

**An Investigation of the Key Market
Growth Factors for Golf Development in
China as a Recreation and Luxury
Product**

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Abstract

The aim of this research is to investigate the key market growth factors for golf development in China as a recreation and luxury product. After nearly 30 years of development, China now has the largest golf complex in the world and the golf market in China is growing at its fastest pace for recent years (Verot, 2013). Due to rapid economic growth and the emergence of a large number of wealthy people, it has been argued that the consumption of luxury and recreational products will increase. Practically, there is evidence to suggest that golfing in China is being developed as both recreational product and luxury product. However, little research has been carried out to answer the question why a foreign game could develop so robustly, and the key factors that have contributed to its growth in relation to its unique features. Moreover, golf development in China is taking place within an increasingly complicated environment, which necessitates strategic adjustments in golf and related businesses for sustained growth. After examining existing literature, this research proposed the theoretical framework, which identifies the relationship among golf industry, features and potential factors.

To test the hypotheses generated from the theoretical framework and to enrich the argument a pragmatic methodology is adopted, which involve both positivist and interpretivist approaches. Therefore, both questionnaire and in-depth interview methods are applied in this research to reach the requirement of both broadness and depth. The questionnaire was distributed to 230 golf course managers in China, and 213 valid responses were collected. Correlation analysis and regression analysis were carried out and the quantitative findings were complemented by evidence from interviews with 5 experienced golf course managers who have worked in several golf courses around China.

The theoretical framework is tested through designed research and suggests that when considering golf as a recreation and luxury product, the economic factor is the key market growth factor in China. The in-depth interviews supported this finding and further suggested that the cultural factor is also significant for golf development. Moreover, the interviews also provided comprehensive information about how political, economic, cultural, technological, geographic and environmental factor are influencing current and future golf development. Accordingly, golf business should adjust their

practices to their external environment. Using the political factor as an example, golf industry has the capacity to influence the factor to their advantage. The golf industry could project a positive image that golf development will not harm the natural environment if the maintenance procedures are appropriated. Furthermore, the golf industry should launch information campaigns and lobby the government to demonstrate that the concern from public is unnecessary.

The findings of this study presented implications for academic literature and the golf industry. From the academic perspective, this research tested theories from existing literature in the field of golf development in China. Meanwhile, this research provides the framework for research in a related area in the future. Furthermore, this study highlighted a new niche subject of academic study, the luxury recreational sector that encompasses luxury experiences and recreation specialisation. For the golf industry in China, the framework provided by this research will help practitioners to understand their external business environment and implement innovative strategies. The information revealed by the framework will also help potential international investors to develop better strategies to gain access to the Chinese market.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1 Thesis title

The thesis title is: “An Investigation of the Key Market Growth Factors for Golf Development in China as a Recreation and Luxury Product”.

1.2 Introduction

The aim of this doctoral study is to investigate the key market growth factors for golf business in China, while recreation and luxury are two of the most important features for golf's development process. The overall aim of this study is to present theoretically based, empirical and insightful frameworks that can be applied by academics as well as practitioners. This study of the golf industry will firstly investigate the feature of the golf industry in China as a recreation and luxury product. Furthermore, the study will attempt to understand the key market growth factors, which are considered to have influence on the golf industry in China. Finally, this research will ultimately deliver an outline and insights to the academic world and act as a foundation for golf business to form their business strategy in the future.

1.3 Background of the research

The number of golf courses and the number of golfers have been growing remarkably around the world. Research on the global market found that there are over 25,000 courses worldwide, collectively covering an area close to the size of Belgium (Wheeler & Nauright, 2006). Readman (2003) claimed there are over 60 million golfers across the world. The three largest golf markets in the world are the United States of America (44%), Japan (25%) and Europe (12%).

Research shows that the speed of growth in these three traditional markets is declining due to the recent economic recession (Ferreira, et al., 2012; Shin & Bell, 2002; The Economist, 2013) but the achievement of golf growth in emerging markets, such as China (KPMG Golf Advisory Practice, 2008), Eastern-Europe (KPMG, 2008), the Middle-East (KPMG, 2008) and Africa (KPMG, 2008; Tassiopoulos & Haydam, 2008) has led to increased growth of the golf market globally.

China is considered one of the fastest growing golf markets. Meanwhile, golf business in China has the trend to overtake the position of both Europe and America because China is considered as being the next untapped market (Wheeler & Nauright, 2006). Meanwhile, from the point of view of golf supply, China has the largest golf project in the world, Mission Hill Golf Club, which boasts 180 holes and covers some 77,000 hectares (Wheeler & Nauright, 2006). The experience that golf brought to the economy and society in Europe and America is extremely important for China because they provide a good model for golf businesses in China to pursue. After hundreds of years its emergence in Europe (Hamilton, 1998), golf is now well developed in Europe and America with a mature business model and a broad market. This growing experience provides an expectation for golf business managers who are operating at the initial stage of golf's development in countries such as China. By knowing the experience, a golf manager in a golf-developing country could see how to better manage their business. So that can prosper in the future. Such experience could also help them to avoid the pitfalls and mistakes that golf-developed countries have suffered such as the damage to the natural environment.

Meanwhile, the increasing buying power of the Chinese people makes recreational products, luxury products and their related businesses become more profitable than before (Gao, et al., 2009). The total expenditure on luxury products by Mainland Chinese reached 156 billion RMB in 2009 (16 billion GBP). The rapid development of the economy brought China a "middle class" larger than ever before (J. Xu, 2013). On one hand, the "getting-richer" Chinese people have the desire and economic capacity to chase certain products in order to be differentiated from others (Y. J. Han & Nunes, 2010). These products could be tangible goods or a particular kind of experience (KPMG, 2011). On the other hand, with the increasing income, people have become more aware of the value of quality of life. There is research suggesting that the consumers of luxury products are shifting their consumption standard of luxury goods from "the more expensive, the better" to "good taste" (Shipman, 2004), and healthy products or activities (Jing Zhao, 2006), such as tourism. During the 8-day national holidays in 2011, Chinese people contributed 180 billion RMB on the domestic tourism market and 80 billion RMB on the overseas tourism market (Xiao, 2012).

Thus, the increasing buying capacity plus the changing taste towards healthy products have also become drivers of the development of golf in China.

1.3.1 Golf, sport and business

The global sport of golf is managed under two governing authorities, Royal and Ancient (R&A) based in the UK, the ruling authority of golf throughout the world except the United States and Mexico, where the responsibility is with the United States Golf Association (USGA) (USGA, 2013). Both the R&A and the USGA work in collaboration with national amateur and professional golf organisations.

For golf businesses, these two authorities also have an indirect impact by providing standards and criteria such as the size and length of shafts for equipment manufacturing businesses to follow. Meanwhile, these two authorities provide a guideline such as the size of golf courses and the length of grass for golf managers to follow (Griggs & Cejnar, 2009). Due to the effort from both golf-governing bodies, golf courses could be built, managed and developed around the world following similar criteria.

Under the governance of these two authorities, the global golf market has been gradually expanding and the golf sector has contributed significantly to the economy of some major markets. According to data and information released by market research group Mintel, more than 63 million golfing holidays were taken in 2009, while there were 56 million golfers worldwide playing on more than 32,000 courses. Today, in the “home of golf”, Scotland, golf has generated £4.2 billion annually in revenue for the national economy. The total estimated value of the golf tourism industry is US\$25.3 billion worldwide (Mintel International Group Ltd, 2006). Table 1.1 below introduces the economic impact of the golf industry on three major golf markets around the world.

Table 1.1 Economic impact of golf on three major markets

Regions & years	Direct effect in revenues (Billion)	Total revenues (Billion)	Employment (Million)	Total wage income (Billion)
Canada (2009)(CAD)	11.3	29.4	0.341794	7.6
EMA (2006)(EUR)	21.174	52.529	0.44600	9.816
USA (2005)(USD)	76	195	2	61

Note: EMA stands for European, Middle East and Africa
Source: KPMG; Sri Group; Strategic network group.

Table 1.1 is collected from the latest report from KPMG Golf Benchmark Team (2008), Sri Group (2008), and Strategic Networks Group (2009). Although there are many other

commercial research institutions publishing the economic impacts after 2010 and selling them online, due to the limitation of funding for this research, the latest, reliable and achievable data are listed in the table.

In the Canadian market, the game of golf accounted for Canadian Dollar (CAD) 11.3 billion of Canada's Gross Domestic product (GDP) in 2009. This includes:

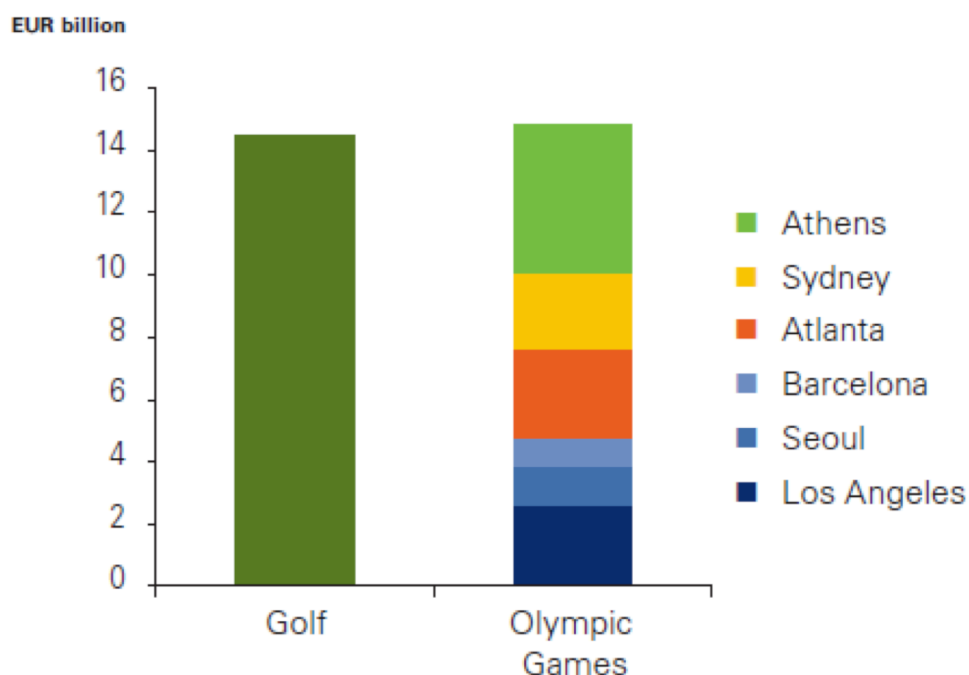
- 341,794 jobs;
- CAD 7.6 billion in household incomes;
- CAD 1.2 billion in property and other indirect taxes; and,
- CAD 1.9 billion in income taxes.

In total, Strategic Networks Group (2009) claimed that golf in Canada generates 29.4 billion CAD in total gross production in 2009 through direct, indirect and induced spending impacts. If breaking down the revenue to golf courses and stand-alone driving ranges, both of them in Canada earned gross revenues of CAD 4.7 billion in 2008.

The European market is considered part of the “European, Middle East and Africa (EMA) market” by KPMG (2010) because they believe the golf markets in these regions are closely connected with each other. The size of the golf economy is also significant and this significance will become more apparent when compared with other sectors. For example, KPMG (2008, page 5) claimed that:

“The (golf) game's total economic value (in EMA market) is (worth) EUR 53 billion in revenue terms. This equates to EUR14.5 billion in GDP – the value of the industry once its costs (for goods and services) have been subtracted. This amount (in a single year) equals the total combined economic impact on the host-nation economies of the six Olympic Games (prior to Beijing 2008).” (As Figure 1.1 shows below)

Figure 1.1 GDP created by the golf industry versus Olympic Games in EUR billion



Note: Price based on year 2006

Source: KPMG (2008) and Blake (2005)

Figure 1.1 shows the revenue from golf in a single year, 2006, in EMA regions is marginally less than the combination of six Olympic Games (Blake, 2005). The GDP contribution for the golf industry is significant. On the other hand, the golf industry has supported the creation of nearly 450,000 jobs, which is equal to 0.1% of total employment in the EMA region and paid almost EUR10 billion in wages in 2006. However, the aggregate impact of the golf industry in the EMA region is approximately only one-third the size of the US golf industry in revenue terms.

In the US market, research carried out by the SRI group (2008) about the American golf market suggested:

- “The U.S. golf economy generated USD 75.9 billion of goods and services in the year 2005.
- Golf generated a total economic impact of USD 195 billion in 2005, creating approximately 2 million jobs with a wage income of USD 61 billion.”

In 2012, research of Golf 20/20 (GOLF 20/20, 2012) also compared the size of the American golf economy to other industries using the following Table 1.2.

Table 1.2 Size of the U.S. Golf economy in comparison to other industry 2011 (\$ USD billion)

Performing arts companies	\$15.1
Other amusement and recreation industries (including skiing facilities, marinas, fitness and recreational sport centres, bowling, etc.)	\$32.3
Spectator sports (including baseball, basketball, football, hockey, etc.)	\$33.1
Golf (golf course and driving ranges)	\$43.5
Motion pictures and videos	\$83.1
TV broadcasting, cable and other subscription programming	\$92.4
Golf (core business plus enabled industries)	\$68.8

Source: adopted from Golf 20/20 (2012, p. 5)

In Table 1.2, Golf 20/20 research compared the total economic impact of golf with other industries and the result is quite impressive. Breaking down the numbers of the revenue of golf facilities in 2005, they generated revenue of around USD 29.9 billion. The reports explained (GOLF 20/20, 2012, p. 4):

“This number of revenue that flows through a golf facility comes primarily from greens fees, membership fees, range fees, golf car rentals, and associated spending on food and beverages. This revenue also supports a host of supply sectors including golf equipment manufacturers, food and beverage providers, and turf-grass equipment and maintenance services providers.”

This shows the significance of golf to the economy, providing confidence for golf businesses to believe golf business has a huge opportunity for profit (Haydu, et al., 2008; Hennessey, et al., 2010; Hodges & Haydu, 2004; Markwick, 2000; Tassiopoulos & Haydam, 2008; Videira, et al., 2006; Watson, et al., 2008). It is believed that if golf in China could be developed as well as it developed in Europe or America, the economic contribution to China’s GDP could be considerable (Fahmy, 2010; Z. Liu, 2008; Sun & Xu, 2008; X. Xu, 2004). The successful experience of golf development in Europe and America provides expectations to the golf business in China, and the potential profit golf could achieve has become the driving force for people who are working in this industry in China to stay and work harder.

1.3.2 Golf and China

Golf in China has a solid history. As records and paintings showing golf first being played in Scotland in the year 1659 start the mythological period of golf in Scotland (Hamilton, 1998), the source of golf in China starts from an ancient Chinese game,

Chuiwan, which dates back to the Yuan dynasty, around the year 1282. Several researchers suggest that the modern golf game people are playing around the world has originated from Chuiwan (Britannica, 2011; Gui, et al., 2012; Ling, 1991; N. Yin & Luo, 2008).

It has been suggested that the Shanghai Golf Club, a nine hole golf course built on 10th January 1894 under the background of colonialism, is the very first modern golf course built in China (Z. Cui & Xiang, 2006). This viewpoint was then further agreed and developed by other domestic golf researchers (L. Han, 2011; M. He, 2012; J. Zhang & Xia, 2008; Zheng, 2006). However, records of historical golf in China are mainly ancient drawings. The ancient drawings demonstrate that “Chuiwan” is a “golf-like” game, which uses a stick to hit the ball to a target (Gui, et al., 2012). As this research will investigate the factors that drive the golf industry in China to develop and progress today and in the future, it is unnecessary to get deeper into the ancient and sparse record of “golf-like” games.

Despite the record of golf in historical documents, golf researchers in China consider the establishment of the standard 18 holes Zhongshan Golf Club in Guangdong province in 1984 as the start of modern golf history in China, because this golf course was established after the foundation of the People’s Republic of China, and the golf industry has been constantly developing and growing since then (Y. Cui, et al., 2005; L. Han, 2011; Hu, 2001; Sun & Xu, 2008; J. Zhang & Xia, 2008).

Since the establishment of the first modern golf course, China has become the next untapped market for golf development (Wheeler & Nauright, 2006). As the previous section has demonstrated how significant the economic impact of golf could possibly be in well developed markets, the huge non-golfing population in China became one of the main reasons why many international golf businesses went into the Chinese market for business opportunities (L. Han, 2011). And this has also stimulated the golf market in China to expand further. Meanwhile, as golf originated in Europe (Hamilton, 1998), the Western culture and its values that golf represents was a huge attraction when it first came to China (J. Wang & Stringer, 2000). These characteristics of golf have become an advantage of golf, which will benefit golf because it will fulfil vacancies in the market (S. Hudson & Hudson, 2009; Mintel International Group Ltd, 2006). In other words, In China, there is no other product or service could provide a better experience of Western culture than golf.

The number of golf courses in China has increased dramatically. According to Zheng & Qin (2006), the number of new courses opened each year in China was about 8 before 1995 and the number increased to over 10 for every year after 1995. The authors claimed the total number of golf courses had reached 148 by 2003.

However, different sources provide different numbers. In 2004, the Economist reported there were 200 golf courses in China and more than 1,000 were under planning (The Economist, 2004). Forward-Group (2011), a golf consultant company who has been publishing golf business reports each year since 2009, reported the number of golf courses in China had reached 432 in 2010 but the report only accounted for 18 hole-standard golf courses. One year later, the Forward-Group (2012) reported that the number of standard golf course in year 2011 had reached 543. The latest report by Han Liebao, a well-known Chinese golf-turf management scholar, claimed that the number of golf courses at the end of 2012 had reached 600 (L. Han, 2013), while Sun & Xu (2008) reported the number of golf courses in China in year 2008 had reached 666. Another report showed that new golf courses opened between 2004 and 2012 had reached over 400 (Xi, 2012). These reports do not introduce methodology clearly regarding the sources of figures. Therefore, this researcher could not further discuss which source is most reliable. However, from these reports, there is a clear trend showing that the number of golf courses in China is increasing very fast. This researcher believes the increasing number of golf courses and related facilities must be driven by market growth.

Another set of numbers shows that the demand for golf activities is getting stronger as well. According to Forward-Group (2011, 2012) in 2009, 8.7 million rounds of golf were played. The number increased to 9.9 and 10.65 million in the year 2010 and 2011 respectively. Forward-Group also reported the population of regular golfers in China reached 333,000 and 358,000 in the year 2010 and 2011 respectively. The most economically developed regions in China – Beijing, Shanghai, Guangdong and their surrounding areas – have the largest number of both golf courses and golfers, with almost 50% of the total golf courses in China (Forward-Group, 2011, 2012; L. Han, 2009b; Zheng, 2006). Both the increasing number of golf courses and the increasing golf population provide evidence, which suggests the golf market in China is growing larger and larger.

To help golf businesses to better understand the reason why golf in China could grow so rapidly and improve their strategy, the aim of this research will be to carry out an investigation into the factors that contribute to the market growth.

1.3.3 Features of golf development in China

It is agreed that Chinese golf is adopted from abroad (Z. Cui & Xiang, 2006). The reason that golf could develop so well in the new environment is because golf has its own strength. It could adapt to the new market and develop new features. This researcher believes recreation and luxury are two of the most important features for golf development in China.

The main purpose of taking part in the activity of golf when it originated in Scotland was for leisure and recreation. However, there is lack of research specifically suggesting people in China play golf mainly for recreation. To define golf in China as having this feature, this researcher will start from the definitions of leisure and recreation and specifically explain the definition of leisure, recreation, sport and tourism, and then further explain the connection of these terms with golf and golf development.

Golf is believed to be very expensive in China when compared to golf as a recreational activity in other countries (KPMG, 2012b; Sun & Xu, 2008). A traditional understanding of golf is a luxury product. However, there is little literature directly suggesting that golf is a luxury product or limited analysis of golf and golf development following the thread of luxury products. Meanwhile, the latest studies regarding the consumption of luxury products suggest that the demand of people for luxury products is shifting from expensive to taste (Hume, 2010) and from product to experience (KPMG, 2011). The changes in consumer trends could further promote golf development in the future, and alter the characteristics of golf in China as a recreation and luxury product.

Recreation and luxury are two of the most significant features for golf development in China. This thesis will discuss the key market growth factors in China following these two features in Chapter 2. The researcher is aware that these two features are not the only features of golf development in China but will argue their significance.

1.4 Justification of the research

Golf is more likely described as a game that, “*promotes the magical, Zen-like tonic of a walk in pristine natural surroundings*” (Keast, 2001, p. 37). However, golf in the 20th century became a wealthy business (Brooksbank, et al., 2012; Hodges & Haydu, 2004). Especially after this game came to China, it gradually drew attention from a wide range of investors and more and more people participated in golf and golf businesses, which then further enlarged the market (KPMG, 2012b; N. Zhang, 2007).

In China, golf is commonly considered as a sport and an activity only accessible to a certain group of people instead of the general public. Therefore, it has not received a lot of interest from academia so far. Studies about golf usually focus on aspects of engineering/biomechanics on golf courses. Researchers see golf as a sport, but not as an industry well worth researching. Thus, in the field of business management, golf has been used as a setting for research but not as the focus of research itself. However, this researcher believes that golf is a noteworthy industry because on the one hand, the contribution that golf businesses make to the global economy is not currently widely known by people and on the other hand, golf business in China has several unique features, which have not yet been adequately explored.

This research will make a contribution to the academic field of business management in relation to golf and related subjects. This research will reveal information that is under-researched to general academia. For instance: the features of golf development in China; the key factors that contribute to golf development in China; and how potential factors could influence golf development. By revealing such information, this research will expand the subject area within the topic of golf. Meanwhile, this research will verify the features of golf development in China, which will build links among sports, recreational products and luxury products. For international researchers, this research will demonstrate the uniqueness of the golf market in China and proffer an engaging subject area for academic study. For Chinese researchers, this research will introduce them to cutting edge international literature on golf and luxury consumption, which could provide them with possible angles to consider in their own research

This thesis explores the key market growth factors for golf development in China, as a consequence of the rapid development of the golf industry in China. Existing research suggests that potential factors influencing golf include: economic, political, cultural, technological, geographic and environmental factors (Y. Cui, et al., 2005; Hodges &

Haydu, 2004; Huertas, et al., 2010; Yu & Xia, 2005; C. Zhang, 2011). However, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, there has been little research based in this sector to investigate the key factors influencing the golf market as a whole, especially in the context of golf development in China, which requires a full understanding of the features and characteristics of golf in China. Moreover, there is limited number of studies considering the two unique features of golf development in China, which are the features of recreation and luxury. This author believes these two features in particular can explain the significant differences between golf development in China and golf development in other countries.

The industry of golf in China is considered as a distinctive sector (Sun & Xu, 2008), even though some researchers have claimed the golf industry exists in the overlapping zone among the sports industry, the real-estate industry and the tourism industry (Sun & Xu, 2008; N. Zhang, 2007; Zheng, 2006). However, there is currently limited empirical marketing literature in relation to the golf industry in China. Therefore, from a marketing perspective, this research will study the market growth factors for the golf industry in China.

This research will introduce the concept of strategic marketing to help golf businesses in China to improve their performance. Strategic marketing is a process which helps managers make strategic decisions and create a strategic vision for their business (McLoughlin & Aaker, 2010). There is plenty of past research which argued that tourism, leisure and luxury businesses stand to benefit from applying strategic marketing techniques (Bardis, 2012; R. Garland, et al., 2011; R. Garland & Brooksbank, 2009; Piercy & Rich, 2004; Truong, et al., 2008; Tsiotsou & Goldsmith, 2012). However, this researcher found limited literature that suggested that Chinese golf businesses in China have adopted the concept of strategic marketing in their daily management processes. Therefore, to achieve the level that European and American golf has already reached, this researcher suggests that golf businesses in China could improve their business practice by incorporating strategic marketing issues within their business strategy.

To establish an explicit and practical strategy for marketing, businesses should thoroughly understand their business environment (Chidi, et al., 2011; N. Lane, 2009). Literature review suggests businesses need to cope with the internal and external environments (Ngamkroeckjoti & Johri, 2000). The internal environment exists within

the organisation's boundaries and the external environment is outside the organisation's boundaries (Chi, et al., 2009). The elements of the internal environment, such as employees and culture, directly influence the business performance while elements of the external environment will influence business performance through the internal environment (Daft, 1997). Therefore, the interaction between golf businesses and their external environment would identify the opportunities and the threats to the business. Adjusting elements of the internal environment will help managers deal with the opportunities or challenges successfully. Meanwhile, the understanding of golf and its business environment will enable businesses to identify areas of growth and expand their business. Moreover, by better knowing the environment, managers can continuously update their knowledge, understanding and skills to meet the predicted future changes. As such, this research will help golf businesses to understand the external environment in order to establish the appropriate business strategy.

This research will provide comprehensive information to help the golf industry in China better understand the factors that influence golf development in China. International experience suggests that golf could be one of the wealthiest industries (GOLF 20/20, 2002; Haydu, et al., 2008). By scanning the external business environment, this researcher will provide practical knowledge for managers working in the golf industry in China to adjust their business strategy to better cope with the changing business environment. The conclusion and recommendation part of this research could provide insights to those who are working in the industry on how to improve or maintain their competitive advantage.

For organisations that have the capacity to influence golf development in China, this thesis will provide insightful information about the developing situation in the golf industry. As a highly specialised sector (C. Zhang, 2011), golf could not exist without the contribution of other specialised sectors and bodies. The development of golf will be influenced by other organisations such as the government, which publishes targeted direct and indirect policies that affect golf development; supply and demand organisations which exert influence through increases or decreases in price; and organisations that provide alternative product prices. By studying the features of golf development and identifying the external environment that the golf industry is exposed to, this research will also help these related organisations to identify potential opportunities and threats.

As the Chinese economy has the potential to continuously develop for quite some time already (W. Wang, 2013), it is highly possible that the Chinese people will change their consumption styles as their disposable income continues to increase. During the period of rapid development, the appearance of golf or other activities with distinct Chinese features is inevitable but accidental. However, during the current period, this researcher believes there are additional activities and sectors possibly having those features of recreation and luxury product like the golf industry in China. Moreover, the researcher is not suggesting that golf is the only game which will be played in the next decade in China because other researcher have claimed that there are numerous possible reasons for people to change their interests to certain activities (Eden & Barratt, 2010). Therefore, there is the possibility that other products or activities could replace golf as a recreation and luxury product in the future.

To answer the question from both an academic and practitioner perspective, this researcher will design the framework to test the relationship between the features of golf and the business environment factors that influence the golf industry in China. After the interpretation of the findings, academics will gain a clearer understanding of the golf industry in China and will be able to use the framework to undertake equivalent research in a different setting. The framework will also help the practitioners in China better understand their business's external environment. Moreover, golf managers could use the finding of this study to modify their business strategy to maintain their current business.

1.5 Aims and objectives

The aim of this study is to investigate the key market growth factors in relation to the golf industry in China as a recreation and luxury product. In this context, the study has the following objectives:

1. To evaluate the current academic literature in order to identify which influential factors are having a dominant impact and shaping the golf industry in China, which will lead into developing a strategic framework.
2. To investigate and evaluate the relationship between the key market growth factors, in relation to recreation and luxury product as the key features of golf in China

3. To identify the key market growth factors that appear to be the most influential in shaping the golf industry in China through a survey and interviews with golf managers.
4. To fill the gap in the existing literature, regarding the key market growth factors and aspects of features of golf development in China and provide recommendations for the golf industry in China to manage the external environment.

Each of these aims and objectives has been specifically investigated from the literature and the researcher has sought to provide an empirical examination of the crucial drivers behind the golf industry in China. Finally, and from a practitioner perspective, this research will provide information to the golf industry. This information could help golf businesses to understand their market position. This information also could assist golf businesses to improve their current strategy to cope with the constantly changing business environment.

1.6 Research methodology

The epistemology of this research project is pragmatism. The ultimate aim of this research is to investigate the key market growth factors for golf development in China as a recreation and luxury product. This actually is the process of revealing the relationship between potential factors with golf development in China. Meanwhile, as golf in China has the feature of a luxury and recreational product, this research will also discover the linkage between these factors and features.

Due to the complexity of the research aim, this research applied both a positivist paradigm and an interpretivist paradigm. This research attempted to verify the relationship between factors and development of golf through testing hypotheses. The hypotheses were tested through questionnaires. However, after verifying the hypotheses, this research carried out several in-depth interviews to gain richer and more in-depth information for additional discussion.

Correlational and regression research is conducted in the first place because the research is cross-sectional with a focus on describing the relationship among the factors examined. Furthermore, to explain the reason why these relationships exist, this research has to adopt the in-depth interview method and answer questions such as “why” and “how” (Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

1.7 Thesis structure

This thesis is divided into seven intertwined chapters:

- The first chapter introduces the background of this research why an investigation about the golf industry is carried out and explains why this research is important for both the golf industry and the related academic world.
- The second chapter reviews the concepts business environment and environmental scanning technique in the background of strategic marketing. This chapter also identifies the feature of recreation and of luxury product then identifies six potential factors influencing golf development. Finally, this chapter ends with a definition of the gap between existing research and the practical golf industry in China.
- The third chapter establishes the theoretical framework for this research and proposes twelve hypotheses according to the findings of the existing literature review.
- The fourth chapter defines the methodology underlying the research. This includes research philosophy, method of data collection, data analysis and interpretation. It also outlines the nature of the questionnaire, in-depth interview and describes the steps that lead to the finalised set of questions.
- The fifth chapter provides the statistical results of the questionnaire survey. It structures the questionnaire responses alongside the hypotheses and discusses the acceptance or rejection of the proposed research hypotheses.
- The sixth chapter uses the results from the previous chapter for further discussion regarding the research hypothesis and research questions by incorporating findings from the in-depth interviews and the finding from the literature review with the purpose of explaining further why and how certain hypotheses are accepted or rejected.
- The seventh chapter finally summarises the thesis and reflects of whether objectives of the study were met. It also considers the implications of the study for academia and practitioners, limitations of the thesis and proposes areas of further research.

The next chapter will start with a review of the existing literature of golf, golf development, features of golf development in China and potential factors that may

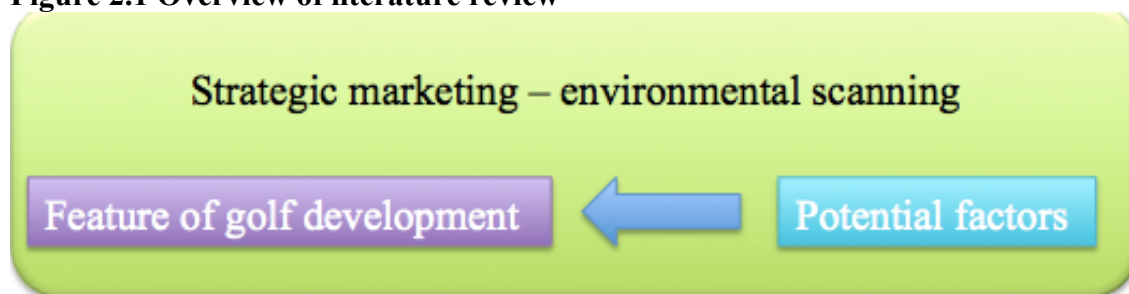
influence the growth of the golf market in China. The next chapter will discuss the existing literature and identify the research gap this research will close.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to review existing literature about golf development in China and identify the gaps that this research aims to fill. Figure 2.1 demonstrates the structure of the literature review chapter. The theoretical backbone for this research is strategic marketing. This research will firstly review the existing literature about strategic marketing and discuss its importance to business focusing in particular on environmental scanning theory to access the context of golf development in China.

Figure 2.1 Overview of literature review



Source: Author's own conception

Secondly, this chapter theoretically connects golf and market growth factors. Although there are many features that could be identified as features of golf development in China it is suggested that recreation and luxury determine the relationship between golf and potential market growth factors examined in this thesis.

Thirdly, this chapter explains why these potential factors have the possibility to influence golf market growth in China though features of golf development in China.

Finally, after revealing the market growth factors in relation to features of golf development in China, this chapter will identify the gap of existing literature and propose the initial research framework for the following study.

2.2 Strategic marketing

Strategic marketing has been defined as

“An organization’s integrated pattern of decisions that specify its crucial choices concerning products, market, marketing activities and marketing

resources in the creation, communication and/or delivery of products that offer value to customers in exchanges with the organization and thereby enables the organization to achieve specific objectives” (Varadarajan, 2009, p. 128).

Another definition is “*strategic market management is a system designed to help management both precipitate and make strategic decisions, as well as create strategic visions*” (McLoughlin & Aaker, 2010, p. 17). Garland (2011) suggests that strategic marketing is an on-going, organisation wide and customer-led planning approach whereby organisations change their management approach and alter their strategy in order to respond rapidly to the changing and increasingly volatile external modern business environment.

However, there is a difference between strategic marketing and marketing strategy. A marketing strategy refers to a set of specific ideas and actions that outline and guide a firm’s decisions on managing in the most effective manner of its marketing mix in order to sustain a competitive advantage (Tsotsou & Goldsmith, 2012). But strategic marketing decisions encompass resource commitments and trade-offs, complement other strategic decisions and are made at a higher management level (Varadarajan, 2009). Moreover, strategic marketing and strategic planning are similar, except strategic marketing is more focused on customers and outcomes or results.

Over the past few years, a number of studies around the world have confirmed that strategic marketing makes an important contribution to organisational performance such as financial performance, market performance, shareholder value performance and improved productivity (Brooksbank & Garland, 2010; Huan, et al., 2008; Richard, et al., 2009; Tsotsou & Goldsmith, 2012). Therefore, for any business, it is important to form an appropriate marketing strategy to improve their business performance.

For golf business in China, it is also important to apply the theory of strategic marketing (Kashmiri & Mahajan, 2014; King, et al., 2013; Wei, et al., 2013). International experience suggests that strategic marketing could improve the performance of golf businesses in aspects of customer services and profit maximisation (R. Garland, et al., 2011). This researcher found very limited number of existing studies that indicate Chinese golf businesses have applied strategic marketing into their daily management process. The application of strategic marketing could be very important to the Chinese golf business because golf is thought of as a very young and immature sector in China

(Sun & Xu, 2008). One of the most essential features to apply to strategic marketing is to develop a strategy to match the uniqueness of each business (McLoughlin & Aaker, 2010). To fully recognise this uniqueness, businesses should scan their unique business environment and identify potential threats and opportunities (Choo, 2001; Pallapothu & Krause, 2013). Information gathered through environmental scanning can also become a fundamental form of information in order to establish an appropriate strategy (Auster & Choo, 1994; Tajuddin & Ahmad, 2013). The coming section will review the existing study of business environments and then discuss the technique of environmental scanning.

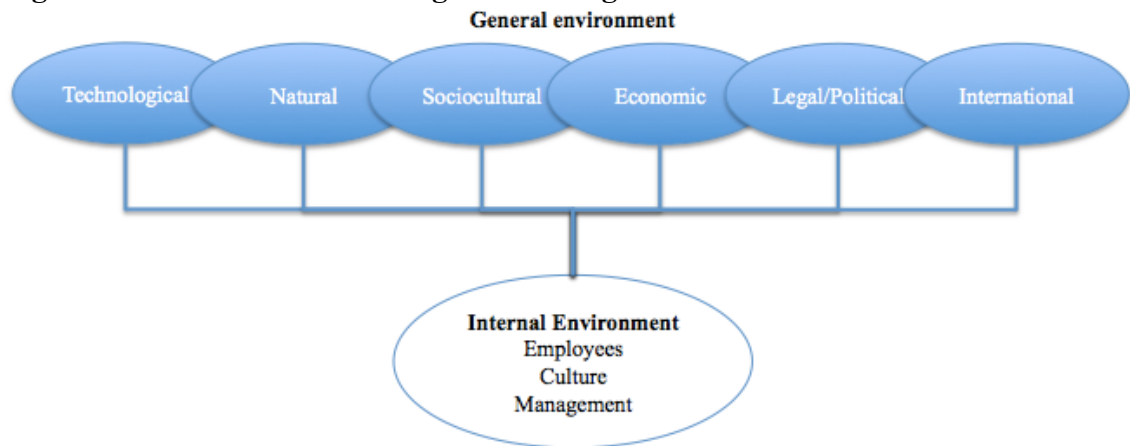
Apart from scanning the business environment and establishing an effective strategy, one school of thought believes strategic marketing's main function should be to profile *"the marketing practices of successful firms and compare them against those of less successful firms in order to offer insights to researchers and managers into ways of improving firm performance"* (Gray, et al., 2007, p. 72). For instance, Tsiotsou (2010) provided a case that by applying the theory of strategic marketing, tourism firms and destination management organisations could further develop their marketing activities and capabilities to increase their customer base. Camillo (2012) analysed the market environment for wine consumption in China and provided comprehensive information for wine companies. Therefore, the strategic marketing practices of similar recreation industries could provide a good example for golf businesses in China.

2.2.1 Concept of business environment

The business environment refers to those aspects of the surroundings of a business enterprise, which has influence on the functioning of a business (Efrat & Shoham, 2013; T. Jain, et al., 2010). Daft (1997) uses the organisation's boundaries to categorise the internal and external environment of a business. Successful business performance should cope with both the internal and external environment (T. Jain, et al., 2010). The external environment includes all elements existing outside the organisation's boundaries that have the potential to affect the organisation (Chi, et al., 2009). Meanwhile, this external environment consists of a general environment such as the political environment, the natural environment etc. (Brooks, et al., 2004; Chavis, et al., 2011). The internal environment is also known as the task environment; which means elements affecting the organisation directly (Daft, 1997). The internal environment is also claimed to be the environment within the organization's boundaries, such as the

business culture, the customs among staff and the accounting practices, etc. (Klapper & Parker, 2010). In short, the external environment indirectly influences the organisation and the internal environment directly influences the organisations operations and performance. Daft (1997) also gives the following Figure 2.2 to demonstrate the elements of the external and internal environment he has defined.

Figure 2.2 Dimensions of the organisation's general task and environment



Source: Daft, 1997, p. 62, Exhibit 3.1

Daft (1997) mentioned that the internal environment for a business includes: the employees, management and culture. Jain (2010) further claimed financial resources and human resources etc. should also be considered as part of the internal environment for a business organisation. Armstrong (2009) also defines the internal business environment as the elements directly affecting the business' ability to serve its customers. For instance, a change of management style could significantly improve efficiency and productivity (Mullins, 2013). The classical case is Taylor's scientific management or Taylorism (Pruijt, 2013). It is a theory of management that analysed and synthesized workflows. Its main objective was improving economic efficiency, especially labour productivity. It was one of the earliest attempts to apply the scientific method to engineer processes and management processes (F. Taylor, 2003). Taylor's method is widely applied in businesses, especially in the manufacture industry. The most representative example is the case of a manufacturer's assembly line.

The case of the assembly line indicates that each element of the internal environment is critical to a business. Durkheim (1997) introduced the concept of a mechanistic system and an organic system. To explain the difference between these two concepts, Jin (2005) claimed an industry with a mechanistic system is like a bag of potatoes, while an industry with the organic system is like a bag of sand or small stones. Each potato or

grain of sand represents an individual department. When lifting both kinds of bag, industry boundaries will hold them together but the bag with potatoes inside must have a larger space between each other; however, the bag of sand will not have such a large space between each individual unit and department. The space between each department, as the author claimed, is the coordination cost. If we could break the larger pieces into smaller pieces, the space, and therefore the coordination costs, could be minimised. This breaking process is made through increasing the extent of specialisation and division of labour. In the case of golf development, if each department in the golf industry could coordinate well with each other, the production capacity of the golf business could increase. In other words, if the internal environment is coordinated, the production capacity of the entire business could be maximised.

Meanwhile, Daft (1997) mentioned that the external environment for a business includes: technological, natural, sociocultural, economic, legal/political and international factors. Jain (2010) also generalised a similar structure to distinguish between the internal and the external environment. The external environment includes technology and economic conditions which indirectly influence the business operation. Armstrong (2009) and Brooks (2004) pointed out several elements of the macro-environment such as economic, political, social and cultural elements, which influence the behaviour of the business operation. Middleton (2012) specialised the elements of the external business environment to various factors and claimed that the factors in any given business environment are significant for the development of that business.

To summarise these claims, the business environment is extremely important for any business. The internal environment affects the efficiency of a business's operations (Durkheim, 1997; Jin & Qin, 2005) which then further affects its productivity and business capacity. Meanwhile, the external environment is one of the most important considerations when designing the business strategy (Li-Hua, 2007). Better understanding the external environment that golf businesses are experiencing could help them to identify the potential threats and opportunities for further development. However, how to understand and analyse the business environment effectively is a crucial question to every business that wants to improve its business performance.

Environmental scanning is the technique accepted by businesses and academics to analyse the business environment in order to establish the business strategy (McLoughlin & Aaker, 2010). The following section will review the concept of

environmental scanning and the process used to apply environmental scanning techniques and how environmental scanning could help a business to assess the characteristics of the respective environment.

2.2.2 Concept of business environmental scanning

There is no generally accepted definition of environmental scanning (Costa, 1997, 2008) however the function of environmental scanning could be described as an internal communication of external information about issues that may potentially influence an organisation's decision-making process (Albright, 2004). As the external environment that a company or organisation copes with poses both great constraints and opportunities, a comprehensive understanding of their external environment becomes the key source for strategy making (Choo, 2001; Daft, 1997; Ebrahimi, 2000). Meanwhile, Aguilar (1967) suggested environmental scanning is a way to examine information about events and relationships in a company's external environment. Costa (2008) believed this information could then be used to assist top management in their task of charting the company's future course of action. Ebrahimi (2000) believed environmental scanning is the information acquisition strategy used by decision-makers to provide essential information for strategy formulation. Decker (2005) claimed that compared with traditional marketing research, which utilizes a more goal-driven mode, environmental scanning is a technique that utilizes a more data-driven mode. Therefore, this author believes that environmental scanning not only contributes to marketing decisions but also contributes to the execution of other management tasks.

The importance of environmental scanning to support the management process is widely accepted and confirmed by several studies (Chrusciel, 2011; Dollinger, 1984; Jogaratnam, 2006; Newgren, et al., 1984; Ngamkroeckjoti & Johri, 2003, 2000; Wright, et al., 2002). E. Garland (2007) and Jain (2002) pointed out that an organisation or company originates from the environment. Therefore, they should scan and monitor their business environment and incorporate the impacts from the environment by constantly reviewing and adjusting their strategy. Jain (2002) suggested that environmental scanning improves an organisation's ability to deal with a rapidly changing environment in the following ways:

- It helps an organisation capitalize early on opportunities;
- It provides an early signal of impending problems;
- It sensitizes an organisation to the changing needs and wishes of its customers;

- It provides a base of objective qualitative information about the environment;
- It provides intellectual stimulation to strategists in their decision-making;
- It improves the image of the organisation with its public by showing that it is sensitive to its environment and responsive to it.

Albright (2004) suggested that environmental scanning is carried out in a “radar-like manner”, which means a business should scan all possible factors or elements that have the potential to influence its business performance.

The information gathered by the environmental scanning process should be different for different companies because they each have different scopes and a different direction in the long run (Costa & Teare, 2000; G. Johnson, et al., 2006; Stubbart, 1982; Tajuddin & Ahmad, 2013). Therefore, environmental scanning should be seen as an approach of data collection about the external environment of a business or organisation which helps the manager identify opportunities, discover potential threats and implement business strategy (Okumus, 2004). However, there are different opinions about how to collect information to carry out environment scanning. The next section will review the specific techniques used to perform environmental scanning.

2.2.3 Types of environmental scanning

There are two types of environmental scanning: the “outside-in” approach and the “inside-out” approach (Fahey & Narayanan, 1986). These two approaches are also named the macro-approach and the micro-approach (Costa, 2008). The outside-in approach adopts a broad perspective. It looks at all the existing elements in the outside environment facing the organisation. Its priority focus is long-term trends, developing scenarios of possible future environments and identifying the implications of these for the industry in which the firm operates and the implications for the firm itself. In contrast, the inside-out approach takes a narrow view of the environment and concentrates only on some elements in the outside environment, which influences the organisation internally. Table 2.1 below illustrates the key differences between these two perspectives:

Table 2.1 The outside-in and inside-out perspectives

	Outside-in	Inside-out
Focus and scope	Unconstrained view of environment	View of environment constrained by conception of organization
Goal	Broad environmental analysis before considering the organisation	Environmental analysis relevant to current organisation
Time horizon	Typically 1-5 years, sometimes 5-10 years	Typically 1-3 years
Frequency	Periodic/ad hoc	Continuous/periodic
Strength	Avoids organizational blinders Identities broader array of trends Identities trends earlier	Efficient, well-focused analysis Implications for organizational action

Source: adapted from Fahey & Narayanan (1986)

The most commonly referred to components of environmental scanning include: political, economic, social and technological factor, known as the “PEST analysis” (Albright, 2004; G. Johnson, et al., 2006; McLoughlin & Aaker, 2010). As these factors become the main content for environmental scanning, Albright (2004) suggests the purpose of examining the external environment is to identify the potential threats and opportunities for an organisation. On the other hand, the purpose of examining the internal environment is to identify its existing strengths and weaknesses. Authors have also named the analysis of these elements as the “SWOT analysis” (McLoughlin & Aaker, 2010; Tsiotsou & Goldsmith, 2012).

Existing research shows that successful environmental scanning requires a well designed planning process (Albright, 2004; Costa & Teare, 2000; Fahey & Narayanan, 1986; T. Jain, et al., 2010). Albright (2004) pointed out there are five steps to a formal environmental scanning process:

- 1) Identify the environmental scanning needs of the organisation;
- 2) Gather the information;
- 3) Analyse the information;
- 4) Communicate the results;
- 5) Make informed decisions.

Currently, most organisations only utilize the environmental scanning process above for short-term decisions (Costa & Teare, 2000; Fahey & Narayanan, 1986). However, as empirical research shows, incorporating environmental information into a long-term plan is key to the success of the organisation (Costa, 2008). And to achieve this, Jain (1990) proposed a seven-step approach for environmental scanning activities for this

long-term plan, and to explain the link between environmental scanning and corporate strategy:

- 1) Keep a tab on broad trends appearing in the environment;
- 2) Determine the relevance of an environmental trend;
- 3) Study the impact of an environmental trend on a product/market;
- 4) Forecast the direction of an environmental trend into the future;
- 5) Analyse the momentum of the product/market business in the face of the environmental trend;
- 6) Study the new opportunities that an environmental trend appears to provide;
- 7) Relate the outcome of an environmental trend to corporate strategy.

This research mainly focuses on the long-term development trend of golf in China. Therefore, the 7-step process proposed by Jain (1990) will be adopted as the theoretical basis for this research.

After environmental scanning, as authors suggested (Albright, 2004; S. Jain, 2002), a company should use the information gathered to review its strategy and alter its internal environment to adjust accordingly to the external environment, avoiding potential threats and chasing potential opportunities.

The following section 2.3 and 2.4 will first explain the features of golf development in China, which provides the fundamental basis to carry out the environmental scanning process of the Chinese golf sector in this research. Then in section 2.5, the key potential factors that may influence golf development in China are identified with a view to carry out environmental scanning in the following thesis.

By applying environmental scanning, Bardis (2012) carried out research on a hotel businesses in Greece. The author studied the issues that affected the hotel's operation and created a simple strategic analysis through the basic tools used in strategic management to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the hotel. Furthermore, the study focused on the external factors immediately influencing the hotel business. Meanwhile, Oreja-Rodríguez and Yanes-Estévez (2007) carried out research about environmental uncertainty in tourism by adopting the method of environmental scanning. Moreover, Wu (1999) applied the method of environmental scanning to analyse the luxury hotel business in China. As several studies in the field of recreation and luxury have used environmental scanning as the method to investigate the factors

influencing the development of the target industry, it is evident that through environmental scanning information could be collected. Meanwhile, the review of the literature has not identified any previous studies of the golf business in China that have used environmental scanning in their analysis.

2.3 Features of golf development in China – recreation

To investigate the key market growth factors of golf development in China, it is essential to wholly understand golf and the golf industry, and in particular features of the golf market in China.

The ultimate aim of this research is to investigate the key market growth factors of golf as a recreation and luxury product in China. However, it is difficult to directly link golf with factors such as the economic or political, because it requires “bridges”. Therefore, recreation and luxury are selected as the features most closely linked with golf. Existing research considered golf as a recreational product (Y.-F. Leung, et al., 2013; Scott & Jones, 2006; Watson, et al., 2008) or a luxury product (GOLF 20/20, 2002; Hearn, 1999; Hennessey, et al., 2010). However, there is no particular study of golf development that has considered golf as a recreation and a luxury product. Meanwhile, this researcher believes these features are the enabling factors for golf’s development in China, which means that factors such as the political, cultural and economic are influencing golf development in China through the features of recreation and luxury.

During the years of evolution and growth, the game of golf has gradually changed as a result of changes to other related industries such as machinery manufacture, plastic manufacture and horticultural sectors (KPMG, 2012). Moreover, through the process of foreign markets expansion golf development has adjusted to local cultures and markets’ characteristics. This process makes the ancient Scottish game of golf represent different meanings around the world (Shmanske, 2004a). Especially when golf came to China, golf was associated with the concept of style and a high quality of life (Z. Cui & Xiang, 2006). Meanwhile, the high economic potential made it become a component of real-estate projects (KPMG, 2012a). However, this researcher believes these features are only superficial ones, while the most essential feature is recreation.

Golf is an activity for the majority of people (Sports England, 2008). Unlike other sports games that have a high physical requirement, any age group with any physical condition can play golf (A. Lane & Jarrett, 2005). Other research has suggested that

unlike other professional sports, the main revenue for many golf courses around the world is the fee paid by golfers to play a round of golf, the green fee (Loomis, et al., 2009). Other sports which rely on sponsorship or broadcasting fees (Gratton & Solberg, 2007), which are very hard to apply due to the speciality of golf. Golf courses require a significant land area, which is very hard to cover efficiently with the game broadcasting on TV. Moreover, the pace of the game does not draw the attention of a majority audience (Gratton & Solberg, 2007). In addition, golf businesses have received various criticisms in different types of public media, which means that mass marketing activities through the media are not possible. Therefore, golf businesses have to pay more attention to their daily customers and try their best to turn them to club members. As individual customers who mainly play golf for recreational purposes make up a significant source of income for the clubs (Warnken, et al., 2001), golf businesses should be more considerate to the features of recreation for golf development in China. In other words, the golf business in China is a recreation business and it should continue to develop the features of recreation.

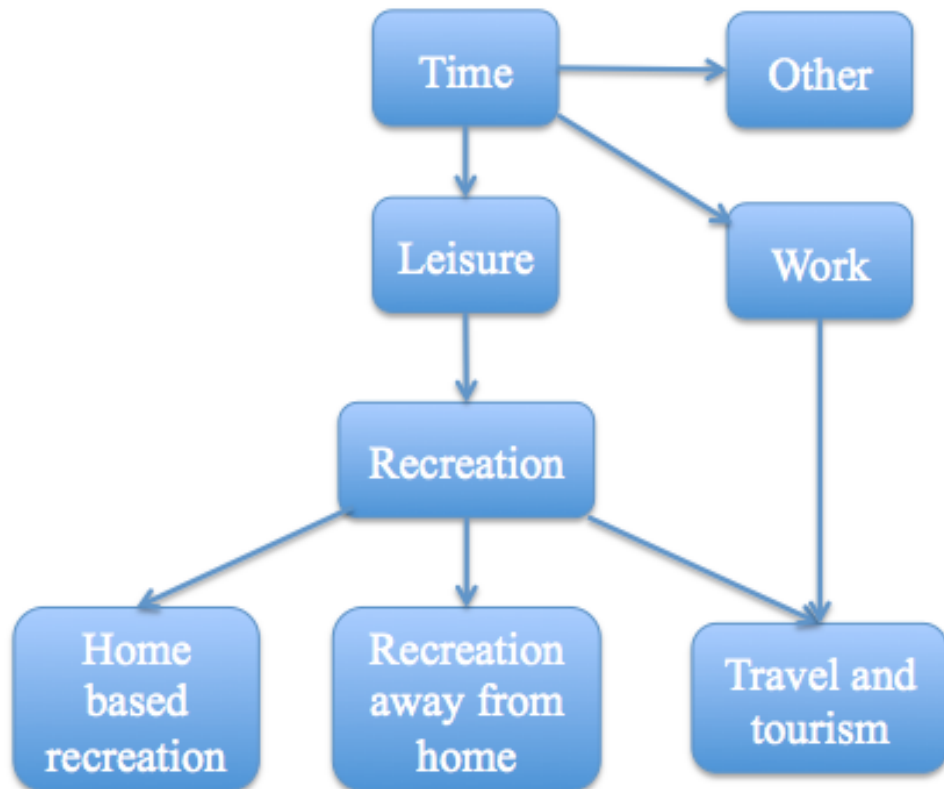
Moreover, existing literature has described golf as one example of a recreational product. For instance, Watson (2008) carried out research about the recreation industry in America and listed golf as part of the recreation industry. Vamplew (2008) researched the history of professional golfers in Britain and claimed golf is one of the fastest growing recreational sports in Britain. Lane (2005) carried out a study among senior golfers and claimed golf is one of the most healthy recreational activities. However, all these researchers found the concept of recreational golf always mixed with other concepts such as leisure golf, golf as sport and golf tourism. For instance, Otis (2000) and Qiu (2007) carried out research suggesting golf could be a leisure activity. This principle was also applied in other studies (Hennessey, et al., 2008; Hunt, 2002; McLachlan, et al., 2013; H. Yang, 2009; X. Yin, 2005). Regarding the research that considers golf as a sport, Wu (2004) and Kate (2001) considered golf in the context of sport and carried out further studies accordingly. This is also not a single case. Other researchers have considered golf as a sport, including: Garland (2009), Hudson (2008), Nicholls (1999), Yang (2009), Lee (2011) and Kostov (2006). The third popular research perspective towards golf is to consider golf as part of tourism (Barros, et al., 2010; Oliveira & Pereira, 2008; Priestley, et al., 1995; Reis & Correia, 2013; Videira, et al., 2006; Woodside, 2009).

Unfortunately, there is little existing research either discussing the recreational features of golf or linking the features of recreation with golf and golf development. This research has to start from the definition of leisure and recreation and clearly discuss the relationship among leisure, recreation, sport and tourism. By fully understanding these concepts, this research will propose the concept of recreational golf for this study. After this chapter theoretically builds on the linkage between recreation and golf by proposing the concept of recreational golf Chapter 5 will empirically examine the validity of this assertion through questionnaires and surveys from people working in the golf industry.

2.3.1 Definitions of leisure and recreation

To clearly explain the definitions of leisure, recreation and tourism, this research has adopted Figure 2.3 of Tribe (2005), which illustrates the relationship among those “terms”.

Figure 2.3 Leisure and Tourism



Sources: Tribe, 2005, p. 3, Figure 1.1 Leisure and tourism

Tribe (2005) explained that people’s time could be divided into leisure purposes, work purposes and other purposes. Voss (1967) defined the concept of “leisure” as the antithesis of “work”. By using leisure time, people could carry out activities such as napping and doing the necessary household and personal chores (Tribe, 2005) or they

could go out for shopping as leisure (Timothy, 2005). Under the roof of leisure, recreation is simply one way to spend leisure time (Mathieson & Wall, 1982; Tribe, 2005).

Leisure and recreation are very similar terms for the majority of people (Kraus, 1971; Veal, 2004). Although the authors believe the purpose of recreation is to gain experience or joy or both (Cushman, 1990; Kraus, 1971; Y. Leung & Catts, 2013; S. Tang, et al., 2014), the majority of authors (Roberts, 2010; Veal, 2004) believe the key element to distinguish “leisure” and “recreation” is the concept of “flow” (Godbey, 2003). The concept of “flow” has been introduced by Csíkszentmihályi (2008) as a mental state operation in a person in an activity for the purpose of “work” or “leisure” who is fully immersed in a feeling of energised focus, full involvement and success in the process of this activity. The author further claimed that “flow” is the feeling of joy and satisfaction. People will only experience this feeling while facing the coming challenge he is able and happy to cope with. During this “flow” feeling, people are highly focused and will not consider anything not related to the thing they are doing. For instance, people could gain the feeling of “flow” from playing video games because the game provides “challenges” to entice players to solve. However, if the challenge is too hard to cope with, players could not gain this feeling. In this situation, people lose self-awareness and even could not feel the existence of time. Furthermore, the author believes any human being desires the feeling of “flow” because people will be intoxicated by this feeling imperceptibly and without purpose. People will not care about the consequences of a challenge or even the dangers of chasing this feeling. Although the idea of “flow” was firstly introduced in the year 1975, many recent studies have confirmed and reinforced this concept of “flow” (Daniela, 2011; Degenhardt, et al., 2011; Hume, 2010; Kraus, 1971; Purrington & Hickerson, 2013; Tsaur & Liang, 2008; Tsaur, et al., 2013; T.-C. (Emily) Wu, et al., 2013).

To further explain how “flow” will influence “leisure” and “recreation”, Godbey (2003) listed several activities that could possibly be categorized as “leisure” or “recreation”, for instance, shopping. For people who feel bored and tired from it, shopping could not provide the feeling of “flow”. Therefore shopping is only a leisure activity for those people who enjoy it. For people who feel enjoyment and satisfaction from it, shopping could provide them with the feeling of “flow”. Therefore shopping for them is recreation. In the case of golf, some people may play golf to earn a living such as professional golf players, golf coaches and golf actors/actresses. In other words, golf is

their profession and playing golf is part of their work and therefore golf for those people is not leisure or recreation. For people who have a job and only spend their off-work time to play golf, golf could be either a leisure activity or a recreational activity. The determiner is the feeling of “flow”. The feeling of “flow” could be further interpreted as “joy” and “pleasure”. For people who feel that golf is “boring” and playing golf is a burden, but nevertheless have to play, golf is a leisure activity. For people who feel that golf is interesting and they could gain “joy” and “pleasure” from the game, golf is a recreation activity.

