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Being a Golf trainer in China: A life of artist?

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Keywords

China, Earnings, Golf, Labor market, Sport, Trainers.

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None.

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Introduction

To paraphrase Pierre Bourdieu, arts workers and sports workers are two 'worlds apart' [1] from the rest of the society. According to the existing literature, arts workers' and sports workers' talents and fame determine their economic and symbolic value [2–3]. Besides, these workers often perceive their talent as innate and their craft as a passion [4]. According to Buscatto [5] and Heinich [6], this specific subjective engagement in their professional activities makes them experience 'very hard working conditions – high precariousness, low earnings, multiple job-holding, high risk of failure, physical suffering and multiple subjective tensions' (p. 29) [5].

These common characteristics invite us to further explore the similarities and differences between the arts and sports labour markets. In this article, we use a national survey conducted by the Chinese Golf Association (in which 684 respondents participated) and a two-year (and ongoing) ethnographic fieldwork to stress the similarities between the social determinants of golf trainers' and artists' earnings. More precisely, we note that earnings are not positively influenced by professional certification or diplomas but instead closely determined by talent and fame, as was found to be the case in Menger's [7–8] and Filer's [9] research dealing with the earnings of artists. In addition, we point out that both labour markets work like a Smithian lottery, where the fame and economic situation of the more established encourage outsiders to sacrifice themselves for potential future opportunities.

In the first section of this article, an ordered logistic regression model shows that trainers' hourly earnings are not dependent on any form of 'institutionalised' resources, such as their highest diploma or professional certifications. In line with the work of Lucifora and Simmons [10], trainers' earnings are found to be closely determined by their playing skills and the reputation acquired through their professional experience. In other words, we argue that in the

Chinese golf trainer market, the economic value of individuals is determined by their professional fame and sport resources, which operate as a specific form of 'symbolic capital' or a type of social credit 'which the group alone can grant those who give it the best material and symbolic guarantees' [11].

The second section digs deeper into the foundation of the social structure of this specific economy [12], analysing how factors influencing golf trainers' hourly and annual earnings relate to each other. Through a multiple correspondence analysis, we excavate the 'ideal type' [13] of golf trainers and show how such profiles relate to different earnings levels. In this way, we demonstrate that the high degree of fame and earnings concentration by a minority of experienced and skilful players creates a 'Smithian lottery' labour market [14] where extreme disparities of earnings are accepted by golf trainers because of the potential for high earnings.

The conclusion continues the comparison until its rupture point. More precisely, we underline that the strategies implemented by artists and golf trainers are not entirely similar, as artists tend to diversify their workplace to extend their public, while golf trainers need to fix their workplace to establish strong personal relationships with their clients.

Literature review

As Rosen and Sanderson underline [15], social scientists have investigated the sports labour market through many different perspectives and theories. Among the many studies, the pioneering research of Scully [16] looks into the social determinants of elite sports workers' salaries through the lens of human capital theory and demand–supply mechanisms. Following in Scully's footsteps, several studies on sport have shed light on the earnings determinants of coaches and trainers. Studying German coaches in a different sport, Wicker, Orlowski and Breuer demonstrate that 'The results provide evidence that only a university degree in sport sciences has

a positive effect on monthly net income, while other formal qualifications including various coaching licenses, diplomas, and certificates issued by national and international sport associations and other organizations have no significant effect' (p. 217) [17]. This finding in itself raises a serious concern regarding the application of human capital theory to sports coaches. According to such theory, excavated by Becker from the axioms of the marginalist economy, an economic actor invests in licenses, diplomas and certificates issued by national and international sports associations only if such an investment can lead to marginal benefits.

Moreover, other studies, such as that of Yuhei et al., 'do not identify the positive effect of coaches' human capital on their maximum total compensation', although they found a 'positive relationship between past performance and compensation of FBS college football coaches' (p. 80) [18]. The limited heuristic power of human capital theory in these studies, as well as the many critiques that have been made of this approach [19–22], invites us to follow another perspective. Taking into consideration the similarities between the lives of artists and the lives of sports workers, already well summarised by Seaman [23], this article intends to shed light on the structure of the golf trainer market through a controlled analogy [24] between empirically observed phenomena in our fieldwork and phenomena observed by Menger [7–8] and Filer [9] in their studies on artists.

The existing critiques of human capital theory also invite us to propose an alternative terminology in this study. Indeed, the concept of human capital can be said to be poorly stenographic, as the denomination does not stress the main tenets of the phenomenon that it is supposed to depict. 'Capital' presupposes the possibility of trading or transferring at a predetermined and socially granted rate. The existence of diplomas and certifications as institutionalised states of cultural capital authorises the use of the term 'capital' since their value is guaranteed by the state *ad vitam aeternam*. However, it remains uncertain whether social

institutions objectify all forms of knowledge and knowhow to the point that these can be easily isolated and converted like any other 'capital'.

Therefore, this study, inspired by Pierre Bourdieu's concepts of 'the three states of cultural capital'[1] [25] and Fleuriel and Faure's considerations [26], prefers to use the term 'resources'. Considering the segmentation of the labour market, we investigate how sports resources confer to trainers a specific form of social credit (or symbolic capital, in Bourdieu's terminology), which, thanks to their fame, can be transformed to some extent into economic capital.

Capitalising on the existing literature on the determinants of coaches' earnings and on our fieldwork observations showing the importance of fame [27] and previous experience, we define the three states of sport as follows. First, in the sports industry, the value of individuals is subjectively measured through their capacity to produce expert movements and discourses. This incorporated state of sports resources (or incorporated sports resources) cannot be capitalised because it declines with age, is challenged, and must be reasserted on a daily basis.

Second, sports resources also exist in an objectified state (or as objectified sports resources), as social players appraise trainers' value while looking at the trainers' objects (trophies, photos of them with golf stars, forged iron clubs, t-shirts with sponsors' names, etc.). Third, sports resources exist in an institutionalised state (or as institutionalised sports resources) through certifications or titles awarded by official bodies.

Data and survey background

The idea of studying Chinese golf trainers' earnings emerged for two distinct reasons. First, this research began thanks to our collaboration with the Chinese Golf Association. Second,

we had already become acquainted with golf trainers for almost two years, as we initially interviewed them to understand the culture of Chinese amateur golf players.

