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Dual Identity Negotiation of Female Billiards Assistants under the Rules of Commercialization and Gender

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ABSTRACT
With the rejuvenation and upgrading of the billiard industry, the billiard teaching assistant industry came into being as a new profession. However, under the highly commercialized and gendered field rules, the role and identity of female billiard teaching assistants have been alienated and conflicted, gradually alienated from the technical "training instructor" to the emotional "accompaniment ", which has also brought social prejudice and stigma. This study mainly uses the participatory observation method and semi-structured interview method, from the theory of physical capital, emotional labor, gender performance and other theories, in-depth analysis of how female billiards assistants construct gender identity and how dual identities can coexist through negotiation, and further discusses the reconstruction of their professional cognition through such negotiation. The research aims to reveal the operation mechanism of billiard teaching assistant industry, and at the same time, it is expected to standardize the green and healthy development of the industry, and also provide empirical support for many other women in the service industry to solve the contradiction between their occupation and gender under the complicity of capitalization and gender.

KEYWORDS
Female billiards teaching assistant; Physical capital; Eemotional labor; Gender performance; Role alienation

1 Introduction

Billiards, as a ball game with a long history and various forms, has a wide range of fans around the world. Since the 21st century, with the promotion of the holding of major billiards events, Chinese billiards has gradually developed in the direction of professionalization, standardization and internationalization. At present, billiards has formed a good situation of promoting from south to north, from rural areas to cities, from people's leisure to colleges and universities, and college students' active participation. According to the authoritative industry research report, by 2025, the scale of China's Billiards Market is expected to exceed 100 billion yuan, and the number of billiards Lovers has exceeded 210million, with an annual growth rate of 180%, becoming one of the most popular leisure sports at present.

In this wave of industrial rejuvenation and upgrading, the huge market potential has led to the continuous increase in the number and scale of billiards rooms. At the same time, it also means that the competition in the industry has become increasingly fierce. Some of the rooms are pursuing commercial development and exploring new ways of profit and value-added services. It is in this industry background that an emerging profession with local characteristics and controversial arises at the historic moment - billiards teaching assistant. Billiards teaching assistants mainly refer to the full-time personnel who provide paid technical guidance and training services in the ball room and undertake the responsibility of maintaining customers.

However, the role and function orientation of billiards assistants has gradually become vague and triggered widespread controversy. Under the alienation of business logic, the role conflict of female billiards assistants' professional identity orientation is essentially the contradiction and tear between the construction of gender identity (physical presentation and emotional interaction), professional identity and value (economic benefits and professional legitimacy), and social ethics (professional stigma pressure). Female billiards assistants still can not really realize professional identity.

Based on the above background, this study analyzes the specific practice of female billiards assistants, a new group, in their work and service process, and tries to answer: under the highly commercialized and gendered rules and habits, what strategies do female billiards assistants use to "play" (gender identity construction) to meet the consumption needs of male customers? How to negotiate and balance the dual roles of "Trainer" and "companion" in practice? Will this negotiation reshape their professional and self-awareness and gender practice?

2 Literature review

Baudrillard pointed out that today's society is a consumer society, and the body is the most beautiful consumer goods in this society [1]. In the process of continuous commercialization, the body has become not only a consumer goods, but also an investable capital. People will constantly beautify and decorate the body in order to highlight the symbolic value behind the body and obtain more other social resources. At this time, the body has become a tool for resource exchange.

So what is physical capital? Bourdieu proposed three forms of sociological capital, namely, economic capital, social capital and cultural capital, and physical capital is a kind of extension of his capital theory system. Bourdieu pointed out in his works such as partition that the body is by no means a pure biological existence, but a description of the body of social structure, emphasizing that the existence of the body is not only a biological form, but also a form of capital constructed by society and exchangeable for investment [2].

The domestic research on physical capital tends to be gender oriented, mainly focusing on the research on female physical capital. This is because in the context of patriarchal consumer society, women's bodies are more regarded as the object of gaze, so the exchange value of women's physical capital should be more prominent. Some scholars focus on the process of rural migrant girls' borrowing and transforming their physical capital to become more like 'urban people', including dressing, body shape, skin color, etc., not only for making a living (economic capital) but also for the upward flow of social classes (social capital). Physical capital has become a bridge between urban and rural differences [3]. At present, more and more scholars pay attention to the female anchors in the network field. Existing studies have pointed out that the commercialization of the body is the key to attracting and maintaining the fan group of the network anchors, and the body has become an important capital [4]. As a symbol and materialized body consumption, the original value of the female body is stripped away, and the female body value seems to be just for consumption [5].