To summarise the above claims, every person has 24 hours a day, and this time could be categorised according to different purposes such as work, leisure and others. Any activities that are conducted during off-work time can be categorized as leisure activities; however, only the leisure activities that provide the feeling of “flow” can be counted as recreation. Moreover, recreation could be categorised into home-based recreation and recreation away from home. Under this category, playing the piano at home for recreational purposes, playing video games at home for recreational purposes and gardening at home for recreational purposes could be seen as home-based recreation. Meanwhile, travel and tourism for recreational purposes could be placed under the category of recreation away from home. By understanding this concept, this research will link golf with recreation in the following section.

2.3.2 Recreation and Golf

Apart from gaining the experience of flow, different authors have provided different explanations about the definition of recreation. The following **Table 2.2** summarises a few of these definitions. By examining the summaries, the researcher concludes that there are a few elements that recreation must have.

Table 2.2 Summary of recreation definitions

Author	Definition
Kraus (1971, 2001)	Recreation has been seen as an activity carried on under certain conditions or with certain motivations; second, recreation has been viewed as a process or state of being-something that happens within the person while engaging in certain kinds of activity, with a given set of expectations; and third, recreation has been perceived as a social institution, a body of knowledge, or a professional field.
Cushman (1990)	Recreation activity as experienced and enjoyed leisure could be seen as a social institution, socially organized for social purpose.
Douglass (2000)	Any action that refreshes the mental attitude of an individual is recreation.
Mathieson (1982)	Recreation embraces a wide variety of activities, which are undertaken during leisure.
Titze (2013)	Recreational activities could provide health benefit.
Kraus (1971)	Recreation is to gain experience or joy or both
Godbey (2003; Jin (2009)	Recreation activities could provide the feeling of flow
George (2008)	Recreation is the activity people engage in during their leisure time

Source: Author's own conception

Regarding the aspect of time, recreational activities must be carried out separately from time that is designated for working. In other words, the purpose for people to take part in recreational activities is not for earning a living. For example, Manning et al., (2011) carried out research about outdoor recreation and suggested that riding a bicycle is one of these activities. For the majority of people who ride a bicycle for recreational purposes in their leisure time, it could be seen as a recreational activity. However, for the professional bicycle rider or athlete, riding a bicycle is not a recreational activity. Moreover, people who ride a bicycle to work also might not consider it as a recreational activity. With respect to the purpose of recreation, the purpose is only for enjoyment, self-fulfilment and to gain the feeling of “flow”.

According to these definitions, sports could be seen as recreational activities but the evaluation criteria need to be clarified. Coakley (2009) suggested that sport could be categorised into two types; formal competition and leisure sports games. The important feature of these formal sports competitions as summarised by Haywood (1995) is the application of proper and codified rules. Bale (2003) also believed the publishing and application of codified rules is the distinguishing line between sports games played for leisure and proper, formal sports games. On the other hand, two players playing a game without complying with a certain rule could be seen as sport-as-play and it could not be

seen as a formal sporting competition (Coakley, 2009). This can also be defined as the second form of sport, sports games for leisure and recreational purposes (Schirato, 2006). To conclude these authors' arguments, the application of rules has become the key criteria used to decide whether a sporting activity is for recreational purposes or not.

Other researchers, as below, have suggested that even when applying the rules of a sport in formal sports competitions, these activities could still be seen as a form of recreation. Bryan (1977, p. 175) firstly proposed the idea of recreation specialisation, which means *"a continuum of behaviour from the general to the particular, reflected by equipment and skills used in the sport and activity setting preference"*. Under this definition, non-professional players playing a round of football competition in a proper football stadium with a referee and applying the formal rules of football could be seen as taking part in a form of specialised recreation (Tsaur & Liang, 2008). Therefore, as discussed previously, the only way to decide whether the activity is recreational or not depends on whether it happens during working or leisure time and whether people could get the feeling of flow from it.

For golf, Miller (2005) studied how golf evolved from an ancient game to a modern formal competition. There is no doubt that golf under the supervision of rules is a formal competition. Therefore, formal golf tournaments or competitions such as The Open Tournament, European Tournament, et cetera, could be seen as one of the formal sports competitions (Kabir, 2012; Nicholls, et al., 1999). For people playing golf for recreational purposes, they follow the principle of rules but do not have to stick to them (The R&A Rules limited & The United States Golf Association, 2012). The purpose for them to play is not only competing with each other but also for enjoyment and even for health benefits.

Moreover, Jin (2009, p45) defined recreational sport as: *"the sports activity that human actively participate independently, freely exert the creativity, seek the release of body and mind, obtain pleasure psychological experience, continually enhance the life quality and pleasure index, and realise human complete development"*. Therefore, sports could provide the participants with the feeling of "flow". For non-professional sports players, sport can be regarded as one of the recreational activities.

Golf is also considered to be a non-demanding physical activity suitable for recreational purposes. Village (2001) categorised sports according to the sports contact and intensity,

and golf is categorised as a non-contact and low intensity sports game. According to his claims, several health researchers have discussed the physical benefits of golf as a recreational sport. Parkkari (2000) claimed that golf has been recommended as an appropriate and risk-free form of health-enhancing physical activity. Lane & Jarrett (2005) carried out research to investigate the effects of playing a round of golf on mood states in recreational players and recorded a positive result. Lane also recommended golf as a form of healthy leisure activity. Furthermore, Lephart's (2007) research suggested that after eight-weeks of golf specific exercise, recreational golfers could improve their physical characteristics clearly. As golf has a low level of physical intensity, it can be considered as a suitable recreational activity for elders (Kate, et al., 2001).

Regarding the aspect of time, golf is an activity requiring relatively long periods: a round of 18 holes of golf with a group of 4 golfers requires roughly 4 hours (Kimes & Schruben, 2002). Plus golf courses, especially golf courses in China, are built relatively far away from city centres (Y. Wu, 2004). The time needed for playing golf expands because the time required for travel, food and showering must also be considered. Therefore, with the exception of professional golf players, the majority of players only have time to play during their leisure time. However, this issue needs further explanation.

There are researchers who suggested that the main purpose for people playing golf in China is for recreation (Qiu, et al., 2005, 2006; Qiu & Zhang, 2007) and for its health benefits (Mackenzie & Denlinger, 2011; Puyang, et al., 2013; X. Xu, 2004). But it cannot be denied that some golfers play golf only to have an opportunity to approach their bosses for potential opportunities for promotion. Some other players may also play golf for the potential opportunities of business that are inherent in the game (Irani, et al., 1997; Sawyer, 1992). For these people, the purpose for playing is not for recreation but a kind of work, even part of their job. Therefore, golf businesses should consider the group of people who are not playing for recreation.

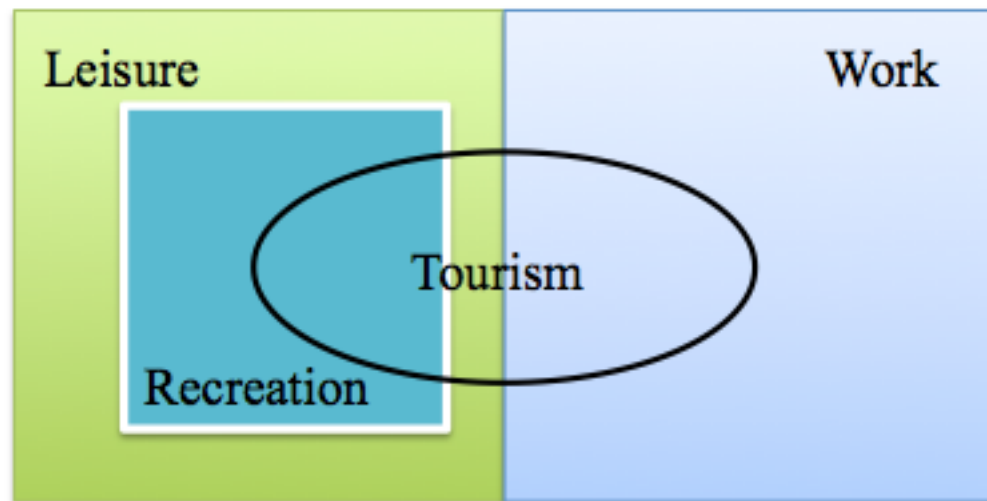
Figure 2.3 based on Tribe (2005) shows tourism is recreation away from home and so is part of recreation. Therefore, golfing for the purpose of tourism and golfing as a part of tourism could also be part of recreation. However, tourism could also fall under the category of work because business trips are a part of the work but also leisure. Therefore, it is important to review the relationship between tourism and golf because

the concepts of tourism and recreation overlap. Therefore, it is important to clarify the relationship among tourism, leisure, recreation and work.

2.3.3 Tourism and golf

According to Figure 2.3 based on Tribe (2005), recreation is divided into home-based recreation and recreation away from home. Tribe (2005) gives some examples of home-based recreation as: listening to music, watching television and videos, reading, do it yourself (DIY), exercise, playing games, and leisurely use of computers. Recreation away from home includes: sports participation, watching entertainment, visiting attractions, eating and drinking, betting and gaming. Travel and tourism fall under the category of recreation away from home, which includes: traveling to a destination, accommodation at a destination, and recreation at the destination. Meanwhile, travel and tourism also take place for business purposes and work purposes, and therefore part of it is under the category of work. This relationship among leisure, recreation, work and tourism could be generalised as following Figure 2.4.

Figure 2.4 Relationship among leisure, recreation, work and tourism



Source: Author's own conception generalised from S. Hudson & Hudson (2009); Stabler, et al. (2010) and Tribe (2005)

Figure 2.4 shows that the concepts of leisure and work are contradictory when considering time. If people undertake some activity not for earning money for living, they do it for leisure purposes. Recreation is part of leisure and it depends on whether participants could gain the feeling of “flow”. Tourism could be part of leisure, recreation and work. If people are on a business trip and tourism and site seeing are part of the business trip, then the tourism component of the trip could not be seen as leisure or recreation. In cases where people travel and take tourism for non-work purposes, if

they could gain the feeling of “flow”, this tourism is recreation. Otherwise, it is leisure. Timothy (2005) pointed out that tourism is certainly one of the most important targets of modern-day consumption and is generally viewed as an extreme form of leisure. Therefore, tourism could be seen as a form of leisure consumption (Walvin, 1992).

Tourism could also be classified as a recreational activity. However, when the feature of work is involved, it is no longer categorized as recreation (Gustafson, 2012a, 2012b; Tribe, 2005). For example, a business trip is not considered as tourism. In this sense, tourism could be divided into two categories: for recreational purposes and for working purposes. The following section will further examine how tourism could possibly be part of recreation.

Fabbri (1990) writes, “*tourism was – and essentially still is – recreational traveling*” (Page xiii). Similarly, according to the World Tourism Organization (1981), the definition of tourism is: when a person leaves his or her living place to participate in leisure, business or social contact activity. The main purpose is not to gain recompense at the specific places. There is another definition given by the World Tourism Organisation in 1992 and subsequently ratified by the UN Statistical Commission in 1994 as “*Tourism comprises the activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes*” (Middleton & Clarke, 2012, p. 3). Meanwhile, Middleton (2012, p. 5) claimed another principle term adopted after the United Nations statistical commission revised the definition in 1994 and this is still used today, as:

- Visitors to describe all travellers who fall within the agreed definition of tourism.
- Tourists or staying visitors to describe visitors who stay overnight as a destination.
- Same-day visitors, or excursionists, to describe visitors who arrive and depart on the same day.

Tribe (2005) defines tourism as visiting for at least one night for leisure and holiday, business and professional or other tourism purposes. Visiting means a temporary movement to destinations outside the normal home and workplace (Tribe, 2005). Although different scholars and organisations during different periods have defined tourism in various ways, there is a common element in these definitions: travelling away from the home area for a period of at least one overnight stay. This is also one key point this research adopts when referring to the concept of tourism.

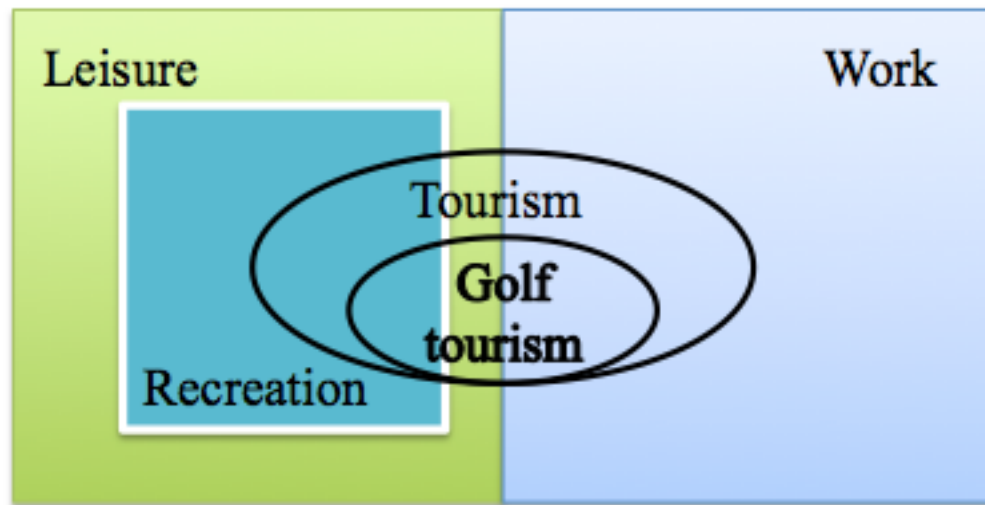
Within the category of leisure and recreational sports, sports tourism is the fastest growing topic; Hall (1992) thought there were two parts of sport tourism: participating in sports activities and watching sports activities. Hall (1992) also defined sport tourism as including non-commercial behaviours and people leaving their living places to participate in activities or to see sports activities. Gammon & Robinson (1997) provided the hard and soft definitions of sport tourism. The hard definition of sport tourism is participation in athletic events actively or passively. Participating in sport would be the main purpose of tourism and attendance at an athletic event like the Olympic Games is a main element. On the other hand, the soft definition of sport tourism is people getting away from home to participate in active leisure activity, and this active leisure activity is the main element for travelling. More specifically, Hinch & Higham (2001) summarised the concepts of tourism and sport as being related and overlapping. The author further pointed out that sport is an important activity for tourism. Meanwhile, tourism is fundamental for sport. Therefore, sports and tourism are linked and connected. From this author's claim, golf and golf tourism are the same. However, this research believes that this definition of golf and golf tourism is not appropriate because his definition did not consider a definition of tourism that requires a certain length of stay.

A more precise definition of golf tourism is given by the Caribbean Golf Association (2000, p. 1) as: *“(Golf tourism) is the term used to describe trips undertaken by persons for which the main purpose is to play golf.”* Golf may also be pursued as a secondary activity. Hudson & Hudson (2009, p. 4) defined golf tourism as *“travel for non-commercial reasons to participate in golf activities away from the traveller's local environment.”* GOLF 20/20 (2002) described golf tourism as a primary motivating factor for travel, or, as an enjoyable activity whilst travelling. Tassiopoulos & Haydam (2008) defined golf tourism as an activity, or overnight trip, where the golfer is travelling more than an hour outside their place of residence and/or regular golf course or club and that it displays at least one of the following characteristics: golf is a primary motivator for travel; golf is a major determining factor in choosing the destinations and/or golf will become the primary leisure activity on the trip.

Although golf tourism became a hot topic for research (Correia, et al., 2007; Markwick, 2000; Qiu, et al., 2005; Tassiopoulos & Haydam, 2008); this research believes golf tourism is only a part of the whole of recreational golf, as will be demonstrated in the

following section. To demonstrate golf tourism with another definition, as discussed in the previous section, Figure 2.4 could be transformed as Figure 2.5.

Figure 2.5 Golf tourism in relation to leisure, recreation, work and tourism



Source: Author's own conception generalised from S. Hudson & Hudson (2009); Stabler, et al. (2010) and Tribe (2005)

The concept of golf tourism is part of tourism and it could be part of leisure, work or recreation. Therefore, golf tourism is only a small part of recreational golf and this concept is discussed further in the following section.

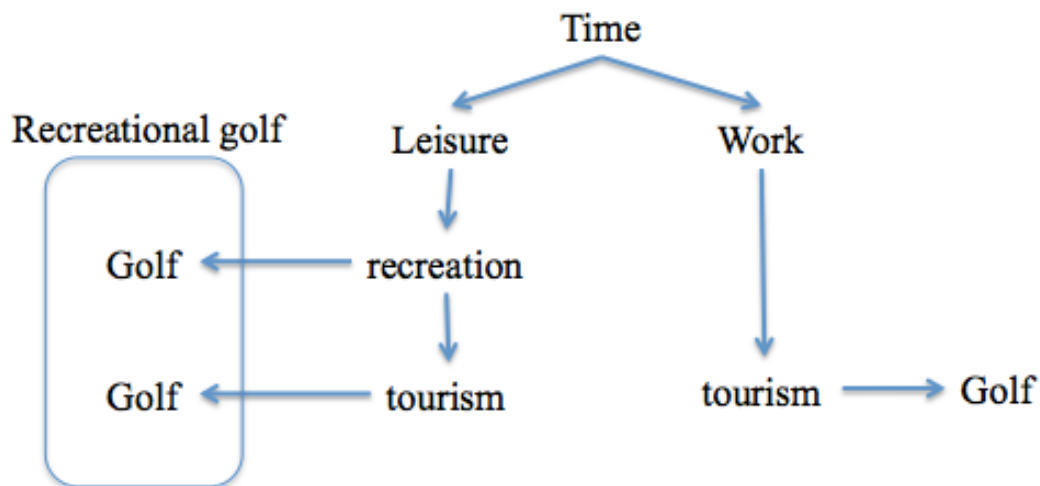
2.3.4 Recreational golf

To summarize the definition of tourism, the general feature of golf tourism includes: Leisure oriented playing or spectating or both (Caribbean Golf Association, 2000; S. Hudson & Hudson, 2009); traveling away from the local environment (GOLF 20/20, 2002; Tassiopoulos & Haydam, 2008) and staying overnight at the travel destination (Priestley, et al., 1995; World Tourism Organization, 1981). However, one important kind of recreational golf, playing golf locally or playing in the local golf club is omitted (Hinch & Higham, 2001; S. Hudson & Hudson, 2009) in other words, day trip golfing is not considered to be golf tourism. For instance, when the golfer visits other golf clubs within a distance of one-days travel, this is not counted as golf tourism. However, in this case, it should be counted as recreational golf.

Playing golf locally is one of the most important sources of revenue for golf businesses. According to Reid (2006) membership fees account for over 50% of the total income of Canadian golf businesses. In China, the spending power of members and member visitors account for almost 90% of the total income of golf businesses (Forward-Group, 2012). Furthermore, according to Hudson & Hudson (2009), the majority of golfers

choose their home golf club based on closeness to their home. Therefore, this research believes playing golf locally is important and recreational golf should include golf tourism plus playing golf locally. The concept of recreational golf for this research to apply is summarised as following, in Figure 2.6:

Figure 2.6 Summary of recreational golf



Source: Author's own conception

Figure 2.6 indicates that playing golf or “golfing” (Hennessey, et al., 2008; Lang Research Inc., 2007) could be for the purpose of leisure, recreation, tourism and even work. One of the hypotheses of this thesis to be tested in the coming chapter is that recreational golf, which includes golf for recreational purposes and golf for tourism purposes, is the main driving force for golf in China and the key contributor for golf development in China. Through the survey carried out among golf managers in China, this research could figure out the respective contribution of golf for leisure purposes, golf for recreational purposes and golf for work purposes. If the survey suggests that the majority of golfers are playing golf for recreational purposes, this research could establish a link between recreation and golf.

2.4 Features of golf development in China – luxury product

Golf originated in Scotland as a game for the majority of people (Hamilton, 1998). However, when the game went abroad, golf “travelled” with words such as “royal, elite and wealthy” – especially when it came to China in the year 1984 (Zheng, 2006). The very first impression that golf gives to Chinese people is expensive (Ceron-Anaya, 2010; Giroir, 2011). Although golf is listed as one of the luxury products by other researchers (C. He, et al., 2012; J. Park, 2011) there is limited number of studies carried out from

the point of view of discussing golf with luxury as the defining feature or characteristic of golf, as well as how golf could develop by following the features or characteristics of luxury product.

The luxury market became a significant element of the global economy (Y. Wang, et al., 2011) due to its incomparable market value, superior image and its significant role and influence in globalisation (Keller, 2009). The luxury market has also grown significantly in China (P. X. Lu, 2011; Zhou, 2011) and current trends suggest that people's requirements regarding luxury products is shifting from product to experience (Xie, 2011), and golf provides the experience that people are after. Therefore, considering golf as a luxury product can create innovation opportunities for golf businesses.

There is lack of evidence of existing research that discusses golf's development in China as a luxury product. Consequently, a link starting from the definition of a luxury product has to be established by this researcher.

The following section explains the characteristics and functions of luxury products, and then considers people's motivations for purchasing luxury products. Based on these findings, the section then argues why golf could have the potential to be a luxury product. As luxury is another feature of golf's development, it is going to be argued in this thesis that it is necessary to discuss the general condition of the luxury market in China and further discuss the "luxurisation" of the golf market in China.

2.4.1 Definitions of luxury

Latin etymology of luxury means difference, departure and deviation (Catry, 2003). Danziger (2005) suggested that luxury means "excess" or "extras of life" from the Latin words "luxuria". Many authors agree with this idea of luxury as excess. Zhou (2011) suggested that luxury goods and products are unnecessary consumables, surpassing the demand for people's basic living, which are expensive or hard to obtain. Sombart (1992), also pointed out that the concept of luxury from the perspective of necessity and suggested that luxury products are any expenditures which go beyond the necessary. His idea about luxury as unnecessary products is further supported by Csaba (2008). Originally, "unnecessary" value of a luxury product mainly comes from its rarity and this rarity comes from natural resources and technology (Catry, 2003). For instance, diamond resources are rare and the number of perfectly cut diamonds is even more rare.

Meanwhile, the very first new technology products, such as the first radios, refrigerators and washing machines, became a symbol of elitism because people who purchased these new technological products could gain a feeling of self-fulfilment.

However, in order to create extra value for a product, approaches such as limited edition and information-based rarity are also adopted. This gradually leads to a replacement of the natural rarity by man-made rarity (Catry, 2003). As a result, the concept of luxury has gradually changed as Zhou (2011) suggested the idea of luxury is continuously evolving and there are diverse representative luxuries in different times. There are others who point out that the concept of a luxury product could further be defined in terms of supply and demand. With respect to supply, luxury products should fulfil the requirement of both quality and quantity, which mean that luxury products should have excellent quality and scarcity. With respect to demand, people who consume luxury products have both material and spiritual requirements (Sombart, 1992). The material requirement means they physically need the product for using or consuming. The spiritual requirement means they need feelings such as self-fulfilment that are brought by the luxury product. Especially in today's world, luxury products are not that far away from the general public (Monash university business and economics, 2007) and even luxury brand companies could not survive if they ignore the purchasing power of the mass market (Catry, 2003).

2.4.2 Characteristics of luxury

Luxury, as the terminology suggests, is defined by aspects of feature and function (Achabou & Dekhili, 2013). The feature or function that luxury products should possess include: excellent quality, scarcity, exorbitant price, a profound cultural foundation, and be non-essential (Zhou, 2011). After discussing the existing literature regarding this definition, Moya (2012) also suggests the features of luxury goods should include the following:

- Regularly possess superior design;
- Quality;
- Performance;
- Offer their users a subjective value in use that cannot be easily quantified;
- And provide their users with social and economic status as ascribed by others.

Meanwhile, many authors believed that exorbitant price is the least considered element among all these factors (Husic & Cicic, 2009; Kapferer, et al., 2013; Silverstein & Fiske, 2003; Zhou, 2011). Shipman (2004) has claimed that people have changed the way they show their status from “waste” to “taste”. In the past, people spent money only to show their status, and the more money they spent, the higher the status it stood for. However, nowadays this has changed. People also care about the taste in addition to showing their status when spending money. The kind of goods considered to be luxury goods has also altered over time. The “new luxury goods” – such as high quality products with the latest technology and luxury experiences – has grown rapidly and threatened the market place of “traditional luxury goods” – such as rare leather products and dedicated handcrafts (Silverstein & Fiske, 2003). Compared with traditional luxury goods, the new luxury goods are more affordable, more accessible and targeting new customers (Truong, et al., 2008).

This research concludes that the key factors that luxury products embody could help people who purchase them to distance themselves from the masses and from one another through the emotional value of acquiring well-crafted and rare objects (Catry, 2003; Roper, et al., 2013; Zhou, 2011). Mason (1998) further explained that the function of conspicuous consumption of luxury products and brands is to ostentatiously display wealth to indicate status. However, approaches to show status are changing through time as society develops (Canterbury, 1998). People used to show their status by showing they were wealthy, such as by spending lots of money on products they do not even need. Now, as people are becoming more reasonable and rational, they focus more on their good manners and taste to show their high status. This conspicuous consumption has become the main reason that people purchase luxury products.

2.4.3 Motivation for luxury

Kotler (2008) defined a motive as a need that is sufficiently pressing to direct the person to seek satisfaction of the need. To understand the motivation of luxury purchasing, Heinemann (2008) identified four schools of thought as “basic human motivations”, “societal group motivation”, “international/global motivation” and “culture based motivation”. Furthermore, to identify the motivations for Chinese and Indian people for luxury purchases, Heinemann claimed the fifth school of thought as “Chinese and Indian motivation” and produced the following Figure 2.7 to demonstrate the relationship among motivations.

Figure 2.7 Motivation to purchase luxury products



Source: adopted from Heinemann (2008, p. 16)

Specifically, Heinemann (2008) described the motivations of the Chinese in consuming luxuries as including the following factors:

- To create and assert status;
- To gain from the status implied from a luxury brand by commanding respect from others to improve the family's "face";
- As self-reward;
- As indication of naturally good taste;
- To make them beautiful or attractive;
- To make themselves identifiable to other consumers; and
- To be price-conscious.

Lu (2011) agreed with the claims of Heinemann (2008). Furthermore, Lu (2011) added to the list of factors contributing to the Chinese motivation for luxury products, arguing that it should include collectiveness and family; respect and superiority and glory and awareness of shame. This section has reviewed the existing literature about the motivations for people to consume luxury products. The researcher believes some of these motivations have also become the motivations for people to play golf, due to golf in China displaying the requisite features of luxury. The following section will discuss the characteristics of the luxury market in China.

2.4.4 Luxury market in China

The latest financial report on China's economy published by the National Bureau of Statistics of China shows that the gross domestic product (GDP) of China reached

51,932.2 billion Yuan in 2012, a year-on-year increase of 7.8% at comparable prices. The value added of the primary industry arrived at 5,237.7 billion Yuan, up by 4.5%; the secondary industry 23,531.9 billion Yuan, increasing by 8.1%; and the tertiary industry 23,162.6 billion Yuan, ascending by 8.1% (W. Wang, 2013).

China also has the largest population in the world. According to the data of the sixth census conducted in 2010, the population of China reached 1.37 billion. However, the gap between poor and rich in China has grown significantly. China's "Gini" coefficient has changed from 0.28 to 0.48 from 1978 to 2007 (Fang, et al., 2013), and some estimated that it has surpassed 0.5 in recent years (Zhou, 2011), although the official information shows that it was below 0.5. This suggests that most of the nation's wealth is owned by very few people. According to the World Bank, in China, 1% of families own 41.4% of the wealth of China. According to the report by the Hurun Group in 2012, the number of Chinese multimillionaires has grown to 1,020,000, and the number of people owning more than 100 million Yuan reached 63,500 (Hurun Group, 2013).

Due to both the high-speed development of the economy as well as the rapid increase in the number of rich people in the population, the luxury market in China has also been expanding greatly. After becoming a member of the World Trade Organisation in 2002, China is taking an active part in cooperating with other countries in economic and trade matters. Compared with 10 years ago, the number of foreign brands nowadays in the Chinese market has increased on a massive scale (People's Daily, 2012). With the gradual opening up of Chinese market policy, high-class international brands have flooded into the hugely profitable Chinese market. For years, those foreign brands wanted to explore the Chinese market but were restricted by many protectionist policies. With the loosening of restriction in the market, overseas products and brands arrived - almost falling over one another. Among those foreign brands, luxury brands are under the spotlight. The buying power for luxury products such as fashion items and cosmetics from Chinese consumers shows their enthusiasm towards such luxury products.

According to the report provided by Bain & Company (2010), the total expenditure on luxury items by mainland Chinese reached 156 billion RMB in 2009 (16 billion GBP) and China has become the second largest market of luxury products with an annual increase of more than 30% in recent years (P. X. Lu, 2010). It seems that China will soon become the largest market for luxury products. Zhou (2011) suggested that the

main purposes for Chinese people spending money on luxury goods are firstly “self-consumption” and secondly “gifts for others”. Similar conclusions could also be found in the work of Heinemann (2008). Furthermore, Zhou (2011) claimed that comparing these two purposes, “gifts for others” takes up a significant amount, and therefore the luxury market in China is often focused on “a product” such as a handbag, designer clothing or jewellery.

However, according to Shipman (2004), there is a trend that people are now adjusting their purchasing of luxury products from one of “waste” to “taste”. And the pursuit of good health is becoming increasingly more popular in China as a way to show people’s high taste (Walley & Li, 2014; Jing Zhao, 2006). The report published by KPMG (2011) showed evidence that in order to gain taste and health, an increasing number of people in China are shifting their luxury consumption from buying certain products to enjoying an experience such as beauty treatment, outdoor activities and gym membership.

2.4.5 From product to experience

Zhu (2000) claimed that although the Chinese people have seen a significant increase in income, their consumption rate is relatively low, which means the earnings of Chinese people have increased but the percentage of spending is low. This further indicates Chinese people prefer saving money than spending money on purchasing products. He also claimed that the consumption rate decreased until the government published the policy of “expansion of domestic demand” to encourage people to spend their money. Apart from encouraging families to renew their household appliances and encouraging people who live in villages to purchase household appliances, Zhu (2000) believed that consumer spending on experience and on health would be the new trend for consumption. Xiao (2012) also believed consumption on experience and health is overtaking the consumption of products, which will become the driving force in the Chinese economy. For recreational consumption, in the year 2012, every Chinese person spent 254 Yuan per month. This constituted a 13% increase in comparison to 2011 (Xiao, 2012). From 1999, the Chinese government promoted the integration of several important national holidays such as “Chinese new year” and the “national day”. The average length for each of these holidays reached 7 days. This 7-day holiday during the year is called the “golden week” (Z. Liang & Bao, 2012). The most significant impact of this “golden week” to the Chinese economy is the promotion of consumption. Tourism consumption takes the largest proportion of impact. Research suggested that

the 2012 “golden week” during “national day” contributed 180 billion Yuan to the domestic tourism market and 80 billion Yuan to the overseas tourism market (Xiao, 2012).

People around the world have the motivation to keep healthy, especially for Chinese people who have the tradition of “Yangsheng” (Chinese as: “养生”), which is the unique Chinese method of health maintenance (Y. Tang & Lu, 2013). Despite ancient Taoism (Nagai, 2007), modern people are more likely to maintain their health by taking healthy food (Ju, 2012) and participating in sports exercise (Tong, 2004). However, although Chinese people have a huge demand for health and well-being products, they seem to have a blurred understanding about it. Zhao (2006)’s research claimed that instead of working on the product itself, Chinese well-being companies achieve their best results through exaggerated marketing promotion to draw people’s attention. Because of the huge population reaching, even a relatively small percentage of customers still make them a good profit. As a result, many authors have claimed that taking exercise is the best way to maintain health (Kate, et al., 2001; Y. Tang & Lu, 2013; Tong, 2004; Yan-xia Zhang & Wang, 2012).

The existence of golf in China also fills a gap in the market for healthy, luxury recreational products. Research in the United States shows that there is a potential social risk if the method of recreational activities is misleading. As Kraus (2001) claimed, since people are getting wealthier and have more time for leisure, lots of them choose inappropriate ways to take part in recreational activities, such as gambling, drinking or riotous behaviour. Most people even consider sexual intercourse as an appropriate approach for recreation and energy consumption (Godbey 2003). In comparison to such activities, golfing is a relatively healthier method of recreation, plus the potential health benefits of golf are becoming more and more popular among people across all age groups.

2.4.6 Golf as a luxury product

Golf was a recreational game played by ordinary people when it was first played in Europe (Davidson, 2009). However, as specialised balls and clubs were introduced to the game, the high cost for these pieces of equipment made golf become an activity only affordable by noble and royal people (Hamilton, 1998). Meanwhile, the game of golf requires a relatively large piece of land. The popularity of the game made playing golf become somehow scarce (Davidson, 2009; Hamilton, 1998). Based on the summary of

Moya (2012), many authors believed that golf in the old times was a luxury product only for a small group of people (Davidson, 2009; Hamilton, 1998; Lang Research Inc., 2007).

Due to improvements in productivity, the golf industry can now produce more affordable equipment, and therefore, currently, golf has become an accessible and affordable recreational sports activities for the majority of people in Europe and America (KPMG Golf Advisory Practice, 2008). Firstly, the golf market in the European and American market is relatively mature which means there are different golf courses to satisfy customers with different budgets and preferences (Visiting Scotland & SQWconsulting, 2009). Secondly, due to the recent economic uncertainty, even luxury branded golf courses have to “become” more affordable (Hunt, 2002) by applying price discrimination (Shmanske, 2004b); which means golf courses have introduced different prices for different customers, such as introducing lower green fees for students, seniors and consumers who book their tee time in advance.

These two reasons have meant that golf in Europe and America could satisfy people with different requirements and budgets. Wealthy people who are pursuing the experience of luxury could play in luxury golf courses. Averagely wealthy people could play in public golf courses without the affiliated luxury products or services, such as a luxury lounge, dining hall and even luxury shower facilities to lower the cost (Shmanske, 2004a). However, this does not mean these averagely wealthy people do not have the chance to “treat” themselves (Kapferer, 2012). They could also play on “luxury” golf courses for an “average” price by booking the tee time in advance or buying a voucher to play.

Furthermore, when golf came to China and other countries, it became one of the highly prestigious activities and gradually became a “luxury”. Although there is no exact literature analysing why golf should be a luxury product, it is a fact that the price for playing golf in China is much more expensive than playing in other parts of the world (KPMG Golf Advisory Practice, 2008). Such high prices make people believe golf is a game only affordable by wealthy people, and therefore golf is considered to be a luxury product (Z. Liu, 2008).

Veblen (2011) established the foundation of conspicuous consumption after the publication of “The Theory of the Leisure Class” in 1899, which became one of the

functions for luxury products and brands. In a simple way, his conspicuous consumption means showing off wealth, which is one of the major functions of luxury products (Truong, et al., 2008). The function of showing off one's status with luxury goods also became one of the main reasons for the fast development of luxury products in the East-Asian market because people in East-Asia pay extra attention to improve their status (KPMG, 2011; K. Park & Reisinger, 2009).

Existing literature (Z. Liu, 2008; Y. Wu, 2004) also suggests that Chinese golf is heading in the direction of luxury goods and services. It is agreed that golf is one of the most expensive activities in China and the cost for a round is high compared with the national average income. Through exclusive membership and applying price discrimination, the Chinese golf industry has created a subjective value to their members and provided them with the feeling of social and economic status (Z. Cui & Xiang, 2006; Zheng, 2006).

Considering Shipman (2004)'s claims that people have changed their way to show status from "waste" to "taste" in the context of golf development in China, golf that is merely "expensive" is not enough to attract people's attention. To attract people who are pursuing "taste", the majority of golf courses spend most of their money on course design by hiring first class designers from the United States and Europe (X. Xu, 2004). A high standard of services and a high quality is what every golf course in China is trying to achieve (H. Yang, 2009).

Meanwhile, a healthy body is what everyone is trying their best to achieve (Jin, 2009). Especially for Chinese people, as the economy is growing rapidly, they are not satisfied with just living to survive anymore. Everyone wants to live better and live healthier lives (Jin, 2009). If there is a product or service, which could provide taste, health and status to show off, Chinese people will certainly pursue it.

Therefore, according to the existing literature, golf has the features of a luxury product because Chinese people have the desire to show off their wealth and show off their healthy way of life through the activity of golf.

Now this section has explained that the features of luxury products are characteristic of golf development in China. The following section will reveal the potential factors that contribute to golf market growth in China.

2.5 Potential factors influencing golf development in China

As demonstrated in section 2.3, golf development in China has the features of a recreational, sport and luxury product. This section examines the potential factors influencing golf development in China by referring to the factors relevant to the development of recreation and luxury goods, and further discusses the relationship of these factors to golf development.

2.5.1 Political factor

For the tourism and recreation sectors, existing research provides clear evidence that the political factor has a huge influence on their development (Awang & Aziz, 2010; T. Lee, et al., 2010; Marcouiller, 2007). Meanwhile, the majority of scholars believe the influence of the political factor in the development of the industry is positive (Mathieson & Wall, 1982; Roberts, 2010). It means if the policy published by the government intends to promote the development of tourism or recreation, the industry will benefit from it and their business will be boosted. In contrast, if the policy published by the government intends to restrain the development of tourism or recreation, the industry will suffer from it and their business will be depressed. However, the existing literature suggests the relationship between the political factor and golf development in China has not totally followed the description proposed by these authors.

He (2012) studied the evolution of golf related policies published by the central and local authorities in China and identified three stages for golf development.

The first stage was the encouraging period, which was between 1984 and 1993. During this period, the central government made nine agreements for the establishment of golf courses across China and planned 10 areas for tourism zones, which included golf course projects. Furthermore, the policies of the time allowed for golf courses to use agricultural land without even paying taxes. Meanwhile, policies encouraged foreign investment in golf businesses.

The second stage was the restrictive period between 1993 and 2003. During this period, both local and central authorities gradually changed their attitude toward golf and published 13 policies, which related to golf course development. The main content of those policies included restricting the type of land used for golf projects, with the approval authority moving away from local government to the central government, and also forbidding foreign investment in golf projects and increasing sales taxes etc.

The third stage, which began from 2004 to the present, is the prohibition period. In 2004, the general office of the national council published the “Announcement to pause new golf course construction”. For established golf businesses, different regions introduced new tax rates (Forward-Group, 2013). These became the most difficult policies received by the golf industry. There were 19 golf related policies published between 2004 and 2011, each restricting further development within golf from different aspects. Many authors believe the reasons that the Chinese government began publishing harder and harder policies include: to contain unhealthy practices such as extravagance; illegal land transactions; waste of natural resources and soil desertification among others. (Imura, 2013; F. R. Li, et al., 2013; Puyang, et al., 2013; Shen & Kou, 2013).

The fact is that the positive policy did not significantly contribute to the number of golf facilities increasing. On the contrary, the increasingly strict policy of the third period has stimulated the rapid development of golf facilities and an increasing number of golfers across China (L. Han, 2009a, 2013; M. He, 2012; Yuan, 2006).

By comparing the increasing number of golf courses each year and the three stages of policies, He (2012) found the policies had little effect, failing to slow down golf development. In fact, the number of golf courses has even doubled. He (2012) reported between 1984 and 2004 that there were only 191 golf courses in China. After the “strictest” policy was announced in 2004, there were over 200 new golf courses open at the end of 2010. It took 20 years to reach the first 200 golf courses in China, while the second 200 took less than 10 years. Han (2009b) even stated that during the five years between 2004 and 2009, the number of new golf courses open for business reached 400.

Although the number of golf courses in China has reached its highest level in its history, scholars and researchers such as Han (2009b, 2013); Yuan (2006) and N. Zhang & Han (2007) believed that further growth is likely. One study in 2006 predicted the number of golf courses in China could reach 743 to 823 by the year 2020 (Yuan, 2006). Based on the current population of golfers and golf courses, Han (2009b) suggested that by the year 2019 Beijing would require 370 golf courses to satisfy demand. In contrast, in the year 2009, there were only 60 golf courses in Beijing, and 100 golf courses including the surrounding regions. It means the demand for golf courses in Beijing and the surrounding regions alone were three times more than the supply in the year 2009. By pointing out the potential demand and supply Han believed the potential for golf to further development in China is still very significant. By following this direction, Z. Cui

& Xiang (2006) and Zheng & Qin (2006) also carried out research studying the demand and supply of golf in China and suggested there is huge potential for golf to develop.

There are several reasons that led the government to publish increasingly restrictive policies relating to golf in China. Yang (2009) pointed out that golf in China is “alien” because firstly, golf became a “highborn” game, which means that golf became a game to distance oneself from the general public. Originally, golf was for the general public with little cost (Hamilton, 1998). However, after hundreds of years of development, especially when it comes to China in the last 30 years, it has become a game only affordable to a few people (Z. Yang, 2009). As the expense of playing golf became much higher than the average income, golf became “royal” and “highborn” (Y. Wu, 2004). Golf became a high-end gift and even an approach to attempt to bribe a public official (Z. Liu, 2008), because golf related products such as golf course membership, driving range membership and golf equipment are very expensive. Using such membership and products as a gift for bribery is implicit and more valuable than using money. However, China is not the only country to have this problem and draw the attention of the government (Neo, 2010).

Secondly, golf became a tool for the development of other sectors. In China, many real estate businesses developed under the umbrella of golf facilities because real estate is still the main income for golf businesses (KPMG, 2012a). Golf became a tool for Chinese “movement of enclosures” (Z. Yang, 2009). In Communist China, the land was owned by the nation, not any individuals (Ministry of land and resources of the PRC, 2005). The role of the government is helping to manage the national resources. If anyone wants to use any land, they need to lease it for a certain period of time from the government. Therefore, the only way to get the land is to apply to either a local, regional or national authority (Y. Cui, et al., 2005). In China, compared with leasing the land for the purpose of developing a golf facility, it is very hard to lease the land for the purpose of villa construction, especially during the period that golf courses were promoted by the government policies. Meanwhile, golf courses take up a large area of land (Hunt, 2002). It was also reasonable if this golf course asked for permission to build an affiliated accommodation facility such as a hotel or villa. After the real estate agent acquired the land, they firstly developed a golf facility and a few villa projects. As the price of a villa increased compared to golf facilities, they built more villas and even shrank the area of the golf facility for villa construction. After the government forbade using a golf course for the purpose of applying for land in 2004, the real estate business

changed the purpose of their business to develop sports parks, which come under a different name than a golf course. Therefore, for a long period of time, golf was the tool by which real estate tycoons could acquire land and use it for high profit real estate projects (Z. Yang, 2009; N. Zhang, 2007).

This practice was harmful because developers would convert agricultural land into real estate projects by using golf and other sports projects as a bypass for real estate projects (Z. Cui & Xiang, 2006; Z. Yang, 2009; N. Zhang, 2007). This bypass meant applying for permission to develop golf courses or sports parks from the government in order to gradually build villas or houses after the golf course had been built caused disorder to land use planning policies and plans.

Thirdly, golf project development led to over consumption of scarce resources. High resource consumption is a problem that golf is facing globally (Chamberlain, 1995; Chatterjee, 1993; Kenna & Snow, 1999; Kross, et al., 1996; A. Platt, 1994; Renaud, 1994). Wheeler & Nauright (2006) has studied the environmental influences and suggested that the potential harm from golf projects comes from:

- The side effects of chemical products applied to golf turf,
- Damages to the biodiversity of the land used and its surroundings, and
- Massive water consumption mainly for irrigation and man-made landscapes such as ponds.

Food security and water resources have always been critical to the Chinese government, in order to support the country's 1.3 billion populations (Fan, et al., 2012). The government became more sensitive about resources especially when golf threatened water consumption and food production (Z. Cui & Xiang, 2006). Although many researchers across the world have argued that the golf industry and the development of golf were not harmful to the environment and did not lead to over consumption of resources (Chang, 2007; Y. Cui, et al., 2005; L. Han, et al., 2009; L. Han, 2011; Hu, 2001; H. Tang, 2000; Warnken, et al., 2001; Wheeler & Nauright, 2006), even they could not deny that the bad practice of a few green keepers will have serious consequences to the environment (Chang, 2007; L. Han, et al., 2009; Wheeler & Nauright, 2006). From a sense of justice, the Chinese public believed that in a situation where many people could not be fed, developing high resources only to be consumed by golf is not the right choice (Imura, 2013). As a result, due to the three reasons stated

above, the Chinese government started to restrict the construction of new golf courses from 2004.

The discussion about this conflict between golf development and government policy could be widely found in Chinese golf research. The majority of researchers focus on why the policy could not stop the development of golf in China. Several authors ascribe this to the implementation of policies, and the conflict between the central government and the local authorities (L. Han, 2009a, 2011; M. He, 2012; Yuan, 2006; J. Zhang & Xia, 2008; Zheng, 2006). For example, He (2012) pointed out that the objectives pursued by the central and local authority policies were different. The central government wished to promote sustainable development and ensure food security, however, the local authority wished for more financial investment in their territories. For the local authority, the golf course business is a good approach to improve their investment environment, which could help them attract more investors. Meanwhile, high volume of taxes golf courses paid every year meant that local authorities could not afford to totally reject the development of golf projects.

Comparing the profit for developing golf projects and villa projects, Liu (2009) claimed that the profit margin for selling a villa is double the profit margin for selling a golf membership. In comparison to other industries, the profit margin for villa development is excessive. Villa development projects under the guise of developing golf courses became the usual practice for many businesses. In order to obtain the land, businesses did not hesitate to bribe officials (Hu, 2001; J. Zhang & Xia, 2008). Before the central government clearly showed their attitude to tighten the policy toward golf projects in 2004, to promote the establishment of golf projects, the local authorities helped golf businesses to access the land by applying for land usage as sports parks, environmental parks or ecological theme parks. However, the actual final use was for a golf course and related facilities (Y. Cui, et al., 2005; L. Han, 2011).

Meanwhile, several authors (Y. Cui, et al., 2005; L. Han, 2011; Z. Liu, 2008; J. Zhang & Xia, 2008; N. Zhang, 2007) believed if the government is convinced that golf will “harm” society and the environment, it should take actions to properly guide the development of golf in China onto the right track instead of simply prohibiting it, because the current situation has proved that simple restriction orders do not actually prevent the trend of golf development in China. These authors discussed several reasons why golf will definitely further develop in China but their discussion mainly focused on

the macro environment. For example, suggesting the government should change their current policy in favour of golf development. There is little previous analysis from the business point of view suggesting that golf businesses should adjust their business strategies to cope with the constantly changing external environment.

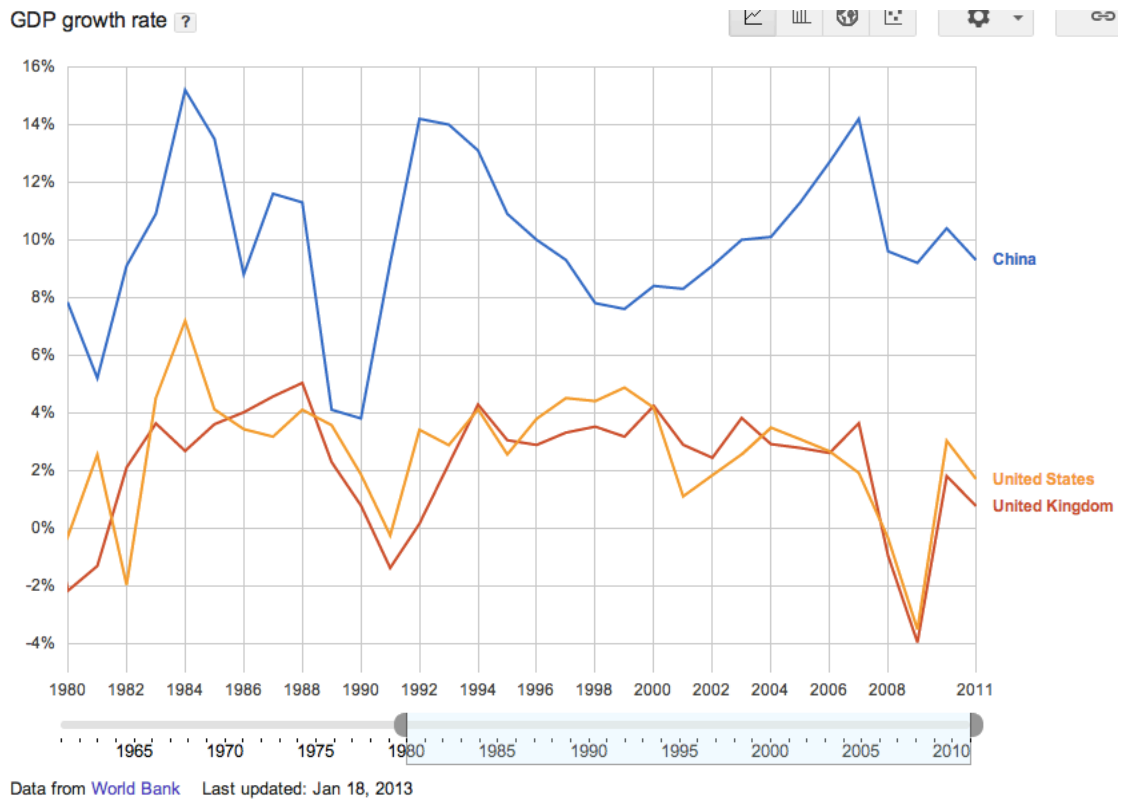
2.5.2 Economic factor

It is generally agreed that golf could benefit the local economic system by increasing the employment rate (Hodges & Haydu, 2004), helping to attract more visitors and tourists (Tassiopoulos & Haydam, 2008) and enhancing the landscape and town image (Hodgkison, et al., 2007). Meanwhile, existing literature suggests golf projects could bring more potential investors and improve the investment environment in China (L. Han, 2011; Shin & Bell, 2002; J. Wilson & Thilmany, 2006). Therefore, the economic benefit that golf businesses will bring to local environments is one of the most important reasons for golf's development. The majority of Chinese scholars who believe the main reason that golf development in China is irresistible is due to the economic factor (Z. Cui & Xiang, 2006; L. Han, 2011; G. Zhan, 2011). Han (2011) and the Forward-Group (2011, 2012) point out that as the Chinese economy keeps growing, people gradually have more disposable income and therefore the development of golf businesses will definitely increase. However, these authors have not provided a detailed analysis of why and how golf development in China could be affected by economic conditions.

The economic environment is significantly more important for the development of any business. The economic environment highly influences the behaviour of business operations (Armstrong & Harker, 2009). For example, a disposable income increase may result in increased consumption, which is the income effect (Gillespie, 2007; O'Sullivan, et al., 2010). Under this assumption, researchers (Z. Cui & Xiang, 2006; L. Han, 2011) have suggested that the development of the Chinese economy is significant, especially since China has become the second largest economy in the world. Meanwhile, against the background of a global economic recession (International Monetary fund, 2012), China's economy is still growing steadily. Especially using Figure 2.8 (generated by Google public data, data comes from the World Bank) such as following (World Bank, 2013) suggests that if China keeps up its high speed growth then the market potential will eventually overtake the British and American market. Therefore the

expenditure of China will contribute to the recovery of the global luxury market (Kapferer, 2010).

Figure 2.8 GDP growth rate for China, United States and United Kingdom



Sources: World Bank 2013, generated by Google public data

Similarly, Brooks (2004) categorised the economic factor as one of the forces influencing the business operation. More precisely, authors have claimed that disposable income growth has the potential to increase the demand for a certain product (Begg, et al., 2005; Sloman, 2007). Especially for the leisure and recreation business, Middleton & Clarke (2012) emphasized that the economic factor and comparative prices are among the main determinants of demand. Moreover, Begg (2005) further pointed out that in general, recreation and luxury goods have an income elasticity larger than one, which is higher than the income elasticity of necessary goods. This means that income has a relatively strong influence compared to the demand for recreational products and services and luxury goods.

Tribe (2005) introduced the factors that affect the demand for tourism and leisure. The author believes the most significant influence comes from the relative price of the goods or services compared to their income. Especially as the world economy keeps growing, people nowadays do not have to work for the whole day and they have more of capacity

to spend money on their leisure time, which have become the symbols and signals of the Leisure Society (Dumazedier, 1967). This suggestion is also supported by Godbey (2003), who believes economic development provides people with enough disposable money for leisure and recreation activities.

The World Tourism Organization (1995) explored the influences and determinants that affect the choices that individuals make when choosing a tourism product. They list economic and financial development as the first essential factor. When predicting the factors that determine the development of tourism in East Asia and the Pacific, the World Tourism Organization (2012) also claimed that the economic crisis was the very first influencing factor for the development of tourism.

Indeed, based on the income effect as Gillespie (2007) and O'Sullivan, Sheffrin, & Perez (2010) describe it, as a consumer's income or budget rises, the demand for products to improve their living standards will increase (Sloman, 2007). According to the authors of this basic economic theory such as Gillespie (2007) and Sloman (2007), the decline of an individual's income or budget will decrease their demand for products and could actually improve their life standard. As leisure, recreation and luxury products are categorized as unnecessary products that could promote the consumers quality of life (Dwyer, et al., 2010), the economic crisis has decreased people's income and budget, which spells doom for the development of the leisure, recreation and luxury goods industries. Many studies have proved the theory, for instance, by studying the influence of the economic crisis to tourism and recreation businesses, many authors suggested that the development of tourism and recreation has a positive relationship with economic conditions (Papatheodorou et al., 2010; Song & Lin, 2009). In particular, Mazilu (2010) analysed the influence of the economic crisis on the tourism industry in Romania and suggested that it will take time for recovery. Smeral (2009) also provided evidence of a decline in aggregated demand of 11% to 12.5% for foreign travel in the five source markets (Australia, Canada, United States, Japan and EU-15). These studies all suggest the industry will suffer if the external economy is not good.

However, there is another group of scholars who go against their claims. They believe the crisis provides the tourism and recreation industry with new opportunities (Mazilu, 2010; Papatheodorou, et al., 2010; Smeral, 2009; Song & Lin, 2009). Smeral (2009) pointed out that the tourism industry could introduce new and more affordable products under the background that tourists have a tight budget. Song & Lin (2009) also

suggested that the hotel industry could introduce budget packages to attract more customers. Meanwhile, surprisingly, after conducting a study, Yeoman (2010) found that luxury goods are not terribly affected by the economic recession, because people change their behaviours of luxury consumption from purchasing to rent and hiring. The fact claimed by Kapferer (2012) was that instead of declining, the sales of prestige brands like Louis Vuitton in fact increased. Kapferer (2012) also pointed out that the luxury sector was growing again under the background of the Western economic crisis especially for high end products. Meanwhile, authors pointed out that the luxury sector's expansion has reached double digits in emerging markets because the crisis did not heavily influence luxury consumption in these markets.

The latest global economic turmoil did heavily strike the Chinese export manufacturing industry because the general demand on many countries who import products from China decreased (X. Huang, 2013) but the buying power of individual Chinese people is still strong, especially for luxury products and tourism (KPMG, 2011; People's Daily, 2012). One of the reasons for this is the exchange rate fluctuation, in that the Chinese Yuan is getting stronger and stronger against other currencies, which resulted in the Chinese Yuan having its highest value on the global market than ever before (Saha & Zhang, 2013). Therefore, tourism and luxury products outside China became "more affordable" than before for Chinese consumers.

Clearly, factors pertaining to the economic environment are not the only factors that influence the development of the recreation and luxury industry. Other factors except the economic environment such as changing purchasing behaviour (Yeoman, 2010) and the effect of newly developing countries (Kapferer, 2012) are pointed out by authors that potentially influence the development of the recreation and luxury industry. This situation also affected golf development in China. The next factor that could possibly be influencing golf development in China is the social-cultural factor.

2.5.3 Cultural factor

Attitudes toward leisure and recreation are changing constantly and research suggests that leisure time is increasing (Dumazedier, 1967; Godbey, 2003). Tribe (2005), Crawford & Godbey (1987) and Godbey (2003) believed one of the main reasons for people changing their attitude toward recreation and leisure is that people gradually have more time for leisure compared with the time for work. Godbey (2003) suggested that gradually improved productivity has changed people's way of living by providing

them with more time for leisure and recreational activities. Research also suggests that the attitude of the Chinese toward leisure and recreation is changing (Bauman, et al., 2008). Spending more leisure time on recreational activities has become an element of modern Chinese culture (J. Liang, et al., 2012).

Moreover, Tribe (2005) claimed that the social culture has a significant influence on people's decisions regarding leisure and recreation. For instance, Kraus (2001) claimed that when the industrial revolution happened, factories and managers encouraged workers to "work honest". Their claims received support from religious leaders and both of them suggested that workers should work 10 - 14 hours a day. Meanwhile, churches blamed people who participated in recreation activities as "entering the doorstep of evil" (Kraus 2001). At this point, Godbey (2003) further claimed that the introduction of machines released more time from house work and the social and cultural influence from churches and other organisations gradually became weaker giving people more chances to participate in recreational activities. These historical claims all suggested that social changes could improve the possibilities for people to attend recreational activities.

From the relationship between income and recreational sports activities, Gammon & Robinson (1997) have pointed out that different levels of income result in different priorities for the type of sport chosen as recreational activities. For example, lower socio-economic urban youth prefers inexpensive, team-based contact sports such as street basketball (T. Wilson, 2002). Furthermore, as one of the most important features of luxury products is conspicuous consumption (R. S. Mason, 1998), upper social classes of people are more likely to participate in expensive, individual and non-contact sports such as golf, tennis and skiing (Parker, 2012). This claim could be viewed as stating that wealthy people would like to choose activities that could display their wealth and status, which are also one of the main reasons that people purchase luxury products.

KPMG (2011) studied the Chinese luxury market and identified the following motivators for luxury consumption including: self-reward, status, connoisseurship and individuality. Other researchers suggest that consumers in Asia purchase luxury goods to secure their social recognition and to show their status because the culture emphasizes hierarchy and status (Gao, et al., 2009). Compared to other societies, status plays a much higher role in Chinese society (Chan & Prendergast, 2007). Chinese

purchase luxuries conspicuously to display wealth and status to accommodate societal expectations (Adams, 2011). They pay close attention to brands of luxury goods with popular logos (Y. Wang, et al., 2011). Middle class Chinese consumers see luxury goods as tokens to become members of elite social circles (Chan & Prendergast, 2007). To display wealth and become a member of elite circles, luxury brand names that other people recognize and possess might be an important influence that affects Chinese consumers' consumption of luxury fashion goods. To display wealth and become a member of an elite circle, golf has also become one of the best tools to help golfers to achieve such a purpose (J. Park, 2011).

