

The Current Distribution of Chinese Athletes with High Commercial Value and the Reasons for Its Formation

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Abstract:

Although the Paris Olympics ended, the heat of the event has not subsided. The commercial value of athletes has been continuously explored, and the commercial value of athletes plays an important role in driving national economic growth. Using mathematical statistics, literature, and comparative analysis, this paper examines the distribution of the commercial value of Chinese athletes by focusing on three aspects: whether the athletes' sports are traditional popular sports in the general sense, the degree of professionalization of the athletes' sports, and the gender of the athletes. The study found that Chinese athletes with high commercial value are concentrated in niche, highly professional, and female sports. The main reason for this is that China's strength in traditional popular sports is not outstanding, but niche and women's sports are more reflective of today's popular pursuit of individuality and national image. This study provides many meaningful benchmarks for future research in this direction, most importantly providing a theoretical basis for the trend that the commercial value of Chinese athletes has gradually shifted from niche events to traditional mass events.

Keywords: Chinese athletes; commercial value; group distribution; formation reasons.

1. Introduction

The commercial value generated by athletes has contributed to the increasing proportion of the sports economy in the national economy, and the sports industry, as an important growth point of the tertiary industry, has gradually become a driving force for national economic growth [1]. With the end of the Olympic Games in Paris, the athletes are attracting

more and more attention and the commercial value that they generate is coming to the fore. In Europe and the United States, the process of sports commercialization and industrialization is at least 30 years earlier than that of China. Compared with Europe and the United States, which have perfect forms of management of athletes 'commercial activities and models for developing athletes' commercial value, the development of China's sports industry is not yet

comprehensive [2]. At the moment, China's strategy for Olympic events is to have small, skilled, female, low-attendance and difficult events, the opposite of the traditional popular events that are recognized around the world. The commercial value of foreign athletes is concentrated mainly on the „three big balls“ (football, basketball, volleyball). Based on this, this paper will examine the characteristics of the distribution of high commercial value groups of Chinese athletes and conduct targeted analyses according to the selected projects. It will provide theoretical support for the trend of Chinese athletes' migration from less popular sports to traditional and popular sports.

2. Methods

Since information on the commercial value of Chinese athletes is not publicly available, and the number of followers means influence, influence means internet traffic, and internet traffic means commercial value, the number of followers of the users of the social media platform (Douyin platform) was chosen to collect, count and compare. This paper uses mathematical and statistical methods, documentary methods and comparative analysis to investigate three aspects: whether the athletes' sports are traditional popular sports in the general sense, the degree of professionalization of the athletes' sports and the gender of the athletes. With reference to three different groups of sports, it summarizes the characteristics of the group portrait of Chinese athletes with high commercial value, and conducts a study based on the sports therein to analyse the cause of their distribution characteristics.

Basketball, athletics and football have been chosen for the traditional popular sports, and break-dancing, diving and weightlifting for the niche sports. There are three types of niche sports: those with a certain mass base but a low participation rate; those with a low mass participation rate due to lack of resources and the influence of factors such as venues and equipment; and those with a weak mass base, low awareness and low participation rate [3]. Breaking is not part of the traditional popular programme as an additional sport at the Paris Olympics. The popularity of diving in China is extremely low, with almost 1 diver per 1.4 million people [4]. The public's knowledge of weightlifting is lacking and misguided, its popularity is not as high as other sports and it still belongs to a very small group of people [5,6].

The procedure is as follows:

The first group has been focused on basketball and breaking sports. Selecting the top ten scoring athletes from the latest basketball CBA season and the top ten men's grassroots basketball players in terms of number of followers on Douyin platform. The number of followers on their

Douyin platforms will be totaled and averaged separately in order to calculate the average number of followers per athlete. Athletes who participated in the top ten women's basketball scoring list at the Paris Olympics and women's grassroots basketball players who ranked in the top ten in terms of the number of followers on Douyin platform were selected, and the number of followers on their Douyin platforms was summed and averaged. A total of eight members of Chinese national breaking team (four men and four women) and four breaking web celebrities of each gender who ranked in the top four in terms of the number of followers on Douyin platform were selected, and their number of followers on Douyin platform was summed and averaged.