Similar to physical capital, emotional capital is an extension of Bourdieu's capital theory, which refers to a kind of valuable emotional resources owned by the subject and invested and rewarded in social interaction [6]. However, the academic research on emotional capital is relatively scattered, and the mainstream tends to analyze the capitalization of emotion from the perspective of emotional labor. However, the academic research of emotional labor theory cannot bypass the American sociologist Hochschild, who established the emotional labor theory to describe "the private and commercial application of emotion" in her book "the decoration of the mind". She revealed the ternary consistency of "situation conventional framework feeling". In each different situation, there will be corresponding feeling rules, under which individuals compare and adjust their emotions. This process is "emotional decoration" [7]. The so-called emotional labor is a form of labor in which employees express, adjust and control their emotions under the needs of work. The two strategies of emotional display are shallow performance and deep performance. The former is more about controlling the external expression, while the latter is about actively changing the inner feelings [8].

In the discussion of gender issues, the gender division of labor is an important theoretical orientation in the study of feminism. In the view of feminists, this kind of caring and nursing work relying on emotional expenditure and control has always been undertaken unfairly by women. Hochschild also paid special attention to the gender model in emotional labor, and there is a division based on the gender characteristics of both sexes. One scholar pointed out that women's greater participation in emotional labor is the result of unequal power relations. Women are required to assume more emotional functions, and the value of emotional labor created by women will be misjudged by society, which will aggravate women's burden in work and family [9]. Some scholars also critically pointed out that the value of women's emotional labor is underestimated or even ignored, which is in essence a kind of exploitation of women by capitalism, especially after 2020, this gender division difference and inequality have been further revealed [10].

Emotional labor is often associated with gender performance. Judith Butler first put forward this theory in the book "gender troubles". She believes that gender is a concept of social construction, not determined by biological gender. It is a role constructed through performance in society. This kind of performance is an act expressed and repeated in order to meet the gender role expectations of society, and behind it is determined by social culture and structure. This symbolic behavior is always regulated and constrained by social expectations [11].

Domestic research on Butler's gender construction theory mainly has two aspects. The first is the theoretical overview, interpretation and evaluation of Butler's gender theory [12-13]. The second is the research on the application of Butler's gender performance theory in different fields. Most scholars choose to study and analyze the gender image in literary works and film and television works from the perspective of gender performance theory [14]. Foreign scholars' current research on Butler's gender performance theory, in addition to some voices of query and political criticism, mainly links gender performance with organizational work and the workplace, discusses the gender division and oppression in the workplace, and how to challenge the traditional gender concept in the workplace through this theory. For example, Jenkins, J And Finneman, T used this theory to study women in the newsroom, and pointed out that in this space, gender expectations can significantly shape career experience and success, thus highlighting the plight of women in the patriarchal working environment [15]. Entwistle, J. and Mears, A. paid attention to the model group, analyzed the daily physical behavior and gender performance of men and women in the fashion industry, and investigated the alienation performance of men and women when they were engaged in the same work under different gender expectations, challenging the traditional masculinity and gender concept [16]. In contrast, the main application fields of domestic gender performance theory are concentrated in the field of literature, and lack of certain sociological attention.

3 Research design

This study mainly selected two commercial ball rooms as the field survey sites. The two billiard halls are both commercial operation modes, and the two field sites have 20-30 resident teaching assistants with sufficient sample data. This study mainly adopts the participatory observation method and semi-structured interview method. The author entered the field from March to June 2025 to observe the dress, makeup, behavior and speech habits of some teaching assistants as consumers' participatory observation. At the same time, as customers, they have long-term communication with specific teaching assistants and have built a good interpersonal relationship. This study selected six female billiards assistants in the two ballrooms as the interviewees, and obtained more detailed and comprehensive industry rules and individual selection and other relevant information through online and offline semi-structured interviews. All interviews received the informed consent of the interviewees, and the key quotes were reviewed and confirmed by the interviewees. The interview time was guaranteed to be more than 60 minutes. In order to protect the privacy of the interviewees, the identity information of the interviewees was anonymized, and the original interview content was not disclosed.