Interpersonal influences play an important role in the development of both luxury brands and the recreation industries (Seevers, et al., 2010; Shukla, 2011). When researching the context of golf, Lee Phillip & Gentry (2006) pointed out that interpersonal influences have become one of the most important factors encouraging people to play golf. The authors pointed out that one of the most important reasons for playing golf is social interaction with others. Moreover, Fahmy (2010) suggested that playing golf could provide opportunities to meet people of higher social status and achieve new business opportunities. As golf development in China displays the features of luxury goods, Shukla (2011) suggested that interpersonal influences could be one of the most important factors influencing golf. There is research suggesting social status and "taste" could be judged according to the consumers' purchasing behaviour (Hume, 2010). Therefore, people playing golf want their peers to believe they are different from others.

China is one of the East Asian countries that is believed to have very complicated interpersonal relationships (Ardichvili, et al., 2011). This complicated inter-personal relationships could also generate opportunities for business (Bickenbach & Liu, 2010). More particularly, this inter-personal relationship in China is known as "GUANXI" (Chinese as: "关系") (Lin, 2010). The Chinese "guanxi" has been a popular subject of study in the field of social science since 1980. The literary meaning of "guanxi" and English "relationship" is similar but have different in expression and result (Xin & Pearce, 1996). In Chinese society, "guanxi" is one of the disciplines in life and has profound influence on commercial activities, business ethics, and organisational behaviour (Tsang, 1998). The function of network or guanxi is established in the connection between two independent bodies, the purpose of which is to promote mobility of individual or social transactions between two sides (Lin, 2010). Moreover,

both sides have to be driven by benefits and confirm the continuance of guanxi when doing business with each other (Kaynak, et al., 2013).

2.5.4 Technological factor

Technological developments not only release of people from hard labour and give them more time to spend for leisure and recreation (Godbey, 2003; Kraus, 1971) but also have influenced supply by improving productivity and creating products and services that meet the requirements of consumers (Devesa, et al., 2010; C. Zhang, 2011).

From the demand perspective, for information acquisition, technological development brings the evolution of new media such as websites and social media based on the internet and provide a new window of opportunity for people to gain information for recreation (Elg, et al., 2008; Fotis, et al., 2012; Iwashita, 2006; Qualman, 2012; Xiang & Gretzel, 2010). Online images of tourism destinations highly influences people's intention to visit and especially for first time visitors (Milano, et al., 2011).

From the businesses' perspective, the management of technology could close the relationship between technology strategy and business sustainability (Li-Hua & Lu, 2013). In the case of golf development in China, the quality of products and services is one of the most important factors affecting people's purchasing decisions (Hodges & Haydu, 2004; J. Lee, et al., 2011), quality is more important for buying luxury products as high quality is one of the essential features (Amatulli & Guido, 2011; Moore & Doyle, 2010; Moya, 2012; J. Park, 2011). Therefore how to improve productivity to increase product quality becomes the main concern for businesses. Especially for the golf industry in China, research suggests one of the main reasons that Chinese people consume luxury goods is because of the higher quality of products and services (K. Park & Reisinger, 2009; L. Zhan & He, 2012). However, in fact, the general natural environment of China is not as suitable for golf development as Scotland, therefore, huge amounts of funds are spent on course maintenance (L. Han, et al., 2009; L. Han, 2011) to keep the high standard of the appearance of the grass.

Zhang (2011) suggested one of the reasons that golf could spread to every corner of the world is because the improving technology brings improved productivity and helps people to modify any natural conditions to fit golf play. As concerns regarding the natural environment and sustainable development keep growing, constant improvements in technology could provide the solution to environmental problems. For instance,

installation of the latest irrigation system could help the golf courses to save more water, the latest environmentally friendly chemicals will not harm the environment, etc. Many researchers (Chamberlain, 1995; Chatterjee, 1993; R. Platt, et al., 2010) suggest that by improving grass-growing techniques and improving equipment, the criticisms aimed at golf courses could be totally avoided (Chang & Han, 2005; Chang, 2007; Diaz, et al., 2007; L. Han, et al., 2009; Hu, 2001). These side effects will also be discussed in the section dealing with environmental factor.

The media is important for the development of the tourism and recreation industry (Middleton & Clarke, 2012) because the media could help the business to spread the word, and information provided by the media plays a vital role for consumers' consumption decisions and patterns. The information provided by the media also is the key determinant for people choosing their way for almost every product or service around the world (Andreff, 2011) due to the fact that the media constitute the main means of obtaining information. It is important to portray a proper image to potential customers and it is especially important for a product or service trying to open a new market (Elg, et al., 2008). After examining the factors contributing to the development of luxury brands in China, Zhang & Kim (2013) claimed that the media is one of the best approaches to present the brand image to the local people and discover potential customers. For a golf developing country such as China, because Chinese people have limited knowledge of golf, apart from high media exposure, the golf media in China has the responsibility to "teach" their potential Chinese customers what golf looks like and what is the standard that golf courses should achieve (Wheeler & Nauright, 2006). In other words, the media has a responsibility to promote the game by creating aspiration and establishing good models.

Taylor & Gratton (2002) claimed the development of the media helps people change their way to access sports information, so people could get the latest scores from the newspaper. As the media innovates, people could also watch live media and observe the latest progress (Dawson & Downward, 2009). Meanwhile, as Internet and social media is getting more and more popular, the new media has become one of the best ways for people to choose their own way for recreation or tourism destinations (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010). The application of new media has become more popular among the younger generation and has shaped a new social culture. There are studies suggesting information revealed online, such as recommendations and feedback from other people, highly influence a potential consumer's decision (Milano, et al., 2011; Seevers, et al.,

2010). Social media also allows people to become reporters of sporting events, so they can announce their achievements to their friends and share information as it happens in real time (Milano, et al., 2011).

Another change technological development brings to golf is that the influence of the media is the main approach for luxury or new products to explore a new market. For golf businesses, high media exposure “teaches” people what golf looks like and what the standard is that golf courses should achieve (Wheeler & Nauright, 2006). The media is one of the most effective ways to persuade people to participate. A report from VisitScotland (2009) suggested that the majority of regular golfers in Scotland regularly access golf related media to obtain relevant information. Ottevanger (2007) pointed out that during and after a live broadcast of a mega sporting event, people are more likely to participate in similar activities they have watched because they see it as a form of “*fulfilling a fantasy*” (Ottevanger, 2007, p. 66). The Masters and the Ryder Cup are the two most important international golf tournaments and the media coverage of both constantly stimulate people to take part in the game (S. Hudson & Hudson, 2009; KPMG, 2008; Otis & Marc, 2000). Warnken et al. (2001) claimed that every golfer has an “Augusta dream” – that is to play a round of golf in perfect circumstances like the Augusta National golf course, which drives people to play and practice golf constantly.

However, previous research had suggested that the media exposure and coverage not only bring about the development of the industry but also poses risks to the industry. In studying participation and sports spectatorship, Dawson & Downward (2009) found that an increase in TV viewing resulted in the decrease of sports participation because people would rather stay at home to watch other than go out to play. Meanwhile, the information broadcasted by the media may be wrong and influence the audience. Wheeler & Nauright (2006) claimed that one of the reasons why the golf industry is facing environmental challenges has come from the so-called “Augusta National Syndrome”, named after the famous course that annually hosts what is arguably golf’s most significant event. After watching the TV broadcast of the Masters tournament held in Augusta National, golfers believe the magnificent green grass view is what every golf course should look like. Meanwhile, general managers also want their golf courses to look like the Augusta National. As summed up by Keast (2001, p. 37): “*For any ordinary golf course to become as verdant as the grounds that host a prestigious televised golf tournament would require a chemical fog thicker than that used in the most intensive of agricultural operations.*” To keep everything close to Augusta,

superintendents have to over use water, pesticides and fertilizer to keep the brilliant outfit every single day. However, as Keast (2001) claimed, Augusta only needs to keep this beautiful outfit once per year.

This section has discussed the claims of the existing literature regarding the influence of the technological factor on golf development. The following section discusses the geographic factor and its influence on golf development.

2.5.5 Geographic factor

The geographic factor has a profound impact on the survival and development of any business (Costa, 2008). Particularly, the geographic factor represents different locations that have different natural resources, labour and conditions of transportation and these differences will further influence the development of business sectors (Middleton & Clarke, 2012). Therefore, the geographic factor is extremely important for the tourism and recreation industry (R. W. Douglass, 2000). For sectors that have a demanding geographic location, the geographic factor plays an important role. By studying the climate and demographic information, Getz, et al., (1999) defined the concept of wine tourism and discussed the advantages for different regions in America to develop wine tourism. Yeh (2008) carried out research about the surfing tourism in Kenting, Taiwan. The author compared the climate for different regions in Taiwan and carried out a survey of feedbacks from tourists. By comparing the geographic information such as water temperature, accessibility for transportation and facilities for accommodation, he provided suggestions and recommendations for the local surfing tourism industry. As golf is an activity that has a high requirement on geographic features, the geographic factor has the potential to influence golf development in China.

For luxury product, the impact of the geographic factor comes from different levels of income, economic conditions or cultural differences (Hearn, 1999). Atsmon et al (2011) claimed that the rapid urbanisation and wealth growing in larger Chinese cities is creating a number of geographic markets with sizeable pools of luxury-goods consumers. Even small cities have the potential to become large enough markets for luxury products. Furthermore, culture plays an important role. As China is a large country, different regions have different cultures and customs. Yan (2004) carried out a study about luxury consumption in the Guangdong province. His research claimed apart from income and economic differences, cultural differences are another reason for why

Guangdong province became one of the most important markets for luxury products in China. These cultural differences are often the result of geographic differences.

There are two geographic boundary partitions in China. The first is called the Qinling-Huaihe line (see Figure 2.9 below) in mid China, which divides China into north and south.

Figure 2.9 Qinling-Huaihe line



Source: adopted from <https://hahachn.wordpress.com/tag/street/page/5/>

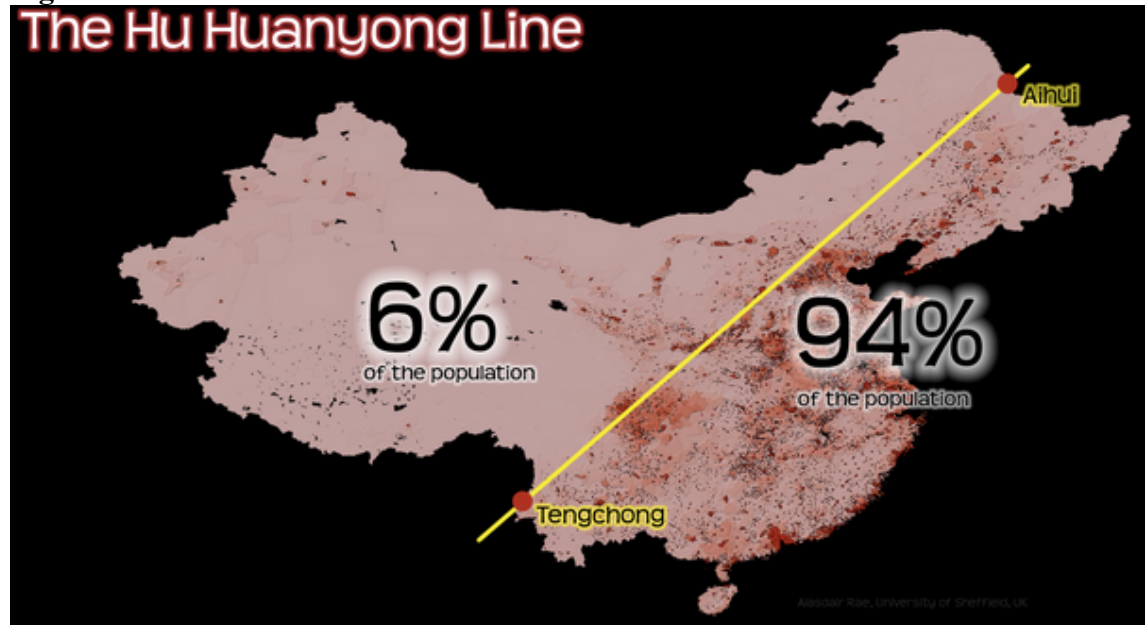
Geographically, the lowest temperature north of the line will be below 0 but south of the line it will be over 0. This line became the frozen line dividing northern and southern China (B. Huang, et al., 2013).

Another geographic boundary line is the Tengchong-Aihui line (L. Chen, et al., 2012) also know as Hu Huangyong Line and Tengchong-Heihe line (Rae, 2012), showing as follows in Figure 2.10, which generally divides China into east and west. This line links the city of Heihe, Heilongjiang province in Northern east China, and Tengchong, Yunnan province in Southwest China. The boundary also has significant effects on population, climate and culture.

The majority of Chinese people live on the eastern side of this line. 94% of the population lives in the south-eastern area, which takes up 36% of the whole land area. In contrast, 6% of the population lives in the north-western area, which takes up 64% of

the whole land (L. Chen, et al., 2012). Meanwhile, the east side of the line has much more rainfall than the west side of the line. Furthermore, the Han religion mainly live on the east side of the line and minority religions live on the west side of the line (Cai, et al., 2011). Based on this difference, the Heihe-Aihui line is created to distinguish east and west China as showed in Figure 2.10.

Figure 2.10 Heihe-Aihui line



Source: adopted from <http://www.aihui.gov.cn/html/index/content/2012/04/1352.html>

Furthermore, research suggests that the most economically developed region in China is located in the coastal areas (Fleisher, et al., 2010). As showed in Figure 2.11 below:

Figure 2.11 China costal regions



Source: adopted from
<http://travel.people.com.cn/GB/139035/215246/215247/14323172.html>

Surprisingly, Figure 2.11 also matches the claim of the Forward Group (2012) who suggested that the majority of golf courses in China are located in the coastal areas. According to the number of golf courses, rounds of golf played and number of golfers the most active areas for golfing in China are the Guangdong province, Shanghai and the surrounding area, plus Beijing and the surrounding area (Z. Cui & Xiang, 2006; Forward-Group, 2012; L. Han, 2011; Zheng, 2006). Han (2011) pointed out the main reason is that these three regions are the strongest financially in China when comparing the GDP, GDP per capita, average disposable income, total volume of imports and exports, and proportion of tertiary industry. By comparing the temperature, sunlight, rainfall rate, et cetera. In major cities in China, Han (2011) pointed out the importance of natural environmental influences and suggested that only Guangdong province has an environmental advantage for golf development. Meanwhile, Zheng & Qin (2006) suggested that people living in these three regions are more open minded and have more chances to access and accept new things and ideas which may conflict with traditions. For example, the latest fashions always start from these cities and golf is not an exception. It being played firstly in South China. Moreover, existing geographic research shows golf courses first became popular in the southern coastal region and

have the trend to develop in northern inland regions (Forward-Group, 2012). This research will consider this idea and investigate the reasons behind it. Furthermore, Han (2011) also predicted the next round of golf boost in China would be in the second largest city along the coastal region surrounding Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou because the first largest cities along the coast are fully developed yet.

Different locations also have a different pace of economic development. To make sure the whole country could develop simultaneously, it requires the government to have different policies for different regions. For instance, China has a favourable policy for western districts to promote development in that area. These findings suggest that the geographic factor could be very influential for golf development. The next section will examine the environmental factor in relation to golf development because the environmental factor is closely linked to the geographic factor.

2.5.6 Environmental factor

The influence of the environmental factor comes from two sources for golf development in China. The first is through the direct influence of the climate and natural resources such as water and soil (geographic). The second is through people's concerns regarding the environment and sustainable development (social/cultural).

On the one hand, the increasing attention given to the environment and sustainable development has motivated the development of golf. Golf should be an activity that provides an opportunity for people getting closer to nature and the great outdoors (Keast, 2001) and many Chinese authors have explained the notion of GOLF from a very sustainable and healthy perspective: G-Green (Green), O-Oxygen (oxygen), L-Leisure (leisure), F-Feet (foot) (Hu, 2001), which suggests that golf is an activity for people to get closer to nature during their leisure time. Golf provides people with an opportunity to enjoy nature in a sustainable way (Noe & Uysal, 1997; Ruskin, 1987; Wheeler & Nauright, 2006).

On the other hand, concerns regarding the environment and sustainable development have also become a factor, which may prevent the development of golf. The debate about whether golf damages (Kross, et al., 1996) or benefit (Y. Cui, et al., 2005) our natural environment has not yet reached a conclusion. As people's concerns regarding the environment began increasing since the 1990s, several authors have claimed that the development of golf has brought with it environmental problems, such as: "The side

effect of chemical products applied on golf turf (Chamberlain, 1995; Chatterjee, 1993; R. Platt, et al., 2010)”, “damages to the biodiversity (Chatterjee, 1993; Kenna & Snow, 1999; Renaud, 1994)”, and “massive water consumption (Hildebrandt, 2003; Winter, et al., 2003; World Watch Institute, 2004)”. On the other hand, the golf industry has claimed that instead of ruining the environment and landscape, golf projects actually improve the natural environment and landscape. Research suggests that golf projects have the function of transforming waste land such as mine fields, riffle areas and sandy surfaces (Y. Cui, et al., 2005). Meanwhile, to improve the appearance of the landscape and to prevent dust storms, the Chinese government spends lots of money on construction and maintenance of the “green belt” project. Golf projects are a good approach to attract business investment in building golf courses on the “green belt” zone and saving the budget from more public spending (Jinling Zhao, 2005).

Environmental concerns and demand for more sustainable forms of tourism are important factors that influence the demand for travel and tourism (Middleton & Clarke, 2012). The Chinese government, for instance, broadcasted a TV program called “Fearless Golf” during a prime time slot of one of the most popular new shows (14th May 2011, Topics in Focus) which criticized how golf projects over-consume resources and cause a series of problems, in order to intentionally draw the attention of the general public to golf’s negative impacts. By following the news of the central government, newspapers, various Internet websites and other media outlets dug up some old news stories, such as one about an American general who died from poisoning after playing golf because the golf course applied poisonous pesticides that polluted the air which then breathed in by the golfers (Chatterjee, 1993); as well as another story about how the sport of golf wastes water (Hildebrandt, 2003). Many studies and reports suggested the report is unilateral (M. He, 2012). However, little research and evidence suggested that there is any golfer in China stopping playing golf after watching this program.

Nevertheless, the environmental factor does directly influence the golf business. There is one study which suggests that the majority of spending on a golf course are on course maintenance (Chou, 2004). Better adjustment to climate and environmental conditions could save their spending on water and soil reconstruction. There is also a study which suggests that golf course construction ruins the local environment and natural resources (Thilmany, 2001). The majority of spending on golf courses is to maintain the current man-made conditions while nature is trying to return itself to the original environment that existed before the course was constructed (Yunsheng Zhang, 2002). There is a

belief that spending on golf courses is a waste of money and challenges the natural habitat (Wheeler & Nauright, 2006). For golf businesses, it is essential to realise the threats from the environment and from unsustainable development. Otherwise, the costs will be huge. For golf managers, understanding better the influence that the environmental factor has on golf and golf development could help the business to avoid these huge costs.

In examining the existing literature, this research found that the analysis between golf and environmental factor is mainly based on objective, laboratory-based, scientific research to determine whether or not golf development will or will not damage the natural environment (S. Hudson & Hudson, 2009). However, this researcher found limited literature discussing people's responses to the impact of golf development on the natural environment, and in particular what people's attitudes are towards the interaction between golf and the natural environment. In other words, it is possible that even if golf has a negative impact on the environment, its development has not been hindered because people who play golf do not care about its negative impacts (Briassoulis, 2002; M. Douglass, 2000). Thus compared to the actual impact of golf development on the natural environment, managers shall pay more attention to the players' attitudes towards this issue.

2.5.7 Summary of potential factors

This section has reviewed six factors, which possibly influence golf development in China: political, economic, cultural, technological, geographic and environmental factors. It is evident from the discussion that golf development in China is facing a complex set of environmental and other challenges that put pressure on golf businesses and golf managers. It is important to assess whether these managers are aware of the impact of the external environment on their business and whether they develop the right business strategies. Engaging in strategic marketing therefore becomes a priority to survive in the golf business. Based on the existing literature outlining the six factors, Chapter 3 will propose research hypotheses and Chapter 4 will explain the methods used to test these hypotheses. Furthermore, as these six factors are mainly elements of the external environment that golf businesses are facing, better understanding of these could help golf businesses improve their internal environment, allocate their resources more effectively and improve their business performance.

2.6 The gap

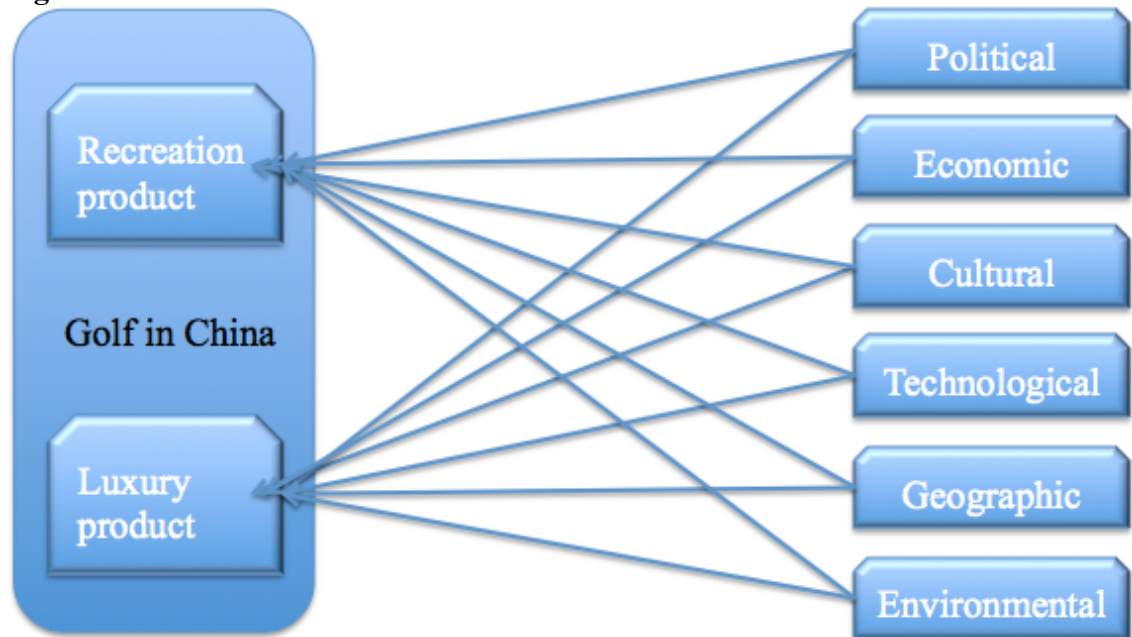
Under the theoretical background of strategic marketing, the literature examined identified two outstanding features of golf development in China, which are recreation and luxury. The literature also identified six market growth factors that could have an impact on the golf industry in China, which are: political, economic, cultural, technological, geographic and environmental factor. As there is limited research analysing how these potential factors influence golf development in China in relation to recreation and luxury product, this research will study these relationships

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the factors in relation to recreation and luxury product against the background of golf development in China. This study will focus on and reveal in-depth information for the golf industry in China to better understand how their external business environment can affect their business practices. Once golf businesses in China improve their understanding of the impacts of their external environment, they could be better prepared to make adjustments in their business practices and formulate a strategy to cope with the constantly changing external environment. Based on the information from the literature review and the study aims, the next section reviews the initial framework for this research.

2.7 Initial framework of the proposed research

Figure 2.12 demonstrates the initial research framework. The left square stands for the golf industry, which is the research target for this study. As discussed in section 1.3, golf development in China has many features depending on the angle of observation. This researcher has selected recreation and luxury product as the break point to conduct this study. The right squares are the potential factors that influence golf. The theoretical background of this study to conduct the investigation is the environmental scanning technique under the topic of strategic marketing. The goal of this research is to provide comprehensive information for golf businesses in China to improve their existing strategy or formulate new strategies to cope with the constantly changing external business environment. The following research will test this initial framework and build upon this initial framework.

Figure 2.12 Initial research framework



2.8 Summary

This chapter has reviewed the existing literature and identified two of the most significant features for the golf industry in China, which are recreation and luxury product. This chapter also introduced six market growth factors to explain golf development in China before presenting a framework for this study, which shows the association between market growth factors and features of the golf industry in China.

The next chapter will demonstrate the research framework in more detail and articulate the study's research hypotheses.

Chapter 3. Conceptual Framework And Hypotheses

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will introduce the conceptual framework that underlies this investigation of the key market growth factors for golf development in China as a recreation and luxury product. Meanwhile, as the preceding chapter already outlined the gaps in the existing research, this chapter will propose hypotheses based on the findings of the existing literature. These hypotheses will be verified through the designed research method, which will be introduced in the coming chapter.

3.2 Conceptual framework

After reviewing the existing literature, it became apparent that the connection between potential factors influencing the golf industry in China is not very evident and direct. Potential factors such as economic and political could influence the consumption of products and services. Golf is only one among these. However, consideration of the golf industry is unique especially against the background of golf development in China, and therefore it is valid to specify the characteristics or features of golf development in China (Y. Wu, 2004). Therefore, to conduct a solid research study, it is important to develop a thorough conceptual framework.

After reviewing the definition of recreation (Godbey, 2003; P. Taylor & Gratton, 2002; Veal, 2004), the categories of golf found in the existing literature with respect to its purposes are not integral. Therefore, this research proposed the idea of recreational golf. Meanwhile, from the definition of luxury (Catry, 2003; Danziger, 2005; Zhou, 2011) the literature review explained the features of a luxury product for golf in China.

According to the literature review chapter, golf in China presumably has two features, defined as: recreation and luxury product. This researcher further proposes that these two features are the enabling features for golf development in China. In other words, the hypotheses this research puts forward are that: the external environmental factor will affect the two features of golf in China and then further contribute to the growth of the golf market in China.

On the other hand, the literature review has delivered a number of factors that are possibly contributing to the golf market growth in China. However, some of these

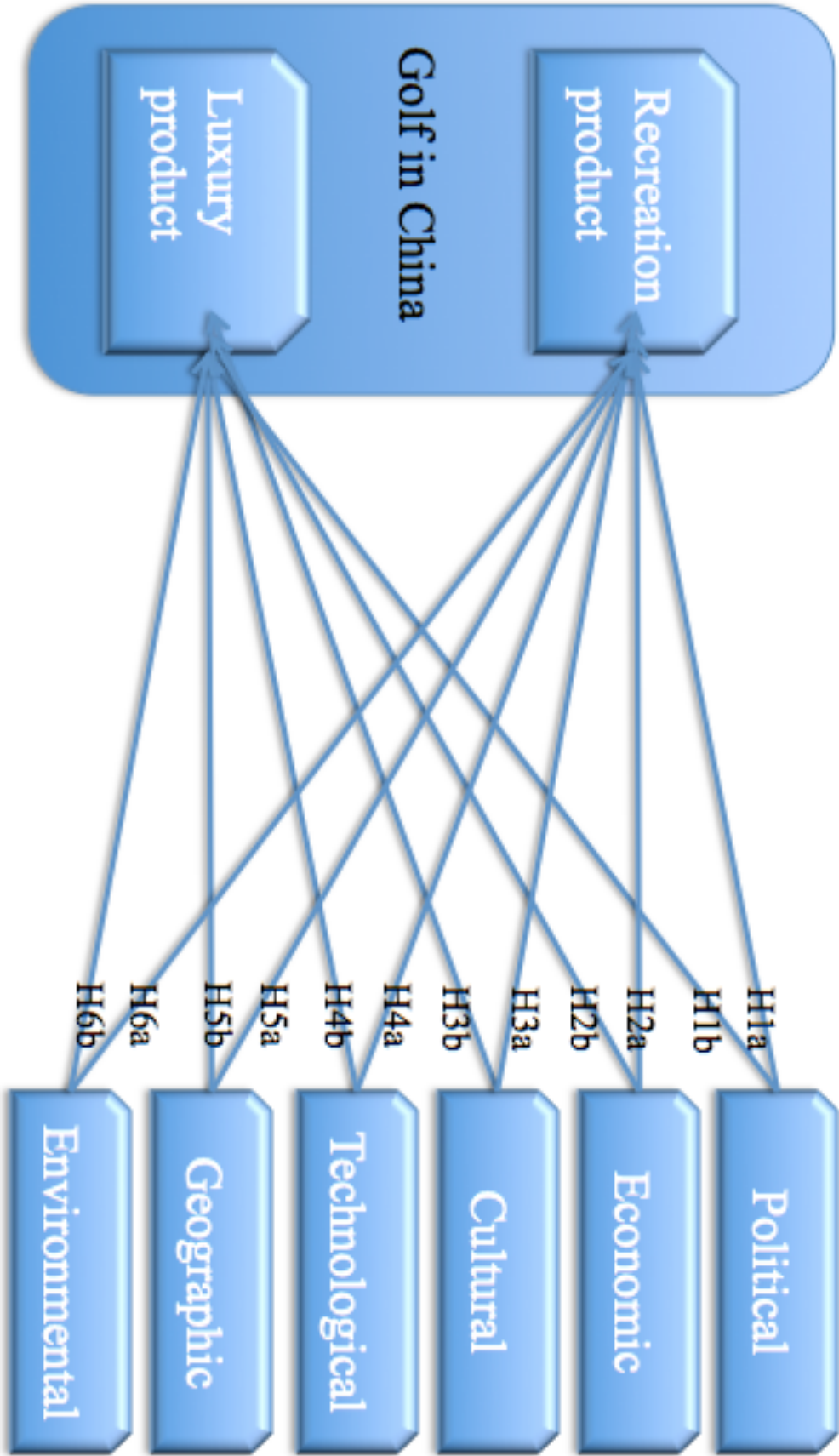
factors do not necessarily promote but instead provide a barrier to golf development in China. Under this situation, how Chinese golf businesses could possibly offset the potential negative factors by utilising the positive factors and keep the golf market in China growing further will become one of the most important elements of this research. At this point, the following questions are articulated to meet the aims and objectives listed in Chapter 1 of this study.

1. What are the most influential factors that have an impact on the golf industry in China in relation to recreation and luxury product?
2. What are the key market growth factors, associated with recreation and luxury product of the golf industry in China?
3. How does the economic factor impacts on the decision making process between customers and the golf industry in relation to recreation and luxury product?
4. Can change of the external environment factors stimulate the golf industry in China to implement key strategies in relation to features of recreation and luxury product?
5. Can cultural factors have an impact on the decision making process in relation to the golf industry in China?
6. Is the geographic factor key in the decision making process in relation to the selected regions for golf development in China?
7. Is it possible for the political factor alone to regulate the golf industry in China and what is the future?

According to Aaker & McLoughlin (2010), environmental scanning should be divided into five areas: technological, governmental, economic, cultural and demographic. However, to systematically analyse golf development in China, these five areas are not sufficient because golf has its own characteristics, which cannot be ignored (Y. Wu, 2004). To investigate golf development in China in-depth, there are additional factors that need to be considered in this study such as the geographic and environmental factors. Due to limitations of time and resources, demographic elements are included in the cultural aspect.

Figure 3.1 displays the structural path of the hypotheses, which were generated from the initial framework presented in Figure 2.12. The framework in Figure 3.1 hypothesizes the impact of those factors in relation to the features of recreation and luxury product against the background of the golf industry in China. In the following section, the hypotheses proposed in this research are presented.

Figure 3.1 Conceptual Framework



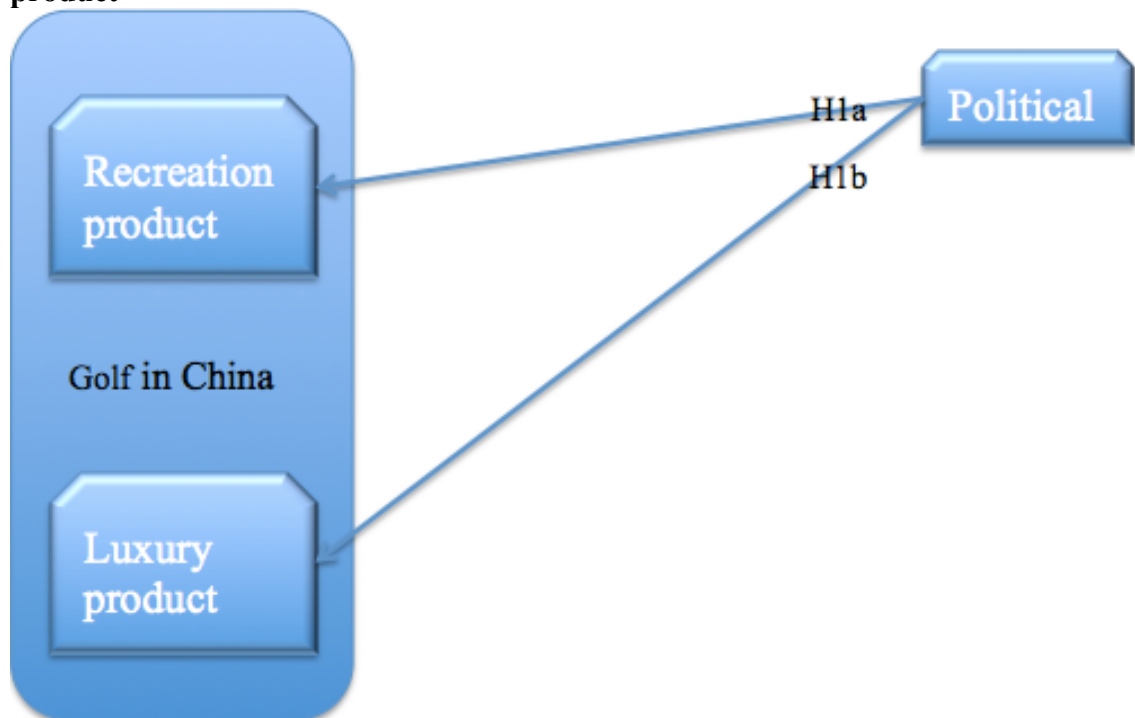
3.3 Hypotheses

Hypotheses have been discussed and partly supported by the literature review, but their validity needs to be verified in the real world. As the conceptual framework in Figure 3.1 proposed twelve links between the features of the golf industry in China and the potential factors influencing the golf industry in China, twelve hypotheses are proposed. To verify these hypotheses in the real world of golf, the questionnaire survey method has been applied by this research because different people may have a different opinion toward the same phenomenon, due to differences in their background, knowledge and sources of information (Kuhn, 1970). The following subsections discuss how each factor affects golf as a recreation and a luxury product and present the hypotheses. A summary of the hypotheses is provided at the end of this chapter.

3.3.1 Political factor in relation to the golf industry in China

This section will shade light on the political factor in relation to the golf industry in China and will put emphasis on the features of recreation and luxury product (Figure 3.2).

Figure 3.2 Political factor for golf in China in relation to recreation and luxury product



The political factor is claimed to be one of the most fundamental factors influencing the development of every business around the world (Awang & Aziz, 2010). The rule of

politics and the behaviour of the government is claimed by market liberalism as the visible hand assisting the operation of invisible hands, the market (Sloman, 2007). Although China claims they are developing their economy following the principle of the market (Risso & Carrera, 2012), politics and the role of the government are still dominant in the business world. Especially with the development of golf, the literature review has revealed a conflict between government and business.

As part of recreation, the importance of policy to develop tourism has been fully studied (Awang & Aziz, 2010; Dwyer, et al., 2010). The purpose of the government to intervene in the recreation industry could be for many reasons. It could be for economic reasons, for social welfare reasons, to gain international prestige and for reasons of social stabilisation. To achieve these aims, the government could publish regulations and policies and adjust the tax rate in order to intervene. To cope with the adjustment of the tax rate, the industry could adjust or restructure their business. However, if the government does publish new regulations and policies, there is little anyone in the industry could do but accept them.

The political factor is believed to be one of the strongest factors influencing business and industry. Because when the government publishes positive policies, businesses and industries will take advantage of them (M. He, 2012). If these policies are discouraging, they have to accept it anyway. However, there are more possibilities and the influence of politics may not work in countries such as China.

China has different levels of government. Different levels of government have the possibility of publishing policies and regulations, which conflict with each other because they all have their individual considerations. Moreover, the central government sometimes will publish a principal policy, which is very general, and requires the local government to modify a specific policy for implementation. Again, due to the inconsistency of different levels of government, the direction of policies might be different. Therefore, this research concludes with the following hypotheses:

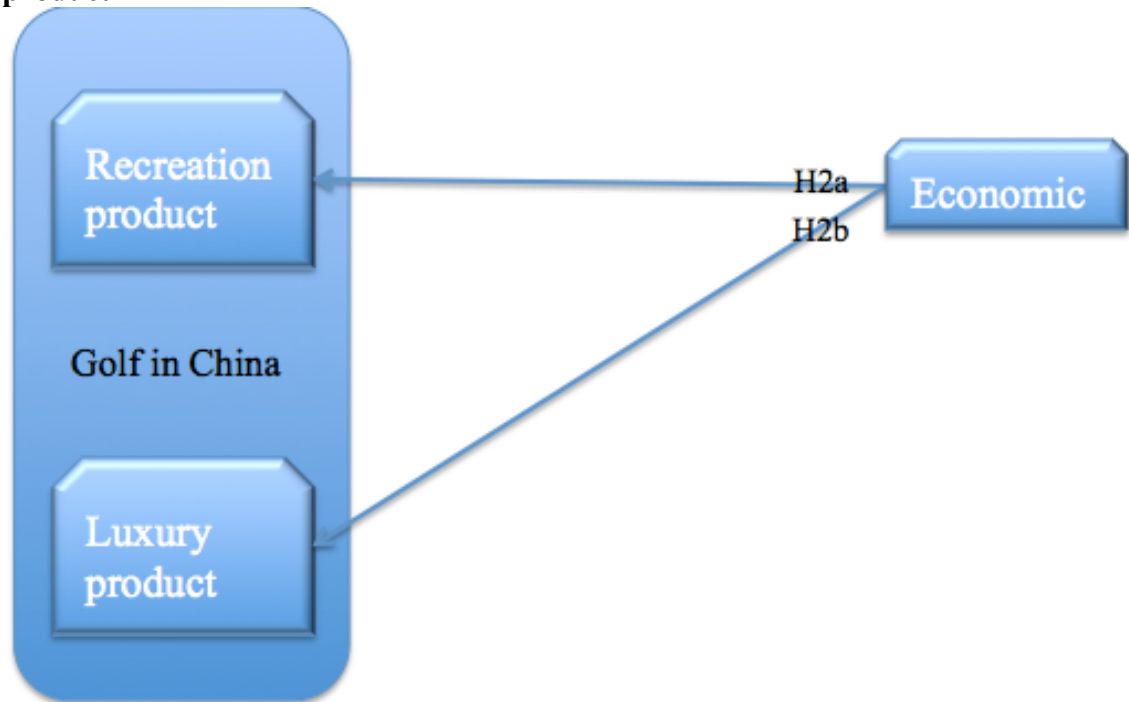
H1a: The political factor has a positive influence on the golf industry in China in relation to the feature of recreation.

H1b: The political factor has a positive influence on the golf industry in China in relation to the feature of luxury product.

3.3.2 Economic factor in relation to the golf industry in China

This section discusses the economic factor in relation to the golf industry in China and emphasizes the features of recreation and luxury product (Figure 3.3).

Figure 3.3 Economic factor for golf in China in relation to recreation and luxury product



The economic environment strongly influences the operation of a business organisation (Armstrong & Harker, 2009; Wheeler & Nauright, 2006). From the last experience, many businesses are suffering from the economic turndown (Papatheodorou, et al., 2010; Smeral, 2009; Song & Lin, 2009). However, rapidly growing economic conditions have helped China become the focus of the world (Lawrence, 2010; Risso & Carrera, 2012). Meanwhile, economic conditions, especially financial conditions, are strongly influencing the behaviour of both consumers (Daniela, 2011; Kirchler & Hölzl, 2003) and businesses (Kotler, et al., 2008). Golf is believed to be one of the most “economically sensitive” businesses (Huertas, et al., 2010). This means that under strong economic conditions, more people would play the game, however under weak economic conditions, fewer people would play. A similar phenomenon is also significant for the recreation and luxury industry.

Since the definition of leisure and recreation is the antithesis of “work” (Purrington & Hickerson, 2013), therefore people could only take part in leisure and recreational activities whenever they do not need to be concerned about earning a living. As

economic conditions in China keep improving, more and more people have more disposable money they could spend on leisure and recreation. Economic development is accompanied by the rise of living standards including more time to spend on leisure and recreation. As Chinese people become more wealthy, they are no longer satisfied with watching TV and listening to the radio for recreation, they want modern-day ways for leisure to represent the fact that they are getting wealthy and gain a feeling of satisfaction (X. Yin, 2005). However, the question of how to lead citizens to take part in healthy types of recreation has become a key task for countries enjoying an economic upraise (Godbey, 2003). There is also research which shows the new trend for Chinese leisure is to pursue health and outdoor activities (X. Yin, 2005; Jing Zhao, 2006). Therefore, this research believes that the economic factor is one of the factors contributing to golf development in China, and this has happened through its feature as a recreational product that golf in China possesses.

With the rapid development of the economy in China, the level of capital income is expanding significantly. The market of luxury products is showing great vigour (Gittings, 2005). There is no doubt that China is already the luxury market with the most growth potential (Monash university business and economics, 2007). With increasing numbers of high-end consumer goods and services being sold, the consumption gap between China and the world is being gradually shortened. As Chinese consumers advocate a fresh consumer idea that “luxury” does not mean corruption, waste of money is instead being replaced by a preference towards “taste” (Shipman, 2004). The focus of products in the luxury market is shifting from the “product” to the “experience” (KPMG, 2011). More importantly, growth of economic conditions stimulates the demand for health (Office of the World Health Organization Representative in China, 2005). Moreover, as the financial conditions are improved, people have a higher demand for luxury products as a symbol of elitism (Catry, 2003). Therefore, golf has become the preferred option to fulfil the demand of most Chinese people who are getting wealthy. Consequently, this research believes the economic factor has encouraged features of luxury product, which then further stimulates golf development in China.

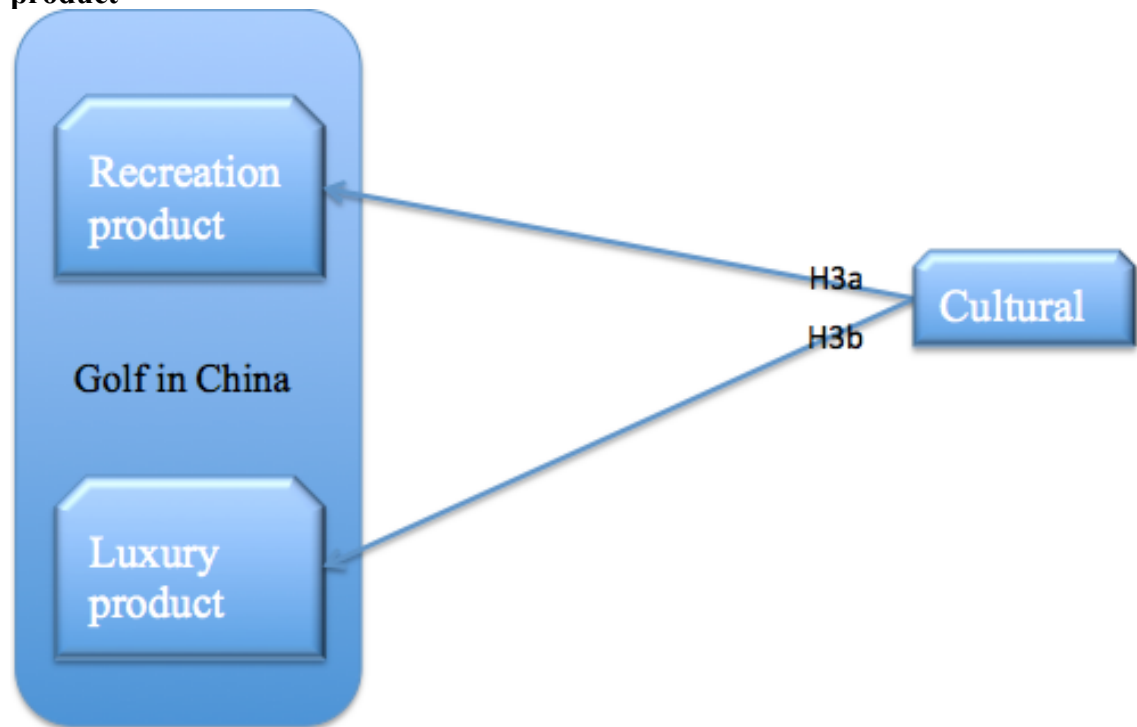
H2a: The economic factor has a positive influence on the golf industry in China in relation to the feature of recreation.

H2b: The economic factor has a positive influence on the golf industry in China in relation to the feature of luxury product.

3.3.3 Cultural factor in relation to the golf industry in China

This section discusses the cultural factor in relation to the golf industry in China and emphasizes the features of recreation and luxury product (Figure 3.4).

Figure 3.4 Cultural factor for golf in China in relation to recreation and luxury product



Culture in international marketing is considered to be one of the most influential factors that affect customers' motives toward their choices and purchases on a global basis (Jarvenpaa, et al., 2006; Samiee, 1998). Studies have shown that different cultures react differently to new products (Everdingen & Waarts, 2003). Therefore, it is expected that a new product or technological innovation will be readily accepted in some countries while in others it may take a substantially longer time. The golf industry in China is no exception as a result of social and economic development where golf has become either a recreation or luxury product or product with both features.

According to Godbey (2003), the outlook toward recreation and luxury is increasing as people start gradually understanding that more time for leisure is as valuable as having time for work. He also suggested the industrial revolution in 1890 (Ceron-Anaya, 2010) brought with it the fact that to increase productivity people could divide their time

between work and leisure (Veblen, 2011). In relation to recreation, the relationship between income and recreation influences the cultural factor, as it has been pointed out that different levels of income will lead to different types of sports and there is no doubt that golf is related to financial status (Neo, 2010; Parker, 2012; Reis & Correia, 2013; Vamplew, 2010). In relation to luxury, the market in China is expanding dramatically. According to Bain & Company (2010), the total luxury expenditure by mainland Chinese people reached 156 billion RMB in 2009 (16 billion GBP), as a result of economic development and increasing numbers of people within the population with high financial status (S. Wilson, et al., 2001; J. Xu, 2013; Yan, 2004). Also, China has become the second largest market of luxury products with an annual increase of more than 30% in recent years (P. X. Lu, 2010). It seems that China will soon become the largest market of luxury products.

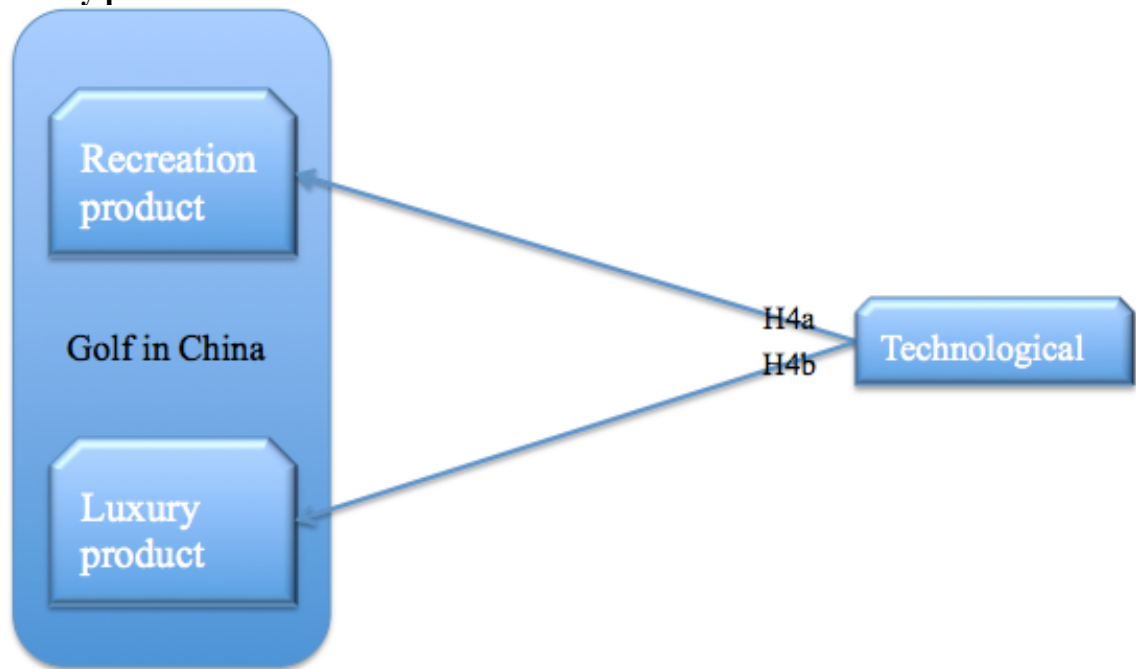
H3a: The cultural factor has a positive influence on the golf industry in China in relation to the feature of recreation.

H3b: The cultural factor has a positive influence on the golf industry in China in relation to the feature of luxury product.

3.3.4 Technological factor in relation to the golf industry in China

This section discusses the technological factor in relation to the golf industry in China and emphasizes the features of recreation and luxury product (Figure 3.5). Technological development has changed the face of our world. The technological factor influence on recreation and luxury product comes from two aspects. The first is providing new media and channels to attract potential customers. The second is to stimulate businesses to improve their productivity and provide high quality products and services.

Figure 3.5 Technological factor for golf in China in relation to recreation and luxury product



Images, expectations, dreams and fantasies are the images and representations that the media uses to influence people's decision-making process during purchasing. The media help businesses to spread the word and information in the media is therefore the key determinant for people choosing products and services even as a way for recreation. From newspapers to TV, from magazines to the Internet and social networks, the development of technology has brought revolutionary changes to our ways of acquiring information. For both luxury and recreational products, the power of the media and especially the power of the new media becomes essential.

The media could become the main source of information determining consumers' purchasing decisions (Fotis, et al., 2012; Hyun, et al., 2009; Shukla, 2011). Before purchasing a certain recreation and luxury product, customers could find pictures, descriptions and even reviews from other customers on different types of media. Instead of wandering around in shops, the media will provide them with a comprehensive knowledge of the product to make a decision. However, seeking information is only the passive power of the media (Milano, et al., 2011; Seevers, et al., 2010), which means people voluntarily go to the media and search for a certain product. The media also has the ability to take the initiative. The information published on the media could constantly give an impression to the audience (Catry, 2003; Y. Wang, et al., 2011) to persuade the audience that what the media is claiming is right. In China, many companies take advantage of people for pursuing physical health by combining with the

power of the media. They sell health products on TV and use an impressive image to persuade people to buy their product (Jing Zhao, 2006).

On the other hand, the technological factor has become one approach that the industry can use to improve the quality of their products and services. There is research suggesting that one of the reasons that golf could become one of the most profitable businesses is due to the constant application of the latest technology (C. Zhang, 2011). However, it is claimed that improving technology will also bring technical barriers to existing businesses due to the transaction costs accrued during the improvement process (B. Chen, 2004). For example, moving from reading a book to read on a tablet or on a screen is a consequence of technological development. However, not everybody will accept the latest way of reading because it is too complicated. At this stage, this research could not determine whether technological factor is one of the factors that influence golf development in China, and therefore the following hypotheses have been formulated:

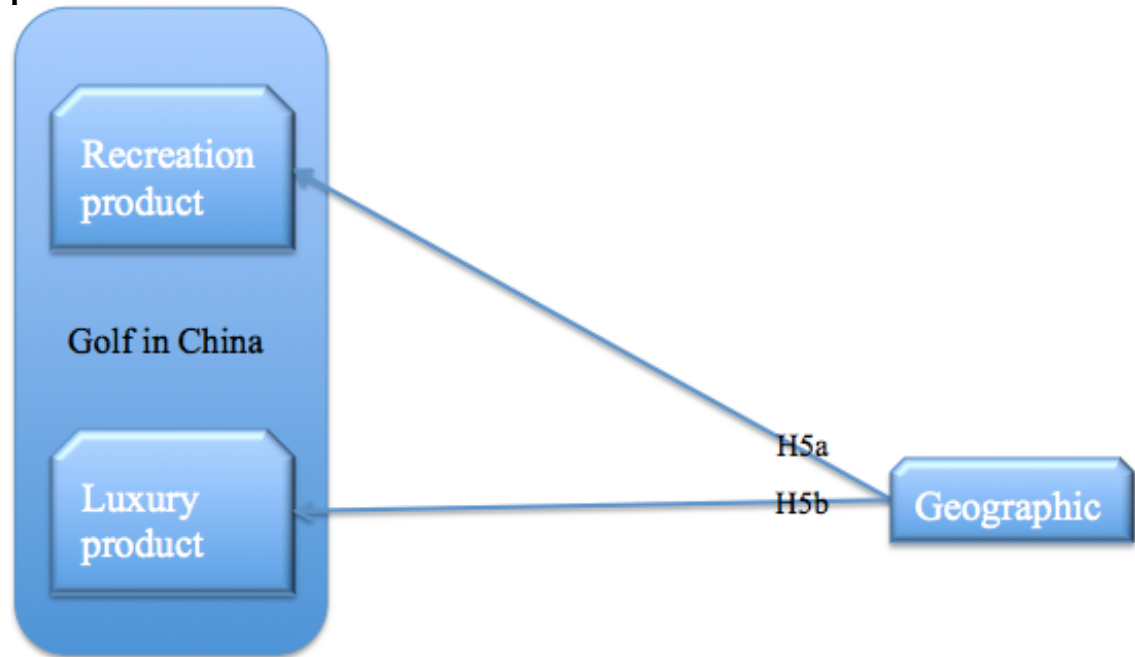
H4a: The technological factor has a positive influence on the golf industry in China in relation to the feature of recreation.

H4b: The technological factor has a positive influence on the golf industry in China in relation to the feature of luxury product.

3.3.5 Geographic factor in relation to the golf industry in China

This section discusses the geographic factor in relation to the golf industry in China and emphasizes the features of recreation and luxury product (Figure 3.6).

Figure 3.6 Geographic factor for golf in China in relation to recreation and luxury product



For leisure, recreation and especially tourism products, the geographic factor is one of the most important issues to consider. Different geographic locations have different customs, cultures and even languages. As part of the experience for customers, these differences are significant for such businesses. However, the literature review chapter has discussed the definition of recreational golf this research has adopted, which is playing golf locally without long distance travel and overnight stay. Although the existing literature suggests there are certain types of golfer who prefer to experience a different golf course at a different location (S. Hudson & Hudson, 2009), there is still the possibility that geographic factor will not influence golf through the feature of recreation.

For luxury product, geographic differences provide different requirements for certain products due to differences of experience, life style, climate and culture (Moya, 2012; Truong, et al., 2008). Meanwhile, China is a country that covers a great area. Different people living in different regions have different cultures, understanding, languages and, of course, different requirements. Thus, it is well worth investigating how geographic factor will influence the development of golf through the features of recreation and luxury product.

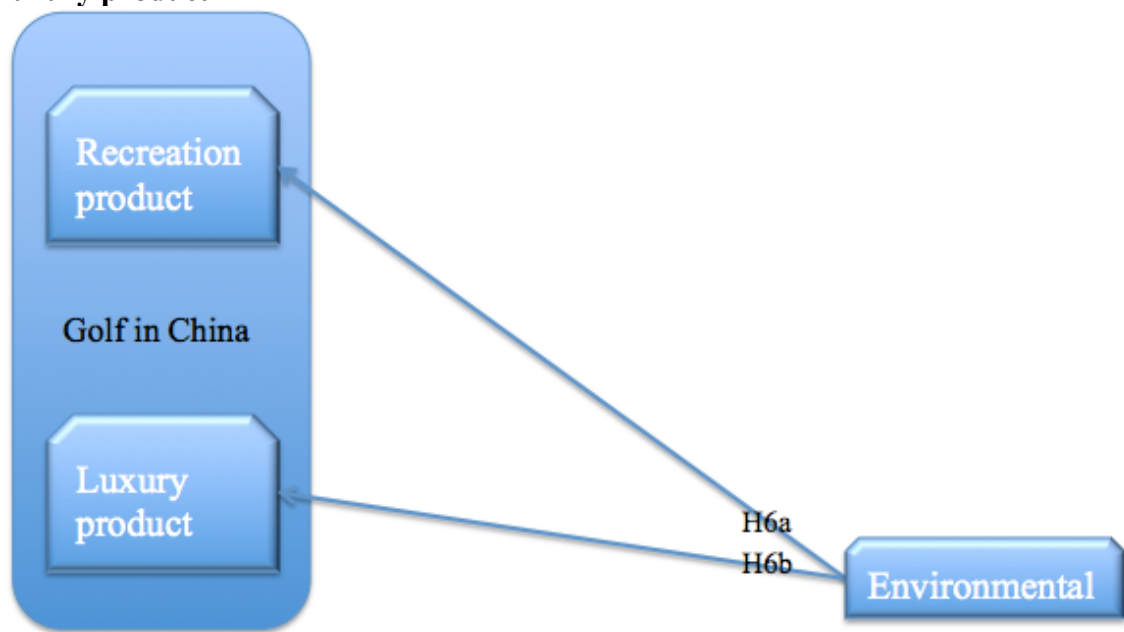
H5a: The geographic factor has a positive influence on the golf industry in China in relation to the feature of recreation.

H5b: The geographic factor has a positive influence on the golf industry in China in relation to the feature of luxury product.

3.3.6 Environmental factor in relation to the golf industry in China

This section discusses the environmental factor in relation to the golf industry in China and emphasizes on features of recreation and luxury product (Figure 3.7).

Figure 3.7 Environmental factor for golf in China in relation to recreation and luxury product



Environmental factor in this research means people's concerns about the natural environment. The development of technology has brought a vast improvement in productivity. This has made the resources on the planet to become scarce. Hence, people have gradually become more aware about protecting the natural environment and considering the approach of sustainable development. Furthermore, consideration of the natural environment became an additional factor influencing the behaviour of customers. In China, there is research suggesting that Chinese people have gradually began to show more interest in leisure and take recreational activities outdoors instead of indoor (Degenhardt, et al., 2011; Yan-xia Zhang & Wang, 2012). Despite the fact that more and more people have begun to take outdoor recreational activities, the first consideration is whether these activities are environmentally friendly. This means that if the outdoor activity is not environmentally friendly, they may not do it.

