, Festival_A, Concert_A, Restaurant_A, CaféClub_A)



Voracious leisure

Scatterplot

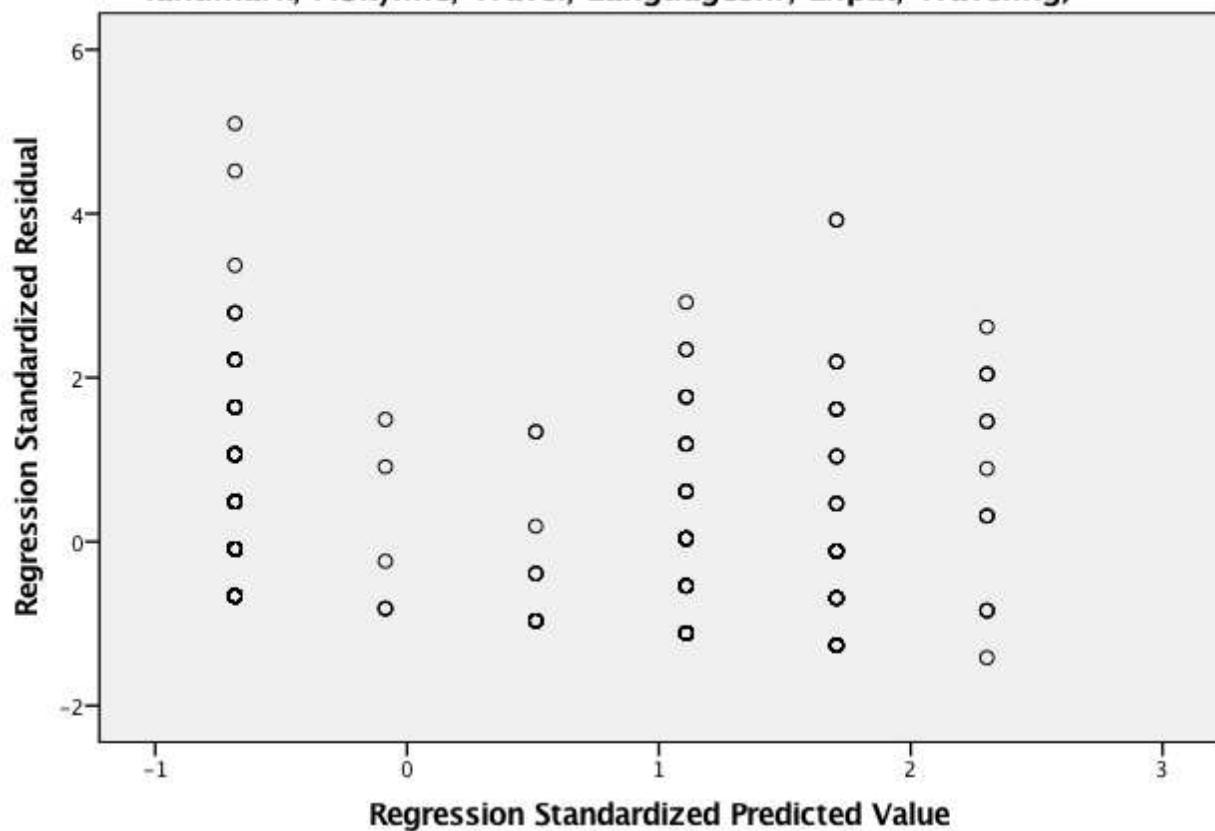
Dependent Variable: all leisure activities (no traveling) compute variable mean (P.nature, P.landmark, etc)