4 The performance process of gender and emotion -- the construction of accompanying identity

4.1 Trimming and highlighting of physical capital

For individual female billiards assistants, physical capital is one of the important resources in peer competition. Under the same technical level, those who are more beautiful and have a better figure are more likely to obtain more economic capital in the competition. Therefore, "make-up" has become the most commonly used and effective means and tool for teaching assistants to trim their physical capital. If make-up is the offline decoration of the appearance, and the technical means such as dithering effect is to further beautify and publicize the appearance through online channels, technology can make the teaching assistants' decoration of the body image capital more frequent and easy.

The appearance can be decorated through makeup, while the body can be decorated or highlighted mainly through dressing. Compared with the former, dressing has more gender symbolic labels. The issues such as "wearing exposed edges" concerned by many media show the symbolic construction of clothing in social culture,. Under the traditional cultural concepts and stereotypes, dressing exposed is a kind of deviant behavior, so this group is more vulnerable to stigmatized labels and occupational discrimination. However, through observation and interview, the author found that there are no hidden rules in the industry, and more are individual choices. Wearing and makeup are the same as beautifying their own image, and are a form of exercise to meet the gender expectations of consumers and constantly construct their own gender.

4.2 Expression and adjustment of shallow emotions

The body of billiards teaching assistants is regarded as a commodity to be stared at, and their emotions are also unable to escape the fate of commercialization. Under the traditional gender concept, men show more professional authority of "technical guidance", while women assume more emotional functions such as "encouraging and comforting". However, emotions are difficult to be intuitively displayed and attractive like the body. Therefore, teaching assistants need to decorate their emotions through expression, tone and tone of voice and interactive content. Through my own observation, the author found that the billiards teaching assistants mainly treat the winning and losing of the game with an entertaining attitude in the service process, and even if the mood fluctuates, they will not show too much. They mainly show appreciation and regret through words to show their emotional investment and cater to customers' emotions.

In most cases, the outpouring of emotion is spontaneous, because billiards, as a highly entertaining sport, can create a certain positive emotional experience and cause emotional input and transmission. However, billiards teaching assistants will inevitably encounter times of depression and even resentment. At this time, the teaching assistants will adjust their service state through emotional decoration of "performance" nature. This kind of emotional depression and adjustment with "compulsion" may cause individual job burnout under the dual work of physical and emotional. This negative psychological experience is also one of the important factors affecting professional identity.

4.3 Emotional internalization and relationship transformation

The body decoration and emotional adjustment of female teaching assistants start from the shallow performance. However, with the passage of working time and the increase of the number of customers, it is gradually difficult to retain customers only by the simple shallow performance. How to enhance customer stickiness and form a long-term stable source of customers has become the core issue for the professional development of billiards assistants. At this time, the teaching assistant must use the deep performance strategy, need to adjust the inner feelings and cognition of different

customers, accept or even reshape the cognition of specific customers, so as to better carry out the shallow performance and self-regulation. This expression of emotional internalization is reflected in the relationship with customers. From the initial temporary service relationship, it gradually forms a long-term interpersonal relationship, and even becomes a "social dependent" friendship relationship. At the same time, emotional expression can gradually change from self concealment to sincere disclosure. The pressure of shallow performance has been significantly reduced. Finally, emotional output for a long time can also get emotional feedback under this relationship.

However, there are some drawbacks in the deep performance, that is, it will cause the emotional alienation and boundary ambiguity of the teaching assistant group. The long-term emotional contact with customers will gradually blur the boundary between work and life, and the work occupies too many emotions, which will gradually make their life empty, and even further affect the original interpersonal relationship.

5 Cognitive reconstruction under dual role negotiation

5.1 Selective switching and identity adjustment (negotiation strategy)

The specific identity practice of "Trainer" or "Companion" is not fixed. Female billiards assistants are able to measure the proportion and weight of roles according to different needs of consumers in the service process. For example, customers seek competitive confrontation and professional guidance, while teaching assistants emphasize their own professional skills; If customers pursue entertainment experience, the teaching assistant will find more interactive topics and praise actively to meet the emotional needs of consumers.

This initiative is not brought about by the profession itself, but by professional billiards technology as the core driving force, because only with sufficient technical level as the support, can we flexibly and reasonably adjust the identity and provide corresponding services. But it needs to be clear that dual identities always exist together. No matter what kind of consumer demand customers have, the whole service is built on the ball and runs through emotional interaction. Therefore, it is difficult for teaching assistants to seek a single identity, and they can only choose and measure the dual identity of subjectivity.