Regarding luxury product, people have gradually lost interest in certain products that are potentially harmful to the natural environment, such as fur and other animal

products (Davies, et al., 2011). People are going after more environmentally friendly products that have the potential for sustainable development. Even traditional luxury products have started to become more environmentally friendly to reflect people's concerns about sustainable development (Achabou & Dekhili, 2013). For Chinese people, sustainable development is part of traditional Chinese culture and the Chinese are always searching for a business that could combine the idea of luxury and sustainable development together. Businessmen are happy to find that golf could be the product they are looking for. For both groups, the proof will be a positive influence, as both will prefer to play golf on healthy surroundings. Therefore, the hypotheses for this section will be:

H6a: The environmental factor has a positive influence on the golf industry in China in relation to the feature of recreation.

H6b: The environmental factor has a positive influence on the golf industry in China in relation to the feature of luxury product.

3.4 Summary

In this chapter, the initial framework (Figure 2.12), which was developed through a review of existing literature in Chapter 2, was adapted to the study's conceptual framework presented in Figure 3.1. Furthermore, the links between the factors and the features of golf described in both initial framework and conceptual framework were expressed as individual research hypotheses. Twelve hypotheses were proposed in total and summarised in Table 3.1

Table 3.1 Summary of hypotheses

Summary of hypothesis		Market growth of golf industry in China as golf has:	
		Feature of recreation	Feature of luxury product
Potential factors	Political factor	H1a: positive	H1b: positive
	Economic factor	H2a: positive	H2b: positive
	Cultural factor	H3a: positive	H3b: positive
	Technological factor	H4a: positive	H4b: positive
	Geographic factor	H5a: positive	H5b: positive
	Environmental factor	H6a: positive	H6b: positive

The following chapter will present and justify the methods employed to test the validity of the conceptual framework. It will also explain the research philosophy that has influenced the analysis and interpretation of the study findings.

Chapter 4. Research Methodology

4.1 Introduction

The aim of this study is to investigate the key market growth factors for golf development in China as a recreation and luxury product. In particular, this research examines the relationship between potential factors and golf development in relation to recreation and luxury product. The earlier chapter has proposed the study's twelve hypotheses and the purpose of this chapter is to describe the research process to test the validity of these hypotheses, which are:

- H1a: The political factor has a positive influence on the golf industry in China in relation to the feature of recreation.
- H1b: The political factor has a positive influence on the golf industry in China in relation to the feature of luxury product.
- H2a: The economic factor has a positive influence on the golf industry in China in relation to the feature of recreation.
- H2b: The economic factor has a positive influence on the golf industry in China in relation to the feature of luxury product.
- H3a: The cultural factor has a positive influence on the golf industry in China in relation to the feature of recreation.
- H3b: The cultural factor has a positive influence on the golf industry in China in relation to the feature of luxury product.
- H4a: The technological factor has a positive influence on the golf industry in China in relation to the feature of recreation.
- H4b: The technological factor has a positive influence on the golf industry in China in relation to the feature of luxury product.
- H5a: The geographic factor has a positive influence on the golf industry in China in relation to the feature of recreation.
- H5b: The geographic factor has a positive influence on the golf industry in China in relation to the feature of luxury product.
- H6a: The environmental factor has a positive influence on the golf industry in China in relation to the feature of recreation.
- H6b: The environmental factor has a positive influence on the golf industry in China in relation to the feature of luxury product.

This chapter includes explanations of the research design and methods and their appropriateness for the current research. This chapter also includes discussions regarding the chosen population, the design of the sampling process, data collection and analysis methods. The discussion incorporates a description of the research instrument used in this study. In addition to reflecting on their validity and reliability as methods,

an overview and justification for the appropriateness of the data analysis techniques used in the study are included in this chapter.

The data collection instruments for this research involve a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods in the form of questionnaire surveys and in-depth interviews. Surveys are one of the most efficient ways to gather large amounts of information and are useful when attempting to create generalisations regarding the target organisation (Iacobucci & Churchill, 2010). However, surveys present difficulties when attempting to gather further information. Therefore, after identifying key market growth factors through the use of surveys and analysis, in-depth interviews are utilised to explain further how each factor could influence golf development through the features. The information collected through the questionnaire and interview methods will identify the key market growth factors influencing features and contribute golf development in China.

4.2 Research questions

The main questions this research aims to address are what key factors contribute to the golf market growth in China and how these factors contribute to the current Chinese golf market growth. After proposing frameworks to define the foundations and drivers, this research attempts to uncover the reasons behind the phenomenon.

The research question is:

What are the key factor that contributes to the market growth of golf development in China as a recreation and luxury product?

The above research question involves three issues. The understanding of these issues could help this research to provide comprehensive arguments toward research questions and achieve the overall research objectives. The three issues are:

1. The features of recreation in relation to market growth of golf in China.
2. The features of luxury in relation to market growth of golf in China.
3. Investigate influencing factors from the literature in relation to recreation and luxury in the background of golf development in China in the actual context.

The unit of analysis for this research is the golf industry in China. Therefore, the data will come from managers working for the golf industry.

However, to investigate these issues with the researcher's philosophical position and how it affected the choice of research methods needs to be discussed. This chapter will firstly present the philosophical underpinnings and then the methodology adopted in this research.

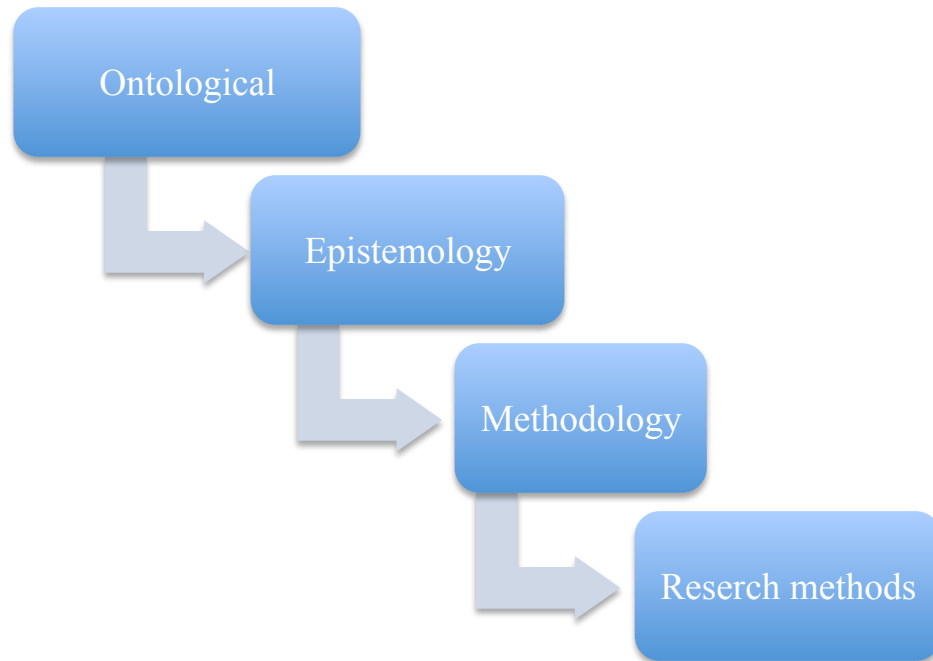
4.3 Research Paradigm Design

The theoretical paradigm has been described as “the basic belief system or world view that guides the investigation” (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p106) and identifies the basis to orientate one's own research (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). In essence, it establishes the starting point of the research process and the premise for designing and conducting one's research. Malhotra, Birks, & Wills (2012, p136) define a paradigm as “a set of assumptions consisting of agreed upon knowledge, criteria of judgment, problem fields and ways to consider them.” It is the fundamental belief system that guides the research process (E. Guba & Lincoln, 1994) and brings forth the framework characterized by the responses to three fundamental questions: ontological (researcher viewpoint), epistemological (attainment of knowledge) and methodological (research design and interpretation) (Creswell, 2002). Guba (1990) defines these three aspects are:

1. Ontological – what is the nature of the knowledge? What is the nature of reality?
2. Epistemology – what is the nature of the relationship between the knower (the inquirer) and the known or knowable?
3. Methodological – how should the inquirer go about finding out knowledge?

Epistemology is the way in which we understand and explain how we know what we know. It encompasses how people think knowledge is created and is embedded in the theoretical perspective and thereby in the methodology. The theoretical perspective is what we hope and expect to obtain from the research being conducted. Methodology includes the reasons why particular research methods are chosen and methods are how we actually find knowledge. Both epistemology and theoretical perspective are forms of philosophical positioning and understanding them are crucial as they can help to clarify research designs (Hinch & Higham, 2001). For a researcher, this not only involves data requirements, collection and interpretation, but also consists of deciding how the data will answer the research question. The relationship among these concepts is presented in Figure 4.1 below:

Figure 4.1 Four elements for research process

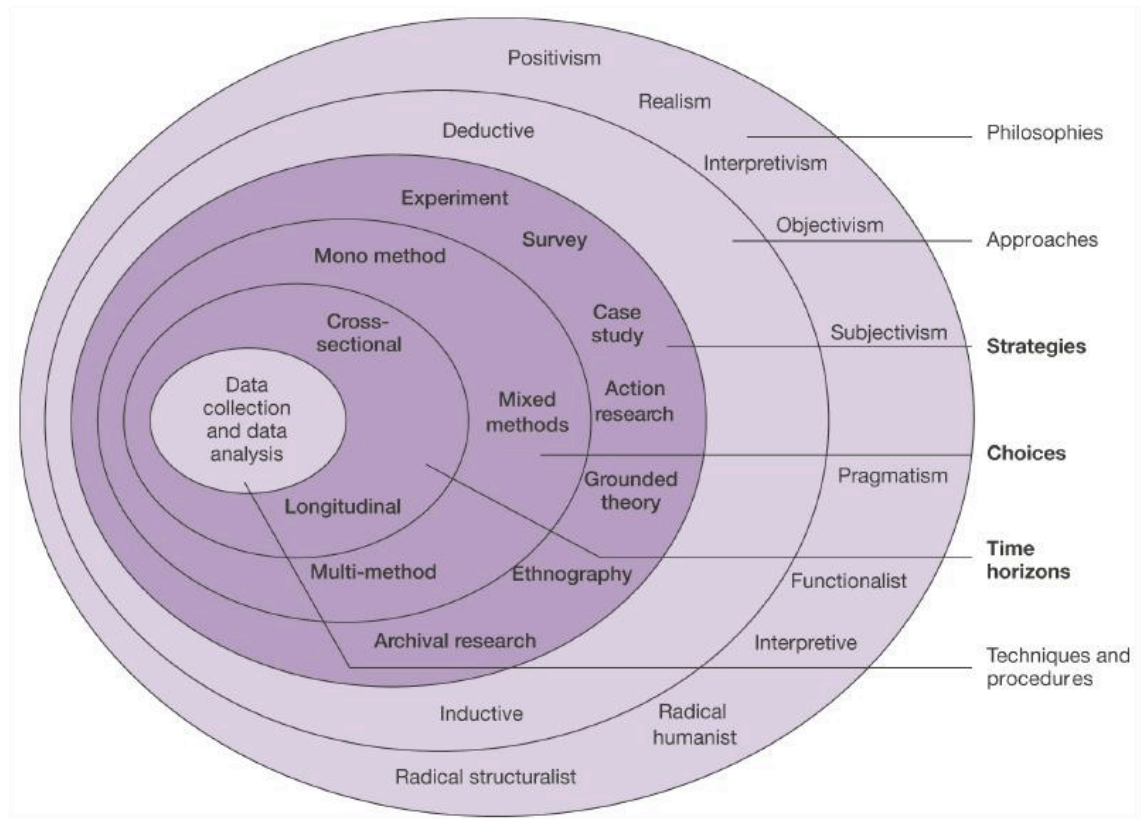


Source: adopted from Crotty (1998, p. 4)

4.3.1 Ontology

Ontology is concerned with the nature of reality and is the choice between being a realist or a relativist. It determines how one chooses to accept reality (Saunders, et al., 2007). Creswell (2002) states ontology raises questions regarding researchers' assumptions about the way the world operates and their commitment to a particular viewpoint. Creswell (2002) suggests there are two widely accepted aspects of ontology which produce valid knowledge which are objectivism and subjectivism (Brannick & Coghlan, 2007; Holden & Lynch, 2004). Objectivism is the position that social entities exist in reality external to social actors concerned with their existence. Subjectivism holds that social phenomena created from the perceptions and consequent actions of those social actors concerned with their existence. Saunders et al (2007) use Figure 4.2 to illustrate the philosophical position that research should take.

Figure 4.2 The research "onion"



Source: adopted from Saunders, et al. (2007)

As Figure 4.2 demonstrates, the 'research onion approach' peels away the various layers of the onion to arrive at the core. In order to reach the core, research progresses gradually by following a step by step method (Saunders, et al., 2007).

Table 4.1 shows a summary of different research paradigms. Realists accept reality as it is and will not attempt to refute it unless they are able to produce new data and develop new facts. On the other hand, relativists believe that reality and the knowledge it is based upon has been created through human effort and is always subject to interpretation (Derksen, 2010). A positivistic scholar, for instance, would choose to be a realist and only accept findings that are numerically conclusive whereas a constructivist scholar would rely on the spectrum of interpretations a relativist world-view would offer. As showed in Figure 4.2, the positivistic research paradigm is located on the left.

Table 4.1 Social research paradigms

Element	Positivism	Critical realism	Constructivism
Ontology	Reality is real and apprehensible	Reality is “real but only imperfectly and probabilistically apprehensible and so triangulation from various sources is required to know it.	Multiple local and specific “constructed” realities.
Epistemology	Findings true – researcher is objective by viewing reality through a “one-way mirror”	Findings probably true-researcher are value-aware and need to triangulate any perceptions he or she is collecting.	Created findings – researcher is a “passionate participant” within the world being investigated.
Common methodologies	Mostly concerns with a testing of theory, thus mainly quantitative method such as survey, experiments and verification hypotheses	Mainly qualitative methods such as case studies and convergent interviews.	In-depth unstructured interviews, observation, action research and grounded theory research.

Source: adopted from Sobh and Perry (2006, p. 1195)

The main aim of this research is to investigate the key market growth factors of golf development in China, which requires a large volume of data and in-depth discussion. Therefore, the research aim requires the research to combine the features of both positivism and constructionism. One combination of positivism and constructionism is a school of thought called “The Strong Programme” (Calvert-Minor, 2008). “Strong programme” adherents to the scientific community approach, which recognises four core criteria of scientific discovery. These four core criteria are: (1) Causality, (2) Impartiality, (3) Symmetry and (4) Reflexivity (Calvert-Minor, 2008).

However, this research will employ pragmatism philosophy. It is argued that mixed method research with its pragmatic approach does not align itself with a single system or philosophy (Creswell, 2002). Instead of choosing one type of ontology, to consider the nature of knowledge, pragmatism is driven by the research question (B. Johnson, et al., 2007). The initial data will be collected as much as possible from participants that are currently working in the golf sector in China. This research will then further investigate the possible reasons that have contributed to the growth of the golf sector in China from experienced managers from the golf industry in China. The chosen research paradigm combines aspects of the positivistic and constructivist schools of thought as an alternative to selecting a single ontological viewpoint/stance. The ontology for this research is a combination of both positivism and subjectivism worldview.

To validate the ontological framework, this research respects the conditions under which the work was created. It will impartially credit every possible discovery that is raised from scientific evidence, acknowledge the unsuccessful claims impartially and aim to find correlations with secondary literature research through a process of reflection.

4.3.2 Epistemology

Epistemology is the doctrine about the origin of understanding, nature, content, effect and the law of development. Epistemology also explains how we know what we know (Crotty, 1998). According to Easterby-Smith (2012), failure to think through philosophical issues can seriously affect the quality of research as it can aid in clarifying the research design. Therefore, it is necessary to identify, explain and justify the epistemological stance adopted in this research.

Crotty (1998) focuses on three epistemologies: objectivism, social constructionism and subjectivism. Objectivist epistemology holds a reality. Those who subscribe to an objectivist epistemology believe meaningful reality exists separately from the operation of any consciousness. For instance, a tree is a tree, regardless of whether anyone is aware of its existence or not. Objectivist epistemology states that researchers are outside the “social” and the individual cannot control society. Truth and meaning reside in objects, apart from the operation of any consciousness, and carefully conducted research can discover objective truth and meaning (Crotty, 1998). Bryman (2012) assumes that there are standardized procedures such as rules and regulations that enable organisations

to accomplish set goals. In short, they seek the facts or cause of social phenomena, with little regard to the subjective state of the individual.

Morgan & Smircich (1980) explains the nature of knowledge along a subjective-objective continuum, where objectivism and subjectivism are two extremes and social constructionism features in between.

On one end of this continuum is subjectivism. In this understanding of knowledge, meaning is imposed on the object by the subject. In this view, the object does not contribute to the generation of meaning. The subject creates “meaning”, for example, meanings of an object may come from dreams, astrology, religious beliefs or other subjective conditions.

Social constructionism is the intermediate standpoint on this continuum. It puts all understandings, both scientific and non-scientific, on the same footing in order to treat them all as constructions. Social constructionism states that meaning is not discovered, but constructed by existence and out of mind (Crotty, 1998). That is, truth or meaning comes into existence in and out of our engagement with the realities of our world. There is no meaning without a mind. Thus, knowledge does not reflect an objective world and is not isolated from that which the individual considers reality to be, but it is an understanding of the world as it is experienced (Holden & Lynch, 2004). Individuals can perceive the same phenomenon in different ways, thus constructing alternative meanings relating to the way in which the individual experiences the world around them (Jin, 2009).

This research attempts to investigate the factors contributing to golf market growth in China, thus it applies pragmatism. Pragmatism is the approach that evaluates theories or beliefs in terms of the success of their practical application (Harrison & Reilly, 2011). Therefore the research is designed according to the research question. This research combines the ideas of objectivism, subjectivism and social constructionism to explore the key factors and further explain the reason behind the phenomenon of market growth.

4.3.3 Theoretical perspective

Crotty (1998) defines a theoretical perspective as “the philosophical stance informing the methodology and thus providing a context for the process and grounding its logic and criteria” (Crotty, 1998, p3). There are varieties of theoretical perspectives and they

tend to be dependent on the choice of methodology. E. Guba and Lincoln (1994) describe a theoretical perspective as the paradigm that represents the belief systems that attach researchers to a particular worldview. In the human and social sciences, two favoured perspectives are positivism and interpretivism. However, as the ontology for this research is pragmatism, the theoretical perspectives for this research have mixed both positivism and interpretivism.

Table 4.2 summarises the thoughts and research methods of positivism and interpretivism (Gratton & Jones, 2010):

Table 4.2 Comparison of two approaches

Positivism	Interpretivism
Quantitative Research	Qualitative Research
Deductive	Inductive
Answer the questions like “what”, “when” and “how many”	Answer the questions like “why” and “how”
The research strictly follows a predetermined design	The research follows a flexible research design, that may be continually adapted
Attempt to establish a causality	Attempt to explain a causality
Attempt to establish or strengthen a theory	Attempt to carry on or develop a theory

Source: adopted from Gratton & Jones (2010, p. 37)

Positivistic research advocates using interpretation to obtain a hypothetical conclusion prior to designing an experiment or hypothesis testing process. Strict testing through the application of mathematical and statistical methods then follows this. The test results attempt to answer questions such as "what" and "how much" to establish a causal relationship between a phenomenon and causal relationships between factors. Additionally, it attempts to establish or strengthen a theory.

Compared with positivism deduction research, the interpretivism induction research focuses on reasoning from specific cases to reach general conclusions. In simplistic terms, positivism deduction research attempts to test a theory, while interpretivism induction research seeks to build a theory (Saunders, et al., 2007).

Existing golf studies, particularly those that focus on golf development in China have used the interpretivism method (Sun & Xu, 2008; Y. Wu, 2004; Zheng, 2006), as this type of research mainly focuses on deducting and inferring the reason for golf development. There is a golf related study that adopts the positivism method, however,

this research is based on biological studies and involves laboratory based experiments, such as measurements to detect the difference between the effect of the chemical on the grass growth and the residue and pollutions generated after using the chemicals (L. Han, et al., 2009). Nevertheless, this research found that the majority of management and so-called positivism economic research on the golf industry did not dig deep enough to explain the factors that contribute to golf development. Most existing research lacks the content of golf development in China. In this case, any other products or services could replace golf. For instance, Zheng (2003) surveyed golf participants regarding their level of demand and the relationship between price and service standard by using questionnaires. By conducting questionnaires in addition to statistical analysis most research merely stated the phenomenon of golf development in China and disregarded the characteristics or features of golf.

It is apparent that the existing research on the golf industry is very broad and only scratches the surface of this phenomenon. Therefore, apart from revealing the phenomenon, this research tries to explore the reasons and processes behind it, which is why a mixed research method of questionnaire survey and in-depth interview is used. By combining these two methods the research is able to utilise the advantage and minimise the disadvantage of each method. With the aid of the questionnaire survey, conclusions and suggestions are presented based on the collection of numerical information and their statistical interpretation. However, this technique only provides limited answers to the research questions. Therefore, after testing the validity of hypotheses through the questionnaires, the researcher utilises the interpretivism approach to collect qualitative data on the golf industry through in-depth interviews. Through this mixed method, the research aims to answer both the “what is” and the “why” and “how” questions.

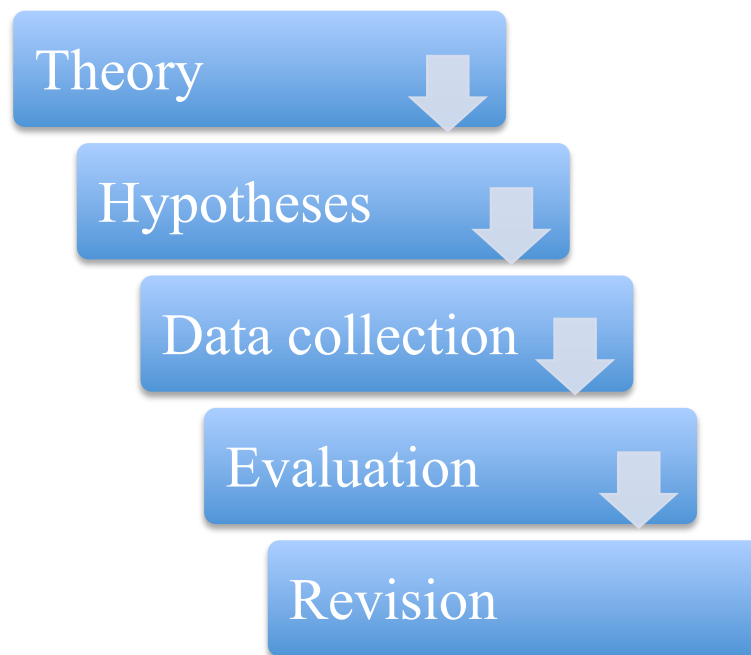
4.3.4 Methodology

Crotty (1998) and Gratton (2010) state methodology is the strategy, plan for an action, process or design behind the choice of conducting sound research. By using particular methods and linking the choice and use of methods, the research finding can be closer to the desired outcomes. Quantitative research and qualitative research have formed two distinctive methodologies (Bryman & Bell, 2007; Hinch & Higham, 2001). Quantitative research emphasizes quantification in the collection and analysis of data. On the other

hand, qualitative research concentrates on words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data.

Sound methodology always consists of a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches. Qualitative approaches rely on interpretation while quantitative approaches try to prove their point solely based on the data they collect. The mixed method has become popular in recent research (B. Johnson, et al., 2007).

Figure 4.3 Methodological approaches to scientific research



Source: adopted from Bryman & Bell (2007)

The methodological approach of the scientific method, as showed in Figure 4.3 was with theories that have framed in hypotheses. The next step is data collection, which then followed by data evaluation. This then leads into converting this data into concrete findings that either confirms or rejects the hypotheses. Subsequently, the theory needs to be revised to conform to the findings (Bryman, 2012).

Creswell (2002) defined quantitative research as “an inquiry into a social or human problem, based on testing a theory composed of variables, measured with numbers, and analysed with statistical procedures, in order to determine whether the predictive generalisations of the theory hold true” (Creswell, 2002, p. 2). The quantitative method allows the researcher to collect the data in numerical form. Statistical analysis can further produce a correlation between the variables (Punch, 2005). Following the

literature review, whereby fundamental theories were collected to understand the situation, a quantitative approach for this research allowed for testing and verifying the hypotheses proposed in the hypotheses chapter.

Under a positivist paradigm, emphasis is placed on the findings and a conclusion is based on substantial quantifiable findings. Therefore, a quantitative research methodology is used in this research. To collect enough information from the participants in the golf industry and achieve the objectives of this research, the reasonable conclusion is explored through quantitative research.

However, merely answering the “what is” question is insufficient as it does not address the “why” and “how” questions. For this reason, the qualitative method under the interpretivism paradigm is also adopted. Qualitative data “*is a source of well-grounded, rich descriptions and explanations of processes in identifiable local contexts*” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 1). It can help the researcher to maintain a chronological flow, see precisely which events led to which consequences, and derive fruitful consequences (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

The quantitative study in this research focuses on the measurement and analysis of the causal relationship between variables, whilst qualitative research focuses on how social experience is created and given meaning (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Through combining research methods, this study aims to conclude with comprehensive findings.

4.4 Data collection method

The research method is the technique or procedure used to gather and analyse data related to research questions or hypotheses. In this research, questionnaires are used as the method of data collection for the first stage in order to verify the hypotheses. Furthermore, in-depth interviews are conducted to provide additional in-depth information.

The research design is the logical link between the data to be collected and the conclusions to be drawn from the initial questions of the study (R. K. Yin, 2003). Research design can help the researcher organise research activities to achieve the aim of the research (Easterby-Smith, et al., 2012). The following section will introduce the design of this research, explain how to organise the research activities to achieve its aim in order to ensure that the data collected is linked with the research question.

4.4.1 Questionnaire survey

A quantitative research method is appropriate for this study because the purpose is to determine the relationship between the independent and dependent variables, an approach requiring measurements and the use of numerical data (Punch, 2005). Measuring the relationship among factor variables is significant to golf development in China as numerical data allow the application of multivariate statistical analysis, a common data analysis method used in quantitative methodologies (Iacobucci & Churchill, 2010). The objective of the research requires a relatively substantial sample size that covers a major area of golf courses in China, therefore is more cost effective to gather data with a quantitative method.

Questionnaire surveys are often claimed to be “the most efficient” method of gathering information (Easterby-Smith, et al., 2012), and are probably the most widely employed method for quantitative research (Bryman, 2012) because they are generally relatively quick when collecting information. Questionnaire surveys also refer to fixed and structured forms of information (J. Mason, 2002) and are one of the most effective approaches to uncover and explore the meanings that underpin people’s experiences, feelings and knowledge (Rubin & Rubin, 2012), as they allow for understanding and meaning to be explored in depth. As questionnaires gather information in a standardised way, they are more objective, certainly more so than interviews (Saunders, et al., 2007). Questionnaires can also be used to explore the relationships between different aspects of a situation. Therefore, it is appropriate for this research to use the questionnaire method as the research questions require a great deal of information which can be further explored and clarified (Easterby-Smith, et al., 2012). Furthermore, questionnaires permit the collection of information from a large portion of a population. This potential is not often realised, as returns from questionnaires are usually low. However, return rates can be dramatically improved if the questionnaire is delivered and responded to in class time (Gratton & Jones, 2010). Additionally, the reliability of questionnaires should be considered because some participants may not complete their questionnaire carefully (Saunders, et al., 2007). To avoid this problem, this research uses straightforward language to avoid misunderstandings on behalf of the participant. Furthermore, to ensure that the collected data is reliable, a reliability test was conducted before data analysis was undertaken. The questionnaires only provide some detailed information that was then investigated further through interviews therefore if the questionnaire

design was not perfect, the interview can improve the validity of the questionnaire results.

The survey is self-administered and requires participants to have an Internet connection on either their computer or mobile devices. Each participant received a card with a QR code and a short website address (Appendix 3) which lead them to a site supported by Wenjuan.com. The details will be explained in Section 4.4.1.4. Participants that are eligible to participate in the study are managers who have experience working in the golf industry and have a relatively mid-level position in their golf club. As this study covers the condition of golf development in China as a whole, participants have to come from or be working in different regions of China.

Iacobucci (2010) compares several communication methods for data collection through questionnaires and suggests that web-based questionnaires have the advantage of being highly versatile, low in cost and offer a fast turnaround, which is desirable for this research. The following section explains the design of the questionnaire.

4.4.1.1 Questionnaire design

As previously stated, a two-step strategy is followed for data collection. Firstly, this research has proposed the hypothesis in the literature review chapter that golf in China has the features of both recreational product and luxury product and the factors are influencing golf in China through these features. This is the first question that is validated through the questionnaire. The second step of this research is to identify the key market growth factors for golf development in China. This study has designed several questions for each of the factors. The questions are generated through finding from the literature review. If participant agrees with the statement, they will be more likely to agree target factors have influence on the golf industry. The finding of each step will synthesise during the process of data analysis.

In order to be consistent with the research strategy, the questionnaire consists of three sections. The first section collects general background information about each respondent. This section helps the researcher to attain a general idea of the respondents' profiles, for instance, their level of experience. The second section consists of two parts, to test the validity of the hypothesis that golf in China has two features, which are recreation and luxury product. The third section consists of five parts. The main aim of

this section is to test the significance of the potential factors influencing golf development in China as suggested by the existing literature.

To ensure the questionnaire is simple and straightforward, there are five types of questions in the questionnaire, which are single choice, multiple-choice, rating, ranking and a few open questions. To eliminate invalid responses, the questionnaire is arranged over 12 pages and every question on each page must be completed before the respondent can proceed to the subsequent pages. After finishing every question on every page, respondents could submit the questionnaire. One advantage of this design is that it eliminates any invalid responses, however, on receiving feedback from the respondents, the researcher was made aware that they were unable to answer every question or alter their choices on previous pages of the questionnaire. But the fact is that there is no right or wrong answer to any questions. This research believes the first instinct for them will tend to be the most accurate answer (Hinch & Higham, 2001). Meanwhile, due to confidential consideration, respondents have the right to stop participating during the whole process. It means if respondents decide to stop in the middle of the survey process, he/she could just close the window and completed answers will not be submitted to the server. The programme only submits the result when participant chooses the “submission” button. Therefore, this study insists using this web-based questionnaire engine to collect information.

4.4.1.2 Translation

It is extremely important for a survey project to allow investigations regarding the respondents’ culture (Armstrong & Harker, 2009; Bryman & Bell, 2007). For this research, it is essential for the original questionnaire to be translated from English to Chinese. As golf in China is an activity that involves more techniques and experiences, most people from the industry do not have proficient English skills, therefore the questionnaire must be written in Chinese. By translating the questionnaire to Chinese, which is the native language for respondents, it allows the respondents to feel close to the researchers and have deeper thoughts regarding each of the questions. Moreover, using Chinese could save respondents’ time when completing the questionnaire. It is suggested that the longer a survey takes, fewer respondents it will get (Hinch & Higham, 2001).

In order to ensure an accurate translation, this research adopted sophisticated methods and used bilingual specialists to assist in the translation process of the questionnaire

(VanPatten & Jegerski, 2010). After the original English questionnaire is designed, it is then translated to Chinese for the first edition. A professional English-Chinese translator working in the embassy of an English speaking country then edited the first edition of the Chinese version. The second edition of the Chinese questionnaire is then passed to the researcher for further translations while reducing the academic jargon to make it more consistent with daily language. The third edition then was passed to another qualified English-Chinese translator working as senior translator in the embassy of an English speaking country to translate to English. Finally, the researcher compared the translated English with the original English and confirmed the translation was accurate. Taking into consideration that there are differences in culture and customs between the two countries. The translation is based on the meaning of each sentence. Thus, some words must be changed, moved or omitted in the Chinese version to ensure the sentences are as accurate as possible.

4.4.1.3 Pilot study

To verify the effectiveness of the research design, pilot studies were conducted. Before collecting actual data, the researcher can learn from the pilot study and make modifications if required to improve the research process or questions (Saunders, et al., 2007). The researcher conducted two rounds of pilot tests for the questionnaire. The first round of the pilot test had two respondents who are not working in any golf courses but have sufficient knowledge about golf in China. The interviewees of this pilot study are lecturers from universities who are teaching golf related subjects. The second round of pilot test had two respondents who are working directly in the golf industry in China.

From the pilot test, the researcher was able to conclude that the questionnaire is appropriately designed. The questions included in the questionnaire consider covered the required topics that needed to be discussed and to answer the research questions. Furthermore, the designed questionnaire met the study's research objectives satisfactorily.

However, participants also suggested areas of potential improvement. Participants stated that the words used for the questionnaire were too "academic" or "complicated" to understand. The education level for most golf clubs in China is not particularly high. Therefore not all respondents were able to understand some terminologies, for instance "monopoly" and "economic contribution". Because the researcher could not supervise the process of completing the questionnaire, respondents could have completed the

questionnaire in a careless fashion. For instance, if participants had not understood the meaning of a question, they would have been more likely to select an answer at random. To overcome this problem, the researcher redesigned the questions in a way that used explanations to describe longer words to avoid the possibility of confusion due to the language used.

The second drawback is the perceived attitude regarding the language used in the study. Understanding culture is important for any international business study (Bryman & Bell, 2007). The main respondents for this questionnaire were leaders of the golf industry and knowledgeable leaders of golf clubs in China. These people have a high social status. It is an honour for the researcher to have these people devoting their time to complete a questionnaire to the researcher. Therefore, extra attention and care was paid to the language styles of the questionnaire, to avoid any possibility of disrespect toward participants. For this reason, many “straightforward” questions are changed to be more consistent with language used on a daily basis. For example, instead of asking for the respondents’ working position, by stating “What is your job position?” the question is adapted to “Currently you are working as ____.”

The third limitation of the initial questionnaire is that some of the choices for questions were weaker because the researcher has little experience working in the golf industry. For instance, question number five was firstly designed to ask where the respondents are working in China. However, during the pilot study, the respondents told the researcher that people working in the golf industry in China are not as steady as other occupations. Many managers will change golf course after a couple of years. Instead of designing a single choice question, this question was re-designed as a multiple-choice question to better capture the respondents’ experience. For example, instead of using “years of working in golf industry”, “region for working in golf industry” is more appropriate for this research because it wants to investigate the general condition of golf development in China as a whole instead of a single region of China. Working many years in one region is not sufficient as to give a general insight on golf development in the whole of China. Conversely, if the respondents selected two or three or even four regions where they had previously worked in China, it is more convinced that they may be better equipped to understand golf development in different part of China and their responses would reflect their working experience in different regions. The researcher regards respondents that have worked in various regions of China as more competent

when understanding and explaining golf development in different parts of China due to their personal experience.

4.4.1.4 Accessibility

The survey was designed as a web-based questionnaire as the results can be uploaded immediately after the respondent has submitted it, which means respondents do not have to email or post it back to the researcher. Iacobucci (2010) claimed web based survey is the most accessible and efficient way for questionnaire collection. Although Survey Monkey is one of the best questionnaire survey engines for business and marketing research, after several test runs it was found that this engine is not capable to handle Chinese translations efficiently. Some of the instruction words such as “single choice” and “multiple-choice” were provided in English, which could have confused the respondents. Similar problems were found on another popular survey engine, Google Docs. Google Docs could not produce results for SPSS for further analysis. Finally, the researcher found a Chinese survey engine called Wenjuan.com, which could overcome these drawbacks. In the meantime, it is still reliable and flexible in its functionality.

Apart from features such as a fully functional Chinese interface, which was able to export the results to SPSS, high accessibility was another reason this engine was chosen. The limitation of web-based questionnaire is that it is difficult for everybody to access a computer and the Internet. Based on the designed questions, Wenjuan.com could automatically generate computer screen sized questionnaires and mobile devices screen sized questionnaires. These two types of questionnaire shared the same website address to avoid confusion. Meanwhile, it enhances the accessibility of the questionnaire by respondents.

To eliminate the technology barrier, this research design used the QR code (abbreviated from Quick Response Code) for the questionnaire, as showed in Figure 4.4.

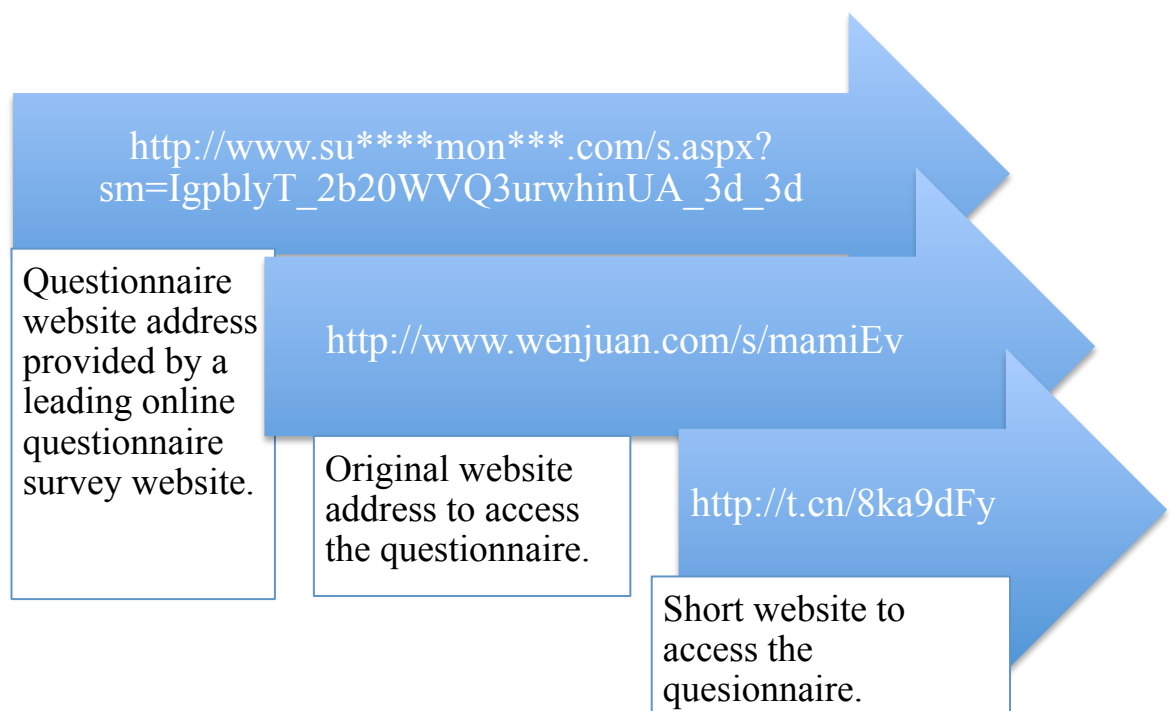
Figure 4.4 QR code for the questionnaire



By using this QR code, the respondents were not required to remember the website address. The only thing they have to do is use their camera on their phone. Then the QR reading app leads them to the questionnaire. Specially, it is worth to point out that according to the report published by CNNIC in late 2013 (China Internet Network Information Centre), China has 618 million people who access the Internet regularly. Within this population, 500 million people access the Internet through smart-mobile phone (CNNIC, 2013). Additionally, WEIXIN (Weico) is a popular mobile phone application published by Tencent technology. Their seasonal report suggests there are 3.55 million “active” users (Tencent technology, 2013). Meanwhile, WEIXIN have the function to “read” the QR code. Therefore, in addition to the population who uses other popular QR code reader application such as “Chayicha”, the researcher was confident that a very large number of golf managers could access the questionnaire through QR code.

To further ensure the accessibility and response rate, this research also designed special shorted website (Figure 4.5) for participants more willing to type in the address into the browser of their mobile device or computer. Meanwhile, if participants needed, this researcher prepared printed card with both the QR code and the short website to increase the ease of accessing the questionnaire for the participants (see Appendix 3).

Figure 4.5 A comparison of the length of website address



In addition to the digital version, a paper questionnaire is also generated for respondents who have difficulty accessing either computers or mobile phones. Respondents who wished to complete the paper edition could email or phone the researcher. All this information was listed on the welcome pages in the questionnaire. However, the researcher did not get many responses through email and paper editions as the online and mobile phone editions are much more convenient for most participants.

4.4.1.5 Sampling for quantitative data collection

Before data collection takes place, the sample needs to be defined and selected from the whole target population, since normally it is not viable to collect data from the entire target population (Bryman, 2012; Saunders, et al., 2007). The target population for this research is the management team of Chinese golf clubs. From the report of Forward Group (2013), at present, there are nearly five hundred golf clubs around China. China has a relatively large landscape, therefore the northern, southern, eastern and western parts of the country have economic, cultural and even language differences. As the aim of this research is to investigate the key growth factors for golf in the whole of China, the geographic difference was considered during the sample selection. Moreover, the pilot study showed that people working in the golf industry in China are consistently changing their place of work. Finding an experienced manager working in different regions of China is potentially more valuable for this research.

The planned time period for data collection was between 1st October and mid-November 2013. During this period of time, major golf courses in northern China were closed for winter. This period has the highest concentration of training and conferences for the golf industry in China. Through connections with the golf industry in China, the researcher was able to participate in one seminar and three conferences in different regions of China targeted to local golf businesses and attended by golf managers. The general information of four events attended by the researcher is listed in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3 General information for questionnaire events

	Location	Date	Number of participants
Workshop of golf course management	Beijing	19 th Sep 2013	55
Golf manager annual forum for Southern China	Shenzhen	4 th Oct 2013	63
Golf manager annual forum for northern east China	Shenyang	11 th Oct 2013	65
Golf manager annual forum for mid China	Wuhan	1 st Nov 2013	59

Sample size depends on the research purpose (Patton, 2002). In order to decide on the sample size, it is necessary to clarify that the researcher studies “*a specific set of experiences for a larger number of people (seeking breadth) or a more open range of experiences for a smaller number of people (seeking depth)*” (Patton, 2002, p. 244). This research is to explore the key factors for market growth in China. Therefore, opinion for golf business is valuable for this research. As research claimed there are nearly 500 golf courses in China (Forward-Group, 2012), 200 respondents were considered a good target for this investigation. Furthermore, to cover the most general condition of golf development in different regions of China, this research requires golf managers to have experience working in the different regions of China. More regions these managers have worked in, the more valuable it will be for this research.

4.4.1.6 Questionnaire collection

The Golf course management workshop in Beijing hosted 55 managers from golf clubs across China. During the workshop, the researcher had the opportunity to distribute the questionnaire. The process started with a five minute introductions of the research which was followed by showing them the website address and QR code (as showed in Figure 4.4) for the questionnaire. Before the participant could start the survey, the researcher explained that the survey is undertaking with assurance of the confidentiality of their responses. Therefore, it was taken under voluntary circumstances. Participants could take the questionnaire either by using their phone or handset to scan the QR code or have a card with the website address.

After all the necessary introductions, respondents could complete the questionnaire either during the whole session of the workshop or after. The contact method was clearly identified on the questionnaire and they could provide feedback whenever they needed. Based on their feedback and questions, the researcher carried out further modifications to improve the questionnaire structure and ease of use in the later workshop.

The three conferences attended were: the golf manager annual forum for Southern China in Shenzhen, the golf manager annual forum for northern east China in Shenyang and the golf manager annual forum for mid China in Wuhan. Each of these conferences has around sixty members attending who work in local golf businesses. The researcher has five minutes to introduce the research and show them the website address and QR code for the questionnaire. Attending the survey was voluntary and all participants could refuse to take part.

Compared to traditional methods of questionnaire collection such as in-person or post by mail, website based questionnaire can collect the results right after the respondent had completed it and respondents could not have to email or post it back to the researcher. Therefore, the web based questionnaire was the most effective way for questionnaire distribution and collection (Remenyi & Williams, 1998).

4.4.1.7 Limitation of questionnaires

Although questionnaires have many advantages such as efficiency and precision, this method does have many limitations, which require the researcher to pay particular attention and take care when designing the questionnaire. Iacobucci (2010) listed two limitations for surveys through web-based questionnaires as follows:

- The researcher could only hope for high level of response rates
- Researcher cannot explain ambiguous questions; no probing opportunity

The first limitation stems from the sampling control. As website based surveys “create” the distance between respondents and the researcher, the researcher may not be able to acquire information such as who has taken the survey. The purpose of this research is to investigate the key market growth factors for golf development in China therefore ideally respondents will be people who are working in the golf industry in China. Furthermore, to fully understand the golf development in China, this research also

requires that the respondents are experienced golf managers. Consequently, this research adopted the purposive sampling method to meet the study's research aims and objectives.

The second limitation is due to information control. Due to the distance between respondents and the researcher, the researcher is unable to explain the questions that arise whilst respondents complete the questionnaire. To overcome this problem, each question was explained with as much detail as possible. This research has very few requirements in terms of time limitations. Respondents could complete more freely. The pilot study and revisions after the initial workshop based on respondent feedback addressed this potential limitation.

This research applied selective sampling when collecting data. Due to the limitations regarding funding and time, this researcher was able to attend only four events in China to approach golf managers. However, due to the condition of the Chinese survey website, the survey process cannot be designed as "closed". This means that every participant who finishes the questionnaire can share the link of the questionnaire through email, text and social networking sites. This presents difficulties since the research is unable to identify the number of people who have access to the questionnaire. Therefore, the accuracy of the response rate will be affected. However, the question is designed by using many of jargon language from the golf industry, people who do not work in the industry or familiar with golf could not finish.

This research found that the potential factors listed in the literature review chapter do not exhaust the number of factors that could contribute to golf market growth. Due to the limitation of knowledge, sources and time, other factors may have not been considered in enough depth for this study. The following in-depth interviews could help to address this potential limitation. The interview process may vary depending on the research questions and it is also likely that the participants will at some point direct themselves or is directed by the researcher. Thus, the conversation and thoughts may flow to cover areas that have not previously been discussed in the literature. Participants were also invited to put forward ideas and suggestions regarding a particular topic and to discuss solutions to problems that arose during the interview. The way the information gathered from the interview process could enrich the research findings and help to reach a comprehensive conclusion.

4.4.2 In-depth interview

As the purpose of this interview is to gather in-depth information to support the findings from the questionnaire, individual in-depth interviews were chosen. This is due to the difficulties of gathering golf managers together as their busy schedules do not permit this and also to minimise the impact that participants can have on each other during interviews. Intuitively, people will feel safer discussing golf development in China without the presence of others and thus will not fear being judged by others.

4.4.2.1 Interview design

The interviews conducted for this research were designed to allow intervention to describe situations that they have experienced during their daily work. Thus, interview could get a richer perspective than information gained through the questionnaire.

The interviews were semi-structured. They consisted of a series of open-ended questions, to help the researcher discover further information to answer the research questions. The semi-structured method provided a structure with a set of themes to be tested from the hypotheses and allowed the interviewer to be flexible and give the interviewees opportunity to be flexible and reflective.

The results of the questionnaires provide information regarding which factor or factors contributes to golf development in relation to the feature of golf development in China most. The interviews could provide further insights on how and why each factor could influence golf and golf development in China. More specifically, the main themes and specific questions of the interviews are shown in Table 4.4 (also in Appendix 4):

Table 4.4 Themes and questions for interview

Feature of golf development in China
Do you think golf development in China have the feature of recreation? Why? (If they do not understand what is recreation, provide them the definition and explain in detail.)
Do you think golf development in China have the feature of luxury? Why? (Carefully with the first responds. Then provide them the definition of luxury and see whether they change their mind.)
Factors of golf development in China in relation to features
How do you think political factor will influence golf development in China? What about in relation to recreation and luxury?
How do you think economic factor will influence golf development in China? What about in relation to recreation and luxury?
How do you think cultural factor will influence golf development in China? What about in relation to recreation and luxury?
How do you think technological factor will influence golf development in China? What about in relation to recreation and luxury?
How do you think geographic factor will influence golf development in China? What about in relation to recreation and luxury?
How do you think environmental factor will influence golf development in China? What about in relation to recreation and luxury?

The questions listed in Table 4.4 provide a guideline for the interviews, however the interviewees were permitted to discuss any topic they felt was relevant, to ensure all aspects of golf development factors had been covered in this research.

4.4.2.2 Sampling for qualitative data collection

In qualitative research, there are various types of sampling techniques that are recommended, for instance convenience sampling, judgement sampling, theoretical sampling (Bryman, 2012), quota sampling and snowball sampling (Remenyi & Williams, 1998). For this study, purposive sampling is adopted. The purposive sample, also commonly called a judgmental sample, is one that is selected based on the knowledge of a population and the purpose of the study (Gratton & Jones, 2010). This method is adopted because the specific target for this research is the golf industry, therefore, the participants for questionnaires and interviews are carefully selected from this industry.

The sample for the in-depth interview differed from the sample used for the questionnaire surveys. Respondents who had already taken the questionnaire survey were not considered as eligible for interviewing as their attitudes and responses had already been collected.

The interview was designed to gain more in-depth knowledge about golf and golf development in China and required the interviewees to have a comprehensive understanding about golf and golf development in China. To identify suitable people who can provide valid information for explaining the findings of the questionnaire survey, apart from simple sample, this research requires the interviewee to have rich experience either in-depth or in-width. The in-depth experience requires the interviewees to have worked in the golf industry for a relatively long period of time or in several Chinese regions. These two kinds of people have comprehensive knowledge and will have witnessed the impact of change overtime. The research thus postulated that they had the most profound understanding of the operating and external environments of the golf industry.

Due to the limitation of sources, in addition to the time consuming process of conducting interviews, the researcher selected five interviewees, which included experienced lecturers from universities teaching golf related subjects and leaders in the golf industry. Due to their experience and extensive knowledge, the information they provided was considered valid for further analysis. Their names and the name of their organisations are kept confidential because of research integrity reason to ensure that they could be as revealing as they feeling comfortable. More confidentiality issues are discussed in detail in Section 4.7.

To further improve the range of information gathered for this research study, and to gain more in-depth information about the political factor of golf development in China, interview invitation letters were sent to two people working for the government. One of interview candidates worked as a local official in one region near Beijing while the other interview candidate worked in the national sports administration department of China. To persuade and encourage them to accept the invitation request, they were also contacted by telephone. However, they indicated they were unwilling to participate in the interview and declined the invitation. As a result, it was not possible to obtain government officials' opinions of the golf industry.

The following Table 4.5 presents the interviewees. For confidential reason, they are referred to as interviewee A, interviewee B, interviewee C, interviewee D and interviewee E. The name of their organisation was replaced by the location of their organisation.

Table 4.5 List of interview participants

Coding for interviewee	Job	Location
Interviewee A	Professor	North
Interviewee B	General manager	North
Interviewee C	Manager	North
Interviewee D	General manager	East
Interviewee E	Manager	South

Interviewee A works as an academic in north China. He is one of the experts of golf course maintenance. His expertise is on grass lawn management. He has worked with the golf industry in China for more than 15 years. He has supervised the construction of hundreds of golf courses and is an expert on lawn maintenance work.

Interviewee B's golf course is located in north China. It is a 36 hole standard golf course and 9 of them have a floodlight facility, which means golfers could play after sunset. His golf course is one of the longest operating history golf courses in north China. He has been working at the golf course since it first opened for business. He is known as one of the best golf manager in north China.

Interviewee C's golf course is also located in north China. It is a 27 holes standard golf course. His golf course opened in 2008. Before 2008, he had worked in many golf courses around China. Although he has only worked in golf for less than 10 years, he also has experience of working in a golf course in Europe. This researcher believes interviewee C has a very good understanding of the golf business in China and golf business in Europe. Therefore, he was in a position to comment on the development status of golf business in China.

Interviewee D's golf course is located in east China. It is a 106 holes golf complex, one of the largest in China. The interviewee comes from Hong Kong and has worked in different regions of China for more than 20 year. Therefore, this researcher believed the interviewee D has deep knowledge of the golf business in China. Since the

interviewee's golf course becomes the training base for the Chinese national golf team, he has gained more sources for further development and understands of the industry.

Interviewee E's golf course is located in south China. It is a 36-holes golf course. His golf course was ranked as one of the most beautiful golf courses in Asia. His golf course has very suitable climate condition for the golf course and he also has one of the best maintenance departments in China. He has worked in the golf industry for more than 15 years in different parts of China. The researcher believes his comprehensive understanding of the golf business in China helped him to obtain the several rewards.

4.4.2.3 Conducting the interview

After selecting the interviewees, they were contacted by telephone and email and to participate in the interview. The invitation letter can be found in the Appendix 5.

A copy of the question themes was forwarded with the invitation email to assure the interviewees of the purpose of the interviews to allow them to better prepare themselves.

The interview venue can affect the quality of the interview. Therefore it should be convenient and comfortable for the interviewees (Bailey, 2007). Taking this into consideration, the interview locations were chosen to be in either a university office or their office in a golf course.

In order to ease the flow of information and conversation, building rapport with the interviewee is very crucial (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Meanwhile, all managers are busy. To avoid the situation that interview is interrupted by telephone or their assistant drop by, this researcher kept the questions as short and as precise as possible. Meanwhile, if the interviewee wished to talk about others, it is inappropriate for a young student to interrupt experienced high rank manager therefore the researcher listened patiently until he could find a suitable point to lead the discussion back to the original questions.

Each of the interviews lasted about one hour because managers provided plentiful information for further analysis. During the interview process, the writing note was taken. The note then was analysed with information gathered through the questionnaire survey.

4.5 Data analysis

This section will introduce the methods used to analyse the data gathered through the questionnaire survey and interviews.

4.5.1 Survey data analysis

The research data collected through surveys is predominantly numerical therefore a quantitative method of research is appropriate. The use of numerical data enables identification and measurement of the relationships between the variables in the current study of golf development. The correlation analysis means a quantity analysis of the extent of the interdependence of variable quantities. Therefore, a correlation study is appropriate because the goal of the study is to determine whether there is a statistically significant relationship between the independent and dependent variables. Furthermore, regression analysis is the method used to measure the relationship between the mean value of one variable and corresponding value of other variables. It is a useful tool to find out which element has the strongest influence. In this case, the regression analysis helped to identify the key factors that contribute to golf development in relation to features of golf in China.

The data analysis method for the questionnaire survey includes testing one or more sets of statistical hypotheses for each of the research questions developed for the study. Correlation analysis was used to test the hypothesis proposed in Chapter 3. The process tests whether there is a significant or insignificant, positive or negative linear correlation. Following the most commonly used level of significance in business statistics (Field, 2013), there is a significant correlation if the probability of the correlation is equal to or below a 0.05 level of significance. Furthermore, if the probability of the correlation is equal to or below a 0.01 level of significance, it suggests a strong significance level.

The design of the study was correlational because of the focus on identifying possible relationships between each of the independent variables and the dependent variable through statistical analysis (Leedy & Ormrod, 2012). For each of the independent variables and each feature of golf development in China, a Pearson product moment correlation coefficient was generated. The correlation coefficient indicates the existence of potential relationships between the predictor variables and the criterion variable. The correlation coefficient is a number between +1 and -1 (Field, 2013), identifying two

important aspects of any possible relationship between any of the independent variables and the dependent variable (Iacobucci & Churchill, 2010)

The sign of the correlation coefficient indicates whether a change in the criterion variable is tied to an increase or decrease in the predictor variable. The size of the number indicates the strength of the relationship between a criterion and predictor variable. The closer the number was to +1 or -1, the more likely a change in the dependent variable is tied to a criterion variable (B. Johnson, et al., 2007)

To conduct a correlation analysis, it is necessary to convert and group the values to fewer units. For instance, there are five Likert-type scale questions. In order to compute each of these questions, it is necessary to take an average score for all five and use it as the value for the economic factor and conduct correlation analysis with recreation and luxury product.

After the correlation analysis, regression analysis is used to test the ultimate research question, which is to investigate the key market growth factors for golf development in China. The specific statistical technique utilized to analyse the data is known as linear regression analysis. There are two sets of hypotheses distinguished with “A” and “B”, the hypotheses set “A” is to investigate the factors for golf development in relation to feature of recreation. The hypotheses set “B” is to investigate the factors for golf development in relation to the feature of luxury. Therefore, the regression analysis also has to follow a two-step process. The first linear regression uses the feature of recreation as the dependent and factors such as economic and environment as the independent variables. The second linear regression uses using the feature of luxury as the dependent and the same factors as the independent.

There are many kinds of regression analysis. Two of the most popular and widely applied types that are used in business related studies are simple linear regression and multiple regressions. In statistics, linear regression is an approach used to model the relationship between a scalar dependent variable y and one or more explanatory variables denoted x . The case of one explanatory variable is called simple linear regression. For more than one explanatory variable, it is called multiple linear regression. Multiple regression is widely used when carrying out an investigative form of research regarding several independent variables toward one dependent variable. After all, multiple regressions could show the researcher the importance of each

independent to the target dependent variable. The multiple regression is widely applied by many researchers who try to investigate the key factors for the development of certain sectors or key elements for a process (Borden, et al., 2004; Chan & Prendergast, 2007; Petrick & Backman, 2002; Rinehart & Pompe, 1999; Scott & Jones, 2006). Therefore, multiple regression is the main method adopted in this research. However, it is inadequate when fulfilling the target of this research to identify the key market growth factors. The model of regression model is shown below.

$$y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_i x_i + \varepsilon_i, i = 1 \dots n$$

If this research adopts multiple linear regression to investigate the key market growth, the model will be altered to, for instance:

$$Golf\ development = \beta_0 + \beta_1 economic_1 + \beta_2 political_1 \dots + \varepsilon$$

$$i = 1 \dots n$$

The equation combines the effect of all independent variables together and each independent has influence on others. This is contradictory to the purpose of this research. This research seeks to explore the importance of single factors to golf development in relation to the features of recreation and luxury product. The research diagram shows a single line from factors to feature and there are no links between factors. Therefore, the simple linear regression, which only considers one independent variable, is more suitable for the data analysis. But the fact is this research cannot deny there is no inter-relation between each factors and repeating simple linear regression has the possibility to lead to more errors and influence the final result. Therefore the researcher chose to continue using multiple regressions with the backward stepwise method. Instead of forcing all independent variables into the model simultaneously, the backward stepwise method firstly enters all variables of the model, then searches for the variable with the least influence on the outcome variable and removes it. The regression equation is constantly being reassessed to determine whether any redundant predictors can be removed. Final indicated factors are the variables that are most useful for the final outcome.