The willingness of the Chinese Golf Association (CGA) to analyse trainers' certifications, careers and need for professional development undoubtedly played a key role in our research orientation. The CGA knew us as the researchers who would interpret the survey, and we advised the CGA several times before they released the online survey during the autumn of 2018. Our advice directly affected the structure of the survey. For example, our advice contributed to reorganising the questionnaire into categories such as 'individual main indicators' (including age, gender, place of residence and higher diploma), 'professional situation' (including workplace, official position and professional certification), 'perceptions of the profession', 'past and actual practice of golf', and 'perceptions and intentions towards professional training'.

The CGA officials did not implement all the proposals we formulated. However, the survey ultimately included a large number of detailed categorical variables, enabling us to investigate the profiles of Chinese golf trainers. For example, the survey included questions dealing with the types of clients of golf trainers (schools, individuals, after-class lessons, etc.). The survey also showed whether golf trainers offered part-time or full-time training and provided many details about their other sources of earnings (sponsorships, selling golf products, online shop, etc.).

Table 1: Descriptive table of trainers' characteristics

Variables	Category	Frequency	Percent
Certification	No certification	122	17.8%
	CGA basic level	325	47.5%
	CGA intermediate level	143	20.9%
	CGA national/international or foreign diploma	94	13.7%

Living place	First-tier cities	392	57.3%
	Non–first tier cities	292	42.7%
Experience	Less than 3 years	120	17.5%
	3 to 4 years	178	26.0%
	5 to 10 years	223	32.6%
	More than 10 years	163	23.8%
Gender	Male	548	80.1%
	Female	136	19.9%
Other earnings sources	Part-time	273	39.9%
	Full-time	411	60.1%
Highest degree	Graduate and above	272	39.8%
	Vocational school	240	35.1%
	High school and below	172	25.1%
Golf handicap	4 and below	116	17.0%
	5 to 9	266	38.9%
	10 to 15	204	29.8%
	16 and above	98	14.3%
Practice background	Former golfer	247	36.1%
	Former athlete (other than golf)	179	26.2%
	No athletic background	258	37.7%
Age group	Less than 30	329	48.1%
	30 to 34	187	27.3%
	35 to 39	68	9.9%
	40 and above	99	14.5%
	No answer	1	0.1%
Hourly earnings	Less than 200 RMB	104	15.2%
	200 to 500 RMB	193	28.2%
	500 to 1,000 RMB	311	45.5%
	Up to 1,000 RMB	76	11.1%
Annual earnings	Less than 100,000 RMB	329	48.1%

	100,001 to 200,000 RMB	249	36.40%
	200,001 to 300,000 RMB	68	9.9%
	300,000 and above RMB	38	5.6%

More importantly, following the first draft of the survey, the CGA officials considered including many questions about golf trainers' earnings. Therefore, the questionnaire not only allowed us to understand the channels through which golf trainers make money but also provided precise information on their earnings as trainers. Concerning this issue, three questions played a critical role. The first asked, 'On average, how much are you paid for an hour-long lesson?' The second asked, 'What is your overall revenue?' The third asked, 'what is the proportion of your revenue coming from golf training activity?' For each of these questions, preestablished categorical answers were proposed. The combination of these three questions was very important because only 17.11% of the trainers reported making all their revenue from their teaching, whereas 34.65% were part-time workers.

From the CGA officials' perspective, these variables were particularly useful in measuring the relation between earnings and professional certifications. However, these variables were only part of a very large survey composed of 58 multiple-choice questions and a single open question. The scope of the CGA's investigation was very broad because they wanted to precisely understand trainers' past training experiences. In addition, the CGA wanted to obtain feedback and advice from trainers regarding the association's own certification system.

These characteristics influenced the collected data. First, the structure of the survey and the many specific and multiple-choice questions enabled us to collect 684 fully exploitable answers. These data did not necessitate a long 'cleaning' process, except for the question relating to 'year of birth' (as some respondents also indicated their month and day of birth in response to

this question). When checking the data through flat sorting, we did not detect any invalid non-answers.

In other words, the overall quality of the answers was excellent. The golf trainers may have used their many timeouts, as they waited for clients, to carefully answer the long questionnaire. Only 15% answered 'nothing' or 'no recommendation' to the last question asking whether they had any comments regarding the CGA's training and certification. On average, the golf trainers took 16 minutes to complete the questionnaire. Only 26%, for whom many of the questions were not relevant, completed the questionnaire in fewer than 10 minutes. Indeed, most of those who spent so little time on the questionnaire were trainers who did not have any kind of certification and had nothing applicable to say in response to the many questions dedicated to their former training.

Because of the richness of the information collected, the CGA initially appointed experts working on different topics. The first report, which we produced according to the CGA's demands, compared golf trainer profiles in the southern/eastern parts of China and the rest of the country. The CGA asked us to investigate whether the profiles of golf trainers were different in the regions where golf was first reauthorised starting in 1983. This initial research allowed us to show the absence of differences between regions. This finding was perhaps a surprise given the scope of the sociospatial and socioeconomic disparities in China [28–29]. At the same time, this finding highlighted the issue of the determinants of golf trainers' earnings.

Fieldwork and selection of variables

Starting from this concern, we conducted our research as a constant 'give and take' between our discussions with the golf trainers during their timeouts, the interviews and the data analysis.

The first step of the ethnographic work consisted of observing the advertisements and posters in the golf clubhouses. During the exploratory stage of the ethnographic work, we visited five golf academies to take note of the overall working environment, including the organisational space, the qualifications of the personnel, the division of labour between trainers and salespeople, and, more importantly, how the trainers were presenting themselves and their academy, especially through their posters. In January 2018, we began our visits to the five golf academies, located in three different facilities of different standing. Two academies were situated in a relatively cheap 'public' golf course. Two others operated nearby, based within 12 golf courses, including several resorts and housing compounds. These two academies respectively, included 21 and 7 trainers at the time of our first visit. The fifth academy was smaller and had only five trainers. However, it was located at the entrance of a golf course only open to members and welcoming international competitions.

In other words, we visited golf academies that had different characteristics, although they were not entirely representative of the diversity of golf trainers' workplaces (outdoor and indoor, driving ranges, not near a golf course, etc.). These initial observations helped us in understanding the main principles used to promote and distinguish trainers. More specifically, we used primary documents, such as trainers' posters and academies' flyers, as a way to observe how trainers and golf academy managers promote themselves and differentiate themselves from each other.