The second group has been focused on athletics and diving. Due to the fact that athletes who are professionally trained in athletics perform better than amateurs, and that diving is more demanding in terms of skill and difficulty, less professional athletes were not selected for comparison [7]. For athletics athletes at the Paris Olympics, ten athletes of each gender who were in the top ten in terms of number of followers on Douyin platform were selected, and the number of followers was totaled and averaged to calculate the average number of followers for each athlete. A total of 10 athletes (six men and four women) who took part in the diving sports at the Paris Olympics were selected and the number of followers on their Douyin platforms was summed up and averaged separately.

The third group has been focused on football and weightlifting. Athletes with a low level of professionalism were not selected for this discussion due to the high level of interest in football and the high level of difficulty required for weightlifting. Ten Chinese national football players men and women who were in the top ten in terms of the number of followers on Douyin platform were selected, and the number of followers was totaled and averaged to calculate the average number of followers for each athlete. A total of six athletes (three men and three women) who took part in the weightlifting sports at the Paris Olympics were selected and the number of followers on their Douyin platforms was summed up and averaged separately.

2.1 Primary Data Collection

The following data were obtained after the initial survey: First group of programs. Basketball: Men's professional athletes have an average of 159,400 followers per athlete, while men's grassroots athletes have an average of 1,462,800 followers. Female professional athletes have an average of 861,700 followers each, female grassroots athletes 1,718,800. Breaking: Men's professional athletes averaged 14,000 followers per person and men's grass-

roots athletes averaged 3,649,500 followers per person; women’s professional athletes averaged 134,500 followers per person and women’s grassroots athletes averaged 2,560,750 followers per person.

Only professionalization and the gender of the athlete are taken into account in the second and third groups of events. Athletics: Male athletes have an average of 271,300 followers per athlete, female athletes 697,200; Diving: Male athletes have an average of 347,750 followers per person, while female athletes have 5,659,000. Football: Male athletes have an average of 260,000 followers per athlete, female athletes 313,500; Weightlifting: Male athletes have an average of 284,700 followers per person, while female athletes have 761,300.

2.2 Model Construction

Set the popularity of the sport (niche sport, traditional popular sport), the level of professionalism (grassroots, professional) and the gender of the athletes (female, male) as the X, Y and Z axes, respectively, and create a

three-dimensional coordinate system. The average number of followers collected per athlete was divided into four levels based on 100,000, 500,000 and 2 million, and the commercial value was marked in light to dark colors, with the darker the colour, the higher the commercial value. The ideal hypothesis of the distribution of the commercial value of athletes is proposed and compared with the image obtained from the data collected in order to detect the anomalies.

Due to the higher degree of specialization required in the second and third groups of sports, the average number of followers per person for amateur sportsmen and sports-women was divided into the slot with the lowest number of followers, i.e. the model was labeled with the colour of the lightest degree.

In order to make the picture clearer, the level of professionalism has been compared with the gender of the athletes. The hypothetical ideal distribution of the commercial value of Chinese athletes is shown in Figure 1:

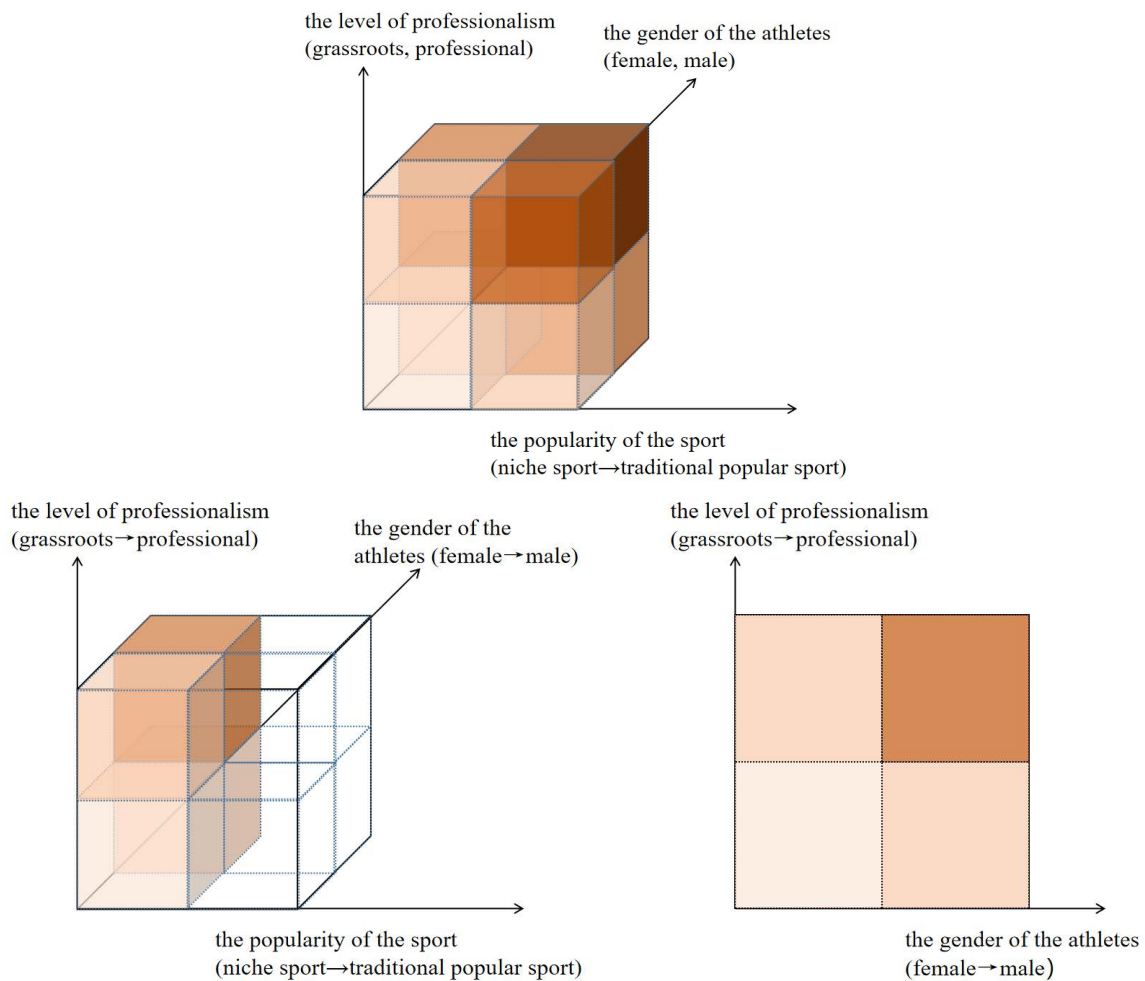


Fig. 1 Hypothetical ideal situation of Chinese athletes’ commercial value distribution

3. Result

The results of the study for the three groups of different sports are shown below:

In Group I: Basketball and Breaking, the distribution of the commercial value of Chinese athletes is shown in Figure 2:

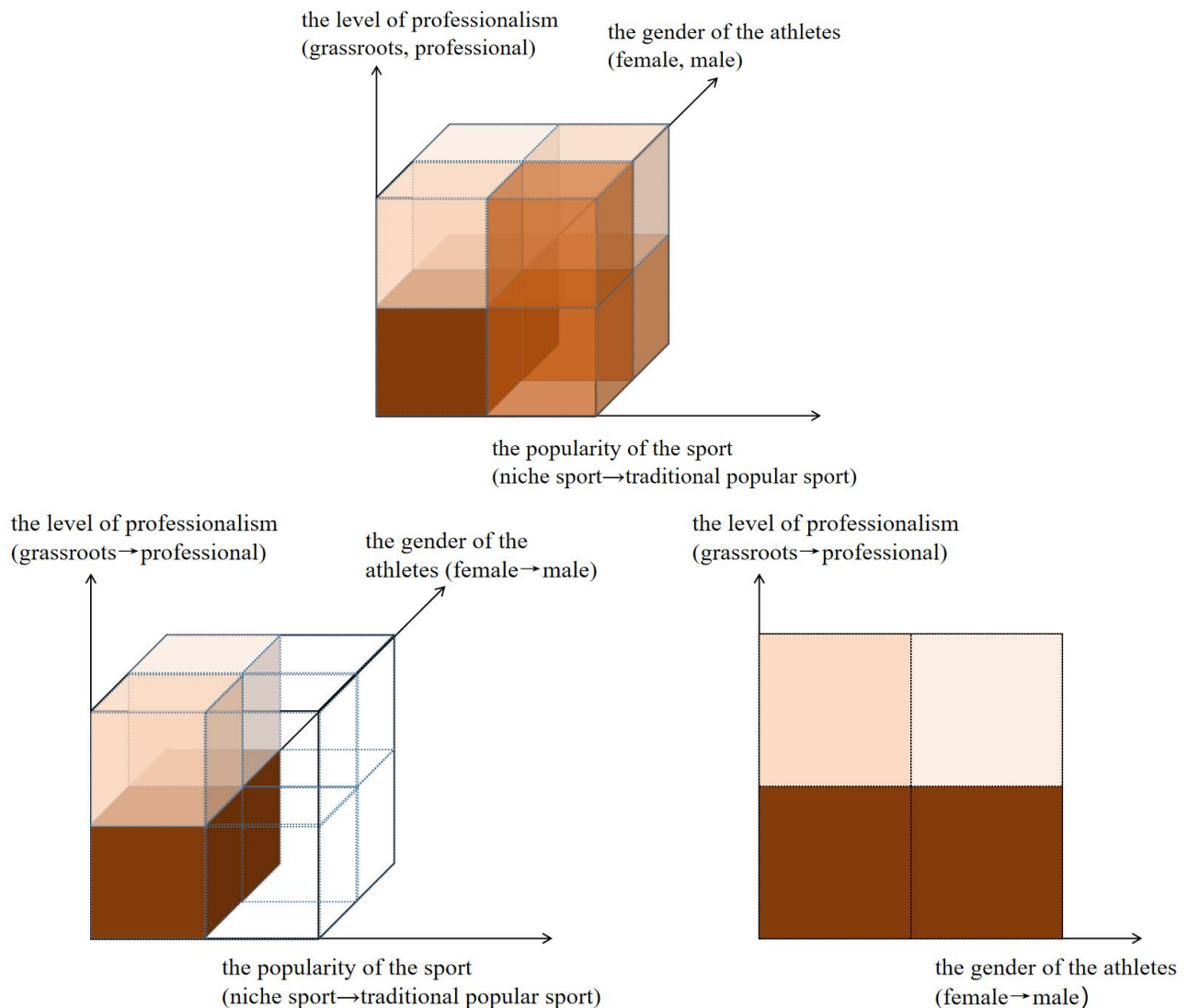


Fig. 2 Distribution of commercial value of Chinese athletes in basketball and breaking

The comparison of the two sports, basketball and breaking, shows that the commercial value of Chinese athletes is concentrated in female, low-professionalized sports, but

it is not clear whether these are traditional popular sports. In Group II: Athletics and Diving, the distribution of the commercial value of Chinese athletes is shown in Figure 3:

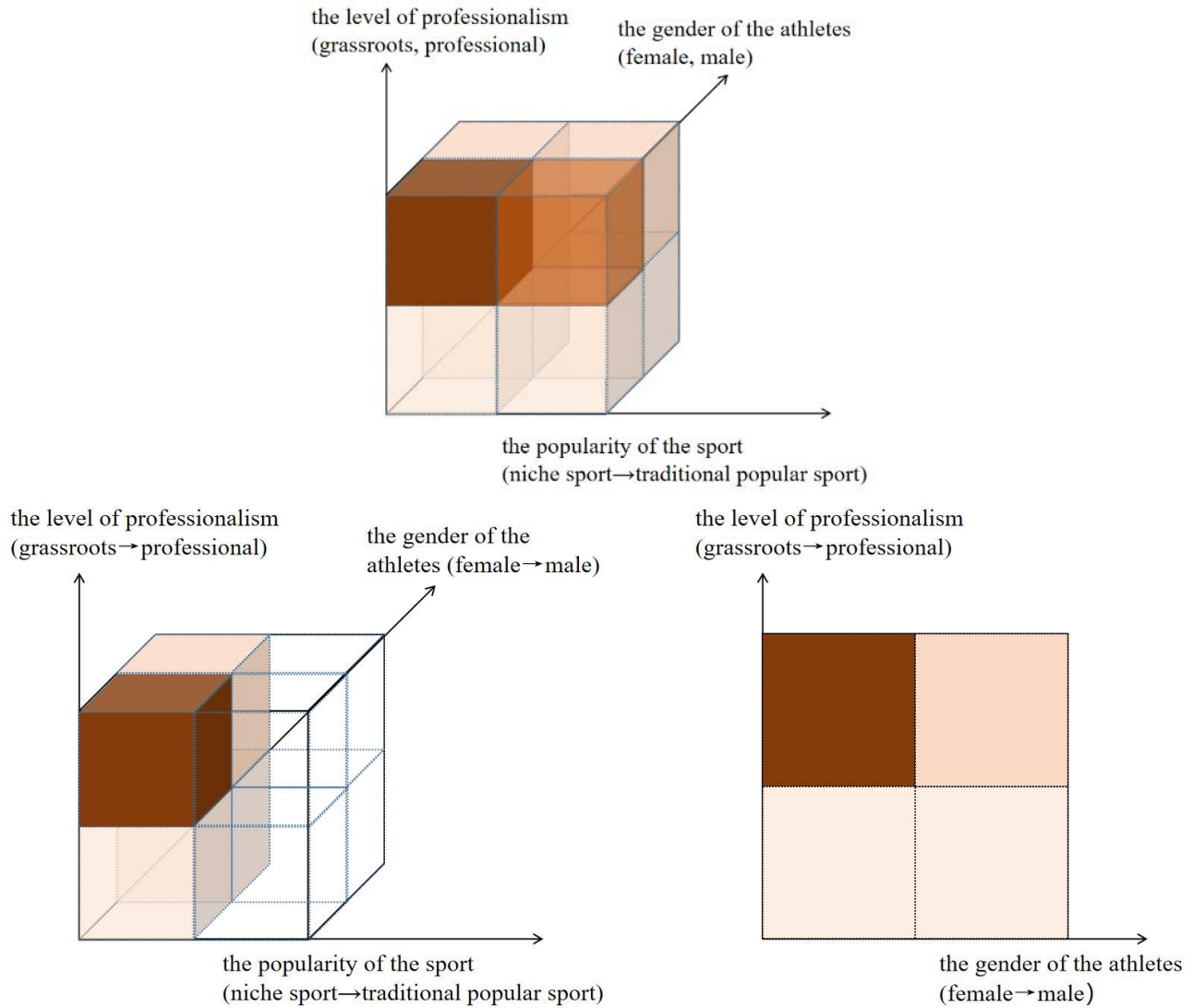


Fig. 3 Distribution of commercial value of Chinese athletes in athletics and diving

In athletics and diving, the commercial value of Chinese athletes is concentrated in female, niche and highly professionalized sports.

In Group III: Football and Weightlifting, the distribution of the commercial value of Chinese athletes is shown in Figure 4:

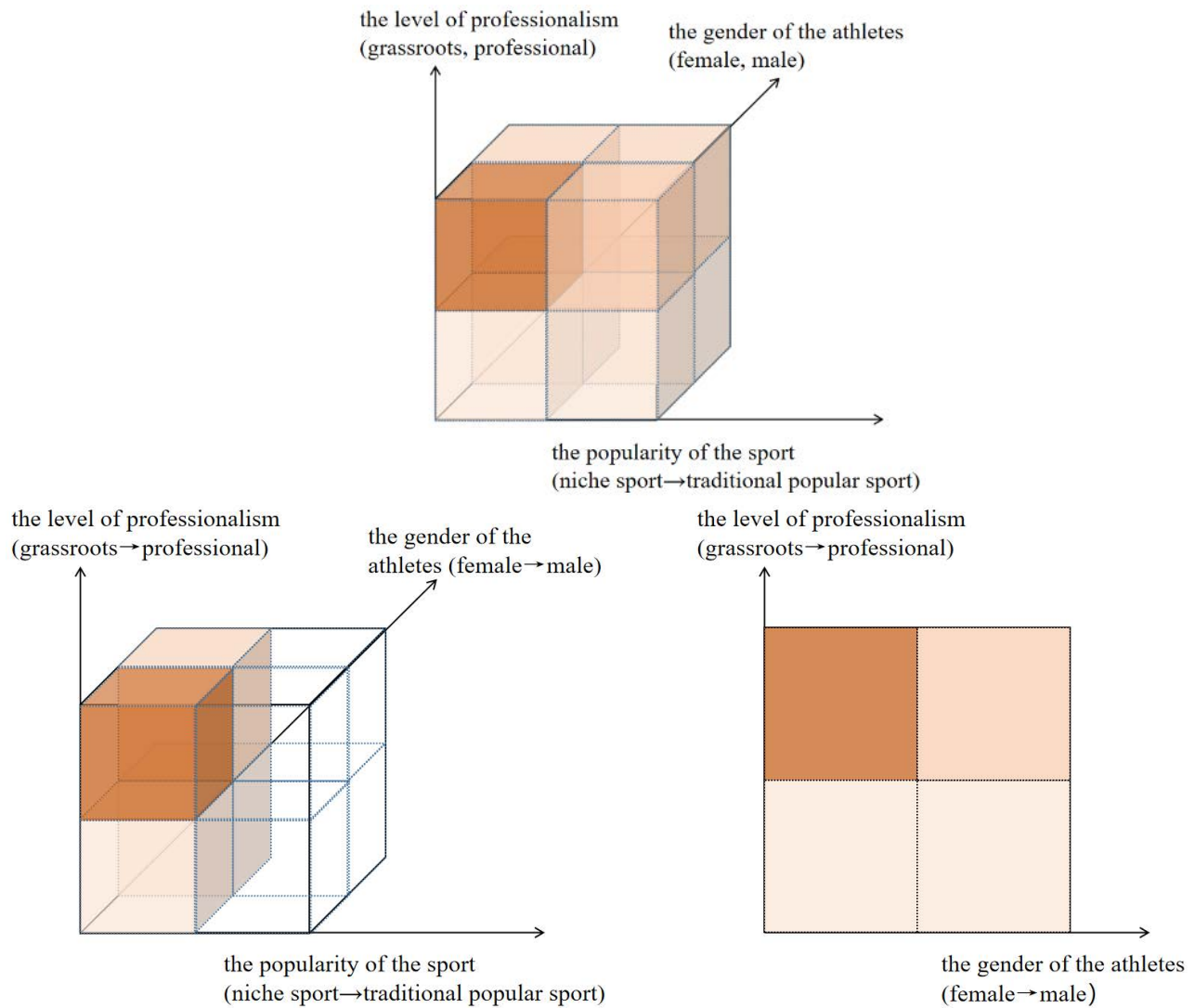


Fig. 4 Distribution of commercial value of Chinese athletes in football and weightlifting

In terms of football and weightlifting, the commercial value of Chinese athletes is concentrated in sports that are female, niche, and highly professionalized.

A comparison of the three groups with different sports and different study dimensions is shown in Table 1:

Table 1. Comparison of different sports in three groups

	niche sport	traditional popular sport	grassroots	professional	male	female
Group I			√			√
Group II	√			√		√
Group III	√			√		√

From the table, it can be concluded that the commercial value of Chinese athletes is currently concentrated in niche, highly professional and female sports.

4. Discussion

The assumption of the characteristics of the distribution of the commercial value of Chinese athletes is that the more popular, the more professional and the more male-oriented the sport is, the higher the commercial value it receives.

The study concludes that in niche, more professionalized women's sports, the higher the commercial value received by the athlete.

Social media platforms provide timely communication opportunities between athletes and fans, especially for niche sports and female athletes, and social media can break through the stereotypes of traditional media and highlight the value of athletes' self-image construction [8].

For the traditional popular sport of athletics, athletics is an individual competitive sport with a wide variety of disciplines, which occupies an important position in competitive sports, but its social attention is not proportional to its status, resulting in a low level of public attention and participation in athletics and athletic athletes [9]. In basketball and football, although the popularity of the sport is not low, the gap with the world's strongest basketball teams has widened further due to the declining competitiveness of Chinese basketball, especially the Chinese men's basketball team [10]. The gap between the Chinese men's football team and the strength of football in Europe, America and other countries is too wide, so the public's expectations of basketball and football programs are lower.

Compared to traditional popular sports, most niche sports have an individual character, due to the higher level of skill, difficulty and professionalism of the athletes, which makes them more decorative, exciting and competitive. They reflect strong social and recreational attributes, while at the same time satisfying today's youth's quest for fashion and individuality [11].

For female athletes, the media creates a personalized, vivid and three-dimensional image for them. Through the athlete's performance on the field, growth and development experiences, etc., the image of a more confident, friendly, grounded and lovable new-age female athlete with more personal charm and infectious power is created [12]. The national image of Chinese female athletes is embodied in the image of champions who uphold the spirit of sport, the image of ambassadors who promote Chinese culture, and the image of charismatic and positive media who have attracted a lot of public attention [13].

5. Conclusion

The findings of this study are that the groups of Chinese athletes with high commercial value are concentrated in niche, highly professionalized women's sports. With the rise of China's comprehensive national power, breakthroughs in traditional popular events are particularly important. This study provides many meaningful benchmarks for future research in this direction, most importantly providing a theoretical basis for the trend that the commercial value of Chinese athletes has gradually shifted from niche events to traditional mass events. The selection of more

representative groups of sports for in-depth study should be the focus of future research.

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