This method did not deny the interrelation among factors but objectively selected the factors with the highest influence, and thus met all the requirements of this research

project, therefore, this researcher applied the regression analysis using backward stepwise method.

The statistical package for the social science (SPSS) software package, Version 22, facilitated data analysis.

4.5.2 In-depth interview data analysis

Narrative analysis is “*an approach to the elicitation and analysis of language that is sensitive to the sense of temporal sequence that people, as tellers of stories about their lives or events around them, detect in their lives and surrounding episodes and inject into their accounts*” (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p. 531). Therefore, it is used as an analytical technique in this research.

“Story” and “narrative” are words often used interchangeably (Fisher, 2004). However, there are clear distinctions between story and narrative: “story” refers to the sales as a whole and usually is used to describe what the person tells; “narrative” is the created structure of a story; it is the researcher’s reconstruction of where the researcher interprets the story not only what the person says, but also how and why the person says it (Iacobucci & Churchill, 2010). Hence, narrative analysis is concerned with not only the analysis of the story, but also the analysis of the storyteller. Thus, it goes beyond mere content analysis of the stories. Content analysis is not sufficient for this research therefore narrative analysis is the preferred method.

Content analysis is commonly used to analyse documents and it seeks to quantify the content of documents and categorise their themes. Theoretical analysis was considered at an earlier stage of this research, but was deemed to be insufficient. This research utilizes the computer software package to store and categorise the data gathered from interviews. However, managers from the golf industry are constructed from context and event, the investigation cannot be constructed in a vacuum environment. Narrative analysis focuses on more dynamic processes and contexts, so it is more suitable for use in this research to analyse the position of managers

Moreover, narrative analysis begins from the standpoint of the storyteller. More specifically, it not only studies the content and context of the story, but also studies why people tell stories. It allows for the systematic study of personal experience and meaning (Gratton & Jones, 2010). In this research, narrative analysis is used to

investigate the key market growth factor of golf development according to golf managers' experience and perspectives. It not only explores the expectations from the managers but also probes deeper and looks beyond the surface.

To analyse the data collected from interviews, computers and software are tools that assist in the analysis of the content of the data. Since this research only consists of five interviews, the amount of data is not very big. The nature of this study requires the researcher to travel extensively to visit golf managers and attend events for questionnaire distribution.

Due to the need to cut costs and the extensive amount of travel incurred during data collection, note taking software package is utilised for this research to record and analyse the data. The most famous and effective note taking software used is "Evernote". It is a very effective way to store information online and collaborate when working with different people (Geyer & Reiterer, 2012). However, because the server of "Evernote" is not allocated in China and due to the limitation of Internet access this research was unable to access the service and record data online. Instead, a Chinese note taking software called "Youdao notepad" was used which has all the functions that are contained on the "Evernote" software, including access from different platforms such as mobile phone, tablet, PC and Mac; and the ability to save various forms of information such as text, picture and voice "Youdao notepad" has no limitations when uploading data each day on its free edition.

To analyse the data through "Youdao notepad", the researcher placed all the interview information, such as transcriptions into the software. When carrying out narrative analysis, the researcher must thoroughly understand the information. Youdao allowed easy access from various devices, permitting the researcher to review the information gathered from interviews and to determine general correlations to be identified with the data.

Although the "Youdao notepad" is not as efficient as other qualitative software package such as NVivo due to the lack of automatic coding and organising nodes features, the researcher was still able to utilise the software efficiently and analyse how the different factors impact golf development in China. Meanwhile, this research only has five interviewees, therefore, this researcher did not have a huge volume of qualitative data so the "Youdao notepad" is an efficient tool used for data analysis.

4.6 Validity and reliability

The concepts of internal and external validity are important, especially in experimental research (Neuman, 2011). As this study is quantitative, correlational and non-experimental, parts of the concerns regarding internal and external validity were not as significant, as they would have been in experimental research (Punch, 2005). However, it is still appropriate to address both types of validity to be confident of the robustness of the methods and data findings and conclusions.

Internal validity concerns possible errors in the results. Creswell (2002) referred to these as threats related to the design of a study (Neuman, 2011). Internal validity further concerns whether the results from the research reflect the target issue of a study and whether another variable has affected the results (Punch, 2005). Data collection instruments, such as the questionnaire surveys and in-depth interviews used for this study are only validated in relation to the purpose of the research. There is no concern with establishing specific causality in the current study. The correlation design is established to assess the strength and direction of possible relationships.

External validity is concerned with the degree to which findings from a study can be generalised outside the study setting (Punch, 2005). The results of the study are generalisable for golf development in China. The findings might also be generalisable to other related or similar sectors due to similarities in subject matter and the fact that these sectors have similar features for development compared to golf industry in China.

Reliability is concerned with the question of whether the results of the study are repeatable; and validity is concerned with the integrity of the conclusions that are generated from a piece of research (Bryman & Bell, 2007). Both of them are important criteria in establishing and assessing the quality of research (Bryman & Bell, 2007; Fisher, 2004; Webb & Webb, 1975). Thus, it is necessary to address the reliability and validity of this research. The words reliability and validity were originally developed for use in quantitative social science, and they are essentially concerned with the adequacy of measures.

As qualitative methods have become increasingly important for social study, the constructionist research must develop the power to convince examiners, professionals and the wide public (Easterby-Smith, et al., 2012). Therefore, reliability and validity

have become important for both qualitative and quantitative research. To ensure the reliability, this research used a two stages approach to combine findings from quantitative and qualitative data collection. The researcher believes the study design has satisfied both reliability and validity requirements.

4.7 Researcher's reflection on PhD journey

Due to various reasons, the researcher's supervisory changed for several times, thus unfortunately, the research direction has to be changed to meet the requirement of different supervision teams. The researcher has read large amount of literature in different areas and wrote many pieces of materials, which in the end could not be used directly in this thesis. However, this turbulent PhD journey did reinforce his determination to complete the thesis and achieve a high standard. Meanwhile, this experience taught him to be patient, persistent and focus on details to see a challenge through to its end.

Moreover, the experience also enriches and deepens his knowledge to better understand golf and golf industry in China. This knowledge helps the researcher to build a solid research project and carry out sound research data collection and analysis. This knowledge also enables the researcher to have a broad vision about the golf industry in China in order to propose robust arguments. Therefore, the researcher is able to achieve a comprehensive outcome despite set backs in the supervision process.

4.8 Research ethics

Ethics refers to the appropriateness of a researcher's behaviour in relation to the rights of participants in the research or how they are affected by the research (Saunders, et al., 2007). A researcher should clarify his obligations to promote awareness of ethical principles and ethical issues when conducting his research activity. This means researchers need to have an ethical framework to deal with such issues (Patton, 2002).

The consideration of research ethics is an essential part of any research project (Gratton & Jones, 2010). This is particularly crucial for this research because the golf industry in China in the current period of time is "sensitive" due to the suspicion of the public attitude towards golf development. It is necessary to take this into consideration when attempting to build rapport and trust with participants. This is of particular importance in a hierarchical social and cultural system like those found in China and India (Gupta

& Wang, 2009). In order to address the ethical issues in conduct the research, this study follows the ethical principles of: the Edinburgh Napier University's (2013) "Code of Practice on Research Ethics and Governance" and the Market Research Society's (MRS) (2010) "code of conduct". These guidelines highlight the importance of integrity, transparency, and quality in conducting research, which were adhered to throughout this study. Since the main purpose of this research is to investigate the key factors for market growth of golf development in China, the respondents and interviewees were managers working in the golf industry in China. The information provided by respondents and the conversations between the researcher and interviewees may consist of sensitive information, which requires extra consideration when reporting in this thesis. In addition to these principles, this research states that the purpose of the study is purely academic in a prominent position on the questionnaire to ensure that respondents are aware of this. Prior to conducting the interviews, the interviewees were also informed that the study was undertaken solely for academic purposes.

Trochim (2008) proposed several key issues to consider for research ethics, which are: informed consent, voluntary participation, the risk of harm, confidentiality and anonymity.

Informed consent means that the prospective research participants must be fully informed about things such as the research aim and procedures so that they can make a decision about whether or not they wish to participate in the study (Bryman, 2012; Patton, 2002). About the questionnaire surveys, the researcher explained such information to the respondents and addressed their concerns prior to starting the survey. For the interview, the researcher contacted the participants via the telephone to explain the aim, purpose and process of the interview and the interviews were held in a mutually agreed space and time.

Voluntary participation requires that people are not coerced into participating in the research. During data collection, the researcher respects the rights of participants' willingness to be researched and informs respondents that they are welcome to terminate the questionnaire or interview at any time. If respondents feel uncomfortable answering certain questions during the questionnaire survey, they can stop answering the questionnaire and close the web page. Stop answering or close web page will not result to their completed questions submitted to the online server. During the interview,

respondents were also given the right to refuse answering questions without any sense of pressure. However, this situation did not happen during the process of the interviews.

Risk of harm means that the researcher should not put participants in a situation where they might be at risk as a result of their participation. To avoid this, the participants in the pilot study were experienced people who have worked in the golf industry for several years. The first task for the pilot study was to read the questionnaire through and point out any questions that are too sensitive to discuss or answer. These questions are then modified to be more acceptable or are deleted. In addition to this, this researcher ensures the information provided is completely confidential and reported in such a way that the participants could not be identified.

Confidentiality and anonymity are concerned with ensuring that information will not be made available to anyone who is not directly involved in the study, in order to protect participants' right of privacy. For the questionnaire survey, all personal data and the name of the company were not collected. For the interviews, all personal data and company information were kept completely confidential, secured and concealed. During the thorough research process, the information made public remains anonymous. Results and findings involving the researched organisations and participants are presented anonymously.

4.9 Summary

This chapter verified the methodology, which was used for collecting the data. This chapter also introduced the research philosophy in addition to presenting the questionnaire and in-depth interview design and analysis process. The researcher satisfied that close care was taken in the data collection, processing and management.

The following chapter presents the data from the survey. After the results of the questionnaire survey are presented, Chapter 6 will further discuss the result combined with the information gathered from the interviews.

Chapter 5. Data And Findings Narrative

5.1 Introduction

This chapter reports the outcomes from the questionnaire using SPSS as the statistical package, which indicates how potential factors would influence golf development in China in relation to it being a recreation and luxury product.

The results from the data analysis are organised in two stages. The first stage provides the findings of the preliminary data, including background and descriptive statistics. The second stage provides the primary data and includes correlational and regression analyses. The second stage also tests the hypotheses proposed in Chapter 3.

5.2 Response rates

Response rates are one of the most important indicators of survey quality and one of the indicators that are most likely to be reported. Additionally, response rates are frequently used to compare quality between surveys, survey organisations and countries and over time (Lynn, et al., 2001). To achieve a satisfactory response rate, this research utilised an Internet based questionnaire engine (Deutskens, et al., 2004). Although research suggested that email recruitment has become an increasingly common practice (Neuman, 2011) and many researchers apply this email method (Correia, et al., 2007; Mansfield & Wheaton, 2011; K. Park & Reisinger, 2009; H. Yang, 2009), the research target for this particular research are managers from the golf industry in China. In comparison to other communication channels, such as messages and phone calls, email is unacceptable in China (Y. Lu, et al., 2010) especially for people working in the front line of everyday business. Therefore, based on Internet based questionnaire engines, this research designed the QR code (Figure 4.4) to scan and shorten the website address (Figure 4.5) making it easier to type into mobile phones, tablets or computers.

This research participates in three conferences in Shenzhen, Shenyang and Wuhan. One seminar was held in Beijing. The general information is listed in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1 General information about questionnaire respondents

	Location	Number of participants	Number of respondents
Workshop of golf course management	Beijing	55	
Golf manager annual forum for Southern China	Shenzhen	63	
Golf manager annual forum for northern east China	Shenyang	65	
Golf manager annual forum for mid China	Wuhan	59	
Total		242	213(88.01%)

This research follows research ethics considerations, which require this research to follow the code of voluntary participation. This means that participants are not required to submit the questionnaire if they feel uncomfortable when answering questions. Therefore, this research is unable to determine the number of people that have access to the questionnaire, how many people submit the questionnaire in each of the events and how many people access the questionnaire but did not submit it. This increases issues regarding the accuracy of the response rate in terms of the sample population.

Nevertheless, the four events that the researcher attended have a total of 242 people in the audience according to the number that the organiser provides. 216 questionnaires are submitted and returned to the website. The number of fully completed and valid surveys is 213. The response rate for the survey is 88.01%.

5.3 Demographic information

The demographic information collected includes gender, qualification, working position and work experience. Background information focuses on the respondents' current business and focuses on the size of their business and the facilities that their business provides. The factors this research attempts to investigate require data from the majority of China. Different people have different outlooks regarding the same phenomenon (Kuhn, 1970; H. Zhao, 2009). Therefore, in addition to searching for participants with rich experience, it is also necessary to cover most general situations. Moreover, an in-depth understanding regarding participants' demographic and background information

will assist in appreciating their perceptions of golf development in China. This information also assists in the following chapter for the crosstab analysis.

5.3.1 Gender

The results in Table 5.2 regarding gender show that more men than women took part in this study. Golf is suggested to be a game that is dominated by men (D. Hudson, 2008) but female participation is on the rise. The latest numbers show that of 80% men play with 20% of women (Reis & Correia, 2013). This circumstance is also apparent in this research. Golf course operation involves substantial amounts of physical work (Hu, 2001). It is not surprising that there are more male golf managers

Table 5.2 Result of Q1, gender

		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	Male	120	55.6
	Female	93	43.1
	Total	213	98.6
Missing		3	1.4
Total		216	100.0

5.3.2 Qualification

The results (Table 5.3) show that the majority of respondents are qualified to college or university levels. Surprisingly, 10% of managers are middle school or high school level educated. This suggests that golf management requires experience and skills rather than just an academic qualification.

Table 5.3 Result of Q2, qualification

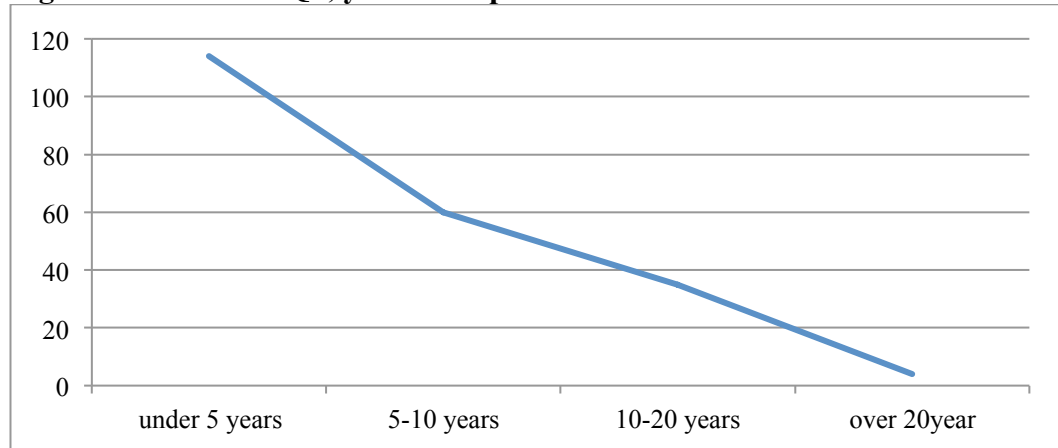
		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	Middle or high school	22	10.2
	College or University	154	71.3
	Postgraduate	37	17.1
	Total	213	98.6
Missing		3	1.4
Total		216	100.0

5.3.3 Years of experience

Figure 5.1 shows that the majority of managers have worked in the golf industry for less than five years. Golf in China is still very young and the biggest boom period occurred within the last ten years. However, golf was officially established in China thirty years

ago, thus the opinions from managers that have worked for more than twenty years are extremely valuable insight for this research. Furthermore, staff working in the golf industry has a high mobility. This means that fewer managers work in the golf industry for a long period of time.

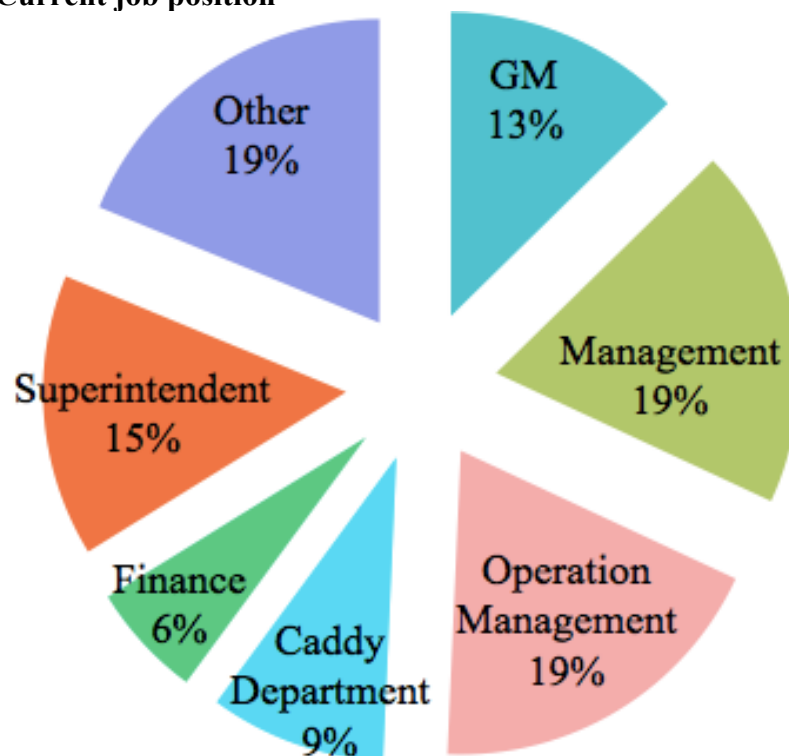
Figure 5.1 Result of Q3, years of experience



5.3.4 Current working position

Figure 5.2 shows the results of managers' current working department. This study believes different people have different opinions towards the same object. For the key market growth factors, different employees provide their varied opinions. This information provides a better background index for crosstab analysis.

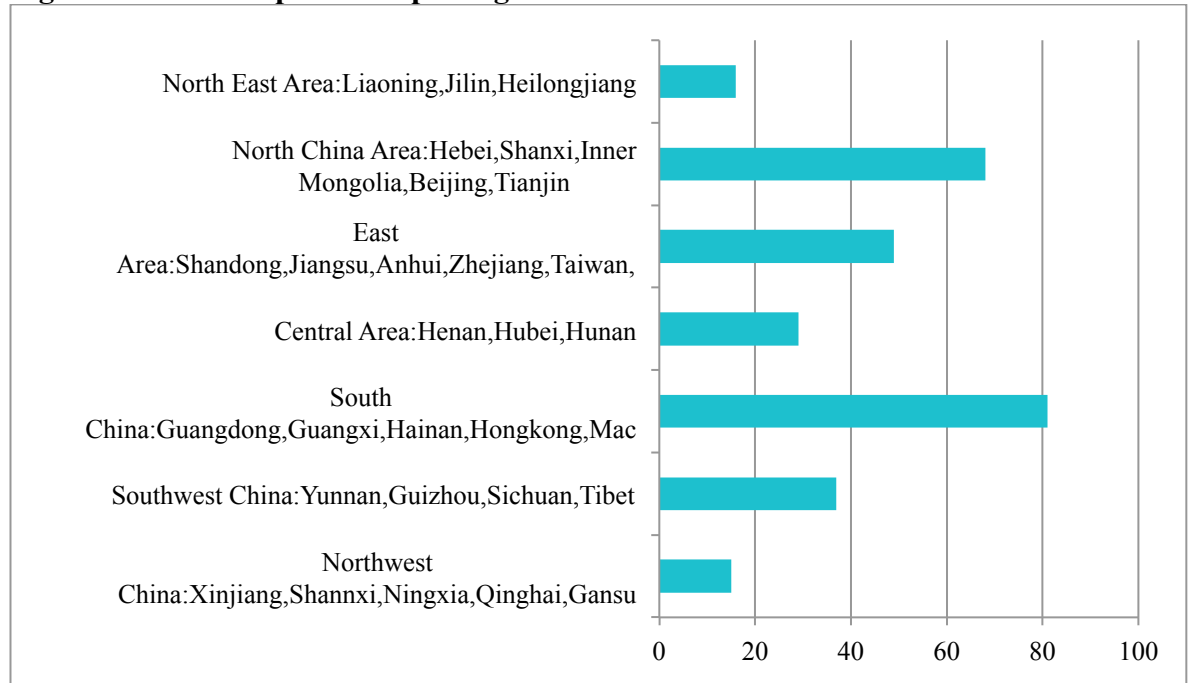
Figure 5.2 Current job position



5.3.5 Work experiences per region

Figure 5.3 shows managers who participate in this survey have worked in the following region of China.

Figure 5.3 Work experiences per region



Due to the high mobility of people working in the golf industry in China, this question is designed as a multiple-choice. This enables participants to select more than one region where they have previously worked. Table 5.4 shows these results. Table 5.4 shows that 213 participated managers have working experience in 1.385 regions in China. It means averagely, each manager has work experience in more than one region around China. The least number is 1 and highest is 5. The standard deviation is 0.747.

Table 5.4 Regions have working experience

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Region	213	1.00	5.00	1.3850	.74742
Valid N	213				

5.3.6 Background for current golf club

This research requires background information such as the number of golf club members and the scale of golf courses to have a fundamental understanding about golf courses in China. Although there is an existing report that records basic golf courses in China (Forward-Group, 2011, 2012), it is necessary to gain insightful material that allows for convenient analysis and a conclusion of earlier findings.

Table 5.5 shows the number of members that managers have in their golf clubs. The survey suggests that the majority of golf clubs have around 100-300 members. Interviews with experienced golf managers suggest golf clubs with over 700 members are quite enormous. Their opinions are quite important for this study.

Table 5.5 Number of members

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	100-300	112	51.9	52.6	52.6
	300-500	56	25.9	26.3	78.9
	500-700	18	8.3	8.5	87.3
	over 700	27	12.5	12.7	100.0
	Total	213	98.6	100.0	
Missing	System	3	1.4		
Total		216	100.0		

Figure 5.4 shows the scale of golf courses that managers participating in this study work in. It suggests 53% of golf managers that participate in this study come from 18 hole golf courses. These results show consistency with the current report published by the Forward-group (2012). The figure is also additional evidence of the validity of the survey finding and the data collection process.

Figure 5.4 Scale of golf courses

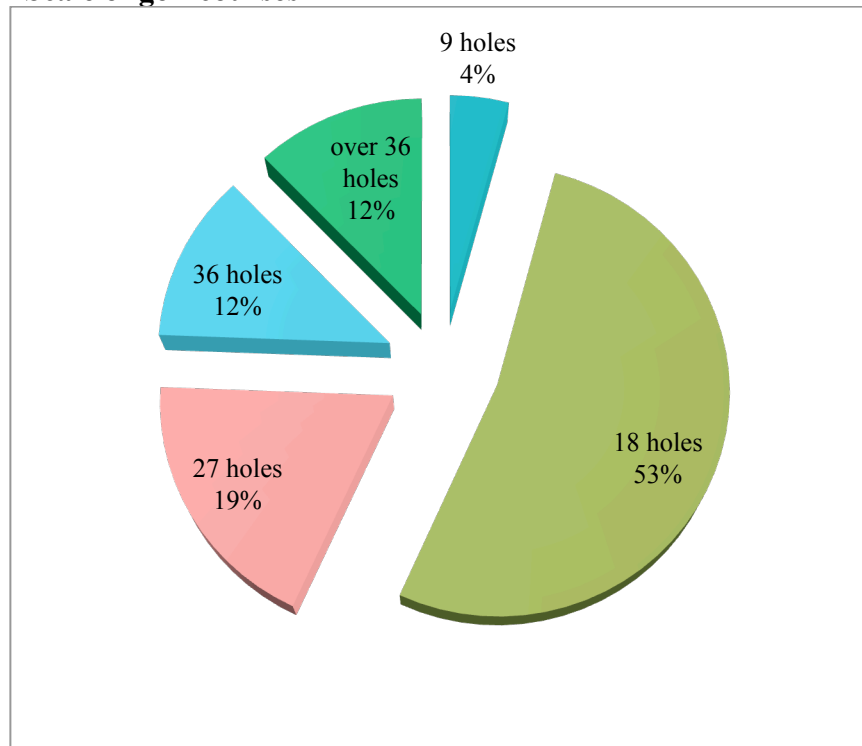


Table 5.6 shows the answers to three questions, whether they have hotel facilities, whether they have a villa project and whether they belong to a sports park. It suggests

that the majority of golf courses involved in this study have a hotel and villa facility. Further discussions about this result and the relationship between golf and recreation are found in the following chapters. However, the results do not show that the majority of golf courses are established under the cover of sports parks as literature suggests (M. He, 2012).

Table 5.6 Results of sports park

Answers	Hotel	Villa	Sports park
Yes	150	121	89
Not yet but under construction	34	52	
No and no plan	29	40	124

5.4 Results of feature of golf development in China

The following section reports the results of managers' opinions on whether golf development in China has the feature of a recreation and luxury product. This section proves the outcome from the literature review. Furthermore, this section establishes the foundations and index for the following analysis that investigates the key market growth factors.

5.4.1 Recreation

The survey questions in this section have two functions. The first is to distinguish whether the majority of people play golf for recreation. The second function is to recognise the extent to which people play golf for recreation purpose.

Table 5.7 shows the largest category for golf members. The table indicates that individual memberships play a big role in regards to membership categories. It suggests that the majority of people play golf for the purpose of leisure. It also means that play for the purpose of work comes the second. If golfers play for leisurely purposes, there is a possibility that they are playing for recreation, because recreation is part of leisure as literature suggests (Veal, 2004).

Table 5.7 Membership categories

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Business membership	57	26.4	26.8	26.8
	Individual membership	124	57.4	58.2	85.0
	Pay as play visitor	32	14.8	15.0	100.0
	Total	213	98.6	100.0	
Missing	System	3	1.4		
Total		216	100.0		

As showed in Table 5.8, the busiest time during the week is the weekend. This suggests that the majority of golfers play outside of working times. It also suggests golfers play for leisure or recreation rather than for working purposes.

Table 5.8 Busiest time during the week

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Weekday	47	21.8
	Weekend	166	76.9
	Total	213	98.6
Missing	System	3	1.4
Total		216	100.0

Table 5.9 suggests that the majority of golfers are of working age and few of them are retired. If considering the results shown in Table 5.8 and Table 5.9, working age golfers mostly play during the weekend. It suggests that quite a few golfers play due to work. This verified the claim of Godbey (2003) that people who work and earn for a living use their leisure time for recreation. Furthermore, majority golfers must enjoy golfing otherwise they will not spend their leisure time on this activity.

Table 5.9 Working condition of players

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Mostly working	165	76.4
	Half and half	39	18.1
	Mostly retired	9	4.2
	Total	213	98.6
Missing	System	3	1.4
Total		216	100.0

Table 5.10 shows the percentage of golfers that stay overnight in accommodation facilities in or surrounding the golf course. It shows that quite a number of golfers do not tend to use the accommodation facilities. As the literature review chapter suggests,

the concept of golf tourism cannot cover major golfers in China, therefore this research proposes the concept of recreational golf, which is a combination of the concept of golf tourism and golf for leisure purposes. Table 5.10 is the corroborative that if one considers golfer tourism, fewer golfers will be considered.

Table 5.10 Golfer stay overnight

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	10%-30%	109	50.5
	30%-60%	54	25.0
	60%-90%	50	23.1
	Total	213	98.6
Missing	System	3	1.4
Total		216	100.0

The following question uses the five-point Likert-type scale to define the extent that people play golf (Trochim & Donnelly, 2008). Five questions are selected for this question, as showed in Table 5.11.

Table 5.11 Recreation

Items	n	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Leisure_Health	213	1	5	3.95	.778
Leisure_Recreation	213	1	5	3.77	.772
Leisure_Peers	213	1	5	3.43	.853
Leisure_Leisure	213	1	5	3.79	.749
Leisure_Technique	213	1	5	3.36	.780

The Cronbach's alpha reliability test (Table 5.12) for the selected question shows 68.6% reliability and correlation among these questions and a significant correlation ($p < 0.01$) among these five questions. Therefore these five questions are statistically well designed. The average score for this question becomes the index for further analysis of factors for correlation and regression analysis.

Table 5.12 Reliability tests for recreation questions

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.686	5

After the rating question, this research designs the ranking question to ask managers' opinions on what they believe to be the most important reason for people playing golf under the definition of people playing for recreation. The results are shown in Figure 5.5.

Figure 5.5 Rank for the reason people playing golf

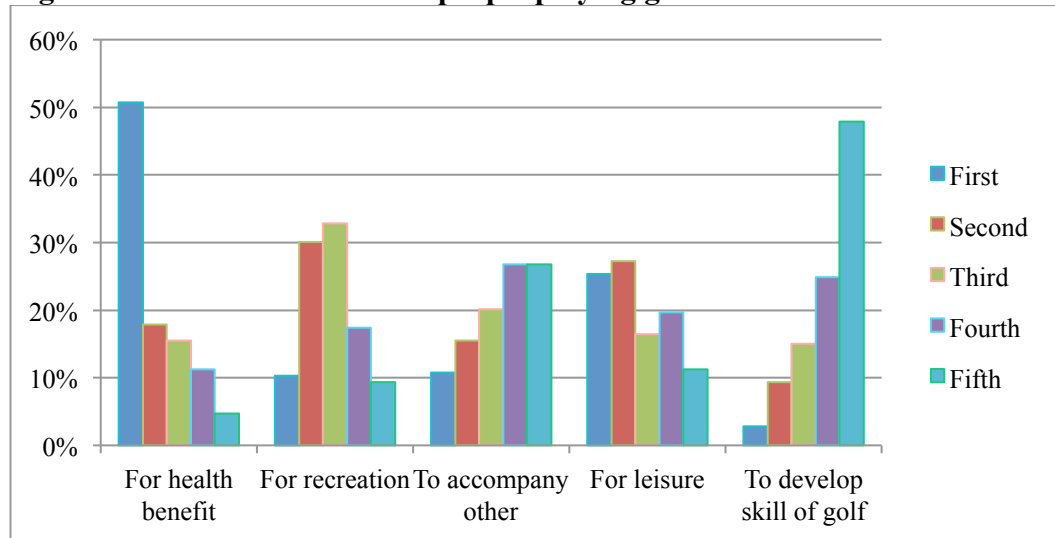


Figure 5.5 shows that a number of golf managers believe that playing for health is the important reasons for people playing golf. Meanwhile, they do not think people likely to play to develop their golf skills.

5.4.2 Luxury

To define whether people play golf due to its feature of luxury, five-point Likert-type scale questions (Trochim & Donnelly, 2008) are used. Seven questions (Table 5.13) are selected for this question. The results for seven questions are presented in Table 5.13 for the feature of luxury product.

Table 5.13 People playing for luxury

Table 5.14 shows the reliability test, which indicates 67.1% statistic validity.

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Q18_Luxury_People post their golfing photos on social media to display their status.	213	1	5	3.25	.952
Q18_Luxury_Golfers like to be seen playing golf	213	1	5	3.29	.942
Q18_Luxury_Majority golfers are well off.	213	1	5	3.91	.847
Q18_Luxury_Golfers play the game to keep up with their peers	213	1	5	3.09	.867
Q18_Luxury_People play where wealthy people play	213	1	5	3.15	1.001
Q18_Luxury_Golfer will pay higher price for better designed golf course	213	1	5	3.60	.833

Meanwhile, the correlation among these questions (see appendix) shows a significant correlation ($p < 0.01$) among five questions. The only two that have no significant correlation are “golfer play to keep up with peers” and “golfer would pay a higher price for better designed golf course”. This means participants believe golfers would like to pay higher prices for better courses but they are not playing golf to keep up with their peers or, golfers would not pay a higher price for better courses but they are playing golf to keep up with their peers. The definition of luxury products shows that people purchase luxury products not only to show to others but also as a “self-reward” (Amatulli & Guido, 2011; Heinemann, 2008; Truong, et al., 2008; J. Xu, 2013; Zhou, 2011). Therefore, this question does not exclude this from the index and the average score for these questions becomes the index for further analysis of factors for correlation and regression analysis.

Table 5.14 Reliability tests for recreation questions

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.671	6

A further t-test analysis is required to determine whether golf is seen as a luxury product. If the average score is larger than 3, it suggests people believe golf has the feature of a luxury product. Table 5.15 shows the results. Participants seem to agree with other statements but do not agree with the fourth statement, which is that golfers play to keep up with their peers. This also indicates that people gradually change their requirements of luxury products from a product to show to others, to a product they use to enjoy or treat them.

Table 5.15 T-test for luxury product

	Test Value = 3			
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Q18_Luxury_People post their golfing photos on social-media to display their status.	3.885	212	.000	.254
Q18_Luxury_Golfers like to be seen playing golf	4.512	212	.000	.291
Q18_Luxury_Majority golfers are well off.	15.611	212	.000	.906
Q18_Luxury_Golfers play the game to keep up with their peers	1.502	212	.135	.089
Q18_Luxury_People play where wealthy people play	2.122	212	.035	.146
Q18_Luxury_Golfer will pay higher price for better designed golf course	10.440	212	.000	.596

Table 5.16 shows the requirements of different categories of golfers for playing golf. It indicates that for three categories of golfers the first priority is a golf course that is high in quality; the second priority is that whether famous golfers play there and the third priority is that whether it is a championship course. The fourth and fifth priorities have different priorities for different categories of people. However, on examining Table 5.16 vertically, it shows players with individual membership consider all of the following statements more than the other two categories of players.

Table 5.16 Requirement of different players

	Price and quality	Exclusive	Quality	Famous player	Championship course
Enterprise membership	3.465 (5th)	3.577 (4th)	4.019 (1st)	3.601 (3rd)	3.803 (2nd)
Individual membership	3.615 (4th)	3.615 (4th)	4.089 (1st)	3.685 (3rd)	3.826 (2nd)
Pay as play player	3.423 (4th)	3.272 (5th)	3.925 (1st)	3.704 (3rd)	3.742 (2nd)

5.5 Factors and testing research hypothesis

This section reports the result of the survey related to potential market growth factors contributing to golf development in China. This section also shows the result of the hypotheses proposed in Chapter 4.

5.5.1 Political factor and golf development in China

The first research question for the study of golf development addresses the possible association between features of golf development in China and potential market growth factors. Table 5.17 shows the questions regarding the political factor have an average score that is significantly ($p < 0.05$) over 3. This means that participants agree with the listed statement and believe the political factor will influence golf development in China.

Table 5.17 One sample T test for political factor

	Test Value = 3			
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Q26_Political_The central government's current approach toward golf is the most restrictive in the last 30 years.	6.935	212	.000	.451
Q26_Political_This approach will slow down golf development in China	3.179	212	.002	.211
Q26_Political_The approach will stop new-entrance.	8.617	212	.000	.521
Q26_Political_Restrict approach will benefit existing golf courses	3.965	212	.000	.235
Q26_Political_restrictive approach will not stop golf development in China	3.249	212	.001	.202
Q26_Political_Restrictive approach will make golf more expensive.	5.784	212	.000	.371
Q26_Political_Restrict policies with gradually correct golf development in China.	7.728	212	.000	.455

The Cronbach's alpha reliability test displayed in Table 5.18 shows 0.621 confidences for questions selected for political factor to further conduct correlation test for both recreation and luxury product.

Table 5.18 Reliability tests for political factor

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.621	7

The first hypothesis regarding the political factor and golf development is:

H1a: The political factor has a positive influence on the golf industry in China in relation to the feature of recreation.

Testing the research hypothesis involves the use of correlational analysis. The results are shown in Table 5.19. The table shows a positive relationship between recreation and the political factor, but the p value of the 1-tailed test is 0.079, which is not strongly significant. Therefore, the hypothesis is confirmed as:

H1a*: The political factor has a positive influence on the golf industry in China in relation to the feature of recreation.

Further discussions about the relationships between features of recreation and the political factor follow in Chapter 6.

Table 5.19 Correlation between features of recreation and the political factor

	REC2
POL Pearson Correlation	.097
Sig. (1-tailed)	.079
N	213

Another relationship this section tested is between the political factor and feature of luxury product. The proposed hypothesis is:

H1b: The political factor has a positive influence on the golf industry in China in relation to the feature of luxury product.

Testing the research hypothesis also involves using correlational analysis. The results are presented in Table 5.20. The table shows a positive relationship between luxury product and political factor. The p value of a 1-tailed test is less than 0.001, which indicates a strong significant. Therefore, the hypothesis is further confirmed as:

Table 5.20 Correlation between features of luxury and political factor

	LUX
Pearson Correlation LUX	1.000
POL	.262
Sig. (1-tailed) LUX	.
POL	.000
N LUX	213
POL	213

H1b*: The political factor has a significant positive influence on the golf industry in China in relation to the feature of luxury product.

Further discussion about relationship between features of factor will follow in Chapter 6.

A summary of additional questions regarding the political factor presents in the following Table 5.21:

Table 5.21 Opinion about government's approach

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Positive	67	31.0
	Negative	76	35.2
	No influence	70	32.4
	Total	213	98.6
Missing	System	3	1.4
Total		216	100.0

The survey shows there is no substantial difference between each of the answers. This finding will be explained further in the following chapter.

Table 5.22 shows the ranking of the impact of relative group to the golf business. The number in the “average ranking” column is the average ranking but is an average score, which means that the item with the lowest number is the most influential. Participants believe the central government has the strongest influence on the golf business.

Table 5.22 Average ranking for possible influences

Groups	Average ranking	Std. Deviation
Central government	2.178	1.323
Local government	2.338	0.921
Local residence	3.230	1.124
Environmentalism	3.624	1.387
Employees	3.629	1.517

5.5.2 Economic factor and golf development in China

This section reviews the results of the relationship between golf development and the economic factor. The one-sample T test (Table 5.23) shows the average score for questions regarding the economic factor are significantly ($p < 0.01$) over 3, which means respondents generally agree with the statements in the questionnaire. Therefore, the majority believe the economic factor influences golf development in China.

Table 5.23 One-sample T test for economic factor

	Test Value = 3			
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Q22_The golf industry in China has grown as a result of Chinese economy growth	11.641	212	.000	.878
Q23_Economics_Golf is an relatively expensive games compare with others	15.008	212	.000	.962
Q23_Economics_Many people wish to play golf but the high cost stop them	10.819	212	.000	.700
Q23_Economics_When disposable income increases people play more golf	16.602	212	.000	.897

The Cronbach's alpha reliability test (Table 5.24) shows 0.682 confidences for questions selected for economic factor to further conduct the correlation test for both recreation and luxury product.

Table 5.24 Reliability tests for economic factor

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.682	5

Under this section, the related hypothesis is:

H2a: The economic factor has a positive influence on the golf industry in China in relation to the feature of recreation.

Testing the research hypothesis involves using correlational analysis. The results are shown in Table 5.25. The table shows a significant positive relationship between the feature of recreation and economic factor. The p value of 1-tailed correlation test is 0.03, which is lower than 0.05, suggesting a significant correlation. Therefore, the hypothesis is confirmed and improved as following:

H2a*: The economic factor has a significant positive influence on the golf industry in China in relation to the feature of recreation.

Table 5.25 Correlation between features of recreation and economic factor

	ECO
REC Pearson Correlation	.187**
Sig. (1-tailed)	.003
N	213

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

Another relationship this section has tested is between the economic factor and feature of luxury product. The proposed hypothesis is:

H2b: The economic factor has a positive influence on the golf industry in China in relation to the feature of luxury product.

Testing the research hypothesis also involves using correlational analysis. The result is shown in Table 5.26. The table shows a positive relationship between luxury product and the economic factor. The p value of the 1-tailed test is less than 0.001, which indicate a strong significant. Therefore, the hypothesis is further confirmed as:

H2b*: The economic factor has a significant positive influence on the golf industry in China in relation to the feature of luxury product.

Table 5.26 Correlation between features of luxury and economic factor

		ECO
LUX	Pearson Correlation	.346**
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.000
	N	213

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

Further discussions about the relationship between features of recreation and the economic factor will follow in Chapter 6.

5.5.3 Cultural factor and golf development in China

This section reviews the results of the relationships between golf development and the cultural factor. The one-sample T test (Table 5.27) shows the average scores for 4 out of 5 questions regarding cultural factor are significantly ($p < 0.01$) over 3, which mean respondents generally agree with the statement in the questionnaire. Therefore, the majority believe the cultural factor influences golf development in China. The only option that the participants do not agree with is “golf representing traditional Chinese culture”. However, as the main purpose of this section is to conduct the correlation analysis, disagreements with this question will not affect the result of the following analysis.

Table 5.27 One-sample T test for cultural factor

	Test Value = 3			
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Q29_Cultural_People playing golf to make friends	14.712	212	.000	.742
Q29_Cultural_Game of golf is reflective of traditional Chinese value	.565	212	.573	.033
Q29_Cultural_During last 30 year the game of golf is reflect more western value and culture.	8.689	212	.000	.479
Q29_Cultural_The game of golf reflect the attitude and value of the younger generation	5.071	212	.000	.272
Q29_Cultural_Golf is popular because the new trend of healthy thinking.	9.876	212	.000	.559

The Cronbach's alpha reliability test as displayed in Table 5.28 shows 0.583 confidences for questions selected for the cultural factor to further conduct the correlation test for both recreation and luxury product.

Table 5.28 Reliability tests for cultural factor

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.583	5

Field (2013) claims that if the Cronbach's alpha value is lower than 60% this means that the response does not follow a normal distribution. A further table is required to show what will happen if some questions are excluded. This is shown in Table 5.29.

Table 5.29 Further reliability tests for cultural factor

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Q29_Cultural_People playing golf to make friends	13.34	4.651	.255	.570
Q29_Cultural_Game of golf is reflective of traditional Chinese value	14.05	4.379	.254	.577
Q29_Cultural_During last 30 year the game of golf is reflect more western value and culture.	13.61	4.410	.280	.560
Q29_Cultural_The game of golf reflect the attitude and value of the younger generation	13.81	3.861	.496	.439
Q29_Cultural_Golf is popular because the new trend of healthy thinking.	13.53	3.911	.432	.473

Table 5.29 indicates that the exclusion of any questions does not raise the value of Cronbach's alpha value. This means that this situation has not occurred due to a single question. It also means that the responses for all of these questions do not follow normal distribution; the responses focus on a particular option. However, as the alpha value is close to 60%, the researcher believes that this result will not influence the following analysis as this result is accidental.

The first hypothesis regarding cultural factor and golf development is:

H3a: The cultural factor has a positive influence on the golf industry in China in relation to the feature of recreation.

Testing the research hypothesis involves using correlational analysis. The results are shown in Table 5.30. The table shows a positive relationship between recreation and the cultural factor, but the p value of 1-tailed test is 0.048, which is significant. Therefore, the hypothesis is confirmed. Further discussions regarding the relationship between features of recreation and cultural factor follow in Chapter 6. Therefore, the hypothesis is further confirmed as:

H3a*: The cultural factor has a significant positive influence on the golf industry in China in relation to the feature of recreation.

Table 5.30 Correlation between features of recreation and cultural factor

	CUL
REC Pearson Correlation	.114*
Sig. (1-tailed)	.048
N	213

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed).

Another relationship for this section to test is between the cultural factor and feature of luxury product. The proposed hypothesis is:

H3b: The cultural factor has a positive influence on the golf industry in China in relation to the feature of luxury product.

Testing the research hypothesis also involves using correlational analysis. Table 5.31 shows a positive relationship between luxury product and the cultural factor. The p value of the 1-tailed test is less than 0.002, which indicate a strong significance level. Therefore, the hypothesis is further confirmed as:

H3b*: The cultural factor has a significant positive influence on the golf industry in China in relation to the feature of luxury product.

Table 5.31 Correlation between features of luxury and cultural factor

	CUL
LUX Pearson Correlation	.192**
Sig. (1-tailed)	.002
N	213

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

5.5.4 Technological factor and golf development in China

This section reviews the results of the relationship between golf development and the technological factor. The one-sample T test (Table 5.32) shows the average score for questions regarding technological factor is significantly ($p < 0.01$) over 3, which mean respondents generally agree with the statements in the questionnaire. Therefore, the majority believe that the technological factor will influence golf development in China. The only statement that participants did not agree with is “equipment with more function is better”. However, as the main purpose of this section is to conduct the

correlation analysis, disagreements with this question will not affect the result of the analysis.

Table 5.32 One-sample T test for technological factor

	Test Value = 3					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Q31_Tech_We regularly update our equipment	14.386	212	.000	.700	.60	.80
Q31_Tech_New equipment improve efficiency and lower cost	14.223	212	.000	.728	.63	.83
Q31_Tech_Latest equipment is good to use	7.488	212	.000	.404	.30	.51
Q31_Tech_Equipment with more function is better	.831	212	.407	.052	-.07	.17
Q31_Tech_We cooperate with a college or university to improve our standard of services.	13.943	212	.000	.845	.73	.96

The Cronbach's alpha reliability test as displayed in Table 5.33 shows 41.3% confidences for questions selected for technological factor to further conduct the correlation test for both recreation and luxury product.

Table 5.33 Reliability tests for technological factor

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.413	5

Field (2013) claims that if the Cronbach's alpha value is lower than 60% it means that the response does not follow a normal distribution. A further table is required to show what will happen if some questions are excluded. It shows in Table 5.34.

Table 5.34 Further reliability tests for technological factor

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Q31_Tech_We regularly update our equipment	14.03	3.546	.320	.287
Q31_Tech_New equipment improve efficiency and lower cost	14.00	3.396	.346	.262
Q31_Tech_Latest equipment is good to use	14.32	3.465	.281	.307
Q31_Tech_Equipment with more function is better	14.68	3.937	.041	.499
Q31_Tech_We cooperate with a college or university to improve our standard of services.	13.88	3.661	.137	.422

Table 5.34 indicates that the exclusion of any questions does not raise the value of Cronbach's alpha value significantly. This means that this situation did not occur due to a single question. This also means the responses for all of these questions do not follow normal distribution; the responses focus on a particular option. The researcher postulates that this result is not on purpose and will not influence the following analysis.

The first hypothesis regarding technological factor and golf development is:

H4a: The technological factor has a positive influence on the golf industry in China in relation to the feature of recreation.

Testing the research hypothesis involves using correlational analysis. The results are shown in Table 5.35. The table shows a positive relationship between recreation and technological factor, but the p value of the 1-tailed test is 0.007, which is less than 0.01. Therefore, the hypothesis is confirmed. Discussions about the relationship between features of recreation and technological factor follow in Chapter 6. Therefore, the hypothesis is further confirmed as:

H4a*: The technological factor has a significant positive influence on the golf industry in China in relation to the feature of recreation.

Table 5.35 Correlation between features of recreation and technological factor

	TECH
REC Pearson Correlation	.168**
Sig. (1-tailed)	.007
N	213

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

Another relationship for this section to test is between the technological factor and feature of luxury product. The proposed hypothesis is:

H4b: The technological factor has a positive influence on the golf industry in China in relation to the feature of luxury product.

Table 5.36 Correlation between features of luxury and cultural factor

	TECH
LUX Pearson Correlation	.079
Sig. (1-tailed)	.124
N	213

Testing the research hypothesis also involves using correlational analysis. Table 5.36 shows a positive relationship between luxury product and the technological factor. The p value of the 1-tailed test is less than 0.124, which indicates no strong significant. Therefore, the hypothesis is further confirmed as:

H4b*: The technological factor has a positive influence on the golf industry in China in relation to the feature of luxury product.

Next, participants were asked to rank the influence that media has on golf. Their responses are summarised and shown in Table 5.37. The question requires participants to rank the importance from lowest to highest. The research establishes that radio has the least influence on golf businesses. Both the Internet and magazine have the greatest influence on the golf industry.

Table 5.37 Average ranking for media influence

Groups	Average ranking
TV	2.962
Newspaper	2.700
Internet	3.366
Radio	2.653
Magazine	3.319

5.5.5 Geographic factor and golf development in China

Questions regarding the geographic factor differ from those for other factors. This section consists of two types of questions, single choice and multiple choices. Single choice question was used to determine whether there is a geographic difference for golf development in China. If participants chose one of north, south, inland or seaside it indicates that they believe there is a preference. The following multiple-choice questions provide the reasons for their selection. For north or south, 123 responses state that people who live in the south are more likely to play, 20 believe people who live in the north are more likely to play (Table 5.38), while 93 people believe the climate is the most important reason why more people are likely to play in the south.

Table 5.38 Geographic, NS

	North or South	
	South	North
	Count	Count
Q36_reason_cheap	46	2
Q36_reason_quality	58	8
Q36_reason_services	54	11
Q36_reason_restrict	25	5
Q36_reason_climate	93	10
Q36_reason_fashion	27	5
Q36_reason_income	66	7
Q36_reason_connection	47	10

For east or west, 130 responded that people who live in the east are more likely to play, 12 believe people who live in the north are more likely to play, while 71 people believe there is no difference (see Table 5.39), while 101 people believe the restriction is the most important reason that more people are likely to play in east. It means respondents believe the policy restriction for playing golf in the eastern area is much looser than in the western area.

Table 5.39 Geographic, EW

	Q37_East or west	
	West	East
	Count	Count
Q38_reason_income	9	43
Q38_reason_climate	8	46
Q38_reason_restrict	6	101
Q38_reason_services	6	78
Q38_reason_quality	8	75
Q38_reason_cheap	9	89
Q38_reason_connection	8	73

The first hypothesis regarding cultural factor and golf development is:

H5a: The geographic factor has a positive influence on the golf industry in China in relation to the feature of recreation.

Testing the research hypothesis involves using correlational analysis. The results are shown in Table 5.40. The table shows a negative relationship between recreation and geographic factor, but the p value of the 1-tailed test is 0.229, which is not significant. Therefore, the hypothesis is rejected. Further discussions regarding the relationship between the feature of recreation and the geographic factor follow in Chapter 6. Therefore, the finding is:

H5a*: The geographic factor has a negative influence on the golf industry in China in relation to the feature of recreation.

Table 5.40 Correlation between features of recreation and geographic factor

	GEO
REC2 Pearson Correlation	-.051
Sig. (1-tailed)	.229
N	213

Another relationship for this section to tests is between the geographic factor and feature of luxury product. The proposed hypothesis is:

H5b: The geographic factor has a positive influence on the golf industry in China in relation to the feature of luxury product.

Testing the research hypothesis also involves using correlational analysis. Table 5.41 shows a positive relationship between luxury product and the geographic factor. The p

value of the 1-tailed test is 0.132, which indicates it is not significant. Therefore, the hypothesis is further confirmed as:

H5b*: The geographic factor has a positive influence on the golf industry in China in relation to the feature of luxury product.

Table 5.41 Correlation between features of luxury and geographic factor

	GEO
LUX Pearson Correlation	.077
Sig. (1-tailed)	.132
N	213

5.5.6 Environmental factor and golf development in China

This section reviews the results of the relationship between the environmental factor and golf development in China. The one-sample T test (Table 5.42) shows the average scores for five out of six questions regarding cultural factor are significantly ($p < 0.05$) larger than 3, which means respondents generally agree with the statement in the questionnaire. Therefore, the majority believe that the environment is one of the factors influencing golf development in China. Respondents did not generally agree with the statement “As people realise golf is damaging the environment they will stop or play less golf”. However, as the main purpose of this section is to conduct the correlation analysis, at this stage, disagreements with this question do not affect the result of the following analysis.

Table 5.42 One-sample T test for environmental factor

	Test Value = 3					
	t	df	Sig. (2- tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Q25_Environment_Golfer care about sustainability	3.115	212	.002	.244	.09	.40
Q25_Environment_Golfer would be willing to pay higher price for sustainable golf courses	2.974	212	.003	.192	.06	.32
Q25_Environment_Golfer enjoy the games outdoors.	18.233	212	.000	.873	.78	.97
Q25_Environment_Golf course improve landscape	13.252	212	.000	.784	.67	.90
Q25_Environment_Golf course will not damage the environment	2.153	212	.032	.155	.01	.30
Q25_Environment_As people realise golf is damaging the environment they will stop or play less golf	-1.561	212	.120	-.103	-.23	.03

The Cronbach's alpha reliability test display in Table 5.43 shows 27.4% confidences for questions selected for environmental factor to conduct the correlation test with both recreation and luxury product.

Table 5.43 Reliability tests for environmental factor

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.274	6

Field (2013) claims that if the Cronbach's alpha value is lower than 60% it means the response does not follow normal distribution. A further table is required to show what happens if some questions are excluded. This is shown in Table 5.44 below.

Table 5.44 Further reliability tests for environmental factor

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Q25_Environment_Golfer care about sustainability	16.90	4.533	.256	.102
Q25_Environment_Golfer would be willing to pay higher price for sustainable golf courses	16.95	6.507	-.065	.371
Q25_Environment_Golfer enjoy the games outdoors.	16.27	5.916	.201	.197
Q25_Environment_Golf course improve landscape	16.36	5.402	.234	.157
Q25_Environment_Golf course will not damage the environment	16.99	4.623	.301	.069
Q25_Environment_As people realise golf is damaging the environment they will stop or play less golf	17.25	6.839	-.135	.421

Table 5.44 shows that if two questions are excluded from the list the alpha value will increase significantly. Questions are: “Golfer would be willing to pay higher price for sustainable golf courses” and “As people realise golf is damaging the environment they will stop or play less golf”. These two questions relate to the outcome of the golfer realising that his or her behaviour may damage the environment. The answer seems to concentrate on a few options.

A further examination of these two questions suggests that participants choose a neutral stance rather than agreeing or disagreeing. Further discussions regarding this issue follow in Chapter 6. For the question “As people realise golf is damaging the environment they will stop or play less golf”, participants believe that people will not stop playing even if they realise golf courses may damage the environment.

The first hypothesis regarding environmental factor and golf development is:

H6a: The environmental factor has a positive influence on the golf industry in China in relation to the feature of recreation.

Testing the research hypothesis involves using correlational analysis. The results are shown in Table 5.45. The table shows a positive relationship between recreation and the

environmental factor, but the p value of the 1-tailed test is 0.035, which is significant. Therefore, the hypothesis is confirmed. Further discussions about the relationship between feature of recreation and the environmental factor follow in Chapter 6. Therefore, the hypothesis is further confirmed as:

H6a*: The environmental factor has a significant positive influence on the golf industry in China in relation to the feature of recreation.

Table 5.45 Correlation between feature of recreation and environmental factor

	ENV
REC2 Pearson Correlation	.124*
Sig. (1-tailed)	.035
N	213

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed).

Another relationship for this section to tests is between the environmental factor and the feature of luxury product. The proposed hypothesis is:

H6b: The environmental factor has a positive influence on the golf industry in China in relation to the feature of luxury product.

Testing the research hypothesis also involves using correlational analysis. Table 5.46 below shows a negative relationship between luxury product and environmental factor, the p value of the 1-tailed test is less than 0.134, which indicates no significance. Therefore, the hypothesis is correct as:

H6b*: The environmental factor has a negative influence on the golf industry in China in relation to the feature of luxury product.

Table 5.46 Correlation between feature of luxury and environmental factor

	ENV
LUX Pearson Correlation	-.076
Sig. (1-tailed)	.134
N	213

The following survey question requires participants to rank the most serious challenge for their golf course in their region. The summary of their responses is shown in Table 5.47 below:

Table 5.47 Ranking for environmental challenge

Challenge	Average ranking
Water shortage	2.6103
Land invasion	2.6385
Chemical damage	3.3944
Deforestation	3.4601
Biodiversity	3.8263
Damage to landscape	5.0704

Participants are required to rank the challenges from most serious to least serious. The average ranking this research finds that the water shortage is the most serious environmental challenge that Chinese golf industry is facing. Moreover, damage to landscape has a much higher ranking than the other options. This means the industry feels this is one of the least serious challenges to them or it could infer that the golf industry does not feel they are damaging the landscape.

5.6 Key market growth factors in relation to features

To determine the key market growth factors in relation to features of recreation and luxury product, the researcher applied the method of regression analysis and set recreation and luxury as dependent variables while the six factors were set as independent variables.

5.6.1 Key market growth factors in relation to feature of recreation

To determine the factors that have the strongest influence in relation to recreation, the constrain method chosen was the “backward method”. This means the computer will distinguish which items have the weakest F value and significance, remove them, complete the regression again and then remove the weakest items until it finds the one with the strongest items. Table 5.48 and Table 5.49 below show the results.

Table 5.48 ANOVA table for backward regression for recreation

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	5.095	6	.849	3.295	.004 ^b
	Residual	53.080	206	.258		
	Total	58.175	212			
2	Regression	5.088	5	1.018	3.968	.002 ^c
	Residual	53.087	207	.256		
	Total	58.175	212			
3	Regression	4.803	4	1.201	4.679	.001 ^d
	Residual	53.372	208	.257		
	Total	58.175	212			
4	Regression	4.427	3	1.476	5.738	.001 ^e
	Residual	53.748	209	.257		
	Total	58.175	212			
5	Regression	3.819	2	1.910	7.377	.001 ^f
	Residual	54.356	210	.259		
	Total	58.175	212			

a. Dependent Variable: REC2

b. Predictors: (Constant), GEO, POL, ENV, TECH, ECO, CUL

c. Predictors: (Constant), GEO, ENV, TECH, ECO, CUL

d. Predictors: (Constant), GEO, TECH, ECO, CUL

e. Predictors: (Constant), TECH, ECO, CUL

f. Predictors: (Constant), ECO, CUL

Table 5.49 Coefficients table for backward regression for recreation

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	2.012	.425		4.729	.000
ECO	.123	.059	.148	2.081	.039
ENV	.088	.083	.074	1.060	.290
POL	-.012	.075	-.012	-.164	.870
CUL	.157	.078	.147	2.023	.044
TECH	.121	.083	.102	1.450	.149
GEO	-.021	.018	-.078	-1.156	.249
2 (Constant)	1.995	.412		4.843	.000
ECO	.121	.058	.145	2.101	.037
ENV	.087	.082	.073	1.054	.293
CUL	.155	.076	.145	2.036	.043
TECH	.120	.083	.101	1.445	.150
GEO	-.021	.018	-.077	-1.156	.249
3 (Constant)	2.202	.362		6.086	.000
ECO	.114	.057	.137	1.997	.047
CUL	.173	.074	.162	2.341	.020
TECH	.134	.082	.113	1.630	.105
GEO	-.022	.018	-.081	-1.210	.227
4 (Constant)	2.201	.362		6.076	.000
ECO	.113	.057	.136	1.974	.050
CUL	.168	.074	.157	2.276	.024
TECH	.126	.082	.106	1.537	.126
5 (Constant)	2.517	.299		8.408	.000
ECO	.127	.057	.152	2.232	.027
CUL	.191	.073	.179	2.624	.009

a. Dependent Variable: REC2

Table 5.49 shows the relationship between each factor to features of recreation. By using the backward method, the system indicates that the economic factor and the cultural factor have a strongest regression relationship with the feature of recreation. Other factors are removed during the process, as they are not as important as these two variables. Both economic and cultural factor have significantly positive relationships with the feature of recreation.