These ethnographic observations immediately led us to notice the high degree of price and service differentiation. In all the golf academies we visited, the number of categories of trainers was never below four. As an example, the largest golf academy we investigated included 21 instructors. The manager divided its instructors into five categories: 'primary instructors – 教练', 'senior instructors – 资深教练', 'advanced instructors – 高级教练', 'lead instructors – 特

级教练' and 'elite instructors – 精英教练'. The advertised price for an hour-long lesson with a primary instructor was 700 RMB, whereas an hour-long lesson with an elite instructor cost 3,200 RMB.

More interesting, every golf academy presented its instructors through individual posters to legitimate the huge differences in price between the top and bottom instructors. At each golf academy, the most costly trainer was always presented (with a single exception) as an actual or former professional golfer. For the other instructors as well, their backgrounds as players constituted the first readable information on their posters. To avoid misunderstanding and to give the appearance of objective information, the playing level of the second-rank instructors was advertised through the trainer's average number of shots to complete an 18-hole course. In some cases, when the instructors possessed further experience, a detailed description of their experience in golf was provided.

After the presentation of the trainer's ability as a player, the poster displayed information relevant to their seniority in the profession. Most of the time, the description of the trainer's training experience was shorter than the information related to their playing capacity, indicating a hierarchy of knowhow. Although teaching golf demands more than the capacity to produce an efficient technique and to correctly analyse conditions (ball on low or high grass, distance to the flag, wind, etc.), ability as a player is still symbolically more valued than information objectifying the quality of teaching. As an example, among the 42 posters we analysed, only one presented in detail the performance achieved by the trainer's students.

In addition, very little information regarding professional certification was available. Many trainers preferred to mention their status as a 'professional trainer' (职业教练) instead of the exact denomination of their highest certification. From our discussions with the trainers, we

learned the reason for this omission. Indeed, 47.51% of the trainers have only completed the first level of the CGA professional certification system (basic certification [初级教练]). This level necessitates only limited knowledge of golf rules and the capacity to shoot a certain distance with a iron seven, the easiest club to use.

During our first round of the nine-month ethnographic survey, during which we regularly visited, interviewed and held discussions with 12 trainers belonging to three different institutions, we were often told that a beginner with less than one year of golf experience could easily meet this requirement. In addition, this first level is called 'basic certification' (初级教练), which is not exactly an honorific title. Therefore, the trainers simply refused to communicate using a certificate that has no symbolic value for their peers and potentially no value for their clients.

Those who held the second level of the CGA professional certification were more eager to mention it. The trainers presented this certificate, entitled 'intermediary level' (中级), as more challenging to obtain. In addition to advanced knowledge of biomechanics and biology, this certificate requires proof of athletic performance. Trainers are required to not exceed 88 strokes for each of their three rounds of 18 holes. In other words, the symbolic value of this institutionalised sport resource is somehow guaranteed by a record of achievement based on an estimation of the incorporated sport resource.

As a proprietor of a golf academy explained in an online interview, plenty of trainers believe that 'In China, most of those who have so-called basic and intermediary certification neither have the ability nor the technical level to teach it'. However, during their discussions with us, Chinese trainers compared the supposedly low value of the CGA basic and intermediary

certification with the quite high value of certifications delivered abroad, such as the American PGA certification and certifications from the Titleist Performance Institute (TPI).

Therefore, in our quantitative analytical models, we paid particular attention to the hierarchy of certifications and skills. First, we included as many categories as possible for the variable 'handicap', which displayed the actual playing level of the trainers. Initially, this categorical variable had seven categories. Because only 1.02% of the trainers had a handicap of below 0 (corresponding to the best level), we included these in the same category as the trainers having a handicap of between 0 and 4. For the same reason, we merged the 28 trainers having no handicap and the 11 trainers having a handicap of above 20 into the same category as the trainers having a handicap of between 16 and 20.

Concerning professional certification, we included in the same category all the certifications that were presented by the trainers as having a high distinctive value (CGA national, CGA international, TPI and foreign certification). Then, we generated three categories for 'no certification', 'basic level' (presented as easy and not mentioned on adverts) and 'intermediary' (sometimes presented as easy but nonetheless described during the interviews as indicating professional ability).

Because we observed that women were less likely to be in the highest categories of instructors, we also added the variable 'gender', as well as other indicators showing the golf trainers' degree of dependency on their golf earnings (part-time vs full-time). A global descriptive table of the variables is included in the appendix.

Empirical results

Fame and playing skills as determinants of earnings

The model outlined below presents the correlation between these variables and the golf instructors' average hourly earnings per lesson through three ordered logistic regression models. These models do not violate the parallel assumption. Besides, they offer statistically stronger correlations and easier-to-read models compared with the multinomial logistic regression models we experimented with.

Table 2: Ordered logistic regression of trainers' hourly earnings category

VARIABLES	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Certification level (no certificate as basic outcome)			
CGA basic level certificate	0.181	0.0812	0.0711
	(0.205)	(0.210)	(0.34)
CGA intermediate	0.581**	0.421*	0.426
	(0.245)	(0.251)	(1.69)
CGA national/international or foreign diploma	0.630**	0.450	0.385
	(0.280)	(0.285)	(1.34)
Control of cost of life in the area			
Workplace in first-tier cities (yes = 1)	-0.825***	-0.929***	-0.913***
	(0.154)	(0.158)	(-5.77)
Experience as trainer (less than 3 years as basic outcome)			
3 to 4 years of experience	1.105***	0.926***	0.948***
	(0.230)	(0.236)	(3.99)
5 to 10 years of experience	2.069***	1.741***	1.746***
	(0.238)	(0.247)	(7.05)
More than 10 years of experience	3.067***	2.565***	2.500***
	(0.280)	(0.295)	(8.48)
Gender (male as basic outcome)	-0.123	0.0573	0.0608
	(0.187)	(0.192)	(0.31)
Other earnings sources (no = basic outcome)	-0.604***	-0.486***	-0.484**
	(0.156)	(0.159)	(-3.03)
Highest degree (graduate and above as basic outcome)			
Vocational school	-0.113	-0.240	-0.211
	(0.175)	(0.179)	(-1.17)
High school and below	0.0503	-0.118	-0.0665