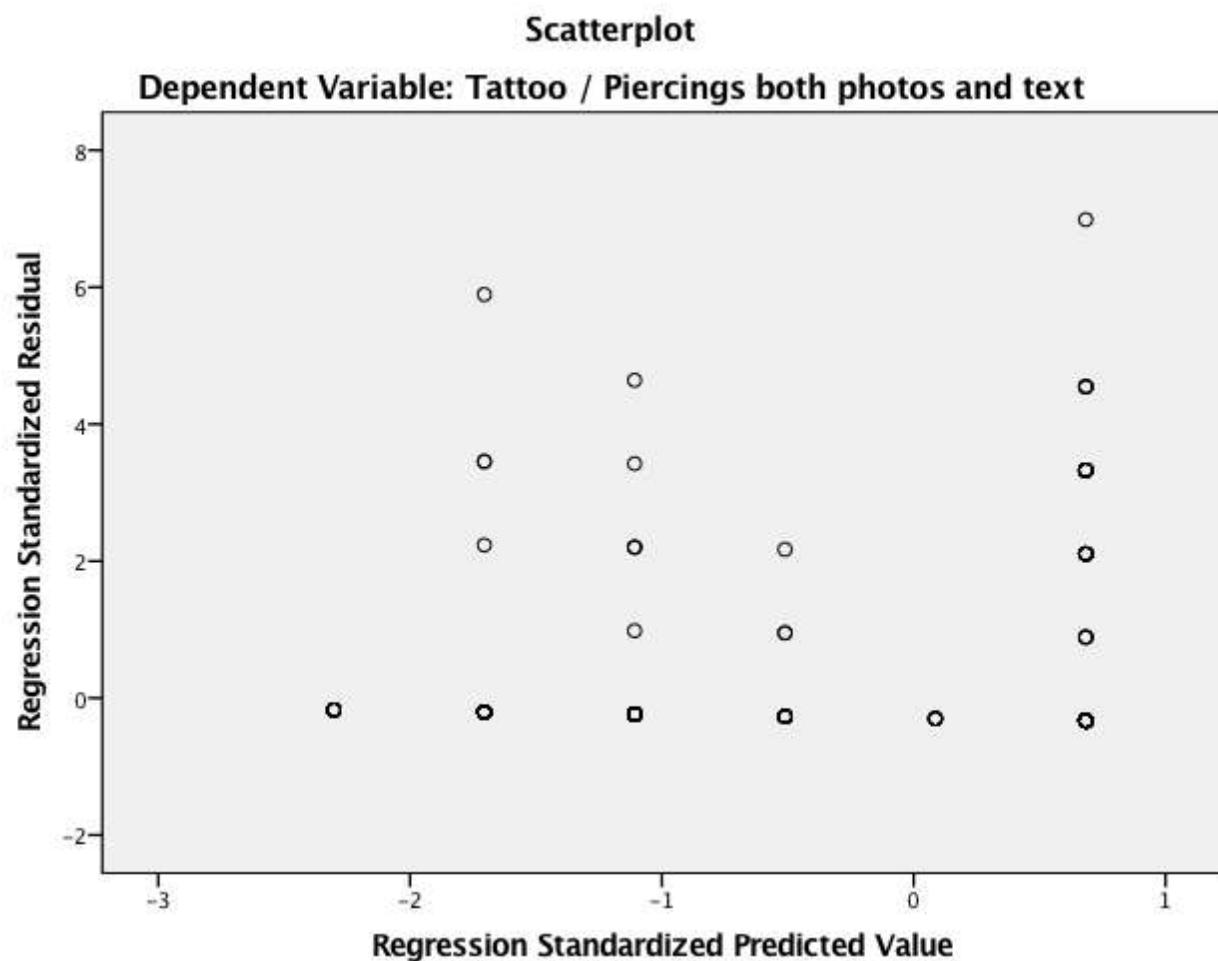
Cosmopolitanism

Scatterplot

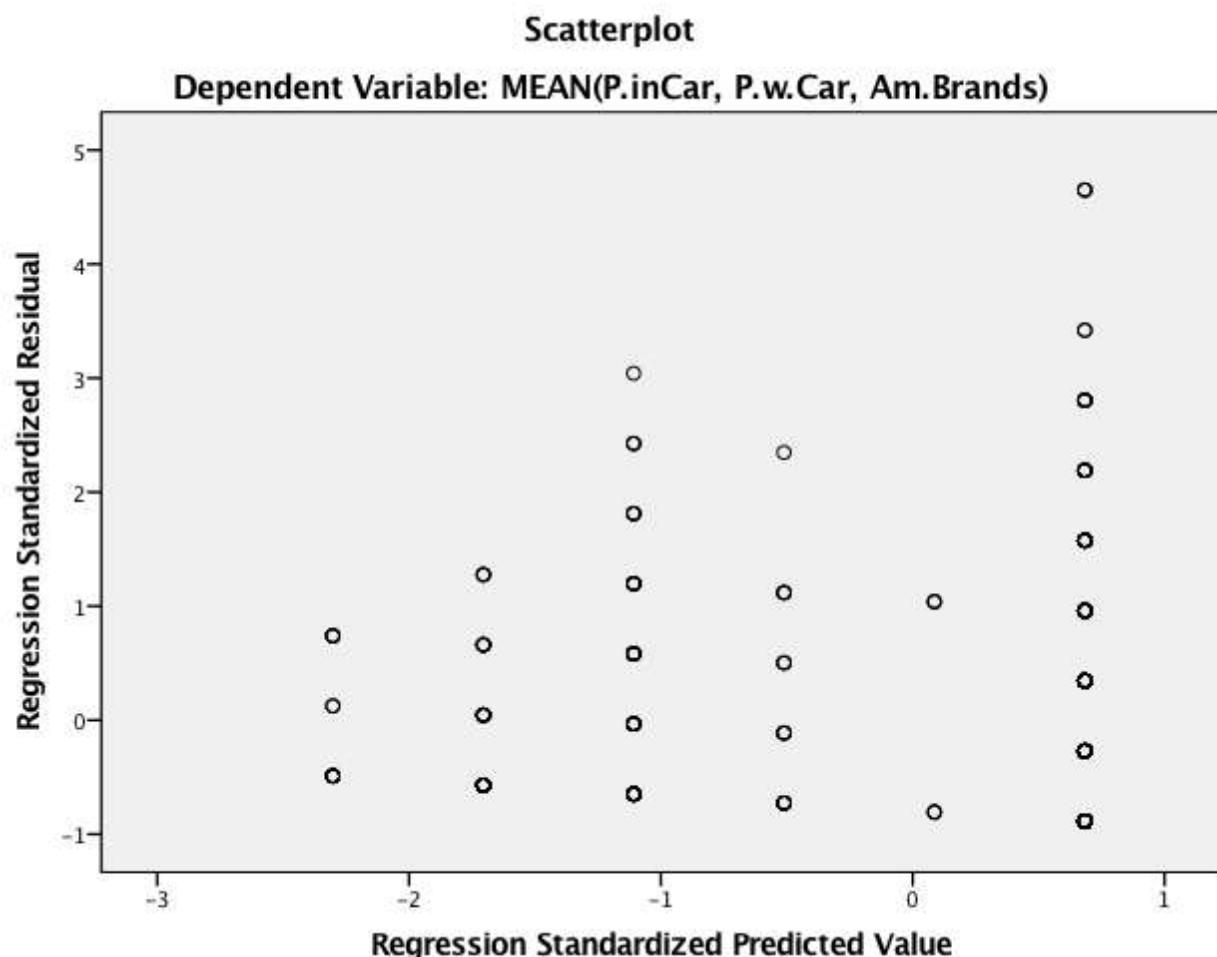
Dependent Variable: Cosmopolitan extended compute variable mean(P.landmark, P.Skyline, Travel, Languagesnr, Expat, Traveling)