5.6.2 Key market growth factors in relation to features of luxury

To determine the factors that have the strongest influence in relation to luxury, the constrain method chose as the “backward method”. This means the computer will find items with the weakest F value and significance, remove them, carry out the regression process again and remove the weakest items until it finds the one with the strongest items. Table 5.50 and Table 5.51 below show the results.

Table 5.50 ANOVA table for backward regression for recreation

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	12.619	6	2.103	7.170	.000 ^b
	Residual	60.426	206	.293		
	Total	73.045	212			
2	Regression	12.602	5	2.520	8.631	.000 ^c
	Residual	60.444	207	.292		
	Total	73.045	212			
3	Regression	12.413	4	3.103	10.645	.000 ^d
	Residual	60.633	208	.292		
	Total	73.045	212			

a. Dependent Variable: LUX

b. Predictors: (Constant), GEO, POL, ENV, TECH, ECO, CUL

c. Predictors: (Constant), GEO, POL, ENV, ECO, CUL

d. Predictors: (Constant), POL, ENV, ECO, CUL

Table 5.51 Coefficients table for backward regression for recreation

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	1.763	.454		3.883	.000
ECO	.256	.063	.273	4.043	.000
ENV	-.148	.088	-.112	-1.684	.094
POL	.199	.080	.171	2.496	.013
CUL	.140	.083	.117	1.687	.093
TECH	-.022	.089	-.016	-.244	.807
GEO	.016	.020	.052	.821	.413
2 (Constant)	1.721	.419		4.106	.000
ECO	.253	.062	.271	4.058	.000
ENV	-.152	.087	-.115	-1.744	.083
POL	.197	.079	.169	2.490	.014
CUL	.137	.082	.115	1.673	.096
GEO	.016	.019	.051	.804	.422
3 (Constant)	1.744	.418		4.175	.000
ECO	.255	.062	.272	4.087	.000
ENV	-.154	.087	-.117	-1.776	.077
POL	.196	.079	.168	2.482	.014
CUL	.143	.082	.119	1.744	.083

a. Dependent Variable: LUX

Table 5.50 and Table 5.51 show the relationships between each factor to the feature of luxury. By using the backward method, the system indicates that economic factor, environmental factor, political factor and cultural factor have the strongest regression relationship with the feature of luxury. Other factors are removed during the process, as they are not as important as these four variables. Economic, political and cultural factors all have a positive relationship with the feature of luxury. Economic and political factors have a strong significant regression relationship and their significance level is below 0.05. The significance of cultural factor is over 0.05, which means it does not have a strong significance. The environmental factor has a negative relationship and the significance is not very strong. This negative relationship could mean that as environmental factor become stronger, the features of the luxury product will become weaker. It is interpreted that as people's concerns regarding the environment increase, fewer people will consider purchasing golf as a luxury product.

5.7 Summary

This chapter reported the statistical result of testing each hypothesis proposed in Chapter 3, which are generated from the conceptual framework (Figure 3.1) by using the data gathered from the questionnaire survey. Specifically, the analysis of the data consists of computing the frequency of responses into the instrument to obtain descriptive statistics. The primary data analysis also included correlational and regression analyses. The result suggesting that golf managers believe recreation is one of the features of golf development in China. Additionally, golf managers believe luxury product is another feature of golf development in China. Meanwhile, the hypotheses are further developed as Figure 5.6, which demonstrates the correlation level of the each factor to features of golf development in China.

Based on the correlation and regression analyses, the researcher identified economic and cultural factors as the key market growth factors for golf development in China in relation to recreation and luxury product. Additionally, key market growth factors for golf development in China in relation to feature of luxury product consist of economic, cultural, environmental and political factors. Therefore, key market growth factors for golf development in China in relation to recreation and luxury product are economic and cultural factors.

Through statistical analysis of the questionnaire survey, several hypotheses proposed in Chapter 3 are confirmed, further extended or rejected. Surveys are able to gain large amounts of information efficiently (Iacobucci & Churchill, 2010) but are unable to provide comprehensive in-depth information due to the limitation of questionnaire survey (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). The following chapter involves the data collected from interviews and further discusses the results and findings of this chapter.

Figure 5.6 Summary of survey finding





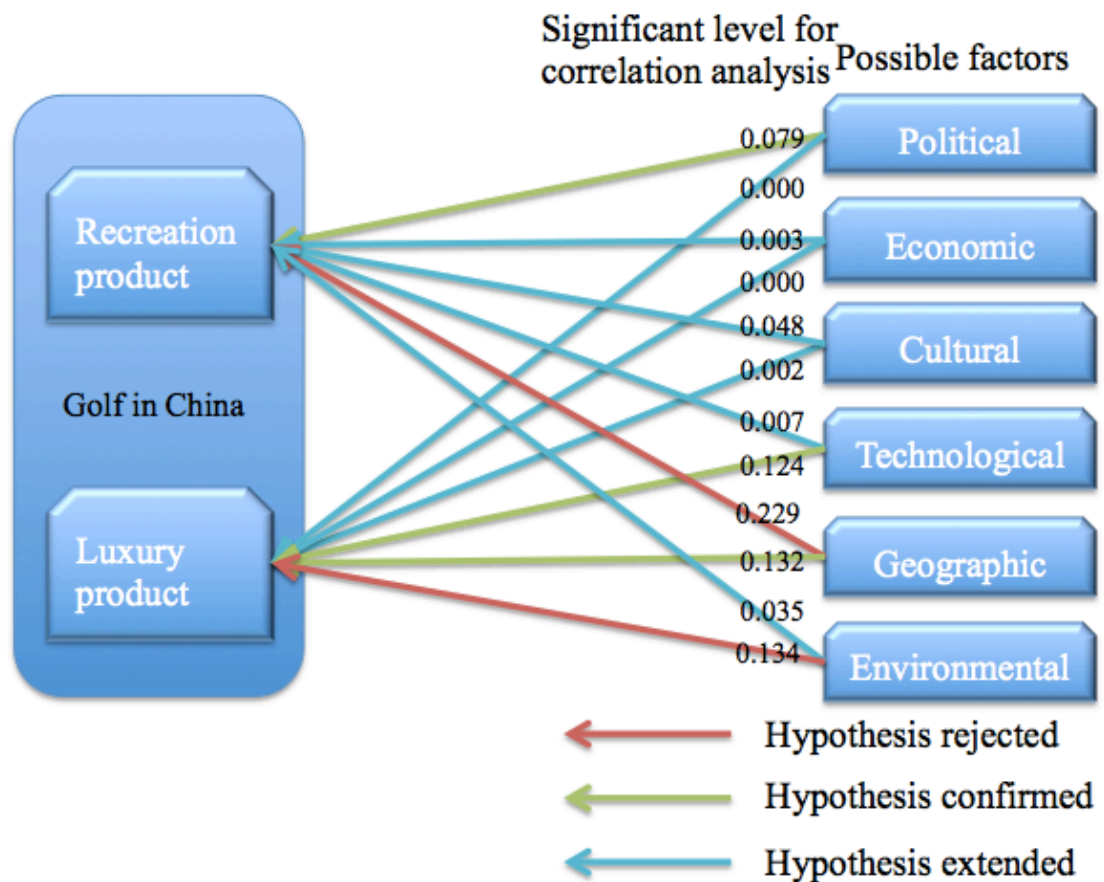
Chapter 6. Analysis And Discussion

6.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study is to investigate the key market growth factors for golf development in China in relation to features of recreation and luxury product. This chapter employs the information gathered from the literature, questionnaires and interviews to explore how each factors influence golf in China and golf development in China through the features.

Chapter 5 presented the results of the questionnaire survey. Based on the conceptual framework presented in Figure 3.1 and the results of the questionnaire survey summarised in Figure 5.6 Figure 6.1 below presents the hypotheses with their significant level:

Figure 6.1 Result of questionnaire survey



The figure indicates that the results gained from the questionnaire do not confirm all of the hypotheses that were proposed in Chapter 3. Some of the proposed factors have a

higher significance for golf development in China in relation to features than initially predicted. Some of the hypotheses are rejected by the survey. The data suggest that some features have a negative relationship with features of golf in the background of golf development in China.

This chapter will adopt data collected from in-depth interviews to further explain the reasons behind the results based on every single hypothesis generated from Chapter 3 and each of the links from the conceptual framework in Figure 3.1 respectively. This chapter will also synthesize the results of both quantitative and qualitative research to provide a comprehensive knowledge of the golf industry. This chapter will also answer the final research question by disclosing the key factors that contribute to golf development in China in relation to features.

6.2 Political factor of golf development in China

According to the literature presented in Chapter 2, the political factor can have an influence on golf development in China and the following hypotheses were proposed:

H1a: The political factor has a positive influence on the golf industry in China in relation to the feature of recreation.

H1b: The political factor has a positive influence on the golf industry in China in relation to the feature of luxury product.

The results reported in Chapter 5 shows that golf managers believe that the political factor influences golf development in China in relation to recreation with a significance level of 0.079. Therefore, the hypothesis is confirmed as:

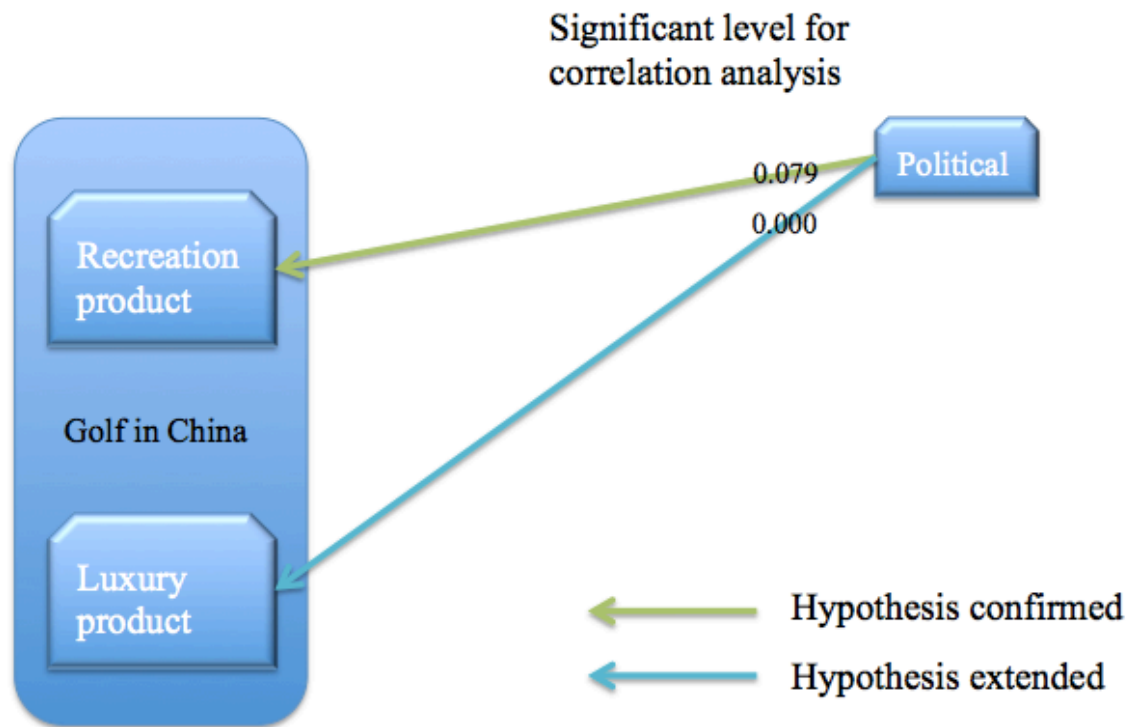
H1a*: The political factor has a positive influence on the golf industry in China in relation to the feature of recreation.

The results in Chapter 5 also show the political factor has a very high significance in relation to luxury; the significance is less than 0.0001. Therefore, the hypothesis is extended as:

H1b*: The political factor has a significant positive influence on the golf industry in China in relation to the feature of luxury product.

The results of the questionnaire survey regarding the political factor are generalised as showed in Figure 6.2:

Figure 6.2 Political factor in relation to golf as luxury product and recreation product



The findings of this study imply the fact that the political factor has influence on golf development in China in relation to features of recreation and luxury. However, this research wants to explain why the political factor could influence golf development through the features of recreation and luxury product.

Under the theme of the political factor in relation to features, the main questions addressed are:

- How do you think the political factor will influence to features of recreation?
- How do you think the political factor will influence to features of luxury?

As discussed in Chapter 4, the interviewees are general managers who have worked in the golf industry for years. They often lead the interview away from the designated theme, therefore, follow up questions were designed, such as:

- Do you think this political factor will work on the golf industry?
- How does the current golf policy influence your business in relation to features of recreation/luxury?
- Do you prefer supportive policies or restrictive policies?

These questions were designed to encourage the interviewees to provide in-depth information based on the theme. However, if the interviewee wishes to continue discussing the political factor, they were not prevented from doing so. Therefore, these questions were only an example and were only to be used when the conversation strays too far from the topic.

6.2.1 Political factor in relation to feature of golf as recreational product

Data from the interviews suggest the political factor has a positive influence on the feature of golf as a recreational product. Therefore, the political factor is essential for the golf business. This denotes that if the government publishes positive policies regarding the golf industry, it will flourish, whereas restrictive policies will damage the industry. At this point, hypothesis “H1a”, that political factor has a positive influence on the feature of golf as a recreation product, is confirmed. Meanwhile, the existing claims (Awang & Aziz, 2010; T. Lee, et al., 2010; Marcouiller, 2007; Mathieson & Wall, 1982; Roberts, 2010) in Chapter 2 are verified through the questionnaire survey and interviews in the field of golf development in China as the feature of a recreational product. However, the ultimate purpose of this research is to investigate the reason behind this. Therefore, this section adopts information from interviews, surveys and additional literature to examine and explain why the political factor has a positive influence on the feature of golf as a recreational product.

Interviewee A suggests:

“The Chinese public is very sensitive to the government’s positive action. They will actively participate in the activities that the government is encouraging.”

The example provided by Interviewee A is based on the case of Ping-Pong in China and is also found in existing literature.

The People’s Republic of China was established in the middle of the 20th century. Due to the world political environment at the time, the majority of countries around the

world did not accept China. Therefore, China was unable to communicate and trade with those countries. However, the newly established country eagerly wanted and urgently needed help from other countries. At this point, communication through sports activities became the method of breaking the stalemate. In 1971, the American Ping-Pong team was invited to China with a group of journalists. This was the first delegation of Americans who were granted permission to visit since 1949. The event provided an opportunity for the Chinese government to welcome foreigners and allow them to see the country. The Chinese believe this is a significant ice-breaking event and further contributed to the U.S. President Richard Nixon visiting China in the year 1972 (Bostdorff, 2002).

In this case, the government did not publish any specific policies to encourage the sport of Ping-Pong. Instead, it was merely a tool selected by both governments as a means of initiating communication. However, it had a great influence on people's choice of recreation in China. During that period of time, Ping-Pong tables became very popular and were found in most places, for instance, in schools, universities, military camps, even residential areas. Ping-Pong became the Chinese "national ball game" and Chinese athletes secured the top-5 position in most international Ping-Pong competitions. In contrast, Ping-Pong did not gain an increase in popularity in the US, which shows that in China, the public pays great attention to every move the government makes. They will voluntarily amplify any small actions from the government even without clear policies.

However, as introduced in Chapter 2, He's (2012) research suggests that during the period in which the government encouraged golf development, the number of golf courses in China did not increase significantly, which seems to contradict this study's findings. Interviewee C explains:

"Back in 1984, golf in China did have specific policies to encourage development. The purpose was to attract more foreign people to come and invest money and build manufacturing infrastructure. However, people living in 1984 to 1993 did not have enough money to spend on recreation. It was not possible for a few foreigners to run a golf course with hundreds of people working there."

In this case, interviewee C suggests the effectiveness of policies that promote golf development was offset by the negative economic factor. Although the Chinese

government published supportive policies for the golf industry in the year 1984, the golf business in China did not witness significant growth. From this explanation, it is concluded that the influence of the economic factor is more important than the political factor.

Even when the economic factor plays a more significant role than the political factor, interviewees still desire a positive attitude from the government. Interviewee B suggests:

“If the Chinese government could change their current unsupportive attitude towards golf because of the Olympic Games 2016 (golf will become an events this year), then our business will become much better.”

The reason for this expectation is because they have witnessed the effect of the 2008 Olympic Games that Chinese government concentrated every power from different sources to make sure the Team China could achieve a good result during the whole events. Golf business believes that if the Chinese government wants to win medals during the golf events in 2016 Olympic Games, they will encourage the sport of golf. If government wants to encourage the sports of golf, government will publish stimulating policies and inject public funding into the golf industry. It will be a great opportunity for golf industry for further development.

As showed in Chapter 2, He (2012) and Han (2011) suggest the boost period for the golf industry in China occurs during the period that the government publish restrictive policies. The reason for this is because Chinese golf not only has the feature of a recreational product, but it also has the feature of a luxury product.

6.2.2 Political factor in relation to feature of golf as luxury product

The interviews suggest that the political factor has a negative influence on the features of golf as a luxury product. This finding contradicts hypothesis H1b, the literature review and the survey findings. This section focuses on the reasons behind this situation.

Moya (2012) states two important features for luxury product are:

- Offer the users a subjective value in use that cannot be easily quantified
- Provide their users with social and economic status as ascribed by others.

Interviewee A suggests:

“The largest population of golfers in China is from the upper social class.”

The interviewee believes the population from the upper social class has the economic capacity and the demand to gain two features claimed by Moya (2012) from luxury product. Interviewee A also suggests people can influence others' decisions easily, however, the government does not have effective approaches to control these “upper social class people” who play golf to show off their wealth and superiority.

According to interviewee E, government control consists of four aspects, which are:

- Stopping the development of new golf courses
- Increasing the running cost for existing golf courses
- Using the media to inform the general public that golf is harmful
- Preventing government officials from playing golf.

The interviewees suggested that all four approaches increase golf's feature of luxury. The result of “stopping the development of new golf courses” and “increasing the running cost for existing golf courses” effectively increases the price for playing golf. Since 2011, there have been no new golf courses open for business. However, the political approach could not effectively control the growing number of golfers. With an increasing number of people playing golf and the fixed supply of golf courses, the price for playing golf will consistently increase. The higher price will stop the demand of golf products (Sloman, 2007). However, this is postulated by economic theory and this situation only occurs in a perfect world. In reality, the consistently higher price will prevent people playing for recreation purposes. In other words, the recreation feature of golf is weakened by these policies. In contrast, the feature of luxury product is strengthened by the government's policy. As golfers play golf to express their wealth and social status, an increased price will encourage them further as it will continue to confirm their affluence to others.

The second political approach introduced by interviewee E is the increase of the running cost for existing golf courses. To increase the running cost, the government has increased sales tax for existing golf related businesses from 10% to 20% since 2006 (M. He, 2012). The tax paid by golf businesses is equal to the amount paid by entertainment businesses, such as KTV and nightclubs. The government aims to use the economic leverage to control the development of golf. However, the increased costs are

represented in the price for playing golf. This increased price once again causes golf to become the perfect activity to show off wealth.

The third approach introduced by Interviewee E concerns the use of media to inform the general public about the harmful impact of golf. In 2011, television and newspapers exposed the harmful consequences of golf and golf development (L. Han, 2011). However, interviewee E believes the media coverage somehow promotes and encourages people to play golf instead of acting as a preventative measure. From media reports, people are aware that there is an expensive activity called golf. People who watch the programme are more likely to play golf to show off their wealth and superiority. The government has not published policies against people from playing golf, for instance, they are not required to pay a fine or face a prison sentence. It gives a message to golfers that playing not approved golf could prove they are extraordinary among general people.

The fourth approach introduced by Interviewee E concerns the government preventing government officials from playing golf. The only people that are controlled by the government are the officials. If officials go against the government, there will be a consequence for them. Interviewee A suggests there is no specific regulation that indicates officials from the government cannot play golf, although the government has made it clear that they do not want their officials involved with golf and the golf business.

Interviewee C claimed:

“The government could not control people who work for business organisations to play golf. But they could control officials who work for government. The philosophy for government is that golf is a relatively expensive activity. The average income for officials could afford one or two rounds of golf each month. If an official goes to a golf course more times than that, they must get more money other than their monthly salary. Their income is more likely to come from an illegal source such as corruption. The government could use golf as the point to start further investigations. ”

Meanwhile, Interviewee D suggested:

“The current policies have great influence on officials work for the government to play golf for recreation. Because there is a specific policy forbids officials from driving their working cars for personal purposes. If officials drive their working car to golf courses to play and are reported by the witnesses, the officials would receive a serious punishment from the government. However, the control of government over its officials provides the reason that businessmen could show off.”

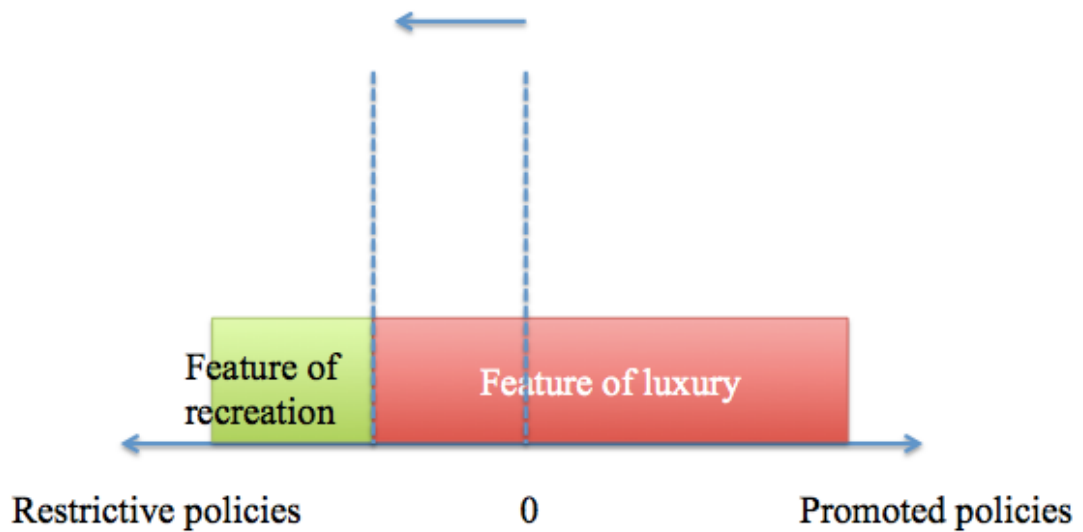
Apart from flaunting their wealth, businessmen can boast about their “freedom” to government officials. Therefore, the feature of luxury for golf in China is promoted by the political approach.

According to the findings from the interview and literature, it is proposed that the political factor has a negative relationship with the feature of luxury in the background of golf development in China. This means golf’s feature of luxury is stimulated by the political factor that attempts to prevent golf development. Meanwhile, golf’s feature of luxury will decrease if the political factor attempts to promote golf development. However, the findings of the interview seem to contradict with the results of the survey, which suggests the political factor has a positive relationship with the feature of luxury.

6.2.3 Summary of political factor

The findings of the relationship between features and the political factor suggest the features of recreation and luxury can exist at the same time. It is possible for golfers to play for both recreation and luxury purposes. Figure 6.3 demonstrates the relationship between features and the political factor.

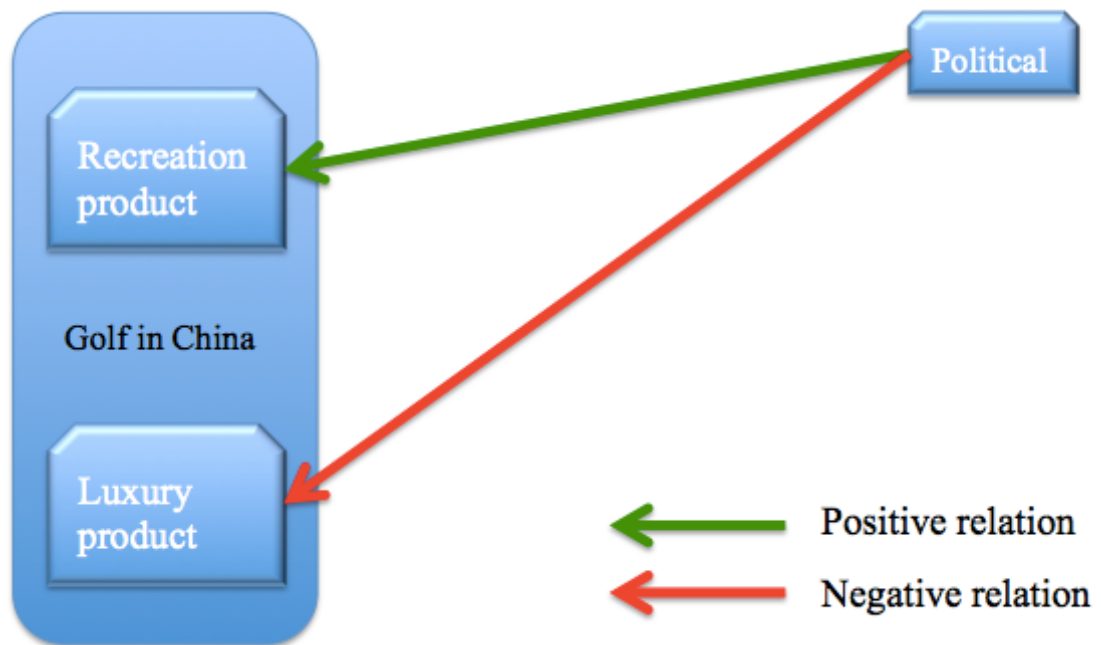
Figure 6.3 Relationship between features and political factor



These findings suggest that if the government has a promoted policy regarding the golf business, the dash line in the middle will shift to the right. The partition of feature of recreation will increase and feature of luxury will decrease. However, currently the Chinese government has restrictive policies towards the golf industry. Therefore, the dash line moves from the middle to the left and the partition of the feature of recreation decreases and the feature of luxury increases.

The findings for this section conclude that the political factor has a positive influence on the feature of recreation, although the influence is not very strong. Meanwhile, the political factor has a strong negative influence on the feature of luxury. Figure 6.4 reflects these findings.

Figure 6.4 Finding of interviews of political factor relationship to golf as luxury and golf as recreational product



There is no clear evidence that suggests the political factor would be enough to successfully promote or stop golf development independently. This suggests the influence of other factors such as economic and cultural are also important in understanding the external environment for the golf industry in China. This implies that the political factor is important but is not the key reason behind the growth of golf development in China as neither a recreational nor a luxury product. The following section discusses the economic factor to features in the background of golf development in China.

6.3 Economic factor of golf development in China

According to literature presented in Chapter 2, the economic factor can have an influence on golf development in China and the following hypotheses are proposed:

H2a: The economic factor has a positive influence on the golf industry in China in relation to the feature of recreation.

H2b: The economic factor has a positive influence on the golf industry in China in relation to the feature of luxury product.

The results reported in Chapter 5 shows that golf managers believe that the economic factor has an influence on golf development in China in relation to recreation with a significance level of 0.003. Therefore, the hypothesis is extended as:

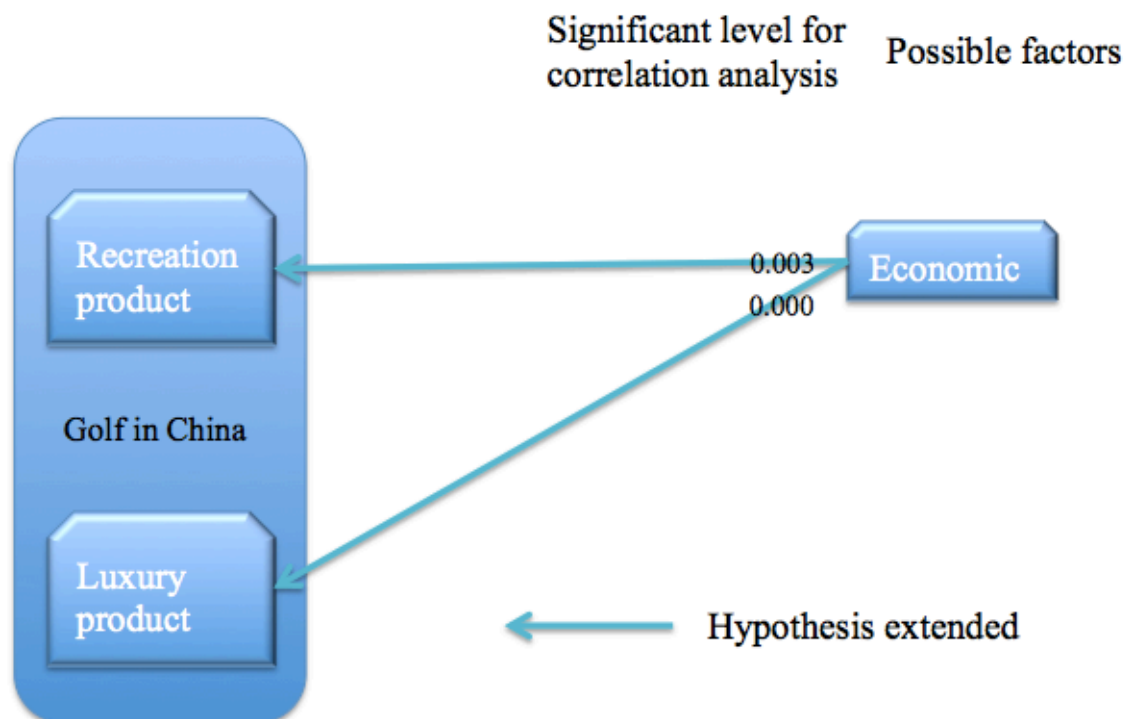
H2a*: The economic factor has a significant positive influence on the golf industry in China in relation to the feature of recreation.

The results in Chapter 5 also show that the political factor has a very high significance in relation to luxury with a significance level of less than 0.0001. Therefore, the hypothesis is extended as:

H2b*: The economic factor has a significant positive influence on the golf industry in China in relation to the feature of luxury product.

The results of the questionnaire survey regarding the economic factor are generalised as showed in Figure 6.5:

Figure 6.5 Economic factor in relation to golf as luxury product and recreation product



The questionnaire only shows that the economic factor has an influence on golf development in China in relation to features of recreation and luxury. The main questions addressed by this study are:

- How do you think the economic factor will have an influence on the feature of recreation?
- How do you think the economic factor will have an influence on the feature of luxury?

To ensure the interview stays on the designated theme and does not stray, follow up questions are designed. For example:

- How do you think the economic factor will influence your golf business?
- How do current economic conditions influence your business in relation to the feature of recreation/luxury?

These questions were designed to ensure the interviewee provided in-depth information about the theme, however if the interviewee wished to continue discussing the economic factor, they were not prevented from doing so. In this situation, these questions were merely an example and were only to be used when the conversation strayed in another direction.

6.3.1 Economic factor in relation to feature of golf as recreation product

The interviews suggest the economic factor has a significant positive influence on the feature of golf as a recreational product. Therefore, the economic factor is essential for the golf business. This means under a positive economic environment the business will be promoted and will suffer from a negative economic environment. At this point, hypothesis “H2a” that the economic factor has a positive influence on the feature of golf as a recreational product is confirmed. Existing claims (Armstrong & Harker, 2009; Gillespie, 2007; Hodges & Haydu, 2004; Tassiopoulos & Haydam, 2008) discussed in Chapter 2 are verified through the questionnaire survey and interviews in the field of golf development in China as the feature of a recreational product. However, the ultimate purpose of this research is to investigate the reasons behind this. Therefore, this section will discuss information gathered from interviews, surveys and additional literature to explain why the political factor has a positive influence on the feature of golf as a recreational product.

The interviews suggest the influence of the economic factor on the feature of recreation is due to:

- The increasing economic environment, which promotes the demand for recreation.
- The increasing economic environment, which provides the economic capacity to afford golf.

Interviewee E suggests:

“The ultimate purpose for economic development is to gain happiness and enjoyment. If people do not spend and enjoy, the money will be worth nothing. As income increases, they have more and are more willing to improve their standard of living. All in all, people do not live only for earning money. They also want to spend the money to gain a better life.”

Furthermore, interviewee E claims:

“Golf is an unnecessary commodity; people only play if they have sufficient extra money. If their money is short, they will give up playing immediately.”

These claims verify the viewpoint of income effect (Gillespie, 2007); that as consumer income or budgets rises, the demand for products to improve their living standards will increase.

In the case of golf development in China, all interviewees agree that golf is a leisurely or recreational activity. People play golf as a form of fun and enjoyment. In other words, golfers want to gain the feeling of “flow” (Csíkszentmihályi, 2008) from golf activity. Therefore, the improvement of economic conditions will promote the demand for recreation because one of the foundations of recreation is the feeling of “flow”. The improvement of economic conditions will encourage people to seek happiness. As golf enables people to enjoy themselves, the feature of recreation is promoted by the positive economic factor.

In addition to increasing the recreational demand, the improvement of economic conditions also provides people with the capacity to consume recreational products.

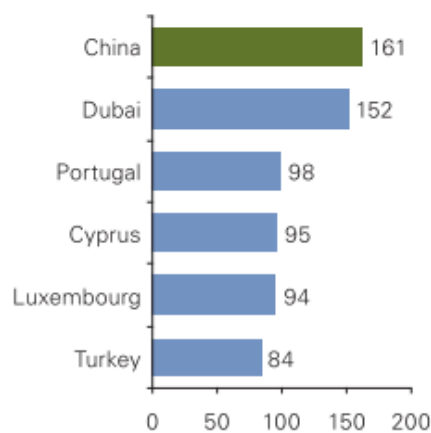
Question 23 in the questionnaire survey suggests 78% of managers believe golf is an expensive activity. Furthermore, interviewees suggested the cost of playing a round of golf is a combination of both variable costs and fixed costs. The variable cost includes:

1. Green fee, paid to the golf course to play a round of golf

2. Travel cost to the golf course
3. Costs of participation-related food and drink consumption, equipment hire and so on.
4. Time cost (time expended playing and traveling to the golf course)

These costs are incurred every time the individual plays golf. Figure 6.6 shows a comparison of green fees in China and countries in Europe, the Middle East and Africa. It also indicates that golf in China is expensive, from the sense of variable cost.

Figure 6.6 Weekend green fees for 18 holes in China in vs. five most expensive countries in Europe, Middle East and Africa in USD



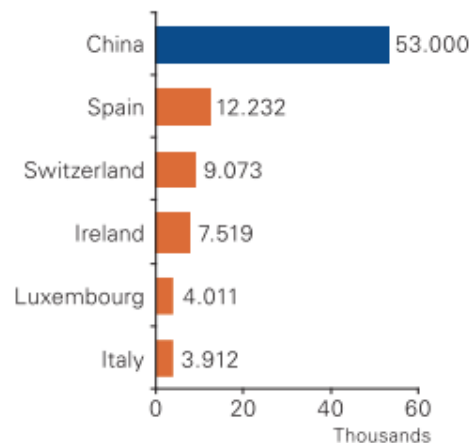
Source: KPMG Golf Advisory Practice (2008, p. 14)

Other costs, such as fixed costs, occur irregularly and are not necessarily related to specific acts of participation. They are:

1. Membership and subscription fees
2. Cost of equipment, clothing and footwear.

A comparison of the membership fees for golf in China and other countries is shown in Figure 6.7. It suggests the fixed cost for golf in China is much more expensive compared with countries in Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

Figure 6.7 Membership fees in China vs. the five most expensive countries in Europe, Middle East and Africa in USD



Source: KPMG Golf Advisory Practice (2008, p. 13)

According to the information shown above, playing golf in China requires a high economic capacity. It is suggested that by improving the economic environment, golfers are provided with the capacity to consume golf as a recreational product. Interviewees also suggest that under the current economic condition in China, the demand for golf will consistently increase. Interviewees also believe the golf market growth is not influenced by the political factor. In other words, interviewees believe the promotion of the economic factor will offset the influence of the political factor on the feature of recreation.

The findings demonstrate the economic factor has a positive influence on the feature of golf as a recreational product for two reasons. Firstly, the increasing economic environment promotes the demand for recreation and secondly, the increasing economic environment provides the economic capacity to afford golf.

6.3.2 Economic factor in relation to feature of golf as luxury product

The interviewees also suggested the economic factor has a significant positive influence on the feature of golf as a luxury product. At this point, hypothesis “H2b”, that economic factor has a positive influence on the feature of golf as a luxury product is confirmed. The findings suggest the influence of the economic factor on the feature of luxury comes from two aspects:

- The increasing economic condition, which promotes the demand to show off.

- The increasing economic condition, which provides the capacity to show off.

Interviewee B stated:

“Playing golf is regarded as a consumption of luxury in China because it is expensive. People who can afford golf must be quite wealthy in China. Thus it is a good option for people to both enjoy a healthy activity and obtain spiritual satisfaction through showing-off their wealth.”

As I mentioned before, the people that come here do not really wish to play golf. Instead, they are here to show others they can afford golf. We often see people who go to the course directly without practice in the driving range, which actually causes a mess to the golf courses because of their lack of skill and understanding of rules. There are also some ladies, who would like to go to the course directly with high heels. And they barely play a strike in the course. Instead, all they were doing is taking photos.”

Interviewee C stated:

“Golf is a good option for luxury consumption. Golf is expensive and the first requirement for people to play is they must be able to afford the game of golf. For showing-off, indeed, wealth is the first thing people want to show off.”

Therefore, interviewees are in agreement with the findings of the literature review, which showed that improving the economic condition will result in an increase of people’s demand for luxury products (Zhou, 2011). People have an increased level of demand for luxury products as they have the need to show off their wealth to others (P. X. Lu, 2010).

Interviewee A suggested that if the price for a round of golf could reach 200 CNY (20 GBP), the majority of non-golfers would be willing to pay to play golf. However, none of the interviewees suggested that golf businesses in China should decrease their prices to attract more customers. The reason for this is that if the price of golf is lowered, golf will no longer be seen as a luxury product. Chapter 2 suggested that luxury products have features such as rarity and high price (Heinemann, 2008). A cheaper price will result in golf losing its image as a luxury product.

Interviewee B affirmed:

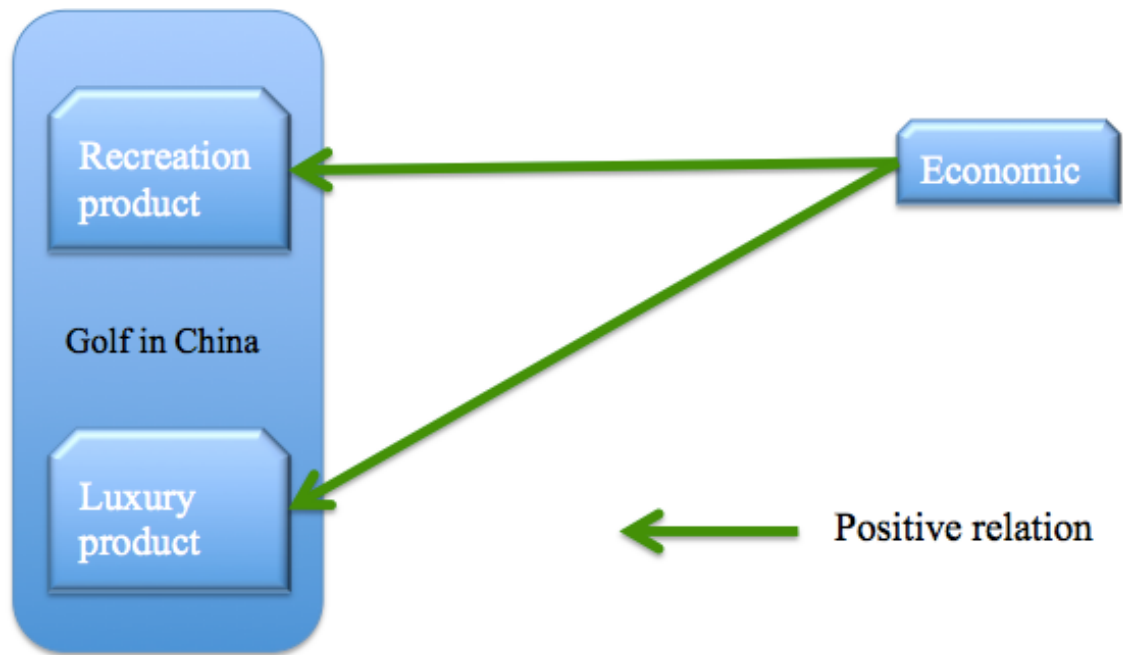
“We also think golf in China is very expensive. The main reason is because of its high maintenance cost. China is not that rich in water resources, with limited annual precipitation. If the level of precipitation in China could be similar to that in Britain, it will save a significant amount of expenditure in water usage, which will certainly bring down the price of playing golf. However, the decreasing price will make golf lose its feature of luxury, which will affect players who play golf for the purpose of showing off.”

The interviewees argued that Chinese people are becoming richer. They need something to fulfil their self-rewarding requirements and show off their wealth to others. The economic development in China will result in an increased income for Chinese people. As income increases, people will improve their living standards by demanding higher-level products and they will not be satisfied with the products they use to consume. They want more expensive or more extraordinary. Therefore, the number of consumers that have the capacity to consume luxury products is increasing. This further explains the findings of the literature review, which stated that the power to consume luxury products is very high. Therefore, there are two reasons why people perceive and treat golf as a luxury product. Firstly, playing golf in China is expensive and therefore it requires high economic capacity; secondly, it requires showing off.

6.3.3 Summary of economic factor

This chapter discusses the findings of the questionnaire survey by using the information gathered from both interviews and the literature. It is found that the economic factor has a strong positive influence on the features of both recreation and luxury. Figure 6.8 generalises these findings.

Figure 6.8 Finding of interview of economic factor



Findings suggest that the economic factor is one of the key factors that contribute to the growth of the golf market in China. This is due to the increase in disposable income brought by economic development, which increases the demand for recreation and luxury products for Chinese citizens. The increase of disposable income brought by economic development also provides people with the capacity to afford the game of golf. The following section discusses the cultural factor in relation to features in the background of golf development in China.

6.4 Cultural factor of golf development in China

According to the literature presented in Chapter 2, the cultural factor can have an influence on golf development in China and the following hypotheses are proposed:

H3a: The cultural factor has a positive influence on the golf industry in China in relation to the feature of recreation.

H3b: The cultural factor has a positive influence on the golf industry in China in relation to the feature of luxury product.

The results reported in Chapter 5 shows that golf managers believe that the cultural factor has a significant influence on golf development in China in relation to recreation. The level of significance reaches 0.048. Therefore, the hypothesis is extended as:

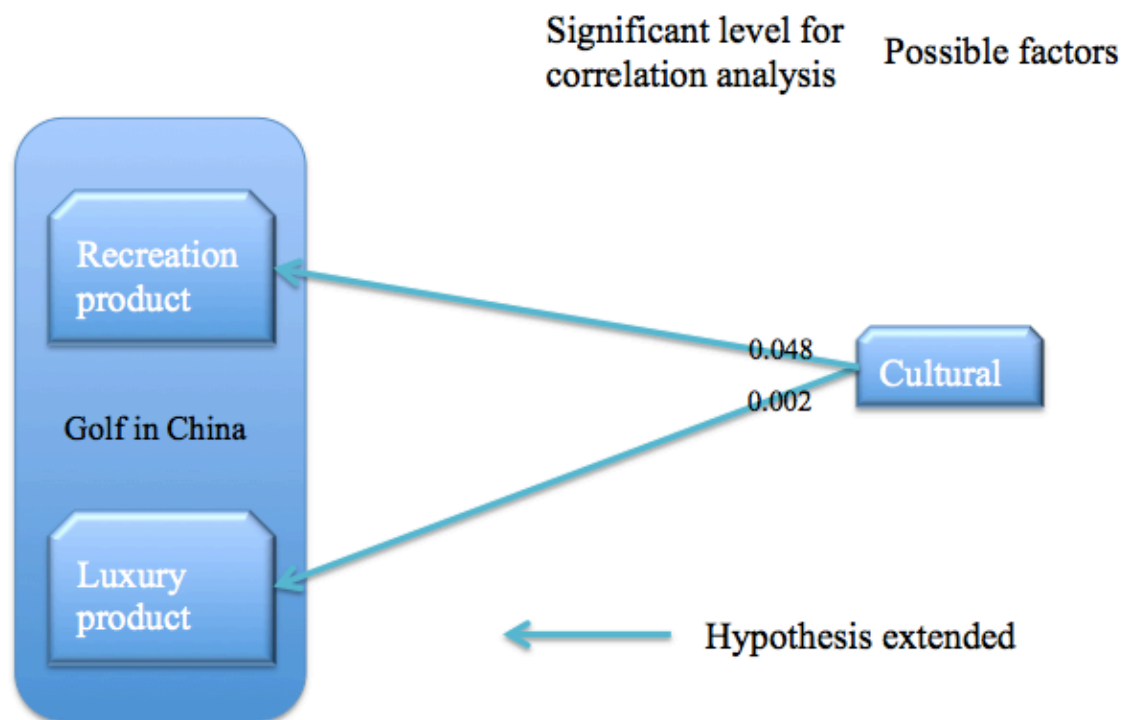
H3a*: The cultural factor has a significant positive influence on the golf industry in China in relation to the feature of recreation.

Results in Chapter 5 also show that the cultural factor has a very high significance in relation to luxury. The significance reaches 0.002. Therefore, the hypothesis is extended as:

H3b*: The cultural factor has a significant positive influence on the golf industry in China in relation to the feature of luxury product.

The results of the questionnaire survey regarding the economic factor are generalised and shown in Figure 6.9:

Figure 6.9 Cultural factor in relation to golf as luxury product and recreation product



The main questions addressed by this study are:

- How do you think the cultural factor will influence the feature of recreation?
- How do you think the cultural factor will influence the feature of luxury?

To ensure the interview remains within the lines of the designed theme, a follow up questions was designed. Such as:

- How do you think the cultural factor will influence your golf business?

The purpose of these questions is to encourage the interviewee to provide in-depth information about the theme. However, if the interviewee wished to continue the discussion on the cultural factor, they were not prevented from doing so. This is an example of a question would be used when the interviewee had strayed too far from the theme of the interview.

The interviewees agree with hypothesis H3a and H3b, that the cultural factor has a positive influence on the feature of recreation and the feature of luxury of golf in China. As interviewee D stated:

“Many people play golf for the experience of golf. They want to learn from the culture of golf. The culture could be the motivation for people to play. I think for the first time players, playing golf could be a journey of golf culture.”

More specifically, many interviewees mention “Guanxi” as one of the reasons contributing to people playing golf. Interviewee A expressed:

“Many people I know told me people play golf to build Guanxi with others. This may be one of the reasons that differentiate golf in China from other countries. Some people play golf to build a connection with other people. The purpose of this connection is the benefit they could get from each other. Golfers who can afford to play golf must have peers with a similar level of income. It is possible they have the same position in society. The connection between them is more accurate and has more chance for mutual benefit. ”

Interviewee B also stated:

“Playing golf is an effective way to build up Guanxi, and expand a person's network.”

Interviewee D declared:

“The culture of golf provides a topic to talk about. Therefore, it is a good topic to start a conversation in the clubhouse.”

Interviewee E explained:

“There are many ways to build the relationship. The relationship established through golf is usually more direct and effective than through traditional ways. Because golf is an activity could bring up more conversation between people. The trust could be built on through conversations. Traditional believes the closest friendship is classmate or schoolmate. During studies in the same school or college, people could stay with each other for a long time. During this time, a lot of things happen. They have more chance to know each other very well.”

Catering to another's pleasure is one of the keys to building up the Guanxi (Kaynak, et al., 2013). Golf in China has the feature of recreation therefore it could be an interesting common point that everyone in the golf course possesses. Therefore, findings imply that as an important element of culture, Guanxi is built based on recreation.

In addition to Guanxi, interviewee A stated:

“I think everybody has the requirement to show-off something. The wealth, of course is the very first thing to show-off. But how? I think that there is no specific luxury product that focuses on the Chinese male. Compared to females, males do not have too many requirements of fashion or leather stuff. They want something to show-off wealth as well as something else to distinguish themselves from each other. Golf could provide them with this feeling because golf has deep culture, long history, represents a healthy lifestyle. They could show off these to others.”

Additionally, interview E stated:

“Golf could be a good option to consumer experiences. When females choose luxury products, they more consider improving appearance and characteristics of elegance. When males choose luxury products, they more consider improving their status, ambitions and reflection of high taste. In this situation, golf becomes the perfect product to fill the market gap.”

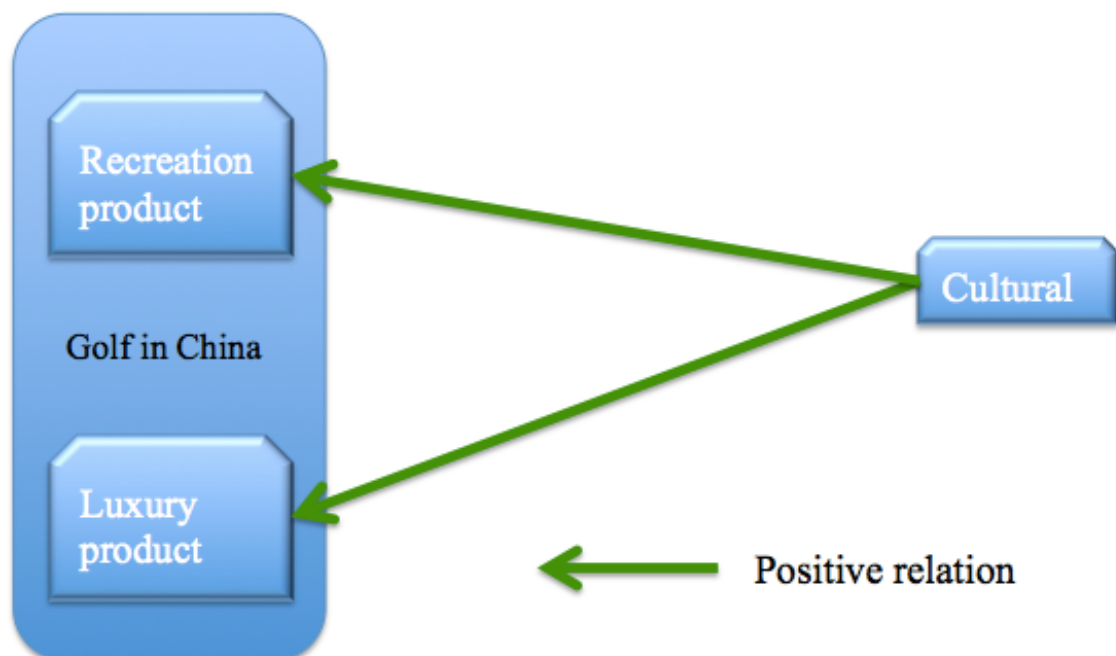
Regarding the new trend of living a healthy life, interviewee B suggested:

“Playing golf not only shows off their material wealth as I said before, but the unique history and culture behind golf could also represent high taste and a

healthy life style which more and more people are pursuing nowadays after obtaining economic wealth.”

According to their claims, the cultural factor is one of the important reasons why people play golf. In other words, the cultural factor is one of the motivations for people playing golf. Guanxi is built up through the feature of recreation. The cultural factor of golf becomes the point that golfers want to show off to others. Therefore, according to the questionnaire and interviews, hypotheses H3a and H3b, that the cultural factor has a positive influence on golf as a recreation and luxury product, are confirmed. The findings are shown in Figure 6.10.

Figure 6.10 Finding of interview of cultural factor



The subsequent section discusses the technological factor to features in the background of golf development in China.

6.5 Technological factor of golf development in China

According to literature presented in Chapter 2, the technological factor can have an influence on golf development in China and the following hypotheses are proposed:

H4a: The technological factor has a positive influence on the golf industry in China in relation to the feature of recreation.

H4b: The technological factor has a positive influence on the golf industry in China in relation to the feature of luxury product.

The results reported in Chapter 5 show that golf managers believe that the technological factor has a significant influence on golf development in China in relation to recreation. The significance level reaches 0.007. Therefore, the hypothesis is extended as:

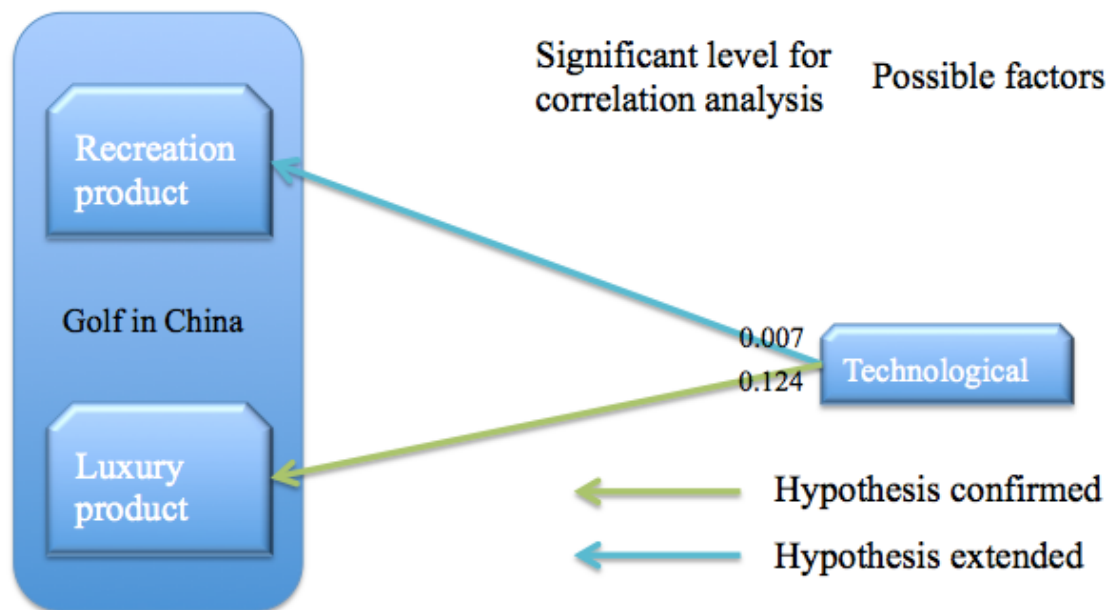
H4a*: The technological factor has a significant positive influence on the golf industry in China in relation to the feature of recreation.

The results discussed in Chapter 5 also show that the political factor has a very high significance in relation to luxury, where the significance level reaches 0.124. Therefore, the hypothesis is confirmed as:

H4b*: The technological factor has positive influence on the golf industry in China in relation to the feature of luxury product.

The results of the questionnaire survey regarding the economic factor are generalised and shown in Figure 6.11:

Figure 6.11 Technological factor in relation to golf as luxury product and recreation product



The questionnaire only shows that the technological factor has an influence on golf development in China in relation to features of recreation and luxury. Under the theme of the technological factor in relation to feature, the following questions are designed.

- Do you think the technological factor will have an influence on the feature of golf as recreational/luxury product?

The interviewees suggested the technological factor has a positive influence on golf development in relation to both features of recreation and luxury.

Interviewee E claimed:

“No matter if some-one is a recreational golfer or luxurious golfer, they all want good quality. The quality is brought by the development of technology and techniques.”

Interviewee B supported this claim and stated:

“Without technological improvements, golf has no way of achieving the current quality.”

According to the statements made by interviewees, hypothesis H4a and H4b are confirmed; the technological factor has a positive relationship with the features of both recreation and luxury. This is because technological improvements will result in the improvement of golf courses and the necessary accessories. Chapter 2 shows that to gain the feeling of flow recreational activities must provide joy and satisfaction (Godbey, 2003). Additionally, Moya (2012) claims high quality is one of the features that luxury products must have. Thus, the interviewees confirm the claims of both Godbey (2003) and Moya (2012). The following question addressed was:

- Why do you believe that technological improvements will lead to an improvement of the quality of golf courses?

Interviewee B and C suggested:

“Technological development does not only mean the equipment and machinery. It also should include the knowledge in people’s head and techniques.”

They believe that technology should include machinery and equipment improvements in addition to knowledge and techniques.

Interviewee A provided an example of how technological improvements will improve the quality of golf lawns:

“It (technology) has a great influence. The knowledge from university and practice allows maintenance work to finish better. The earliest golf course maintenance is nothing more than cutting the grass, cleaning the dry clipping and planting new grass in the divots (repair the divots). The earliest grass keepers could not have answered the questions: How high should the grass be? How to efficiently treat the thatch and clipping? Which is the right grass species for golf courses? These are the basic knowledge every green keeper in golf courses should know nowadays.”

Interviewee A suggested that if green keepers are able answer these questions correctly, they can provide their customers with top quality grass at the golf courses.