	(0.201)	(0.205)	(-0.32)
Level as player (4 and below as basic outcome)			
Handicap 5 to 9		-0.688***	-0.592**
		(0.223)	(-2.63)
Handicap 10 to 15		-1.035***	-0.881***
		(0.250)	(-3.45)
Handicap 16 or above		-2.113***	-1.958***
		(0.311)	(-6.21)
Practice background (former golf player as basic outcome)			
Former athlete in a sport other than golf			-0.382*
			(-1.85)
No athletic background			-0.564**
			(-3.04)
Constant cut 1	-0.997***	-2.229***	-2.446***
	(0.347)	(0.415)	(-5.70)
Constant cut 2	0.885**	-0.227	-0.427
	(0.349)	(0.410)	(-1.01)
Constant cut 3	3.845***	2.827***	2.661***
	(0.376)	(0.420)	(6.19)
Mc.Fadden R2	0.145	0.174	0.179
Chi-square p value	0.000	0.000	0.000
AIC	1484.474	1441.935	1436.468
AIC/N	2.17	2.108	2.1
BIC	1547.866 (df=14)	1518.91 (df=17)	1522.499(df =19)
Observations	684	684	684

Standard errors in parentheses
*** p < 0.01, ** p < 0.05, * p < 0.1

The three models displayed present different degrees of detail, although models 2 and 3 can be regarded as the strongest according to the Bayesian Information Criteria. We choose to reproduce all of them to show the fundamental properties of the conversion of sport resources into economic capital.

If our interpretation were limited to the first model, we would have to conclude that a correlation exists between certification and hourly earnings. More precisely, this model says that

all things being equal, a trainer having a basic certification has no greater or smaller chance of being in the highest earnings category than a trainer having no certification ($p > 0.1$). At the same time, this model suggests that at a 95% interval of confidence, a trainer with an intermediate-level certification has a 78.7% greater chance of belonging to the highest earnings category than a trainer who has no certification. For a trainer with the most distinctive type of certification (CGA national, CGA international, TPI or other foreign certificate), this percentage reached 87.8%. In other words, this model suggests that the institutionalised sport resource offers a higher convertibility of golf trainer resources into economic capital.

However, the two other models show that once we add indicators relating to incorporated sport resources (i.e., handicap and practice background), the pure effect of certification is no longer obvious. In model 2, only the CGA intermediate-level certificate seems to offer an advantage at a low interval of confidence (p value = 0.094). The most distinctive type of certificate failed the p value test at 0.114 (i.e., significant at only an 88.6% interval of confidence).

Once we introduced the sport background of trainers in model 3 in order to better control the effect of the players' experience on their careers as trainers, we found no more evidence of a pure effect of any kind of certification on hourly earnings. This finding is consistent with Wicker et al.'s conclusion [17] on sport coaches in Germany and invites a first comparison with the labour market of artists. Indeed, in both markets, a 'certificate of cultural skills' [24] is not correlated with higher earnings.

On the contrary, for golf coaches, models 2 and 3 suggest that good players who are able to achieve the most distinctive kind of certification can make the same money with or without certification. Indeed, model 2 shows that the best players have a large advantage compared with

the others. Compared with a player having a handicap of 4 or below, a trainer having a handicap of 5 to 9 had a 49.8% lower chance of being in the highest earnings category.[2] This percentage is even more elevated for players with fewer playing skills (64.5% and 87.9% for the trainers with a handicap of 10 to 15 and 16 and above, respectively).

During the interviews and informal discussions, the trainers often reported the importance of playing skills. Despite busy weeks with more than 20 hours of teaching with young players, Leo, a young senior instructor, often played on the course during his rest days. According to him, keeping a good level was crucial because 'playing abilities are like a business card'. Another relatively experienced trainer, with a handicap of 5, expressed a quite similar concern, saying that he 'sometimes plays on the course with clients who play very well. It is just shameful to lose against them while you are supposed to teach them'.

Model 3 entirely confirms the importance of playing abilities that we observed by analysing model 2 and the statements of the trainers. The coefficients reported for the different handicap categories were roughly similar. However, the new parameter introduced in this model contributed to better specifying the correlations and the chain of causality. This showed that those who were already in the golf field as sportspeople before becoming trainers had accumulated knowledge of the market and specific social capital. Indeed, during several informal discussions, golf coaches reported learning about new opportunities in advance through social media and benefitting from the fame provided by their previous career as a player. One coach, who is currently playing on the Chinese American Tour and limits his clientele to four customers to focus on his performance, explained that 'some coaches try to enter the amateur circuit to boost their career as a trainer'. Another trainer who obtained his professional player license in 2006 made an interesting contrast with South Korea to describe this situation. According to him,

'China is the only place where you are a trainer before becoming a player, while elsewhere you need to be a professional player to pass your certification'. Such statements suggest that playing skills and the professional player license are so valued that some people chase this license without the desire to compete.

To this extent, Chinese golf trainers present many similarities with the artists studied by Menger in France and Filer in the USA. Like the artists, Chinese golf trainers' capacity to convert their talent into economic reward is closely tied to their capacity to establish a reputation [8–9].

As a young coach with four years of experience explained to us, becoming well known through positive word of mouth is the main concern of each trainer who is changing his workplace. Another coach, commenting on his colleague leaving, explained that 'the one who cannot find clients after six months is obliged to find another place', simply because a large part of the salary is paid as incentives depending on the number of lessons. After further investigation, we understood that in this academy, as well as in many private VIP rooms located in driving ranges, trainers are 'associate workers', whose earnings are entirely dependent on their clients' teaching expenditure. More precisely, they receive 60–70% of their clients' payments, while they pay a 30–40% commission to the academy owner. In other places, incentives based on clients' payments are the main part of the earnings. Trainers can earn as much as 30,000 RMB, while they receive a basic salary corresponding to the minimum salary of approximately 2,000 RMB.