5.2 Changing stages of occupational cognition

The cognition of billiards teaching assistants to the profession is mainly divided into three stages: the first stage is the idealized cognition before entering the profession. Young and beautiful women who enter the society initially understand the salary and work tasks of the teaching assistant industry through information channels such as the Internet, and paid learning and training, regular League building and other propaganda techniques have successfully attracted them to the profession. In their view, the teaching assistant industry is a relaxed and ideal profession. The second stage is the perception of suspicion and withdrawal after employment. Under the high involution competition of peers, the teaching assistants are trapped in the pressure of indicators and internal friction of themselves. During this period, they also face the prejudice and discrimination of the public against their profession, and have doubts and withdrawal psychology about the teaching assistant profession. The third stage is that with the improvement of ball skills and the increase of fixed customers, the performance of teaching assistants has been stabilized, and the mastery of technology has strengthened their understanding of the boundaries of professional profession and enhanced their professional identity.

5.3 Dialectical remodeling of self cognition

In the face of stigmatized social pressure, how to reasonably adjust to psychological pressure and face the value created by work has become an important factor to promote the development of individuals' professional practice. The development of their self-worth cognition also mainly presents three stages. The first stage is "self is the biggest beneficiary". In the initial stage, the teaching assistant is full of enthusiasm for this work, and self enjoyment has become the main psychological state; The second stage is "self discipline and numbness". With the increase of performance pressure, the oppression and discipline of the rules and potential rules in the field, and the negative evaluation and harassment from the outside world, self cognition began to doubt its own value; The third stage is "self-worth awakening". The TA recognizes the professional value and emotional value they have created and shows it through customer feedback. The emotional compensation mechanism makes their psychological pressure for professional stigma self dispelled to a certain extent. Teaching assistants can successfully achieve self internalization, actively establish rules, adjust emotions, and give meaning and legitimacy to their emotional labor, so as to achieve the consistency of emotion and feeling rules.

6 Conclusion and discussion

Combining with the theoretical framework of physical capital, emotional labor, gender performance and so on, this paper makes an in-depth discussion on the existing mechanism and service logic of female billiards assistants. The research finds that female billiards assistants mainly meet the gender expectations of male consumers by virtue of their physical capital advantages, and in the service process, there is a contradiction phenomenon that "professional technology" gives way to "emotional value", which fully shows that in the field of commercialization and gender, the professional identity of billiards assistants has been alienated, and has caused disputes on the level of professional ethics and legal boundaries, affecting the green and long-term development of billiards industry.

In the specific practice of teaching assistants, the author found that women will consciously emphasize the construction of their gender identity, that is to say, they will show more of the identity of "emotional accompaniers". First, before the service, through the decoration and highlighting of physical capital, such as makeup and dressing, they will establish a female image that conforms to the male aesthetic, so as to attract customers' consumption. In the process of service, they will provide emotional value through explicit shallow performances such as script design, tone and expression, so as to create positive emotional experience for customers. At the same time, they need to carry out emotional internalization and establish emotional ties with customers, so as to attract customers to consume again and form a stable source of customers. The construction of gender identity will make the teaching assistant an "emotional companion" who will exchange resources from external body to internal emotion as commodities.

The teaching assistant gradually reconstructs his own cognition in the negotiation of dual identities. The teaching assistant will selectively adjust the proportion of identity according to the main consumer needs of customers, and strengthen the initiative of adjustment by improving his own technical level. Teaching assistants' professional cognition and individual value cognition will also undergo periodic changes and remodeling. The study found that this cognitive remodeling is also highly correlated with technical level. The improvement of technical level will promote the professional identity and self internalization of professional value of teaching assistants.

Therefore, under the role conflict brought about by commercialization and the triple game of "technology body emotion", technology has become the core of negotiation, because only the mastery of billiards technology can better divide the professional boundary, fully display the unique charm of their own occupation, and the body and emotion are more used as accessories to optimize the training or accompanying experience. It can be seen that in order to promote the transformation of the teaching assistant industry and get rid of the shadow of social stigma, it is necessary to strengthen the technical assessment of teaching assistants and ensure sufficient professional strength, so as to balance the dual identity more reasonably.

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