Interviewee B provided an example of how technological improvements can improve the customer's experience:

“Through the improvement of technology, the service for golfers has been largely improved in order to let the golfer fully enjoy the game. For instance, as soon as the golfer arrives in the golf club at the reserved time caddies will carry the golf bag out of the vehicle to the starter with the number labelled and a badge with the same number will be handled to the golfer. To simplify the procedure, the number badge is the credit for consuming. The second event is when golfer goes into the clubhouse. By using the badge, the golfer can purchase relative golfing products from the pro-shop like balls, tees etc. The golfer can also go to the restaurant for a meal, consuming also will credit the badge. After the golfer goes to the changing room for final preparation, he goes to the starter. The third event is when the golfer is in the starter, the starter credits the fees from the badge and communicates with caddies. Caddies bring the golfer's golf bag onto buggy, check the number and are ready to go. The fourth event is when the golfer finishes the game. The caddie brings the golf bag to the bellhop and the golfer back to the clubhouse to shower, change, dine and have a rest then checkout by using the badge. Then the golfer gets a different

coloured badge which shows they have already paid, then hands it to the bellman, the bellman or caddie will bring the golf bag to the car and the golfer can leave. In this process, the sensor badge and golf buggy are the equipment that is used to improve efficiency. The golf bellman and the caddies are the new job positions to improve efficiency. More importantly, during the whole process, the golfers do not have to do too much. They only enjoy the game.”

Interviewee A and B provide good examples that suggest the improvement of technology improves the quality of the golf course. The improved quality will result in an improvement of the customer experience. According to Csíkszentmihályi (2008) and Godbey (2003), golfers’ feeling of “flow” is enhanced if their experience is improved. They are more willing to play golf to gain the feeling of “flow”.

Moya (2012) claims that the features of luxury products, including quality, design and performance, are linked with overall quality perception. These features can be improved by refining techniques and technology. Furthermore, as the new trend of luxury products are heading to luxury experiences (KPMG, 2011; Zhou, 2011), the enhanced customer experience will result in an increased willingness to play golf due to the luxurious feeling associated with it. Therefore, golf’s feature of luxury should be upgraded through the technological factor.

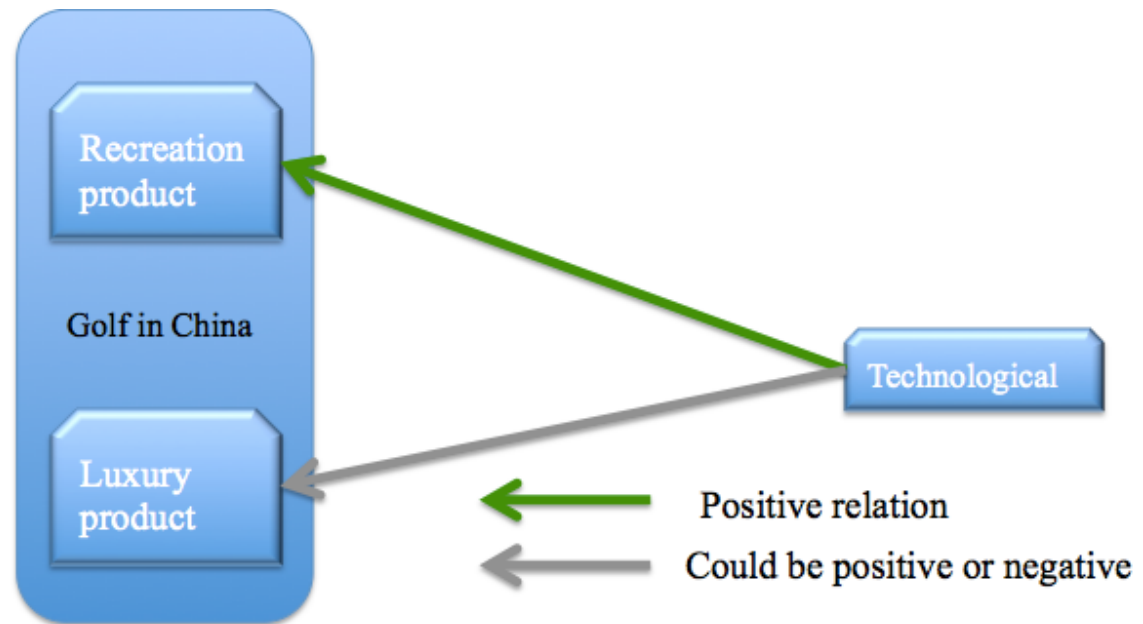
However, interviewee D points out:

“In a golf course where I used to work, all of the buggies (golf cart) have been equipped with tablets, which show information such as the current location of the player, the distance to the green. If the player wants, the tablet can also recommend the next landing point. This kind of advanced technological equipment provides people with comprehensive information. However, our feedback showed that the player didn’t like this at all. They considered this is like installing a flat screen TV into antique furniture, which is practical but has ruined the value of the antique.”

This statement infers that people do not mind the improvement of experience brought by technological developments. However, from the aspect of a luxury product, over developed technology will influence the originality, which is one of the main features that a luxury product should have (Moya, 2012).

According to the information gathered from the interviews and surveys, the technological factor has a positive relationship on golf in China in regards to features of recreation and luxury. However, there is a balance point between technology and the feature of luxury. If the technology is developed appropriately, it can improve the customer experience; however, over-developed technology can harm the originality of golf and the feature of luxury. Figure 6.12 shows these findings.

Figure 6.12 Finding of interview of technological factor



The following section discusses the geographic factor in relation to features in the background of golf development in China.

6.6 Geographic factor of golf development in China

According to the literature presented in Chapter 2, the geographic factor can have an influence on golf development in China and the following hypotheses are proposed:

H5a: The geographic factor has a positive influence on the golf industry in China in relation to the feature of recreation.

H5b: The geographic factor has a positive influence on the golf industry in China in relation to the feature of luxury product.

The results reported in Chapter 5 show that golf managers believe the geographic factor has a significant influence on golf development in China in relation to recreation. The

significance level reaches 0.229, although the correlation is negative, which rejects the hypothesis:

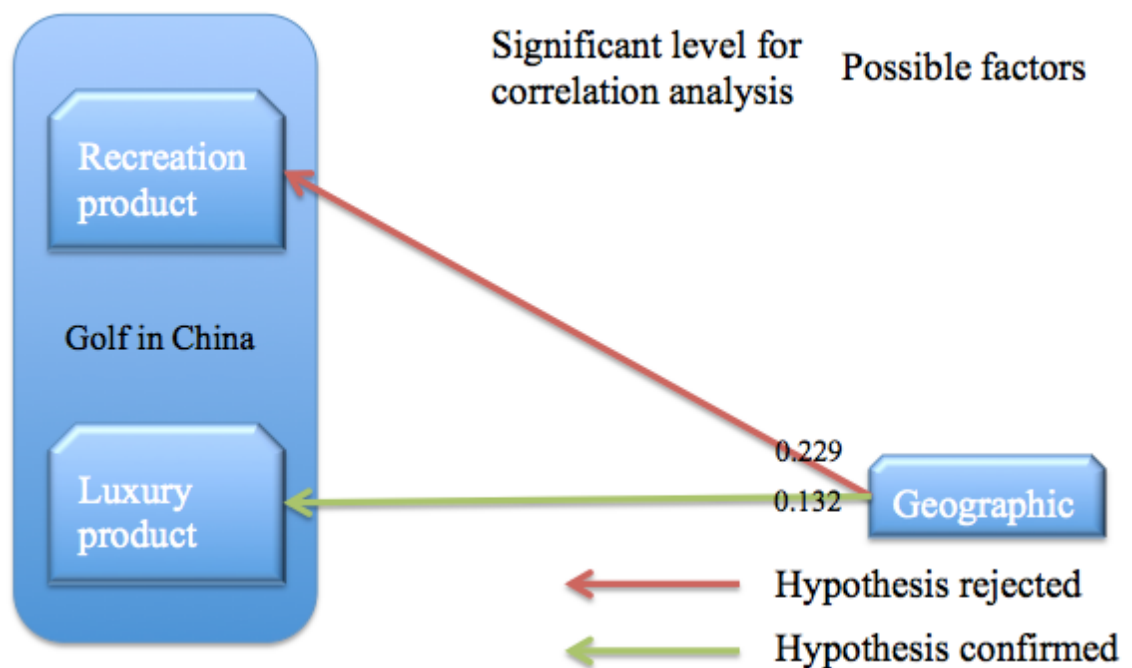
H5a*: The geographic factor has a negative influence on the golf industry in China in relation to the feature of recreation.

Results in Chapter 5 also indicated the geographic factor has a positive relationship with luxury with a significance level of 0.132. Therefore, the hypothesis is confirmed as:

H5b*: The geographic factor has a positive influence on the golf industry in China in relation to the feature of luxury product.

The results of the questionnaire survey regarding the economic factor are generalised and shown in Figure 6.13:

Figure 6.13 Geographic factor in relation to golf as luxury product and recreation product



Under the theme of the geographic factor in relation to features, the interviewees are asked the following questions:

- Do you think the geographic factor will have an influence on the feature of golf as a recreation/luxury product?
- How will the geographic factor influences your business in relation to features of recreation/luxury?

As with the questionnaire survey, the interviewees suggested that the geographic factor has little influence on golf development in China in relation to features of recreation and luxury product. Interviewee B and C have similar suggestions:

“I do not think geographic factors have a great influence on golf development. It does not change. It only indicates whether a place could build a golf course and if the place is ideal to build a golf course. Or, compare two sites: where is more suitable to build a golf course.”

Interviewee D stated:

“My understanding is that geographic means climate, soil and wind. Climate may be the most important to golf courses in China. As an outdoor activity, golfing is not appropriate if the temperature is higher than 30 degrees or lower than 10 degrees. Meanwhile, rainfall is important for maintenance work.”

Interviewee A also provided an example of how the geographic factor influences golf development in China:

“One golf course requires 1,500 tons of water. 200 tons come from tap water from the water system of the city; 140 tons comes from underground; 1,160 tons of water comes from the reserved water through ponds and lakes in the golf course and other facilities. As the largest amount of water comes from natural sources, the location of golf courses requires a large amount of rainfall. Again, even if it could have some sort of influence it is not easy to observe the change of geographic factors therefore it is not easy to observe the influence of this change on features of golf development.”

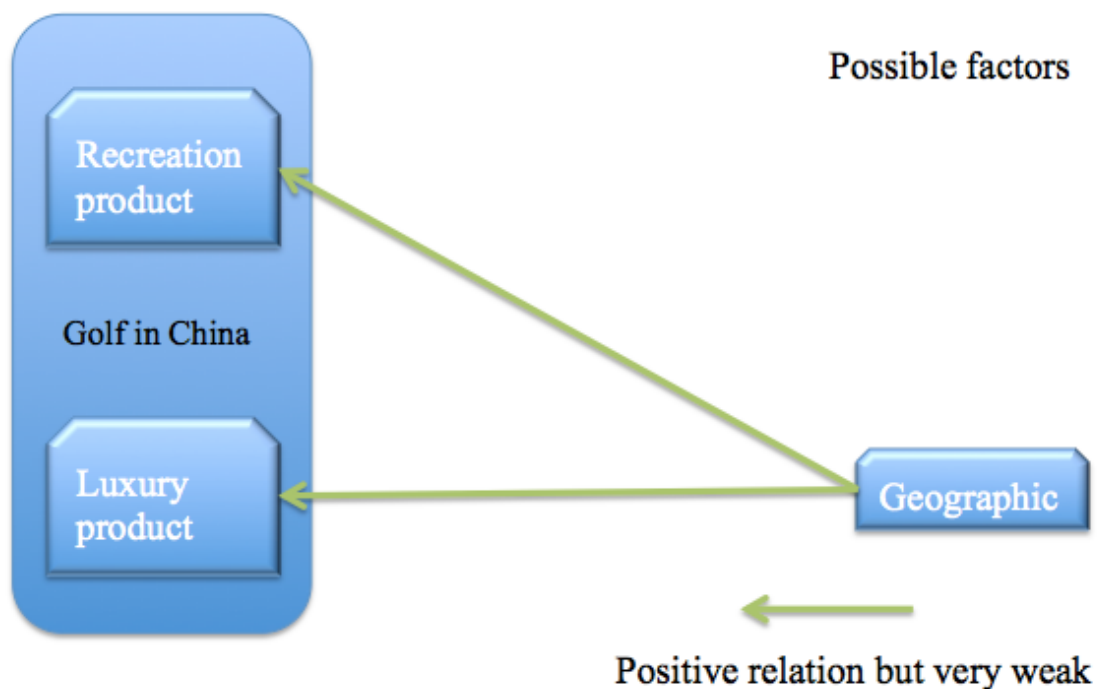
Furthermore, Interviewee E provided another example regarding the geographic factor's influence:

“Different regions in China have their (comparative) advantage for developing golf. Hainan aims to become the “eastern Hawaii” in China and is using golf as its main attraction. The natural environment in Zhejiang is not suitable for golf course construction. This (comparative) advantage comes from the difference of geographic factors. However, considering the feature of luxury and recreation I

do not think the geographic factor contributes to golf market growth through these features”

Both questionnaire and interview findings suggested that the geographic factor has little influence on golf development as a recreation and a luxury product. Therefore, there is not enough evidence to reject the findings of the questionnaire survey. The findings infer that the geographic factor has little influence on golf market growth in China in relation to the features of recreation and luxury. Figure 6.14 generalises the findings:

Figure 6.14 Geographic factor in relation to features



Although the interviews and questionnaires suggest the geographic factor has little influence on golf market growth through features of recreation and luxury, useful information has been uncovered that can be applied to the golf business. As discussed, China is a large country, resulting in different regions having their own geographic factors. These different geographic factors can become their comparative advantage to attract golfers to play. Meanwhile, these comparative advantages could combine the features of recreation or luxury to attract more people to visit. Chapter 7 will include the recommendations that this study provided for to the golf business in further detail. The following section discusses the environmental factor in regards to features in the background of golf development in China.

6.7 Environmental factor of golf development in China

According to the literature presented in Chapter 2, the environmental factor can have an influence on golf development in China and the following hypotheses were proposed:

H6a: The environmental factor has a positive influence on the golf industry in China in relation to the feature of recreation.

H6b: The environmental factor has a positive influence on the golf industry in China in relation to the feature of luxury product.

The results reported in Chapter 5 show that golf managers believe that the environmental factor has a significant influence on golf development in China in relation to recreation. The significance level reached 0.035. Therefore, the hypothesis is extended as:

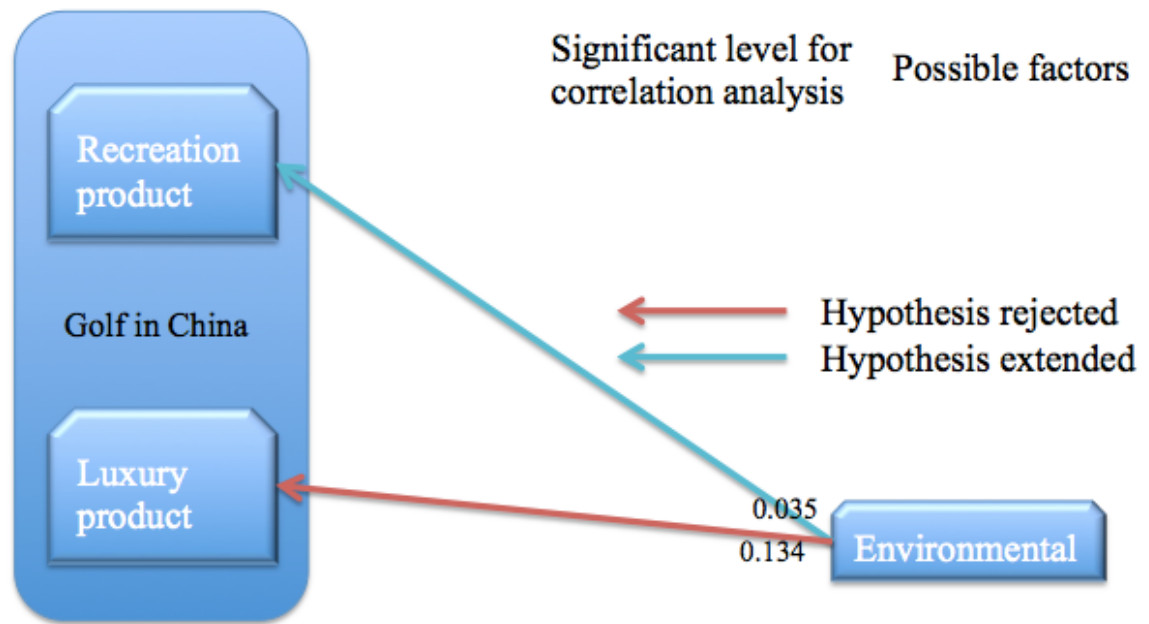
H6a*: The environmental factor has a significant positive influence on the golf industry in China in relation to the feature of recreation.

The results in Chapter 5 also show that the environmental factor has a positive relationship with luxury. The significance reaches 0.134. However, it shows the correlation is negative which means the hypothesis is rejected as:

H6b*: The environmental factor has a negative influence on the golf industry in China in relation to the feature of luxury product.

The results of the questionnaire survey regarding the significance of the environmental factor are represented in Figure 6.15:

Figure 6.15 Environmental factor in relation to features of golf as luxury product and as recreation product



Under the theme of geographic factors in relation to features, the interviewees were asked the following questions:

- Do you think the environmental factor will have an influence on the feature of golf as a recreation and luxury product?

The interviewees suggested that the environmental factor has a positive influence on both features of recreation and luxury. As interviewee A stated:

“Nowadays in China, the pace of life is very fast. People are either work in the office, or on the way to work. Therefore, the opportunity to get close to nature is cherished by the public. And golf provides this opportunity for people to be close to nature. For golfers, they are playing to enjoy the opportunity of being close to nature. For recreation, it is good for health. For luxury, it is also something they can show off to others.”

Interviewee D had a similar viewpoint:

“People who regularly play golf could have a great opportunity to access the natural environment. In traditional culture, the status of coexistence of human and nature is trying to be achieved by everyone. The sport of golf could help people to gain this feeling. People who play for recreation like this feeling.”

Both interviewees believed that being close to nature makes the golfer feel joy and happiness. Therefore, they verified the claims of feeling “flow” that people experienced when they take part in recreation activities (Csíkszentmihályi, 2008; Godbey, 2003). As people can gain the feeling of “flow” from playing in the natural environment, findings imply that the environmental factor can promote golf development through the feature of recreation. At this point, hypothesis H6a, that the environmental factor has a positive influence on golf development in China as a feature of recreation, is confirmed.

Additionally, interviewee B stated:

“Within the description of GOLF, three elements are related to health, which is G-Green (Green), O-Oxygen (oxygen) and F-Feet (foot). “Green” means natural and without additive; “Oxygen” means fresh air and “Feet” means appropriate physical exercise. Therefore, golfers playing for recreation are very concerned about their health.”

Furthermore, interviewee C suggested:

“Other than a wealthy, tasteful and healthy life style. They have the chance to be close to nature and that is worth showing off.”

Interviewee B also stated:

“As I mentioned before, having the chance to be close to nature is also worth showing off as good taste and a healthy style besides the wealth.”

Therefore, the interviewees also believe that being close to the environment is another aspect that people will want to show off to others to display a form of superiority. As interviewee A suggests, the majority of people do not have time to access the natural environment freely. Therefore, playing golf is an ideal opportunity to boast of this advantage.

However, interviewee D pointed out that:

“Attitude toward golfers playing golf for the cause of luxury is changing throughout time. When golf first came to China, both golf managers and golfers believed golf should be “beautiful” and could feast eyes.”

This situation was discussed in the literature review chapter too and is known as the “Augusta national syndrome” (Wheeler & Nauright, 2006). Interviewee D further explained:

“At the beginning people knew about golf through magazines and TV. However, in order to achieve a certain effect, magazines and TV have twisted the image of golf to a certain extent. This has led to some misunderstandings about the concept of a good golf course. While now this twisted concept has become what the Chinese people are looking for in a golf course. Since people have paid hundreds of thousands of CNY to buy the membership, the club could only do their best to fulfil its members’ demand.”

Interviewee C further explained this point:

“If people really want to show off, they really do not care about the natural environment, they only care about whether there is a good picture that comes out.”

Interviewee E further pointed out that:

“The work load for people working in Augusta is crazy. I think it is one of the few foreign golf courses that have a maintenance department as large as those of Chinese golf courses. I guess it is ten times larger than St Andrews.”

Interviewee D also suggested:

“The origin of this “syndrome” is because the information is wrongly interpreted. However, the consequence of this “syndrome” is on the natural environment.”

From their viewpoint, the “beautiful image” is the result of chemical application and more maintenance work. These approaches damage the natural environment however, people like the final outcome. At this point, it appears that the environmental factor has a negative influence on golf as a luxury product. However, interviewee C also claimed:

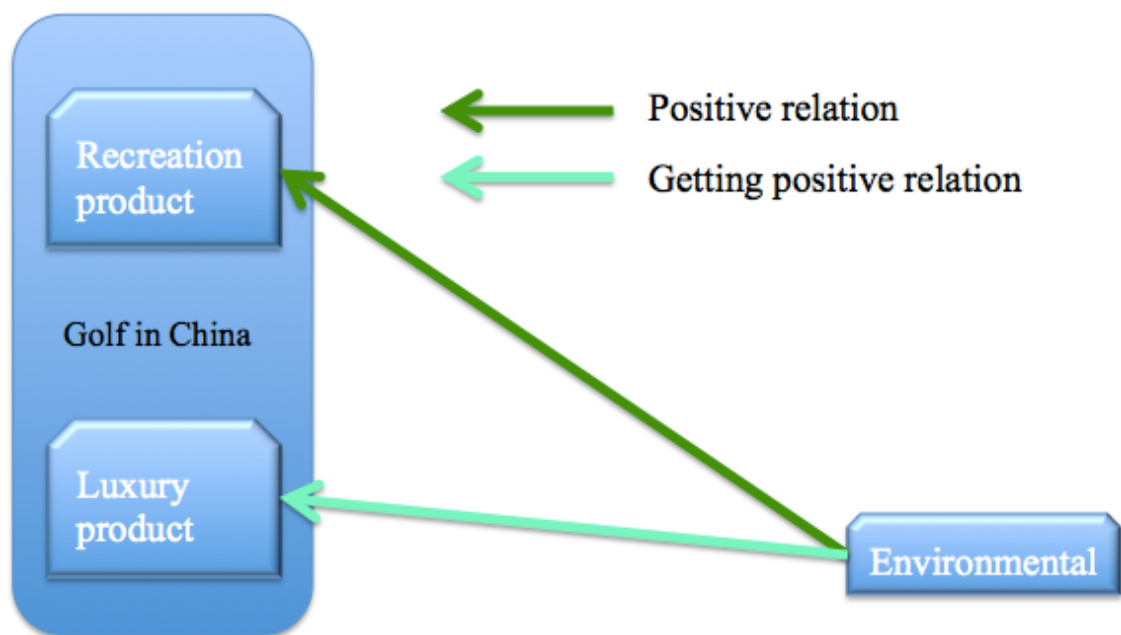
“‘Green’ in golf does not only mean colour of green. It also means no additive.”

Therefore, golfers do care about their health a great deal. They also care about whether chemical products have been applied on the lawn.”

These claims suggest that the influence of the environmental factor on golf as a luxury product changes over time. When golf originally emerged in China, people wanted a beautiful outcome regardless of the environmental impacts and consequences. However, as people have become more aware of environmental protection, their attitude has changed. Although they still want a beautiful image, they do not want to damage the environment and wish to protect it. In this sense, they are able to boast of their ability to enjoy a beautiful golf course as well as display their sense of environmental awareness. Therefore, hypothesis H6b is extended as originally environmental factor had a negative influence on golf as a luxury product, however, as people are becoming more aware of environmental protection, this influence is becoming positive.

These findings indicate the environmental factor has a positive relationship with the feature of recreation while it has a negative relationship with the feature of luxury. However, there is an emerging trend that suggests this relationship could become considerably stronger and positive in the near future. The results are generalised and shown in Figure 6.16:

Figure 6.16 Finding of environmental factor



The following section explains how the key factors are identified by this research.

6.8 Identification of key factors

According to the backward regression analysis in Chapter 5, the influence of each factor on features of recreation can be ranked as showed in Table 6.1:

Table 6.1 Finding of backward regression for feature of recreation

Finding of backward regression for feature of recreation	
Most important	Cultural
2	Economic
3	Technological
4	Geographic
5	Environmental
Least important	Political

The influence of each factor on the feature of luxury is ranked as showed in Table 6.2:

Table 6.2 Finding of backward regression for feature of luxury

Finding of backward regression for feature of luxury	
Most important	Economic
2	Political
3	Environmental
4	Cultural
5	Geographic
Least important	Technological

After discussing how each factor influences golf development through features, this section discusses the key market growth factors for golf in China in relation to the features of golf as a luxury and recreation product as suggested by interviewees. To this end, the researcher asked the interviewees to rank the importance of each factor for golf development in China. Table 6.3 displays their answers.

Table 6.3 Ranking for key factor

Interviewee	A	B	C	D	E
Most important	ECO	ECO	ECO	ECO	ECO
2	POL	CUL	CUL	ENV	CUL
3	CUL	ENV	ENV	POL	TEC
4	TEC	POL	POL	CUL	POL
5	ENV	TEC	TEC	TEC	ENV
Least important	GEO	GEO	GEO	GEO	GEO

Additionally, interviewees were asked to describe the reason why they have chosen this ranking. All interviewees agree that the economic factor is the most important factor for

golf market growth in China. This is because the economy provides the demand for people to pursue recreation and luxury. It also provides them with the capacity to afford golf games. Meanwhile, people who play golf for luxury purpose want to show off their wealth to others. It could be inferred that they want to show off their extraordinary economic status. Therefore, the economic factor becomes the element that enables them to show off.

Findings of this study also suggest that the cultural factor is the second most important because Interviewee D claims that culture is the reason why people play golf. It represents the “flow” people want to gain from playing in addition to the “taste” people want to show to others.

The environmental factor is similar to the cultural factor. It is another key reason which contributes people playing golf to enjoy nature. Additionally, the environmental factor can provide golfers with the feeling of “flow” and “taste” and enable them to show off. Therefore, it is important for golf business in China.

The political factor is not as important as the literature had suggested (Awang & Aziz, 2010; Marcouiller, 2007) in the case of golf development in China. This is because according to earlier experience golf managers infer that the political factor has a weak influence on the golf business. The in favour policies had not promoted golf development while restrictive policies could not stop golf development either because of the effect of other factors such as economic development and cultural change.

Although the technological factor can significantly improve the overall experience for golfers, if technology is over used, the golf experience can be inferior and lead to adverse effects on golf being interpreted as a luxury product. The geographic factor is the least important factor for golf development in China. This is because the geographic factor is relatively stable and people are unable to easily observe the change over time. Therefore, it is hard to observe the influence of these changes, although it is suggested that certain regions could use their unique geographic characteristics to their advantage and develop competitive advantages in golf course development.

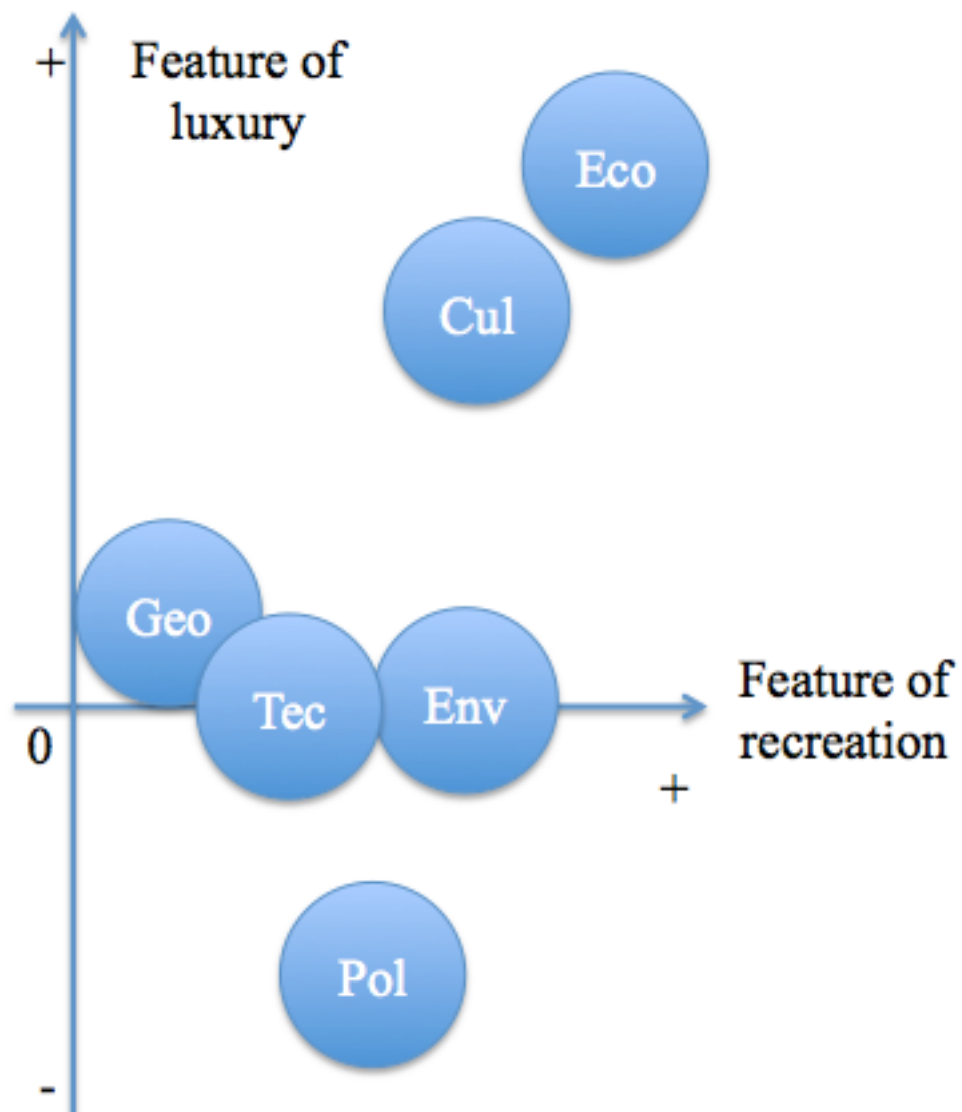
6.9 Synthesis and discussion of the findings

The results of the questionnaire survey show the general demographic information of China’s golf market. Correlation and regression analysis of the survey results proved

that the economic and cultural factors are the two most critical factors out of the six in relation to golf's luxury and recreation features in China. However, the questionnaire did not reveal the reason why these factors influence golf development in China therefore further in-depth interviews were conducted. The in-depth interviews facilitated a comprehensive understanding regarding the influence each factor has on the golf business through features of recreation and luxury product. Additionally, interviewees provided their opinions on the key factors contributing to golf market growth in China.

Following the synthesis of those findings, Figure 6.17 shows the importance of the six factors in relation to recreation and luxury product based on the existing literature, the questionnaire survey and information collected from in-depth interviews.

Figure 6.17 Relationship among factors



As Figure 6.17 shows, the vertical axis represents the influence of the external business environmental factors on golf development in relation to the feature of luxury. The horizontal axis represents the influence of the external business environmental factors on golf development in relation to the feature of recreation. The further to the left and lower to the zero point signifies a negative influence whereas the higher influence is shown as being further from the zero point.

Within the model shown in Figure 6.17, the economic factor is the key market growth factor for golf development in China in relation to features of both luxury and recreation.

With constant economic development in China, the literature review suggested more people have entered the middle-class level in the society (J. Xu, 2013). With the increasing amount of disposable income, they can afford expensive recreational activities such as golf. Furthermore, interviewees suggested that China is currently experiencing an economic transformation that has resulted in a shift from previous levels of high pollution and substantial industry to a sustainable way of development that is focused on expanding the service sector, including tourism and the leisure industry. Golf managers suggested that the golf business in China has a huge potential for further development with the elements of both tourism and leisure in it. As a result, golf managers believed the improving economic condition has increased the number of people who play golf because of its features of luxury and recreation, and the economic development has also promoted the emergence of more golf businesses. Thus, according to the interviews, this research proposed that golf development is promoted by the economic factor.

The cultural factor is the second important market growth factor. With over hundreds of years' of global development, golf has become an activity with its own culture (Yu & Xia, 2005). When introduced into China, this unique culture attracted the younger generations who are greatly influenced by the western style of life, especially in recent years as more western cultural elements have been combined with traditional Chinese culture. Meanwhile, health has always been one of the most important concepts in China's traditional culture and this concept is now strongly promoted due to improvements in living conditions (Jing Zhao, 2006). Thus, it also becomes one of the most useful tools for various businesses to promote their products and services. Golf provides health benefit and provides an opportunity for people to be close to the nature (David & Kitrina, 2004; A. Lane & Jarrett, 2005). Furthermore, this research suggests

that the cultural factor encourages people to play golf, so the cultural factor has a significant positive influence on golf development in relation to both features.

The political factor can have a significant influence on golf development, however findings suggest that it has a negative relationship with the feature of luxury. This means that if policies are put in place, which promotes the development of golf, fewer people will play golf, as it will lose its image of exclusivity and luxury. On the other hand, if the policy demotes the development of golf, a higher number of people are more likely to play golf for the cause of luxury. When providing their personal experiences of sports development in China, interviewees suggested that the Chinese government has a huge capacity to influence the development of particular sectors. The government is able to impede public participation by introducing higher tax rates or restrictions of new golf courses and is currently doing so. The interviewees suggested that the policy, which is intended to impede the golf business in China, is actually making golf more favourable and is causing it to have the feature of luxury. The higher tax has increased the cost of playing golf while the limited number of golf courses has amplified the exclusivity of membership. The limited number of golf courses means that golf is an activity that can be enjoyed by a limited number of people. As a result, golf has attracted more people because of its exclusivity, which is one essential features of luxury product. Additionally, questionnaires and interviews suggest the political factor has a positive relationship with the feature of recreation. More precisely, if the policy is altered and the government chose to promote public participation, more people will then choose golf as an option for their recreational activities.

The environmental factor (sense of environment and sustainable development) encourages golf development in China. Originally, sport was not only a competition between players but also a competition between humans and nature. Golf has maintained this feature over hundreds of years of development. The current rapid urbanisation in China has led to vast areas of land being used for construction, which results in city dwellers having less access to the natural environment. Therefore, similarly to the cultural factor, the environmental factor is one of the reasons that people play golf, in order to be close to the nature.

The questionnaire survey suggests that the environmental factor has a small positive relationship with the feature of recreation. However, the relationship with the feature of luxury is more complicated. The interview findings suggest that people playing golf

purely to pursue a premium experience do not care about the environment and sustainable development. From this aspect, the environmental factor has a negative relationship with the feature of luxury. Other golf players view the chance of getting close to nature in itself as a symbol of superiority. To them, the environmental factor has a positive relationship with the feature of luxury. Therefore, the relationship between environmental factor and golf's feature of luxury is two-sided. However, the interviews suggest that the trend is more positive as being able to be close to nature is a privilege to the Chinese public due to rapid urbanisation. The interviews suggest a large number of people play golf for its feature of luxury mainly to pursue the premium experience, and disregard the environment and sustainable development. Therefore, it is concluded that the environmental factor does promote golf development in China, however to a large extent, it not in terms of recreation and luxury product.

The technological factor has a huge influence on golf development (C. Zhang, 2011). It is seen as one of the critical reasons why golf has flourished and spread on a global scale. However, the technological factor has little influence on golf development in China in relation to the features of recreation and luxury compared with other factors, for instance, cultural and economic factors. As recreation or luxury is the main motivating forces that cause people to play golf, technological development only provides the condition for golf activity to fulfil the motivation but few people play golf because it has advanced technology. Furthermore, interviews suggest that over developing technology may lower the uniqueness and "originality" of golf, which may have a negative influence on its feature of luxury. The interviews also suggest that people play golf, as it is a long-standing and well-established sport. If there is an excessive use of modern technology, golf will lose its uniqueness, originality and prevalence. In contrast, as the literature review suggested, the technological improvements have improved the transaction efficiency (X. Yang & Zhang, 2003; C. Zhang, 2011), which has lowered costs and the price of golf. Questionnaire respondents suggested cheaper prices would attract more people to play golf. Additionally, the interviewees argued that the price decrease brought by technological improvements would encourage more people to play golf as a form of recreation. Therefore, it is suggested that the technological factor does promote golf development in China through the features of recreation and luxury. However, it must be noted that the extent of this influence is small compared with other factors.

China is a large country with different geographic characteristics; different regions have different economic, social and cultural conditions. Therefore, the geographic factor is one of the significant factors influencing golf development in China. However, both the questionnaire survey and in-depth interview findings suggested that the geographic factor has the least influence on golf development in relation to recreation and luxury. Although people in different regions have the same demand and seek recreation and luxury, their approaches are diverse. The questionnaire results suggest that demand varies in different locations and, the data from the interviews inferred that this is the result of other factors, for instance, economic and cultural factors. For instance, questionnaire responses suggested people believe golf courses in the south are popular because it is cheaper there. This statement can imply that people who live in the south are richer than people in the north. This is the result of the economic factor. Furthermore, China is a large country with different geographical characteristics. The interviewees advocated that some regions of China are more suited to golf and golf courses, whereas other regions are not. Therefore, when considering golf in China as a whole, the geographic influence can be small when compared to other major factors such as economic and cultural.

Each of the six examined factors influences golf development in different ways. For instance, from the aspect of golfers, both the cultural and environmental factors provide the impetus to play golf. Furthermore, the economic factor provides golfers with disposable income to spend on the golf course. The technological factor allows improvements to the entire golf course experience for golfers and facilitates easier transactions for the golf business. Moreover, the geographic factor provides golf businesses with varying landscape characteristics and consumers with different preferences. However, taking consideration of all the factors involved in the research, it is concluded that the economic factor is the key factor contributing to golf market growth in China. Without the existence of China's economic transformation in recent years, golf could not have emerged in China. Without economy, as the steady backing up, golf course could not development flourished as well as it has in China. If there were no national economic development that provided an increased amount of disposable income for the Chinese people, they would not have such a strong demand for leisure, recreation and luxury product, thus golf market growth would not have occurred.

Table 6.4 exhibits the conclusions from the surveys, interviews and synthesis discussion of the relative importance of the factors in order of importance.

Table 6.4 Ranking for this research

This research	
Most important	Economics
2	Cultural
3	Environment
4	Political
5	Technological
Least important	Geographic

As showed in the table, the most important factor for golf development in China in relation to features of recreation and luxury product is the economic factor as it provides the fundamental motivation and capacity for people to desire and demand for both recreation and luxury product. Cultural and environmental factors are the second and third most important factors, respectively, because they determine the elements that people seek. Political is the fourth important factor because the government has the power to manipulate the market, however in the case of golf development the power of the market seems stronger. The fifth important factor is the technological factor because it ensures that the golf industry maintains a high level of quality. The least important factor is the geographic factor because it is not very significant for people who work in the golf industry.

6.10 Summary

By applying the information gathered from interviews, this chapter further discussed the findings from the questionnaire and reveals how each factor influences golf development through the features of recreation and luxury product. This chapter also identified the key market growth factor while listing the importance of each factor for golf development in relation to feature of recreation and luxury product.

The next chapter summarises the entire thesis and provides recommendations to academia and the golf industry in China. The limitations of this study are discussed in addition to identifying areas of future research.

Chapter 7. Conclusions

7.1 Introduction

This chapter will summarise the research findings, highlight the academic and practical implications of the study, and comment on the implications of the constant fluctuations of the business environment to the golf business in China. Finally it will address the limitations of the research and also provide suggestions for future research that can be undertaken based on the outcome of this research.

7.2 Summary of thesis

The introductory chapter of this thesis introduced the background of this research project and explored the research question while presenting a clear justification of the importance of this research for both the golf industry and the related academic world. It demonstrated the growth of golf internationally and highlighted the growing significance in emerging markets such as China.

The literature review chapter explored and evaluated the existing literature that relates to this study. The first section reviewed the concept of strategic marketing, in particular the theory of the business environment and the technique of environmental scanning. The second section theoretically connected golf and market growth factors by identifying the features of golf development in China. This section argued that recreation and luxury are the features of golf business in China. The third section reviewed existing literature regarding six factors that have the potential to influence golf market growth in China through features identified in the second section. Finally, gaps in existing literature were identified and the initial research framework was presented.

The framework was presented in more detail in Chapter 3. Twelve hypotheses based on the research question and the framework were proposed in relation to the external environmental factors influence on the features of recreation and luxury product of golf in China.

The methodology chapter discussed the data collection methods. The purpose of this study is to provide comprehensive information in order to identify the key market growth factors for golf development in China as a recreation and luxury product. To merely identify the key factors was deemed insufficient. It is essential to further explain

why these factors have such a significant influence on the golf business in China. Therefore, Chapter 4 argued that a pragmatic approach is more suitable to this research in comparison to apply either a positivism or interpretivism theoretical perspective alone. This enables a synthesis of the advantages of both schools and remedies of the drawbacks of each school of thought. Chapter 4 also introduced the ways in which the questionnaire surveys and in-depth interviews were designed and conducted. This chapter also elaborated on the data analysis processes.

Data and findings narrative chapter examined the demographic information and the results of the questionnaire survey, in addition to the factors, which have a strong impact on the golf business through its features. The information gathered from the survey was analysed by utilising SPSS for correlation analysis and regression analysis, whilst narrative analysis was used for qualitative data.

The analysis and discussion chapter presented a further discussion regarding each of the factors and their impacts on features. Chapter 6 initially presented the results of the questionnaire survey and described how each factor influences golf development in China through features. Data collected from interviews enable a comprehensive explanation on how each factor influences the golf business through features. The results of the interviews are used to reassess the results of the questionnaire surveys and provide a final result. This improved the validity of the research outcome. Finally, by synthesising the results of the questionnaire survey and in-depth interview, this chapter identified the key market growth factor for golf development in China in relation to features. Moreover, this chapter ranked the importance of each factor in regards to golf development in China. This chapter identified that the economic factor is the most important factor for golf market growth in China in relation to features of recreation and luxury product.

The conclusion and implication chapter summarises the thesis in addition to explaining the implication of the study for practitioners and academics. It also discusses areas of future research, limitations and suggestions for future research.

7.3 Aim and objectives

The ultimate aim of this study is to investigate the key market growth factors in relation to the golf industry in China as a recreation and luxury product. To achieve this, this study accomplishes the following objectives:

1. To “*evaluate the current academic literature and identify factors that have a dominant impact and shape the golf industry in China*”, this research carried out a comprehensive study of existing literature which provides the framework for the case of golf development in China.
2. To “*investigate and evaluate the relationship between the key market growth factors, in association with recreation and luxury product as the background of the golf industry in China*”, a pragmatic, two-step research was applied. The first step was the general survey among golf managers regarding the assessment of the factors and their importance. The second step was in-depth interviews among experienced golf managers. The purpose is to have a thorough understanding of how each factor can influence golf through its features.
3. To “*identify the key market growth factors*”, this research synthesised the findings of the questionnaire survey and in-depth interviews and suggested that the economic factor is the most influential factor that shaping the golf industry in China. The economic factor is also identified as the key market growth factor for golf development in China as a recreation and luxury product. Moreover, this research also ranked the importance of each factor in regards to market growth in China.
4. Through the literature study, questionnaire surveys and in-depth interviews, this research “*fills the gap in the existing literature, regarding the key market growth factors and aspects of features of golf development in China and provides recommendations for the golf industry in China to manage the external environment*”.

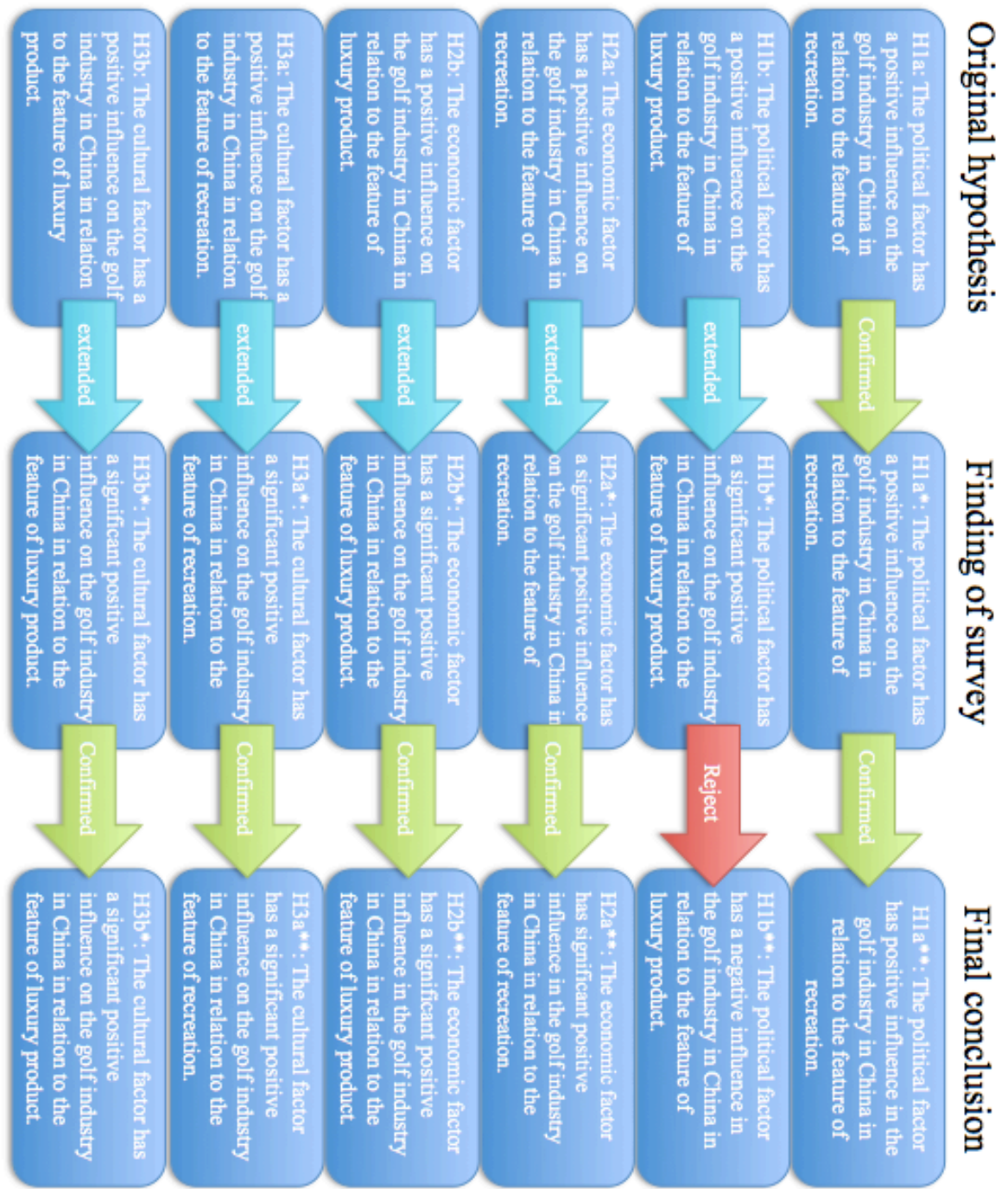
Overall, each of these aims and objectives has been achieved successfully. This chapter will further “*investigate the potential for the golf industry in China to reinforce their current strategy to cope with the constantly changing environment*”. This chapter will also “*provide recommendations for the golf industry in China to cope with the changing environment*”. In addition to providing recommendations to the industry, a review of how this research contributes to academic literature is included.

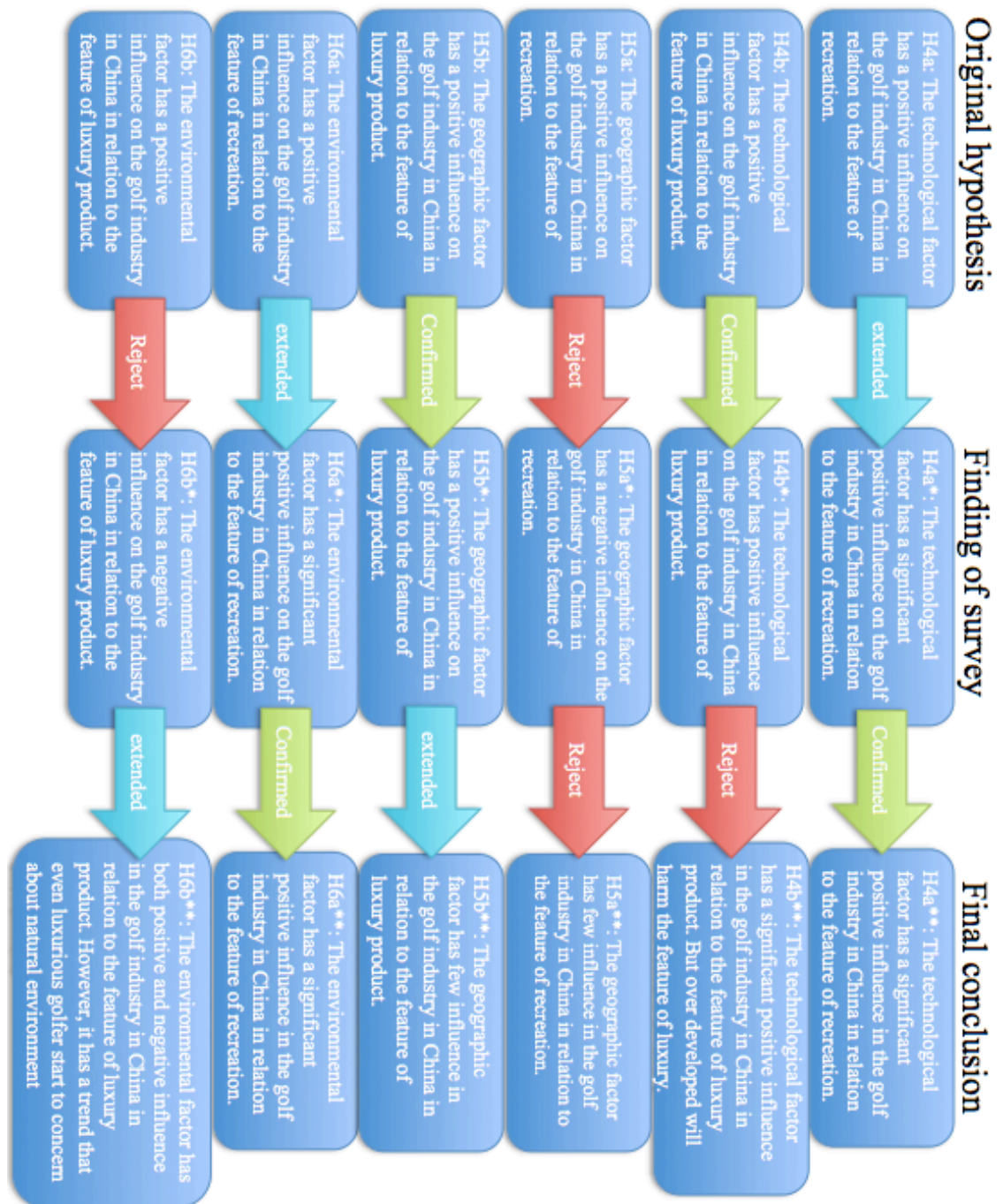
7.4 Conclusion for research findings

According to existing literature, this research proposed twelve hypotheses regarding the relationship between the six factors and the two features of golf. The hypotheses, which were initially proposed in Chapter 3 (Figure 3.1), were tested through a questionnaire

survey of golf managers in China. The questionnaire findings (Figure 5.6) were further supported through data gathered from in-depth interviews with experienced Chinese golf managers. This allowed the researcher to produce the final propositions of this study as presented in Figure 7.1 below.

Figure 7.1 Conclusion of hypotheses





To explain further, Figure 7.1, the left column lists the original hypotheses proposed in Chapter 3. The column in the middle is the result of the findings on the hypotheses statements after the statistical analysis of the questionnaire survey results presented in Chapter 5. The right column shows the result of the questionnaire survey and in-depth interview findings, which were synthesised in Chapter 6 on the hypotheses statements.

The arrow in the middle of each column shows the changes from the original hypotheses to intermediate and then the final statements.

The findings of this study are both pragmatic and theoretically justified, and can benefit both academic literature and the golf industry in China. The next section discusses the study's contribution to knowledge and provides recommendations to academics and practitioners based on the findings.

7.5 Contribution and recommendation

Every finding revealed by this study is equally important to academics and industry. Therefore, this section does not rank the business environmental factors in order of significance to the features of golf, but in the order they were presented in the initial framework.

7.5.1 Contributions of the study to academic literature

The main contribution of this study is providing the academic world with a research framework (Figure 3.1), which shows the links between the external environment of the golf business in China and the features of recreation and luxury. The contribution of this framework to existing research could be generalised with caution as follows:

Firstly, closing the gap between the factors and features that affect the golf industry in China, which had not been previously studied in-depth, to the best of my knowledge in the Chinese or international context.

Secondly, the validity of theories from existing literature on luxury and recreation consumption, luxury brands, tourism, etc. was tested in the context of golf development in China. The findings of this study revealed a strong interrelationship between the consumption of golf as a luxury product and its consumption as a recreation product, which had not been previously identified in the literature.

Thirdly, this framework also provides a model for related future research in the subjects of recreation, luxury and golf. This research realised that golf is not the only activity that may exhibit the features of recreation and luxury. Other activities such as polo, horse riding and sailing may also display the luxury and recreation features of golf but the business environmental factors may condition their consumption in different ways.

Fourthly, this research built a bridge between the academic world and the practitioner world. The study's findings could encourage more researchers to carry out further research in the field of golf business and management for the benefit of golf.

The following section will introduce how each finding of each features and factors will contribute to the academic world.

7.5.1.1 Features of golf development in China

This thesis reviewed two of the most representative features of golf development in China. Features of recreation and luxury product were firstly identified through the existing literature. During the investigation process, findings have improved and reinforced several claims and arguments proposed by authors in previous research.

For feature of recreation, the structure of Tribe (2005) shown in Figure 2.3 identifies the difference among work, leisure and recreation. The findings of this study further verified the structure in the field of golf development in China. This researcher believes firstly using purpose of time to classify leisure and work is appropriate. However, the author did not point out the criteria to distinguish leisure and recreation. To improve this, the concept of “flow” (Godbey, 2003) was introduced. The findings confirmed the claims of existing literature, which postulated that the feeling of “flow” is the most important determinant to distinguish leisure and recreation activities. Furthermore, this research proposed the relationship between work, leisure, recreation, tourism and golf tourism (see Figure 2.5) in addition to the structure of recreational golf (see Figure 2.6) to better explain golf as an activity. These findings reinforce the assertions of existing academic literature and provide a solid structure for related research in the future.

For feature of luxury product, the topic of “luxury goods” is very popular in the academic world. As discussed in Chapter 2, there are few existing studies suggesting or testing whether golf is a luxury goods or product. It is therefore verified that golf in China is a luxury product from a business point of view, according to the characteristics of luxury products as suggested by Moya (2012) and Heinemann (2008). Furthermore, this research suggests golf managers in China believe golf in China has the characteristics suggested by Heinemann (2008) and Moya (2012). Therefore, golf businesses themselves see golf as a luxury product. Additionally, this research confirmed the claims that the main reason for the popularity of luxury products in China is because Chinese people are becoming more affluent and the size of middle class is

growing (Bain & Company, 2010; People's Daily, 2012; J. Xu, 2013; Zhou, 2011). In addition to this, changing trends are tested. These trends have witnessed consumers adjusting their purchasing behaviour of luxury products from "waste" to "taste" (Shipman, 2004) and shifting from "product" to "experience" (Xiao, 2012; Zhu, 2000) within the field of golf development in China. More importantly, in the field of golf in China, this study points out the "taste" and "experience" is represented by the culture of golf and sense of proximity to the natural environment. For this reason, the findings have further reinforced the emerging concepts found in existing literature.

By examining the features of golf development in China, this study implied features of recreation and luxury can exist in one product or service. In the case of golf in China, golf can be a recreational product as well as a luxury product. This suggests that the findings of this study have opened a new area of study for recreational luxury product or luxurious recreational product. In this area, consumers not only enjoy the feeling of "flow" brought by the recreational feature but they also enjoy the feature of luxury. Findings suggest the combination of the two features can improve the limitations that exist when considering one feature alone. In the case of golf development in China, many authors attempted to explain why golf is unstoppable by the government but they were unable to provide a persuasive argument under the framework of leisure, sport and recreational study. However, by adding the feature of luxury product, this thesis explained the reason why Chinese golf development cannot be stopped by government policies. In regards to studies on luxury, existing literature suggests there exists a trend that people are more likely to enjoy the luxury experience (KPMG, 2011; Xie, 2011). However, the only provider of luxury experience that academia had so far discussed are hotels, spas or fitness centres (Hearn, 1999; Yilmaz, 2013; Zhou, 2011). If future studies begin to consider the elements of luxury experience in the recreation industry, existing knowledge and understanding of consumer behaviour can be enhanced.

In the areas of tourism, leisure and sports studies, the findings of this research indicate that the combination of both features of recreation and luxury product could provide a better vision for further investigation. For recreational studies, this study provides another category of recreational product, the luxury recreational product. For investigations on luxury goods, this study provides an additional category of luxury product, the recreational luxury product. Under this new category, popular activities such as horse riding, sailing and polo could be studied by academics as they share golf's features of recreation and luxury product. Furthermore, as these activities possibly

contain the features of recreation and luxury, this research provides a referable model for future studies that seek to investigate how the external environment will influence horse riding and polo and how businesses in those sports shall operate to satisfy consumer demand.

7.5.1.2 Factors influencing golf development in China

Existing literature claims that the political factor has a huge influence on the development of the recreation and luxury sector (Awang & Aziz, 2010; Heo & Lee, 2010; Marcouiller, 2007). However, this study provided findings that contradict this and demonstrated that golf in China is not heavily influenced by the political factor. In other words, in the case of golf development in China, the negative influence of the political factor on the golf industry can be offset by other factors, for instance economic and cultural factors (Figure 6.3). More specifically, the findings of this study suggest the promoted political factor will endorse the feature of recreation but demote the feature of luxury. In contrast, restricting the political factor will promote the feature of luxury but demote the feature of recreation. This finding bridges the gap in existing literature where authors describe the conflict between golf development and the government's attitude (L. Han, 2009b; Puyang, et al., 2013) but offer a limited explanation on why this circumstance occurs. Furthermore, this research disproves the argument that the "policy failure" is due to the effect of government and bribery behaviour (Hu, 2001; Z. Liu, 2008; J. Zhang & Xia, 2008). The findings suggest this is due to the nature of golf as a recreation and luxury product.