Consequently, trainers rarely change their workplace once they have stabilised their customer base, except for an exceptional raise in their basic salary or when they are asked to leave by their employer. Those who leave a driving range are often those who have fewer clients. In one-and-a-half years of ethnographic observations, we observed very few changes in the staff

personnel of the golf academies. First, we met a trainer in his fifties who did not have any clients; he explained that he was changing his workplace to improve his technical skills with another employer. This trainer was close to leaving the profession, as he had sold his expensive set of clubs (original price approximately 30,000 RMB) to one of his clients. Additionally, his former colleagues initially said that he was leaving the profession to pursue another business. He finally found a way through a 'backdoor', accepting an internship opportunity elsewhere. In the second case, we met a young trainer who told us that he had relocated to another branch of the same golf academy because of the lack of clients at his former workplace.

The other trainers seem to have understood how the accumulation of clients in a given place allows for bargaining for higher hourly earnings. Indeed, the importance of seniority appears clearly in our three models. As an example, model 3 shows that a trainer with 3 to 4 years of experience has a 157.9% chance of being in the highest earnings category compared with a trainer with fewer than 3 years of experience. For trainers with more than 10 years of experience, this same rate reaches 1118.2%.

Such extreme discrepancies are probably due to the number of exits from the profession. From 2008 to 2017, the CGA issued 7,257 professional certificates to trainers, whereas the total number of trainers actually working in the golf industry was estimated by several golf academy managers to be around 10,000.[3] The extreme tension in the labour market can certainly be more intense for newcomers. They may leave the field after several years of precarious earnings, following the principle 'make clients or perish'. Because the cost of entry into a career as a golf trainer is low (no professional certification is required), many candidates enter to try out this line of work. Analogously with artists, at this stage of their careers, they accept low earnings to build

their reputations, but they do so at the price of a low rate of conversion of their talents into economic capital.

Therefore, fame and incorporated sport resources remain the two main interdependent factors explaining the hierarchy of earnings. As is the case for artists, cultural capital and other forms of certification do not positively influence workers' earnings. In other words, the compelling importance of innate talent, further enhanced by diligent training and experience, leads to observable outcomes that largely prevent the capitalisation of standards, certifications and academic degrees into tangible economic rewards.

This phenomenon suggests that the outputs of the Chinese golf trainers (who are professional players' trainers) are not as systematically measured as those of professional players in sports such as golf and baseball [30]. This invites us to raise doubts concerning Goff and Tollison's [31] conclusions about the differences between the labour markets for the arts and sports. Indeed, sports workers are not always operating in a controlled environment where generated outcomes are systematically recorded. In our case, the situation of the Chinese golf trainers remains more similar to that of performing artists than that of professional players.

The following section analyses how fame and incorporated sport resources are combined and shared among different trainer profiles. Ultimately, this part demonstrates how the accumulation of advantages and disadvantages contributes to increasing the degree of conversion of sport resources into economic capital, as is the case in the labour market of artists.

Trainers' earnings as a Smithian lottery model

To understand the principles organising the repartition of fame and sport resources among golf trainers, analytical tools such as multiple correspondence analysis (MCA) are required.

Jean-Paul Benzécri and his student popularised MCA at the beginning of the 1960s [32–33]. In short, 'In multiple correspondence analysis, the object is to display geometrically the rows and columns of the data table – where rows represent individuals and columns the categories of the variables – in a low-dimensional space, so that proximity in the space indicates similarity of categories and of individuals' (p. vii) [34]. In social science, this method has been extensively applied by Pierre Bourdieu to characterise the typical food, musical and pictorial tastes of French social classes (p. 263) [35].

Throughout this study, the main principle remains the same. It consists of displaying a graphical representation of a table of contingencies between variable modalities [36]. The modalities projected in a given part of the graphic can eventually form a cluster. A cluster of modalities can be regarded as an ideal-type profile, rarely existing as such in reality but inviting a better contextualisation of individual characteristics. In our study, we projected in a two-dimensional graph the variable modalities we initially used for our ordered logistic regression model. We obtained the following graphical representation [insert Figure 1].

This graphical projection of the multiple correspondence analysis presents a traditional long 'V shape' that identifies the principles of division among the golf trainers.

The first dimension corresponding to the x-axis contributes 12.53% of the variance of the results.[4] This dimension corresponds to the addition of the incorporated sport resources and reputation. Indeed, golf trainers are divided from the right to the left – from the most experienced trainer (more than 10 years of experience) to the least experienced trainer (fewer than 3 years). Similarly, the best players are distributed from the most skilled to the least skilled, following the same pattern. To this extent, it can be said that the x-axis corresponds to the overall sport resources and fame retained by the trainers.

In terms of sport resources and fame, a first dichotomy exists between the trainers on the left and right parts of the graph. On the right, we find that the trainers are likely to accumulate all sorts of sport resources. Most of them have a golf player background and a handicap of 9 or below. The less experienced and younger trainers with good playing skills are located in the lower right part of the graph. They mostly earn 500 to 1,000 RMB per teaching hour (100,000 to 200,000 RMB yearly) and are more likely to have a golf player or another sport qthlete background compared with the overall population. To this extent, the dichotomy between the left and right parts of the graph indicates that only those trainers who accumulate rare sport resources, a social network and a reputation acquired after a long socialisation within golf circles can access the highest earnings. In other words, becoming a leading trainer requires being able to perform and publicise one's performance among clients and peers.

The dichotomy between the left and right parts of the graph also suggests a gap in terms of both earnings and 'lifetime' in the profession for those trainers with few sport resources and little seniority. Indeed, those whose handicap is between 10 and 15 have a strong likelihood of having fewer than five years of experience in the profession and of formerly being athletes in a sport other than golf. They look like latecomers, trying to convert their knowledge and knowhow into a new discipline. This particular situation makes it difficult for them to progress in the hierarchy of earnings, where the insiders control the opportunities and the conditions of the conversion of sport resources into economic capital. Indeed, the hierarchy of earnings is set up by golf institute managers, who are mostly trainers with a handicap of 9 or below (78.6%) and former golf players (55%).

The fact that only 6.4% of the 'latecomers' with no background as players earn at least 1,000 RMB per teaching hour further objectifies the existing gap between insiders and outsiders.

For trainers with a golfer background, 19.4% can earn such a high salary. In these circumstances, the structurally dominated trainers have two main possibilities: exiting from the profession or remaining in the profession with low earnings. The first alternative seems to be quite popular for those with no golf background. Golf trainers having neither a golf background nor a background in another sport represent 37.7% of the trainer population, but only 26.4% of these trainers have more than 10 years of experience.