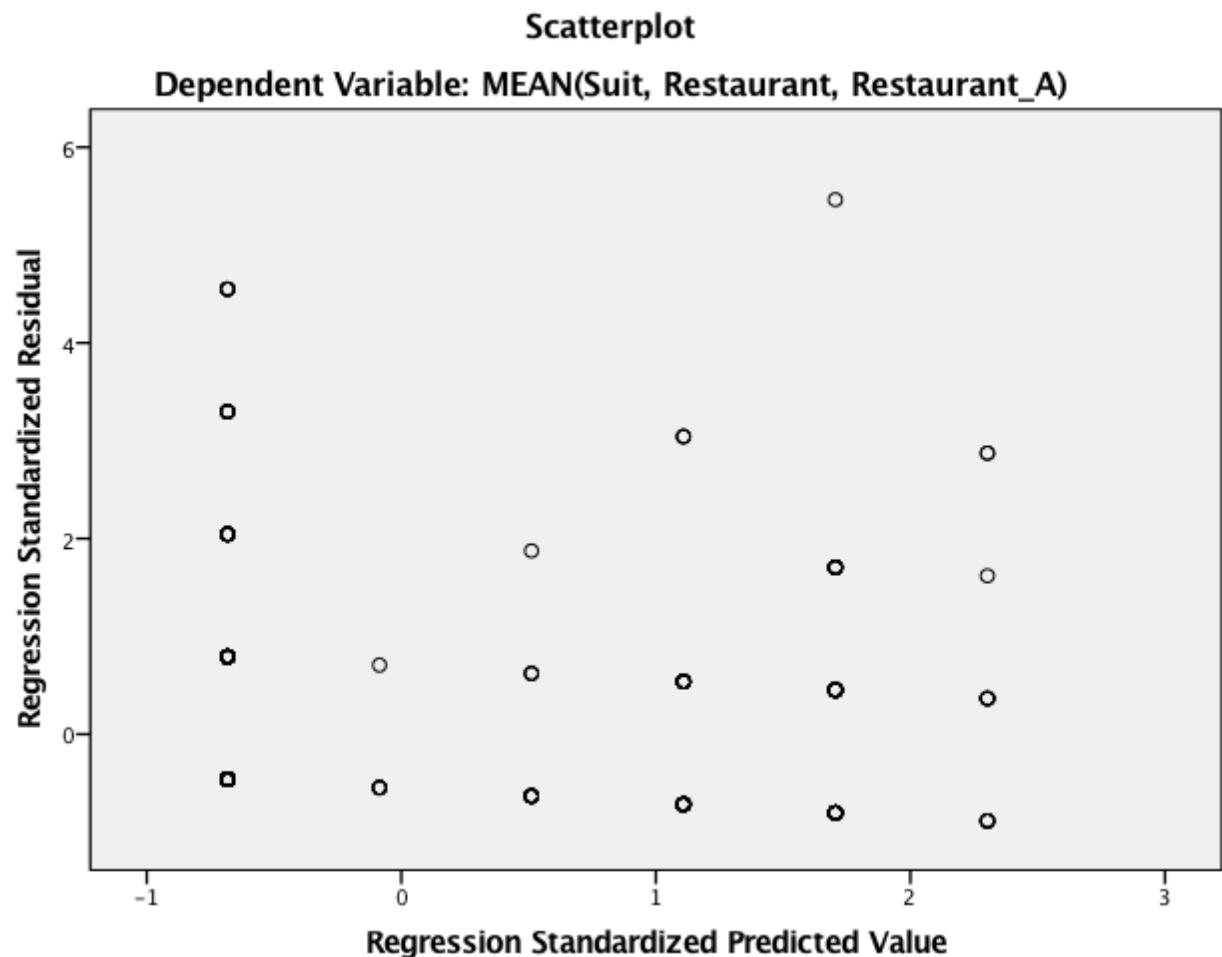
Scatterplot Bodily modification



Status conspicuous



Status subtle



T-Test

Passive Leisure Independent Sample t-test

Group Statistics

Group Statistics					
	education only Yes or no (EXCLUDED # 1 because not sure what education it is)	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
COMPUTE passiveleisure=mean(P. Skyline, Music, TV/Netf, Movies, Reading, MusicL, MusicM, Musicunknow, Gaming	.00	329	.0385	.08644	.00477
	1.00	171	.0721	.12724	.00973

Independent Samples Test

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances			t-test for Equality of Means				
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference
COMPUTE passiveleisure=mean(P. Skyline, Music, TV/Netf, Movies, Reading, MusicL, MusicM, Musicunknow, Gaming	26.824	.000	-3.489	498	.001	-.03362	.00964	-.05256 -.01469
Equal variances assumed Equal variances not assumed			-3.103	253.761	.002	-.03362	.01083	-.05496 -.01229

FREQUENCIES VARIABLES=Intention
/STATISTICS=STDDEV VARIANCE RANGE MEAN MEDIAN MODE

Active Leisure Independent Sample t-test & Voracious Leisure Independent Sample t-test

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
active leisure compute variable mean(P_nature, P.landmark, Festival, Concert, Sportgame, A, Park, TeamSport, Cardio, Gym, Art, skating, Dj, Restaurant, CaféClub, Zoosaf, Nature, Nature_A, Art_A, Festival_A, Concert_A, Restaurant_A, CaféClub_A)	.00	329	.0732	.08310	.00458
all leisure activities (no traveling) compute variable mean (P_nature, P.landmark, etc)	1.00	171	.1127	.10884	.00832
all leisure activities (no traveling) compute variable mean (P_nature, P.landmark, etc)	.00	329	.0548	.05846	.00322
all leisure activities (no traveling) compute variable mean (P_nature, P.landmark, etc)	1.00	171	.0883	.07685	.00588

Independent Samples Test					
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means	
		F	Sig.	t	df
				Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
active leisure compute variable mean(P_nature, P.landmark, Festival, Concert, Sportgame, A, Park, TeamSport, Cardio, Gym, Art, skating, Dj, Restaurant, CaféClub, Zoosaf, Nature, Nature_A, Art_A, Festival_A, Concert_A, Restaurant_A, CaféClub_A)	Equal variances assumed	12.218	.001	-4.518	498 .000
active leisure compute variable mean(P_nature, P.landmark, Festival, Concert, Sportgame, A, Park, TeamSport, Cardio, Gym, Art, skating, Dj, Restaurant, CaféClub, Zoosaf, Nature, Nature_A, Art_A, Festival_A, Concert_A, Restaurant_A, CaféClub_A)	Equal variances not assumed			-4.156 275.508	.000 -.03948
all leisure activities (no traveling) compute variable mean (P_nature, P.landmark, etc)	Equal variances assumed	17.772	.000	-5.441 -4.999	498 274.734 .000
all leisure activities (no traveling) compute variable mean (P_nature, P.landmark, etc)	Equal variances not assumed				-.03351 -.03351 .00616 .00670