The second dimension of the multiple correspondence analysis, which contributes to explaining 8% of the variance, suggests that trainers with few sport resources remain in the profession thanks to other sources of earnings. The trainers located in the lowest part are those who are more eager to be full-time golf trainers. In contrast, those who are in the upper part are mostly part-time for very different reasons. Many of the trainers with excellent playing skills are still professional athletes. In addition, 23 trainers are retired athletes; they still have 4 or below as a handicap and manage golf academies. For these two sub-profiles, golf earnings are not entirely dependent on lessons. More specifically, among the trainers with a handicap of 4 or below, 38.8% earn more than 75% of their golf earnings from teaching. In other words, sport resources and seniority are not only a source of the highest hourly earnings but also an opportunity to diversify earnings.

In contrast, the trainers who have a handicap of 5 to 9 are much more dependent on their training earnings: 45.5% of them earn more than 75% of their golf earnings from lessons. Being insufficiently skilled to become sponsored players and being paid less for their teaching hours, these trainers are obliged to devote themselves entirely to teaching.

This situation again invites us to further draw the analogy between the labour markets of golf trainers and artists. Following the observations of Wassal and Alper (p. 191) [37], we

observe that for golf trainers, as for artists, 'multiple jobholding contributes substantially to the apparent financial success' of the profession's members. With 40% of the overall trainer population reporting full-time work in the golf industry, and only 39.6% of the trainers making more than 75% of their golf earnings from training, engagement in the profession appears to be very dependent on the capacity to diversify earnings.

This capacity can be easily found among the trainers who accumulate sport resources and fame. However, for the less established, the diversification of earnings is a critical issue. For the trainers located in the bottom left of the graph, this situation is even more critical because their low cultural capital (high school and below) reduces their chances of finding a well-paid parallel occupation.

In contrast, the cluster in the upper right of the graph shows that the trainers with few sport resources (a handicap of 16 and above) are more eager to be part-time and hold at least a bachelor's degree. Analogously with Filer's study on artists [9], this finding suggests that the well-educated trainers focus on other more profitable sources of earnings and persevere in their golf-trainer careers thanks to these parallel earnings. In other words, some of the trainers with low earnings are white-collar workers or employees who work occasionally as golf trainers; they have to go through a backdoor, and they remain trainers by offering competitively low prices and accepting the high uncertainties of their future within the golf industry. For example, in our fieldwork, we had some informal discussions with a yoga teacher and a PE teacher who occasionally taught golf. Some trainers also reported knowing white-collar workers in the finance industry who were hired to teach occasionally thanks to their ability to play golf.

Therefore, this multiple job-holding model contributes to increasing the disparity in golf earnings and reinforces the prestige of the trainers at the top of the hierarchy. This is how the

golf trainers' market ultimately resembles the Smithian lottery market. In the Smithian lottery model, the individual acceptance of uncertainties regarding earnings is made acceptable by the potential for high earnings, thus inhibiting risk aversion (p. 125) [7].

In the golf trainers' labour market, the high potential earnings attract two types of people. The first type are those with other principal occupations and low sport resources who are seeking extra earnings. From our observations, they are mainly caddies, driving range employees or sport teachers. The second type are former athletes who are likely to hold a bachelor's degree in sports training and who are trying to convert their sports resources into a golf occupation.

These two types of structurally dominated trainers are not only attracted by the high earnings of the leading trainers but also contribute to the magnification of leading trainers' situation. In this specific economic structure, only the high concentration of sport resources and fame becomes steadily convertible into economic capital. In addition, the dominant position of former athletes as golf institute owners or managers contributes to the maintenance of the existing hierarchy through their control of hiring, salaries and the hierarchy of trainers.

Finally, the social structure of the golf-training economy no longer depends on cultural capital and professional certification. Whereas in the rest of Chinese society, being a university graduate is seen as proof of individual value (素质) [38–39], in golf circles, the main stakeholders do not value this form of capital. In this particular field, cultural capital only opens or allows the possibility of remaining a part-time and low-paid golf trainer because it helps to stabilise other sources of earnings. Although not useless, cultural capital does not determine the economic value of the service.

Conclusion

This paper investigates the social structure of the golf trainer labour market in China and explains how the earnings of golf trainers are determined by analogy with the arts labour market.

More precisely, we demonstrate that hourly earnings are strongly dependent on incorporated sport resources, socialisation within the golf circle and, more generally, reputation acquired through years of work. Indeed, the ordered logistic regression model presented in the first part of the paper clearly shows that a high salary is correlated with years of seniority and the handicaps of golf trainers. In contrast, the institutionalised sport resources, corresponding in our case to a trainer's professional certification, do not have any effect on earnings; the same is true of cultural capital as measured by the trainers' highest diploma.

To this extent, the Chinese golf trainers' labour market is not framed like most of the labour market in China. Indeed, many studies have already demonstrated the importance of a diploma to access the middle class [40–42]. To a certain extent, being a university graduate is tending to become a sine qua non for experiencing social promotion at the top of the social class hierarchy in China. Sociologists such as Wu Xiaogang have shown that the importance of cultural capital has increased since the beginning of Deng Xiaoping's 'opening-up and reform policy' in the context of higher education massification [43–44].

From this perspective, the golf trainer labour market can be seen as original but not entirely exceptional. In France and the United Kingdom, artists' earnings are also largely determined by individuals' performance capacity and reputation, whereas cultural capital is negatively correlated with artists' hourly earnings. This situation may be partly related to the nature of the two activities. For artists, who sometimes play in a group, the satisfaction and pleasure experienced by clients as well as their fidelity is quite difficult to measure and to guarantee. For the golf trainer, the evaluation of the progress made by the client, along with the

heuristic nature of the prescribed exercises and advice, requires a long and potentially subjective inquiry. Artists and golf trainers, respectively, focus on the emotional and psychomotor states of their clients, which are ultimately difficult to evaluate. In such a configuration, the virtuosity of the worker and their reputation play a determining role in the estimation of their economic value. These two elements simplify the process of rationalising the work outputs.

The analogy between golf trainers and artists is further strengthened by the tendency of both types of labourers to hold multiple jobs, which contributes to structuring their professions as a Smithian lottery. In both the artists' and golf trainers' labour markets, the cost of entry is almost negligible. Whereas in certain countries such as France, professional certification is mandatory to work as a sports trainer [45], in China, no professional title is required. In our sample, 17.84% of the trainers did not have any professional training. Similarly, musicians or painters are not required to follow any type of training to put their talents or pieces on sale. In such configurations, institutional barriers do not restrict newcomers. Consequently, opportunities and reputation are concentrated at the top by a limited number of leading trainers or leading artists who accumulate all the distinctive attributes. This specific setup contributes to increasing the disparity in earnings, which, in return, continues to lure newcomers. As in the lottery, individuals consent to a negligible chance of earnings because of the potential elevated earnings concentrated among the happy few. This conclusion, based on the multiple correspondence analysis, is also supported by Scully's observations on NBA players (p.79) [16]. As Seaman observes, Scully remarks on the 'increases in the proportion of athletes in the overall population yielding a higher dispersion of observed talent' (p.105) [23], which thus increases the earnings distribution.

Despite these fundamental similarities, the artists' and golf trainers' labour markets still present a number of differences. Having only a few faithful clients is a key challenge for Chinese golf trainers, especially in the context of the closure of golf courses. For golf trainers, the structure of the market encourages them to settle down in a given place for a long time. Through social media, golf coaches share their private lives, performances and sometimes business opportunities. They try to keep a strong and regular connection with their regular clients, in most cases no more than 40 people. As noted elsewhere [46], to gain their clients' loyalty, trainers adopt flexible sales policies, which often include free extensions of lessons and analysis of videos made by their clients during their unsupervised training sessions. In other words, they provide extra services that are consistent with the specific nature of their occupation.

This strategy is slightly different compared to performing artists. If we exclude the encore performed by performing artists, in the arts labour market, volunteering for non-paid work is more often carried out to open opportunities rather than gain existing clients' loyalty [47].

Moreover, musicians and painters tend to develop other strategies to counterbalance the uncertainty of non-continuous employment. Since opera houses, theatres and galleries attract the public by renewing performers and collections, musicians and painters are likely to move from one place to another. Artists who cannot access the highbrow places have the possibility of forming an association or building alternative communities to publicize their work [48]. Such strategies are less likely to be implemented by golf trainers in China because sports training services do not similarly value creation and novelty and do not require the quick renewal of performers. Besides, except for indoor golf, golf trainers can hardly arrange a fully independently managed workplace.

To this extent, the trajectories of reputation development in sports and the arts are not entirely similar. They call for strategies that are slightly different in each field, although the structure of the labour market remains similarly patterned by the workers' passion, reputation, admiration for the happy few, and winner-takes-all logic.

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Endnotes

[1] The 'incorporated or embodied state' of cultural capital relies on the cultivation of behaviors, competences and manners signaling the mastering of culture. It requires a personal costs, a ascetic work on oneself. This form of cultural capital must be constantly proved. The cultural capital is also objectified in material objects such as books, paintings. This objectified state of cultural capital is primarily acquired by investing economic capital and can be transmitted to the next generation. Finally, the institutionalised state of cultural capital corresponds to academic qualification and certification. The value of the institutionalised is guarantee by social instution while it cannot be directly transmitted from one person to another.

[2] These percentages are given by the formula $(1\text{-}e^{\beta},)*100$.

[3] More specifically, this figure was mentioned again during an interview on February 2, 2019, with a golf academy owner who owned three golf academies in China and had worked in the field as a golf trainer for 18 years.

[4] he percentage of the variance is calculated from the indicator matrix (also known as a complete disjunctive table).

Table 1: Descriptive table of trainer's characteristics

Variables	Category	Frequency	Percent
Certification	No certification	122	17.8%
	CGA Basic level	325	47.5%
	CGA Intermediate level	143	20.9%
	CGA national/international or Foreign diploma	94	13.7%
Living Place	First tier cities	392	57.3%
	Non first tier city	292	42.7%
Experience	Less than 3 years	120	17.5%
	3 to 4 years	178	26.0%
	5 to 10 years	223	32.6%
	More than 10 years	163	23.8%
Gender	Male	548	80.1%
	Female	136	19.9%
Other earning sources	Part-time	273	39.9%
	Full-time	411	60.1%
Highest degree	Graduate and above	272	39.8%
	Vocational School	240	35.1%
	High-school and below	172	25.1%
Handicap	4 and below	116	17.0%
	5 to 9	266	38.9%
	10 to 15	204	29.8%
	16 and above	98	14.3%
Practice background	Former Golfer	247	36.1%
	Former Athlete (except golf)	179	26.2%
	No athletic background	258	37.7%
Age group	Less than 30	329	48.1%
	30 to 34	187	27.3%
	35 to 39	68	9.9%
	40 and above	99	14.5%
	No answer	1	0.1%

Hourly earning	Less than 200 RMB	104	15.2%
	200 to 500 RMB	193	28.2%
	500 to 1 000 RMB	311	45.5%
	Up to 1 000 RMB	76	11.1%
Annual earning	Less than 100 000 RMB	329	48.1%
	100 001 to 200 000 RMB	249	36.40%
	200 001 to 300 000 RMB	68	9.9%
	300 000 and above RMB	38	5.6%

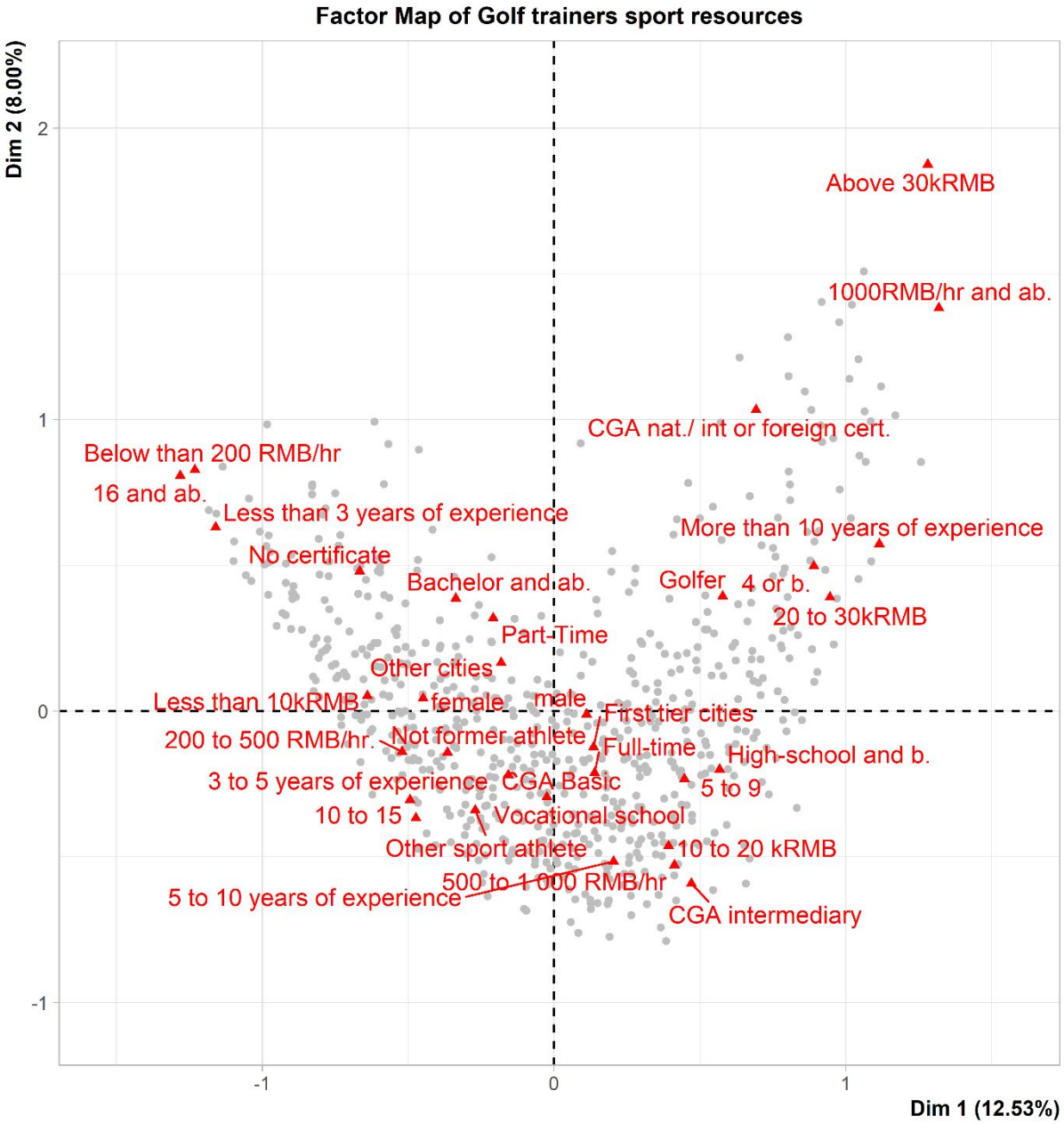
Table 2-Ordered logistic regression of Trainers hourly earning category

VARIABLES	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Certification level (no certificate as b.outcome)			
CGA Basic level certificate	0.181	0.0812	0.0711
	(0.205)	(0.210)	(0.34)
CGA Intermediate	0.581**	0.421*	0.426
	(0.245)	(0.251)	(1.69)
CGA national/international or Foreign diploma	0.630**	0.450	0.385
	(0.280)	(0.285)	(1.34)
Control of cost of life in the area			
Workplace in first tiers cities (yes=1)	-0.825***	-0.929***	-0.913***
	(0.154)	(0.158)	(-5.77)
Experience as trainer (Less than 3 years as b.ouctome)			
3 to 4 Years of experience	1.105***	0.926***	0.948***
	(0.230)	(0.236)	(3.99)
5 to 10 years of experience	2.069***	1.741***	1.746***
	(0.238)	(0.247)	(7.05)
More than 10 years of experience	3.067***	2.565***	2.500***
	(0.280)	(0.295)	(8.48)
Gender (male as b.ouctome)	-0.123	0.0573	0.0608
	(0.187)	(0.192)	(0.31)
Other earning sources (No=b.ouctome)	-0.604***	-0.486***	-0.484**
	(0.156)	(0.159)	(-3.03)
Highest degree (graduate and above as b.outcome)			
Vocational School	-0.113	-0.240	-0.211
	(0.175)	(0.179)	(-1.17)
High-school and below	0.0503	-0.118	-0.0665
	(0.201)	(0.205)	(-0.32)
Level as player (4 and below as b.outcome)			
Handicap 5 to 9		-0.688***	-0.592**
		(0.223)	(-2.63)
Handicap 10 to 15		-1.035***	-0.881***
		(0.250)	(-3.45)
Handicap 16 or above		-2.113***	-1.958***
		(0.311)	(-6.21)
Practice background (former golf player as b.outcome)			
Former athlete in another sport than golf			-0.382*
			(-1.85)

No athletic background			-0.564**
			(-3.04)
Constant cut1	-0.997***	-2.229***	-2.446***
	(0.347)	(0.415)	(-5.70)
Constant cut2	0.885**	-0.227	-0.427
	(0.349)	(0.410)	(-1.01)
Constant cut3	3.845***	2.827***	2.661***
	(0.376)	(0.420)	(6.19)
Mc. Fadden R2	0.145	0.174	0.179
Chi-square p value	0.000	0.000	0.000
AIC	1484.474	1441.935	1436.468
AIC/N	2.17	2.108	2.1
BIC	1547.866 (df=14)	1518.91 (df=17)	1522.499(df=19)
Observations	684	684	684

Standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1


Factor Map of Golf trainers sport resources
Dim 2 (8.00%)
Dim 1 (12.53%)
2
1
0
-1
-1
0
1
Above 30kRMB
1000RMB/hr and ab.
CGA nat./ int or foreign cert.
Below than 200 RMB/hr
16 and ab.
Less than 3 years of experience
More than 10 years of experience
No certificate
Bachelor and ab.
Golfer
4 or b.
20 to 30kRMB
Part-Time
Other cities
Less than 10kRMB
female
male
First tier cities
200 to 500 RMB/hr.
Not former athlete
Full-time
High-school and b.
3 to 5 years of experience
CGA Basic
5 to 9
10 to 15
Vocational school
Other sport athlete
10 to 20 kRMB
500 to 1 000 RMB/hr
5 to 10 years of experience
CGA intermediary