This study verifies that the economic factor has a great influence on the development of the recreational sector and luxury sector as claimed in existing literature (Armstrong & Harker, 2009; Haydu, et al., 2008; Shin & Bell, 2002; Tassiopoulos & Haydam, 2008; J. Wilson & Thilmany, 2006). Furthermore, in the case of golf development in China, this study identifies the influence of the economic factor is derive from two directions to either the feature of recreation or the feature of luxury product. Firstly, the economic factor provides the willingness and motivation for people to pursue recreation and the need to "show off". Secondly, the economic factor provides consumers with the economic capacity to afford recreational or luxury products.

This research validates the claims of existing literature which affirm the cultural factor has a great influence on the development of the recreation and luxury sector (Dumazedier, 1967; Fahmy, 2010; SeEVERS, et al., 2010; T. Wilson, 2002). Furthermore,

the findings of this study suggest that culture can be a motivational force, which encourages consumers to choose a recreational luxury product such as golf. The feeling of “flow” for recreation as well as “experience” and “taste” for luxury in the case of golf in China is represented by the cultural factor. Findings also reveal the motivational drives and urge associated with Chinese culture, for instance “Guanxi”, are satisfied through the game of golf. Golf’s culture also provides golfers with the motivations of “experience” and “taste”.

This study also verifies the claims that technological development has assisted the golf industry in China to reach today’s market growth (C. Zhang, 2011). The interviews suggest that technological improvements enhance the quality and standard of the final product and services that the golf industry provides to customers. The improved quality of the golfing experience further improves customer’s satisfaction regarding features of recreation and luxury. This study finds that previous studies (Devesa, et al., 2010; C. Zhang, 2011) that investigated technological and golf development have focused mainly on the supplier. These studies introduced how improved technology can boost the transaction efficiency and therefore improve productivity for the golf business. However, this study introduces the view that improved technology can improve the quality of the final product and increase the features of either recreation or luxury for the golfers. Moreover, this research validates the claims of previous authors (Jin & Qin, 2005; X. Yang & Zhang, 2003; C. Zhang, 2011) who asserted that technology cannot develop without limitations. In the case of golf development in China, overdeveloped technology can bring to the golf industry serious costs such as severely harming the natural environment. Meanwhile, the development of technology can harm the originality of golf and the feature of luxury if it is used to maximise profits only.

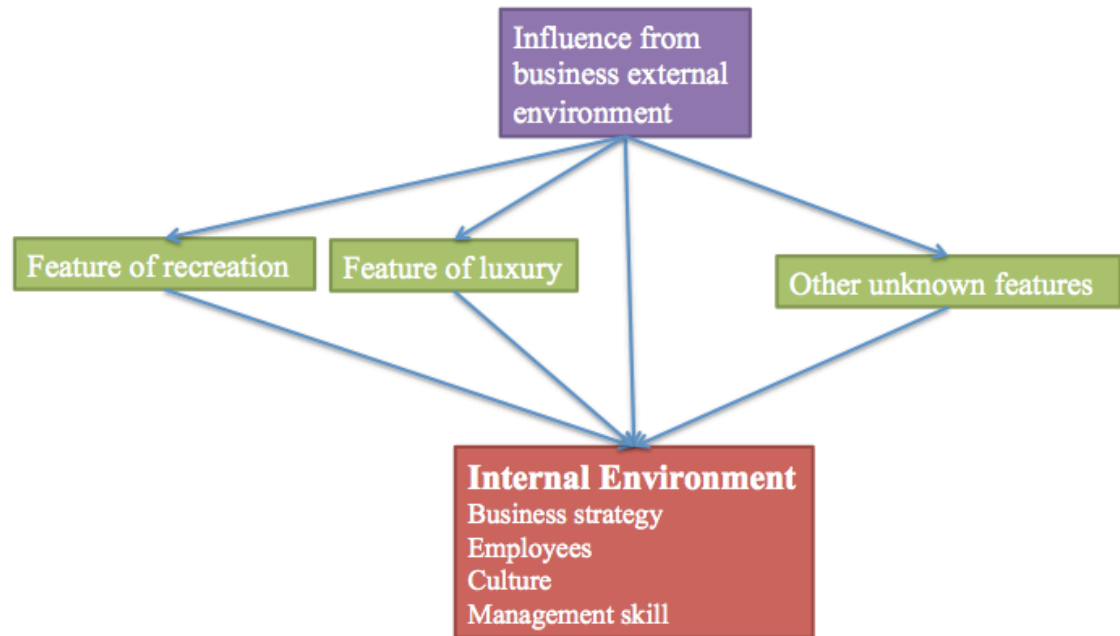
The geographic factor does not have a severe influence on golf development in China as the authors’ claim previously had on other studies (Costa, 2008; R. W. Douglass, 2000; Getz, et al., 1999; Middleton & Clarke, 2012). However, this does not affirm that the geographic factor has no influence whatsoever. Although the interviewees assert that the climate is an essential consideration for golf businesses, the research findings do not indicate the importance of the geographic factor for golf business in China as a whole. It is also proposed through that the geographic factor can be a useful viewpoint when conducting comparison studies of the development of certain sectors in two different regions.

The environmental factor is very important for golf development in China (Noe & Uysal, 1997; Ruskin, 1987; Wheeler & Nauright, 2006). Previous studies focused on explaining how golf courses can improve or damage the natural environment (Y. Cui, et al., 2005; L. Han, 2011; Hu, 2001) but few researchers had considered how this will influence the development of the golf industry. From the viewpoint of both features of recreation and luxury, the research findings suggest that the environmental factor can be one of the main motivations for people to play golf. The surveys and interviews suggest that golf does provide golfers with a perfect opportunity to be close to nature. As these urges are satisfied, golfers gain the feeling of “flow”. The process can also be viewed as an “experience” that enables people to show off to others and suggests golfers have a healthy lifestyle. Furthermore, this research also identifies the trend that luxurious golfers are changing their consumption from being less environmentally friendly to more environmentally friendly.

7.5.2 Recommendations to the practitioners

This section summarises the practical implications of the study findings, which golf managers in China could adopt to improve their existing business strategy to cope with the challenging environment. However, some caution must be applied when trying to generalise the results. Figure 7.2 is generalised from the research framework of Figure 3.1, which summarised the study’s recommendations. I believe that compared to Figure 3.1, Figure 7.2 is more straightforward for golf practitioners to understand the relationship between the features of golf and the factors that influence the golf industry.

Figure 7.2 Golf business and its environments



The golf industry in China has to face an ever-changing external environment. This study investigated six factors that influence the golf business through two main features. However, it is important to draw attention to the fact that there are also other factors influencing the golf business. The purpose of this study was to provide the golf industry with an understanding of their external environment. In order to cope with these external influences, golf businesses in China should alter their internal environment, by developing business strategies, optimising employees through training, improving management skills and business culture. The following section explains the recommendations to the golf industry in China according to the findings of the study.

7.5.2.1 Features of golf development in China

This study reviewed two of the most significant features of golf development in China, which are recreation and luxury. Through examining existing literature, this study found there are no specific studies discussing any of these features in detail. Therefore, this study considered that the golf business in China had not considered the significance of the relationship between these features and golf development. Furthermore, the researcher did not discover any literature, which had suggested that the golf business in China should thoroughly consider how to improve their existing business strategies according to the features of golf development in China.

As golf in China has the feature of recreation, golf business in China should alter their strategy accordingly. From the findings of the questionnaire, the majority of members of golf courses in China have individual membership. Therefore, golf businesses in China could alter their business target from satisfying business members to satisfy individual members. For example, golf courses in China could reduce the number of facilities, such as the conference lounge, to save the operation cost. Additionally, individual members play golf more frequently than business members. Therefore, the golf business can create a mechanism that encourages individual golfers to play in a group. For instance, golf businesses could introduce a group discount scheme whereby individual members receive a discount if they would like to play in a group. The advantage of this is to improve the efficiency to use the golf course in one business day.

Pay as play visitors currently plays the least, hence golf businesses can introduce new services or price plans to attract pay as play visitors. Moreover, the findings also show the majority of golfers are working aged people that play during the weekend and very few of them choose to stay overnight near the golf course. Therefore, golf businesses can reduce their accommodation facilities and focus on improving facilities used by one-day visitors, for example, waiting facilities for accompanying visitors. The researcher postulates that if accompanying visitors are pleased with the facilities, the golfer is more likely to attend the golf course on a frequent basis. Golf courses can include facilities such as Child Zones similar to those that are found in shopping malls. As adults are able to leave their children in such an area, they can spend more time shopping for goods (Matthews, et al., 2000). Golf course also could introduce plans to encourage families to play together. In addition to this, golf course should also consider spouses that accompany the golf players, who have a tendency to dislike golf or have no interest in the sport and provide additional facilities for them, where possible.

Feature of luxury product is also one of the representative features of golf development in China. Research suggests large groups of people believe playing golf provides them with a satisfying feeling that is associated with consumption of luxury products. Additionally, they also like to “show off” after playing. Based on these findings, golf businesses can improve their existing services to satisfy golfers’ demand for luxury. People play golf for the luxury experience, therefore, improving the golfer’s experience is essential when improving the existing services. However, this research does not suggest golf business in China should improve the golfer’s experience of luxury through buying antique furniture or using rare and expensive wood to decorate the clubhouse.

This is because Chinese people consume more rationally than they had previously done (J. Xu, 2013) and people who purchase luxury products also have the requirement of taste (C. He, et al., 2012).

It is suggested that golf businesses should spend more time on the design and details of both the golf course and clubhouse. The design of the clubhouse should emphasise details and practicality. One good example to demonstrate this is the economy hotel business in China (Y. Li, 2011) who provides a good experience by paying attention to details such as the layout and the line of movement in the room. A further reason as to why businesses should focus on detail instead of buying expensive decorations is due to the need for golfers to flaunt their wealth. Although people play golf because it is a luxury product and they want to flaunt their wealth, the business may cause customers to become unhappy if they themselves flaunt their wealth. Instead of flaunting their wealth to golfers, the golf businesses should show off their taste. Additionally, research also indicates that golfers are less concerned about exclusivity, thus the golf businesses could reduce the perceived exclusiveness and attract more members to lower the cost.

7.5.2.2 Factors influencing golf development in China

According to the features of golf development, this thesis discusses the factors influencing golf development in China. As the political factor has a positive influence on the feature of recreation, the current negative political environment will reduce the consumer's demand for golf as their recreation activity. Furthermore, the political factor has a negative influence on the feature of luxury. The current negative political environment will cause more people to play golf for luxury purposes, therefore, golf businesses should increase the feature of luxury. However, existing literature (Chapter 2) suggests the pattern for luxury consumption is changing from "waste" to "taste" (Shipman, 2004) which was also verified by the findings of the interviews (Chapter 6). Therefore, golf business should not increase the feature of luxury by investing money on expensive decorations. Instead, they should pay more attention to design and other details to show golfers that they have good taste. If they do so, current members and players of the golf club can also gain the feeling that they have a high taste. Furthermore, showing wealth to golfers has no effect on golfers who also want to show off their wealth and by avoiding investing in expensive decorations costs will be reduced and playing golf will be cheaper. This could encourage an increased number of people to play for recreation and luxury.

Moreover, golf businesses should collaborate to lobby the government and present evidence that demonstrates government concern is needless. Collaborations could also strengthen the industry and avoid errors in practice that damage the natural environment. However, this research understands and appreciates that attempts to lobby the government in China are quite complicated and can often be risky. Therefore, if golf businesses wish to avoid seeking to influence the government and officials, they could start campaigns that inform the public of the benefits of golf course development. For instance, golf business could invite people to come to the golf course during off-peak hours to see the course and show them how the golf course has improved the local landscape because a large number of golf courses are built on barren landscape and former waste lands. By informing the public about golf and golf courses, golf businesses will eventually ease the pressure from the public.

The economic factor is found to be the key market growth factor for golf development in China. Economic development will encourage more golfers to play for recreation and luxury. In the current circumstances, there are many golf courses surrounding the first level cities. As the second level cities are developing rapidly, golf businesses could target the second level cities in China and develop golf facilities. However, as the government has forbidden new golf course development in China, golf businesses could alter their strategies and build a golf driving range or golf simulation facilities instead. By doing so, golf businesses are able to grasp the opportunities provided by economic development and attract more potential consumers. As driving ranges and golf simulation facilities are perfect for beginner level golf players, the development of such facilities could assist golfers in these cities by developing their golfing skills faster and thus make them more willing to play in golf courses.

The cultural factor also plays an important role for golf development. The culture is one of the reasons that people play golf and the majority of golfers are attracted by the culture of golf. The culture of golf is important for both recreational and luxury features. Therefore, golf businesses should enhance their capabilities of delivering golf's deep-rooted culture to every golfer. Furthermore, helping people to understand the culture of golf is important for golf businesses in China. For example, currently public media consistently criticise golf while golf businesses in China still advertise the culture of golf as "royal" and "honourable". These words can immediately catch the eye of golfers who play golf for its feature as a luxury product. However, the actual golf business in China does not promote the characteristics of being humble and modest. These words

could catch the golfer's attention however golf businesses in China do not state that playing golf requires a humble and modest personality. Additionally, these words will not appeal to general people who are not familiar with golf or have a bad negative perception of the sport. If golf businesses could use the off-peak times to run golf exhibitions for both golfers and non-golfers in their golf course, they could encourage more people to learn about the sport. This could alter people's attitudes towards golf.

The technological factor allows the golf industry to have the capacity to transform every condition of the golf course. However, this research suggests this transformation does not mean to imitate other golf course. Golf business should make more effort to create their own "signature" style to attract more golfers. However, by over-using or abusing technological innovations in the golf course will harm golf's feature of luxury. This study suggests that the golf business should find the equilibrium point to balance the cost and benefit in terms of financial, environmental and social resources to ensure both the features of recreation and luxury is maintained.

The geographic factor does not have a very strong influence on golf development in relation to golf as a recreation and luxury product as was initially proposed. However, China is a large country with diverse geographical characteristics. Therefore, this study suggests golf business could combine golf course design with local features to improve customer experience. This is because golfers that play for recreational and luxury purposes demand a satisfying experience from playing golf. This comes along with the motivation that people go for tourism (Fotis, et al., 2012). More specifically, golf courses could use golf as the main theme and try to help golfers to experience local features whilst they play.

The environmental factor is critical for golf development. Golfers that play for recreational and luxury purposes cherish the opportunity of being close to nature. Golf business should provide a healthy natural environment for golfers. Meanwhile, golf business should build golf facilities on wasteland or barren land instead of using farmland in order to preserve the land and avoid causing further environmental damage. This approach will not only improve the image of the golf industry and give an environmentally friendly attitude, but also ease the tension from government.

To summarise, golf businesses in China should regularly review their external environment, as economic and cultural factors will influence the perceptions of golf as a

luxury and recreational product. They should readjust their strategies and business performances regularly to ensure their development is continual, sustainable and focus on the long term rather than short-term gains.

7.6 Limitations of the study

Every study has limitations and this study is no exception. Although the researcher was able to gain access to golf managers and related researchers from the golf industry in China, it was not possible to interview officials from either central or local government. Therefore, information of this research gathered is derived from members of the golf industry who largely believe that the government's concern with golf development is unfounded. In fact, the golf industry in China wishes to negotiate with the government but they are unaware of which department they should talk to. Therefore, it is almost impossible for this study to gain information from the official side to facilitate the construction of a whole picture of the golf industry in China. However, if governmental organisations could conduct similar research, they should have an increased chance of accessing the resources this study was unable to obtain.

As the research target is in China much time is spent on translation between English and Chinese. Procedures were put in place to ensure that no information is missed in the process of translation and the meaning was not distorted. Furthermore, as English is not the first language for the researcher, a significant length of time is taken to complete writing. In order to overcome this drawback, extra time and consideration were taken to find a professional proof reader to ensure the use of language is accurate and efficient.

Furthermore, as a result of the Chinese culture and the mutual respect between generations, in some circumstances the interviewee could divert their thought in a different direction from the asked questions. To be more specific there is an age gap between the researcher and the golf managers who consider themselves as high-ranking and successful businessmen, however, the situation was controlled with patience.

7.7 Future researches

This study investigated the key market growth factors of golf development in China as a recreation and luxury product. This research postulates that recreation and luxury are the key features of golf in China. However, taking a different angle and standpoint into consideration, this research does not suggest these two features are the only features that

the golf industry in China has. Therefore, future research could find a new angle and aspect to investigate additional features that the golf industry has and analyse how these potential factors will influence the features. Additionally, similar research could be conducted on golf development in other countries other than China.

For golf's feature of luxury, this research project only tested from the viewpoint of the golf business. Future research could focus on the customer's point of view to examine and evaluate the golfer and non-golfer views of golf as a luxury product.

This study discussed the development of golf and the features of golf in China, such as luxury and recreation. Although the development of the golf industry in China and Europe is mentioned consistently, this study did not carry out an in-depth comparison of golf development in these two countries. Furthermore, this study focused on China as a whole. Future studies could assess the impact of these factors in specific regions of China or between regions of China.

This study applied a pragmatic research method, which includes a combination of quantitative and qualitative research. However, the analyses in Chapter 6 focus on qualitative research to discuss the importance of each factor for golf development in China. Research will conduct in the future could carry out deeper quantitative or econometric research to determine the relationship between factors with final outcomes. For instance, quantitative research determines the relationship between the contributions of technological improvements to the final outcome of business performance. Meanwhile, quantitative research can determine the extent to which people's income will be required to reach in order for them to consider playing golf to show they are wealthy. However, the econometric analysis requires solid data and requires researchers to fetch "hard" data from either the golf industry or governmental organisations.

The geographic factor could also be examined further by focusing on golf course management and development in different regions of China. This research provided an outlook for future research in the field of geographic factor of golf development. For example, the questionnaire results suggest that people believe that the golf courses in the south have a higher quality than those in the north. The findings from the interviews suggest this is because the geographic conditions in the south are more suitable for golf and golf courses. The geographic factor is useful for studies seeking to compare the development of golf in different regions. However, this research examines golf in China

as a whole and does not include a comparison between China and different countries. Therefore, future research could utilise the geographic factor by carrying out comparison studies among different regions in China, such as the comparison of east versus west and north versus south.

7.8 Summary

This final chapter has presented the outcomes of this study and its contribution to the academic world as well as the golf industry in China. It also provides comprehensive information about constant changing of external environment for golf business in China to formulate their business strategies. Like every study, this study also bears limitations. Nevertheless, these limitations do not reduce the value of this study to both academia and practice. Finally, this study provides suggestions on how further research based on the outcome of the study can be undertaken.

This ship has been sailing for about six years. And she finally arrives home.

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Appendix 1: Questionnaire (Chinese)



中国高尔夫产业增长因素分析

非常感谢您在百忙之中抽出时间参与本研究

尊敬的先生、女士

我正在进行一项有关影响中国高尔夫市场发展关键因素的博士课题研究。请您根据您的相关经验，填写以下问卷。填写此问卷大概需要15分钟。非常感谢您的参与！

恳请您按照步骤填写并提交问卷。

您也可以通过扫描二维码用手机或其他移动设备填写问卷(通过“微信”、“查一查”或其他二维码扫描app):



若您不习惯以上填写问卷，请与我电话联系：18010148562，我可以将问卷邮寄给您或者在您方便的时候通过电话对您进行采访。

本结果将匿名收集，但如果您对本研究的结果非常感兴趣，请在最后留下您的邮箱地址，我们会把调研结果的简要概况发送给您。

若您对此课题有任何疑问或者建议，请与我们邮件联系：

s.zhang@napier.ac.uk

c.s.zhang1985@gmail.com

本问卷在线版地址：

<http://www.wenjuan.com/s/mamiEv>

再次感谢您的参与和支持！谢谢！

请注意大小写

张丛杉

下一页 >>

7%

请问您的性别是

- ☐ 男
- ☐ 女

您获得的最高学历是

- ☐ 初中、高中学历
- ☐ 专科或本科学历
- ☐ 研究生学历

3. 您在中国高尔夫行业工作了

- ☐ 少于5年
- ☐ 5-10年
- ☐ 10-20年
- ☐ 超过20年

您目前的职位是

- ☐ 总经理
- ☐ 管理部门
- ☐ 运营部门
- ☐ 球童部门
- ☐ 财务部门
- ☐ 场务部门
- ☐ 其他

您过去和现在，都在以下那些地区的高尔夫相关公司工作过？（多选）

- ☐ 东北地区:辽宁,吉林,黑龙江
- ☐ 华北地区:河北,山西,内蒙古,北京,天津
- ☐ 华东地区:山东,江苏,安徽,浙江,台湾,福建,江西,上海
- ☐ 华中地区:河南,湖北,湖南
- ☐ 华南地区:广东,广西,海南,香港,澳门
- ☐ 西南地区:云南,贵州,四川,西藏
- ☐ 西北地区:新疆,陕西,宁夏,青海,甘肃

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15%

您目前所在的高尔夫球场从开业至今

- ☐ 不到5年
- ☐ 5-10年
- ☐ 10-20年
- ☐ 超过20年

您所在球场的会员人数?

- ☐ 100-300
- ☐ 300-500
- ☐ 500-700
- ☐ 700以上

您所在球场的规模是?

- ☐ 9洞
- ☐ 18洞
- ☐ 27洞
- ☐ 36洞
- ☐ 超过36洞

您所在的球场是否配有酒店设施?

- ☐ 有
- ☐ 目前没有但是正在建设
- ☐ 没有且无此计划

您所在的球场是否配有别墅等房产项目?

- ☐ 有
- ☐ 目前没有但是正在建设
- ☐ 没有且无此计划

您的球场是否是体育园的一部分?

- ☐ 是的
- ☐ 不是

下一页 >>

23%

下列哪一种身份的顾客占到顾客总数的最多数？

- ☐ 个人会员
- ☐ 企业会员
- ☐ 非会员访客

一周中您的球场最繁忙的时候是？

- ☐ 工作日
- ☐ 周末

您的顾客中工作与退休者的比例是：

- ☐ 大多数的正在工作
- ☐ 大多数已经退休
- ☐ 工作与退休者各占一半

在您球场酒店或球场附近酒店留宿顾客的比例是：

- ☐ 10%-30%
- ☐ 30%-60%
- ☐ 60%-90%

您认为人们为什么打高尔夫？

	非常不同意	不同意	中立	同意	非常同意
人们打高尔夫是为了休闲	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
人们打高尔夫是为了陪伴他人	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
人们打高尔夫是为了娱乐	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
人们打高尔夫是为了提高球技	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
人们打高尔夫是为了健康	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

根据您的经验，什么将成为未来10年顾客选择高尔夫的主要原因。请将下列选项排列

为了健康

为了娱乐

为了陪伴他人

为了休闲

为了提高球技

1

2

3

4

5

请将左面的项拖放到右面的框完成排序

您是否同意以下说法？

	非常不同意	不同意	中立	同意	非常同意
打球的人是为了显示自己的身份	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
人们将自己打高尔夫的照片放到社交媒体（微薄，微信，博客等）上以显示自己的身份	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
打高尔夫的人喜欢被人看到自己在打高尔夫	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
大多数打高尔夫的人家境富裕	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
打高尔夫的人是为了不落后来于他们的同辈	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
人们喜欢去富人去的球场打球	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
人们会愿意为了设计较好的高尔夫球场支付更高的价格	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

您认为以下这些因素中哪个是使用**企业会员卡的顾客**认为重要的？

	非常不同意	不同意	中立	同意	非常同意
高价代表高质量	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
会员身份的稀缺性	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
球场质量	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
著名的专业球手打过的球场	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
举办过重要赛事的球场	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

您认为以下这些因素中哪个是使用**个人会员卡的顾客**认为重要的？

	非常不同意	不同意	中立	同意	非常同意
高价代表高质量	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
会员身份的稀缺性	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
球场质量	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
著名的专业球手打过的球场	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
举办过重要赛事的球场	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

您认为以下这些因素中哪个是**非会员访客**认为重要的？

	非常不同意	不同意	中立	同意	非常同意
高价代表高质量	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
会员身份的稀缺性	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
球场质量	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
著名的专业球手打过的球场	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
举办过重要赛事的球场	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

您多大程度上同意此观点？ 1分为不同意，5分为非常同意

中国高尔夫行业的增长主要归因为中国经济的增长

1

2

3

4

5

分

有关高尔夫发展与可支配收入，您是否同意以下观点？

	非常不同意	不同意	中立	同意	非常同意
高尔夫与其他运动相比相对昂贵	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
很多人想打高尔夫却因为价格昂贵而放弃	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
可支配收入增加了，打高尔夫的人会随之增加	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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46%

您当地的高尔夫球场（您的球场以及周边球场）所面临的最大挑战是什么？请根据严重程度排序，1为最严重6为最不严重

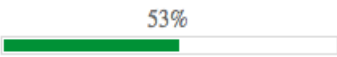
水资源缺乏	1	
土地侵蚀	2	
森林退化	3	
化学物质伤害	4	
威胁了生物多样性	5	
影响了当地景观	6	

请将左面的项拖放到右面的框完成排序

高尔夫和可持续发展，您是否同意以下观点？

	非常不同意	不同意	中立	同意	非常同意
打高尔夫的人并不关心环境的可持发展	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
打高尔夫的人愿意为了可持续发展的球场支付更高的价格	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
打高尔夫的人喜欢户外娱乐	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
高尔夫球场能改善景观	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
高尔夫球场损害环境	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
当人们意识到高尔夫损坏环境时，会停止或者减少打高尔夫的次数	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

下一页 >>



关于高尔夫和有关部门目前的政策，您是否同意以下观点？

	非常不同意	不同意	中立	同意	非常同意
中央政府目前对高尔夫的政策是近 3 0 年来最严苛的	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
该政策将阻碍中国的高尔夫发展	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
该政策将限制新高尔夫球场的建成	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
限制性的政策将有利于现存的高尔夫球场	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
限制性政策将不会阻碍中国的高尔夫发展	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
限制性政策将使高尔夫变得更加昂贵	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
限制性政策将逐步引导高尔夫在适合中国国情的前提下发展	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

您认为现阶段政策将如何影响您高尔夫球场的经营？

- ☐ 积极影响
- ☐ 消极影响
- ☐ 没有影响

以下哪一选项对您的高尔夫经营影响最大？ 1为影响最大的，5为影响最小的

环保主义者	1	
当地政府	2	
中央政府	3	
当地居民	4	
本公司员工（人员不足或消极怠工）	5	

请将左面的项拖放到右面的框完成排序

Appendix 2: Questionnaire (English)

Golf development in China

Thanks for your participation

*Required

The website for this questionnaire is: <http://www.wenjuan.com/s/mamiEv/>

Dear Madam or Sir,

I am undertaking a research project to investigate the key market growth factors for golf development in China. I kindly request you complete the following questionnaire reflecting your experience of golf development in China. It will take you approximately 15 minutes of your time. Your response will be highly appreciated.

Kindly return the completed questionnaire to us, or by E-mail.

If you want paper edition questionnaire or arrange a time for telephone interview, please contact me through phone or email, we will post the questionnaire to you.

If you have any questions or comments regarding this research, please contact us by E-mail us at: Mobile number: 18010148562

s.zhang@napier.ac.uk

c.s.zhang1985@gmail.com

If you not comfortable with online form, please give me a phone call for further discussion.

Thank you

P.S. The following figure is the QR code for this research, you could use your phone app to scan it and it will lead you to the questionnaire. (Require app such as WEIXIN or CHAYICHA.)



About yourself

Skip to question 1.

What is your gender * Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

What is your highest qualification? * Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Middle or high school
- ☐ College or University
- ☐ Postgraduate

How many years have you worked in golf industry in China * Mark only one oval.

- ☐ under 5 years
- ☐ 5-10 years
- ☐ 10-20 years

over 20 years

What is your current position * Mark only one oval.

GM

- ☐ Management
- ☐ Operation management
- ☐ Caddy department
- ☐ Finance
- ☐ Superintendent

Other:

Have you worked in golf in any of the following regions * Tick all that apply.

East

South

Middle

North

North-west

South-west

North-east

About your golf course

Skip to question 6.

How long has your current golf course been in operation? * Mark only one oval.

- ☐ under 5 years
- ☐ 5-10 years
- ☐ 10-20 years

over 20 years

How many members do you have? * Mark only one oval.

- ☐ 100-300
- ☐ 300-500
- ☐ 500-700
- ☐ Over 700

Size of your golf course * Mark only one oval.

9 holes

- ☐ 18 holes
- ☐ 27 holes
- ☐ 36 holes

over 36 holes

Does your golf course have affiliated hotel facilities? * Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ Not yet but under construction

No and no plan

Does your golf course have affiliated villa properties? * Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ Not yet but under construction

No and no plan

Is your golf course part of a sport park? * Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Recreation

Skip to question 12.

Your largest number of golfer is? * Mark only one oval.

- Member from individual membership
- ☐ Member from business membership
- ☐ Pay as play visitor

When is the most busy time for your golf course during the week * Mark only one oval.

Weekday

☐
☐

Weekend

To what proportion is your customers: *Mark only one oval.*

☐
☐
☐

Mostly working

Mostly retired

Half and half

What percentage your players stay overnight in your golf course or nearby *Mark only one oval.*

☐
☐
☐

10%-30%

30%-60%

60%-90%

Why do your believe people playing golf? * *Mark only one oval per row.*

Absolutly

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Absolutly

	disagree				agree
People playing for leisure	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
People playing to accompany others	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
People playing for recreation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
People playing to develop skill of golf	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
People playing for health benefit	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Based on your experience which of the following group will growth for the coming 10 years. *

(Ranking)

Mark only one oval per row.

Column 1

- People playing for health benefit ☐
- People playing for recreation ☐
- People playing to accompany other ☐
- People playing for leisure ☐
- People playing to develop skill of golf ☐

Luxury

Skip to question 18.

To what extent do you agree with this statements? * Mark only one oval per row.

Absolutely Disagree Neutral Agree Absolutely

	disagree				agree
Golfers play golf to display status.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
People post their golfing photos on social-media to display their status.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Golfers like to be seen playing golf	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Majority golfers are well off.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Golfers play the game to keep up with their peers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
People play where wealthy people play	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Golfer will pay higher price for better designed golf course	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Which of the following features do you consider to be important for corporate membership players *

Mark only one oval per row.

Absolutely Disagree Neutral Agree Absolutely

	disagree				agree
Price are the sign of quality	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Exclusivity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Golf course quality	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Played by famous professional player	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Champion course	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Which of the following features do you consider to be important for individual membership players *

Mark only one oval per row.

Absolutely Disagree Neutral Agree Absolutely

	disagree				agree
Price are the sign of quality	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Exclusivity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Golf course quality	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Played by famous professional player	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Champion course	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Which of the following features do you consider to be important for pay as play players * *Mark only one oval per row.*

Absolutely Disagree Neutral Agree Absolutely

	disagree				agree
Price are the sign of quality	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Exclusivity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Golf course quality	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Played by famous professional player	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Champion course	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Skip to question 22.

The golf industry in China has grown as a result of Chinese economy growth * To what extent do you agree with this statements? *Mark only one oval.*

1 2 3 4 5

Disagree most ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Agree most

Golf development and disposable income * To what extent do you agree with this statements? *Mark only one oval per row.*

Absolutely Disagree Neutral Agree Absolutely

disagree

agree

Golf is an relatively expensive games compare with others

☐☐☐☐☐

Many people wish to play golf but the high cost stop them

☐☐☐☐☐

When disposable income increases people play more golf

☐☐☐☐☐

Environmental

Skip to question 24.

What is the most serious challenge for golf courses in your region.

(Rank)

Mark only one oval per row.

Column 1

Water shortage

☐

Land invasion

☐

deforestation

☐

chemical damage

☐

biodiversity

☐

damage to landscape

☐

Golf course and sustainable development *

To what extent do you agree with this statements? *Mark only one oval per row.*

Absolutely Disagree Neutral Agree Absolutely

	disagree				agree
Golfer do not care about sustainability.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Golfer would be willing to pay higher price for sustainable golf courses	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Golfer enjoy the games outdoors.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Golf course improve landscape.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Golf course damage the environment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
As people realise golf is damaging the environment they will stop or play less golf	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Political

Skip to question 26.

Golf and current approach from government * To what extent do you agree with this statements? *Mark only one oval per row.*

Absolutely Disagree Neutral Agree Absolutely

	disagree				agree
The central government's current approach toward golf is the most restrictive in the last 30 years.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This approach will obstructs golf development in China	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The approach will stop new-entrance.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Restrict approach will benefit existing golf courses	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
restrictive approach will not stop golf development in China	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Restrictive approach will make golf more expensive.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Restrict policies with gradually correct golf development in China.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How do you think the government approach has impact to your business * Mark only one oval.

☐ Positive
☐ Negative
☐ No impact

Which of the following has affected your business the most? *

(Ranking)

Mark only one oval per row.

	Column 1
Environmentalism	<input type="radio"/>
Local government	<input type="radio"/>
Central government	<input type="radio"/>
Local residence	<input type="radio"/>
Employees	<input type="radio"/>

Social-cultural

Skip to question 29.

29. To what extent do you agree with this statements? * Mark only one oval per row.

Absolutely	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Absolutely
	disagree			agree
People playing golf to make friends	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Game of golf is reflective of traditional Chinese value	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
During last 30 year the game of golf is reflect more western value and culture.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The game of golf reflect the attitude and value of the younger generation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Golf is popular because the new trend of healthy thinking.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Technological

Skip to question 30.

Please rank the following options from the sources that least influencing golfer (1) to the sources that most influencing golfers (5): * Technology and inferstructure (Rank)
Mark only one oval per row.

	1
TV	<input type="radio"/>
Newspaper	<input type="radio"/>
Internet	<input type="radio"/>
Radio	<input type="radio"/>
Magazine	<input type="radio"/>

Technology and golf club * Mark only one oval per row.

Absolutely	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Absolutely
------------	----------	---------	-------	------------

	disagree				agree
We regularly update our equipment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
New equipment improve efficiency and lower cost	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Latest equipment is too complicated to use	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Equipment with fewer function is better	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
We cooperate with a college or university to improve our standard of services.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Demographical

Skip to question 32.

What age group play most golf in China * Mark only one oval.

17 or younger

- ☐ 18-25
- ☐ 25-35
- ☐ 35-45
- ☐ 45-55
- ☐ 55-65

over 65

To what extent do you agree with this statements? * Mark only one oval per row.

Absolutely Disagree Neutral Agree Absolutely

	disagree				agree
The Majority of employees are local	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
More play with family than on their own	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Which of following group will growth faster in the future 10 years. *

Ranking

Mark only one oval per row.

1

Men	<input type="radio"/>
Women	<input type="radio"/>

Geographic

Skip to question 35.

Who do you believe are more likely to play golf? * Mark only one oval.

<input type="radio"/>	People live in south
<input type="radio"/>	People live in north
<input type="radio"/>	No difference

Why do you think people live in this area more likely to play golf? * Tick all that apply.

Cheaper

Better quality

Better services

Lower restriction

Better weather

More fashion

More wealthy customer

More chance to know high-class people

Other:

Who do you think are more likely to play golf? * Mark only one oval.

People live inland region

☐

People live in costal area

☐☐

No difference

Why do you think people live in this area more likely to play golf? * Tick all that apply.

Cheaper

Better quality

Better services

Lower restriction

Better weather

More fashion

More wealthy customer

More chance to know high-class people

Other:

Looking forward the final result?

Skip to question 39.

39. Please leave your email address if you want to get a summary report of this survey

Appendix 3: Card for participants to access to the questionnaire



<http://t.cn/8ka9dFy>

调查问卷地址，请用微信等二维码扫描工具进入，或使用浏览器输入下面网址进入。

Please use QR reader (Weixin) to access the questionnaire or type the address into your Internet browser

Appendix 4: Themes and questions for interview

Feature of golf development in China
Do you think golf development in China have the feature of recreation? Why? (If they do not understand what is recreation, provide them the definition and explain in detail.)
Do you think golf development in China have the feature of luxury? Why? (Carefully with the first responds. Then provide them the definition of luxury and see whether they change their mind.)
Factors of golf development in China in relation to features
How do you think political factor will influence golf development in China? What about in relation to recreation and luxury?
How do you think economic factor will influence golf development in China? What about in relation to recreation and luxury?
How do you think cultural factor will influence golf development in China? What about in relation to recreation and luxury?
How do you think technological factor will influence golf development in China? What about in relation to recreation and luxury?
How do you think geographic factor will influence golf development in China? What about in relation to recreation and luxury?
How do you think environmental factor will influence golf development in China? What about in relation to recreation and luxury?

Appendix 5: Invitation letter for interviews



Dear Madam or Sir,

I am undertaking a research project to investigate the key market growth factors for golf development in China. I would like to have a face-to-face interview with you regarding your experience of golf development in China. It will take you approximately 30 minutes. Your cooperation will be highly appreciated.

Anytime is available for me as long as it is convenient for you. And we can have the interview at your office or any place you feel comfortable with. The conversation is for the research purpose only and could be kept as anonymous upon request.

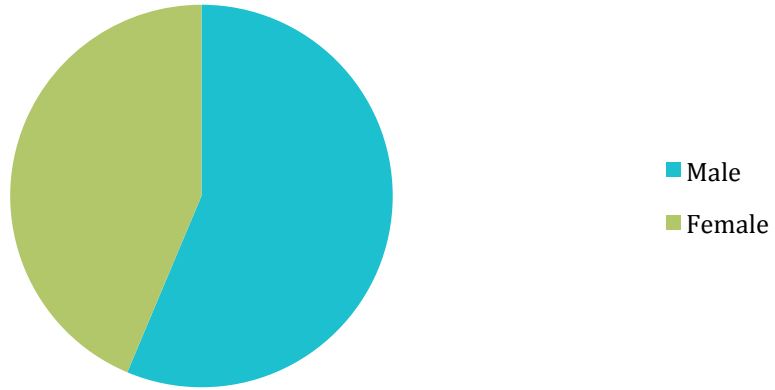
If you have any questions or comments regarding this research, please contact us by E-mail us at: Mobile number: 18010148562

s.zhang@napier.ac.uk

c.s.zhang1985@gmail.com

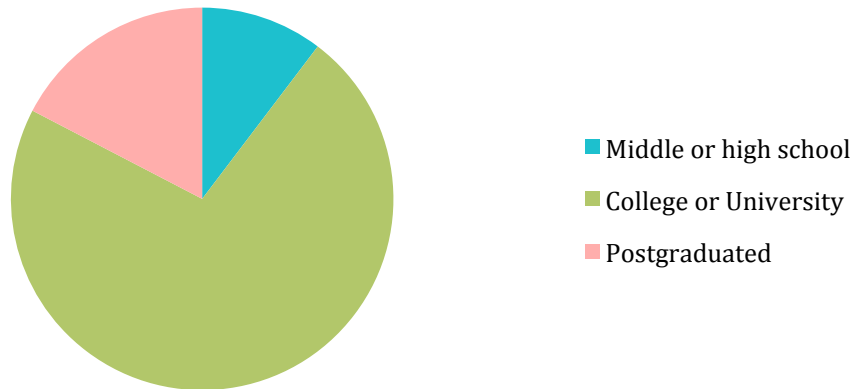
Appendix 6: General result of the survey

Q1:What is your gender



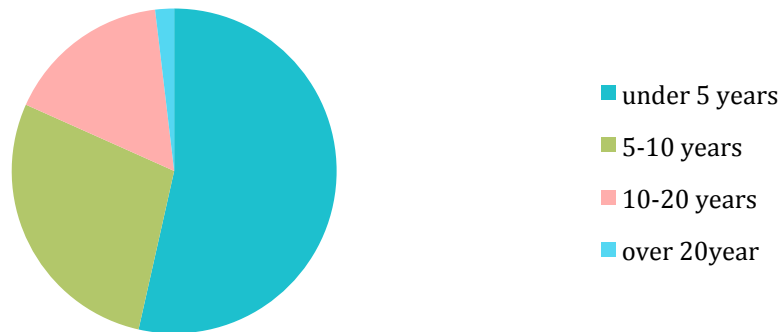
Answers	Responds
Male	120
Female	93
Total responds:213	

Q2:What is your highest qualification?



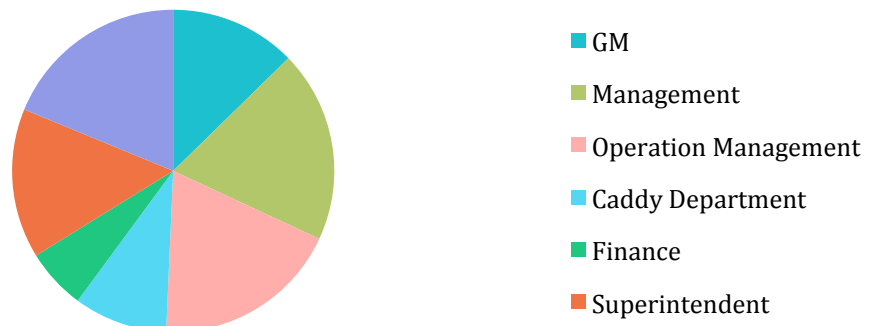
Answers	Responds
Middle or high school	22
College or University	154
Postgraduate	37
Total responds:213	

Q3:How many years have you worked in golf industry in China



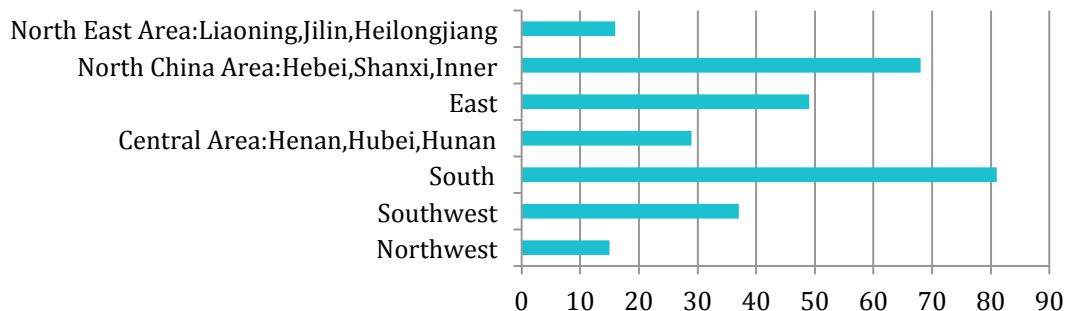
Answers	Responds
Under 5 years	114
5-10 years	60
10-20 years	35
Over 20year	4
Total responds:213	

Q4: What's your current position



Answers	Responds
GM	27
Management	41
Operation Management	40
Caddy Department	20
Finance	13
Superintendent	32
Other	40
Total Responds:213	

Q5:Have you worked in golf in any of the following regions(multiple choice)



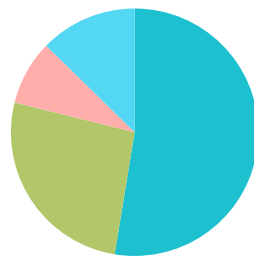
Answers	Responds
North East: Area:Liaoning,Jilin,Heilongjiang	16
North China: Area:Hebei,Shanxi,Inner Mongolia,Beijing,Tianjin	68
East Area:Shandong,Jiangsu,Anhui,Zhejiang,Taiwan,	49
Central Area:Henan,Hubei,Hunan	29
South China:Guangdong,Guangxi,Hainan,Hongkong,Macao	81
Southwest China:Yunnan,Guizhou,Sichuan,Tibet	37
Northwest China:Xinjiang,Shannxi,Ningxia,Qinghai,Gansu	15
Responds:213	

Q6: How long has your current golf course been in operation



Answers	Responds
Under 5 years	92
5-10 years	84
10-20 years	29
Over 20 years	8
Responds:213	

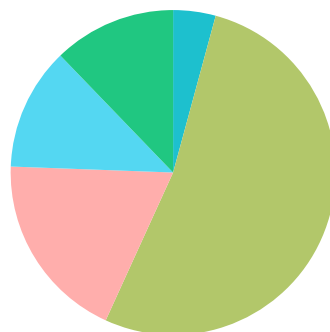
Q7: How many members do you have



■ 100-300
■ 300-500
■ 500-700
■ over 700

Answers	Responds
100-300	112
300-500	56
500-700	18
Over 700	27
Responds:213	

Q8:Size of your golf course



■ 9 holes
■ 18 holes
■ 27 holes
■ 36 holes
■ over 36 holes

Answers	Responds
9 holes	9
18 holes	112
27 holes	40
36 holes	26
Over 36 holes	26
Responds:213	

Q9: Does your golf course have affiliated hotel facilities



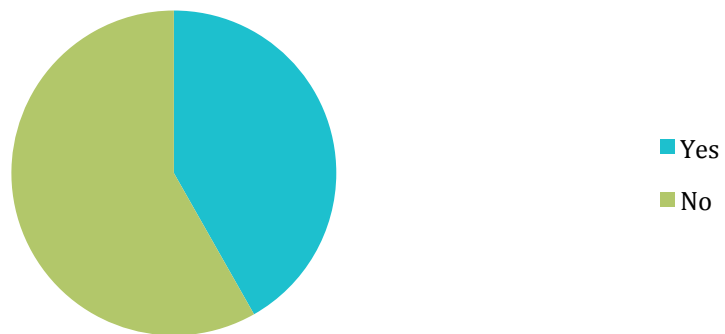
Answers	Responds
Yes	150
Not yet but under construction	34
No and no plan	29
Responds:213	

Q10: Does your golf course have affiliated villa properties



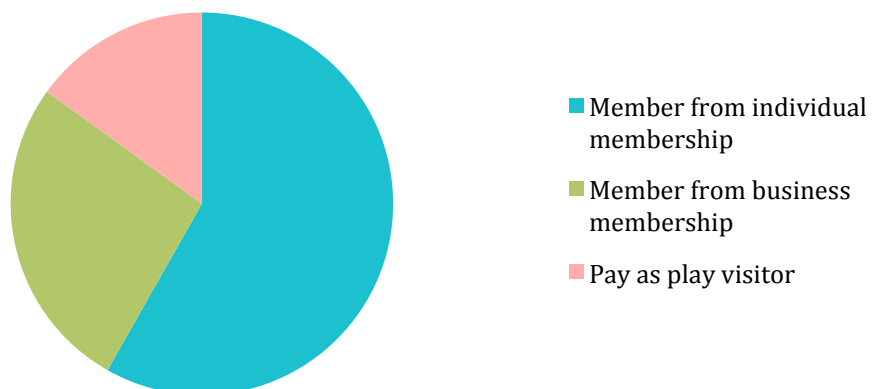
Answers	Responds
Yes	121
Not yet but under construction	52
No and no plan	40
Responds:213	

Q11: Is your golf course part of a sport park



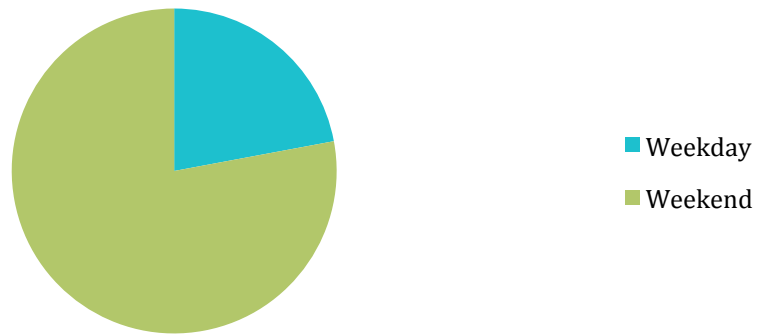
Answers	Responds
Yes	89
No	124
Responds:213	

Q12: Your largest number of golfer is



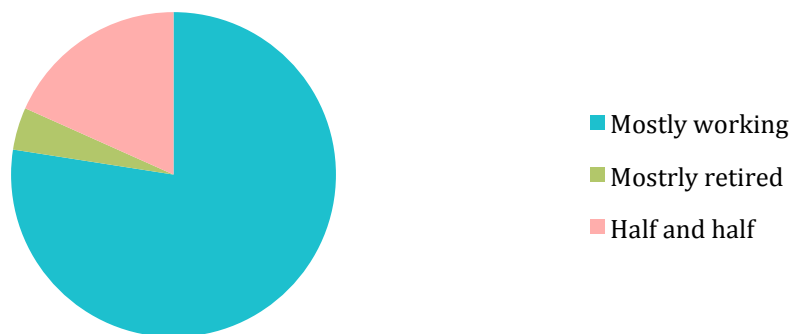
Answers	Responds
Member from individual membership	124
Member from business membership	57
Pay as play visitor	32
Responds:213	

Q13: When is the most busy time for your golf course during the week



Answers	Responds
Weekday	47
Weekend	166
Responds:213	

Q14: To what proportion is your customers



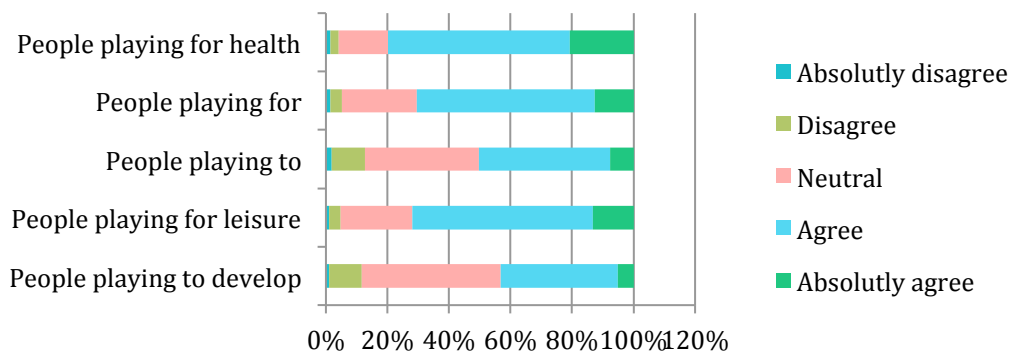
Answers	Responds
Mostly working	165
Mostly retired	9
Half and half	39
Responds:213	

Q15: What percentage your players stay overnight in your golf course or nearby



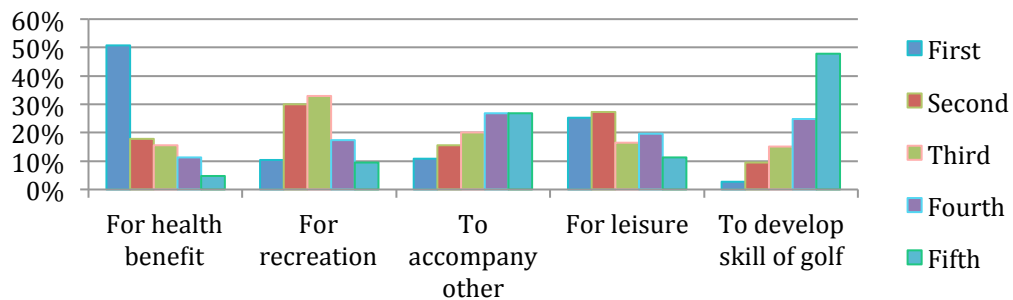
Answers	Responds
10%-30%	109
30%-60%	54
60%-90%	50
Responds:213	

Q16: Why do your believe people playing golf



	Absolutely disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Absolutely agree
People playing for health benefit	1%	3%	16%	59%	21%
People playing for recreation	1%	4%	24%	58%	13%
People playing to accompany others	2%	11%	37%	43%	8%
People playing for leisure	1%	4%	23%	59%	13%
People playing to develop skill of golf	1%	11%	45%	38%	5%
Responds:213					

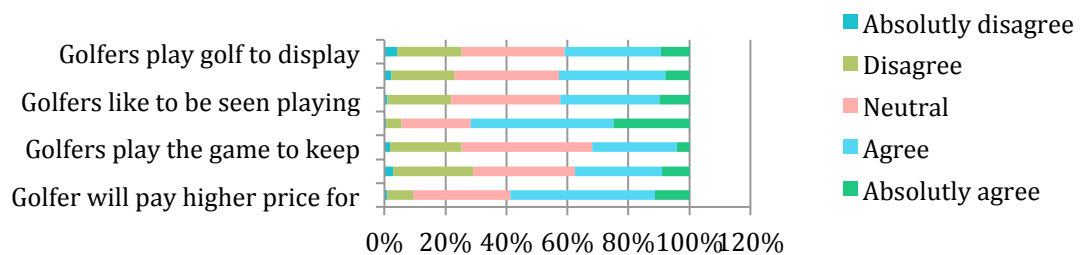
Q17:Based on your experience which of the following group will growth for the coming 10 years



	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth	Average Ranking
For health benefit	51%	18%	15%	11%	5%	2.0138
For recreation	10%	30%	33%	17%	9%	2.8544
To accompany other	11%	15%	20%	27%	27%	3.4319
For leisure	25%	27%	16%	20%	11%	2.6433
To develop skill of golf	3%	9%	15%	25%	48%	4.0563

Responds:213

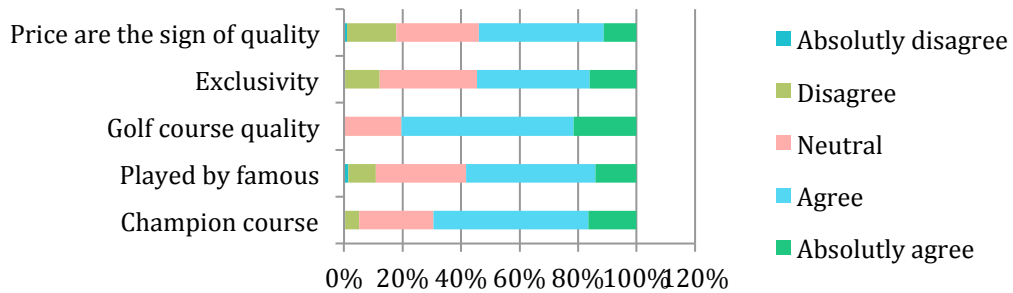
Q18: To what extent do you agree with this statements



	Absolutely disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Absolutely agree
Golfers play golf to display status	4%	21%	34%	31%	9%
People post their golfing photos on social-media to display their status	2%	21%	34%	35%	8%
Golfers like to be seen playing golf	1%	21%	36%	32%	10%
Majority golfers are well off	0%	5%	23%	47%	25%
Golfers play the game to keep up with their peers	2%	23%	43%	28%	4%
People play where wealthy people play	3%	26%	33%	29%	9%
Golfer will pay higher price for better designed golf course	1%	8%	32%	47%	11%

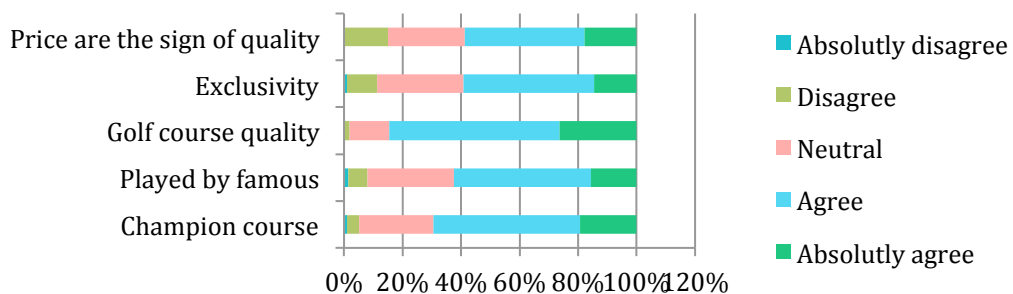
Responds:213

Q19: Which of the following features do you consider to be important for corporate membership players?



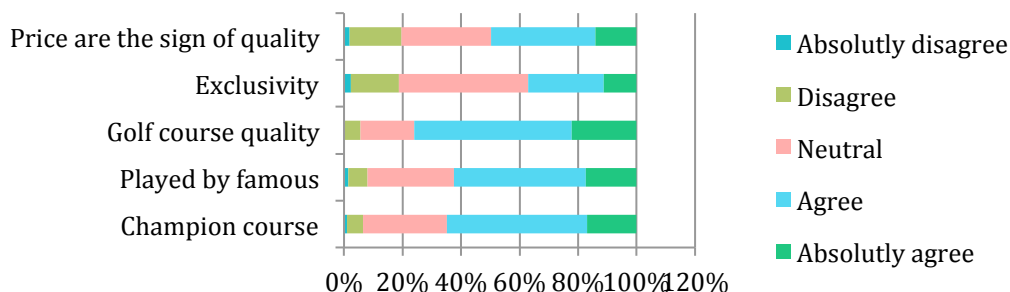
	Absolutely disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Absolutely agree
Price are the sign of quality	1%	17%	28%	43%	11%
Exclusivity	0%	12%	33%	38%	16%
Golf course quality	0%	0%	20%	59%	22%
Played by famous professional player	1%	9%	31%	44%	14%
Champion course	0%	5%	25%	53%	16%
Responds:213					

Q20: Which of the following features do you consider to be important for individual membership players



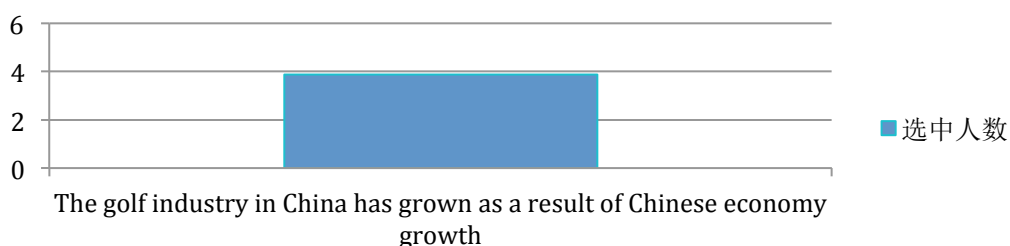
	Absolutely disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Absolutely agree
Price are the sign of quality	0%	15%	26%	41%	18%
Exclusivity	1%	10%	30%	45%	15%
Golf course quality	0%	2%	14%	58%	26%
Played by famous professional player	1%	7%	30%	47%	15%
Champion course	1%	4%	25%	50%	19%
Responds:213					

Q21: Which of the following features do you consider to be important for pay as play players



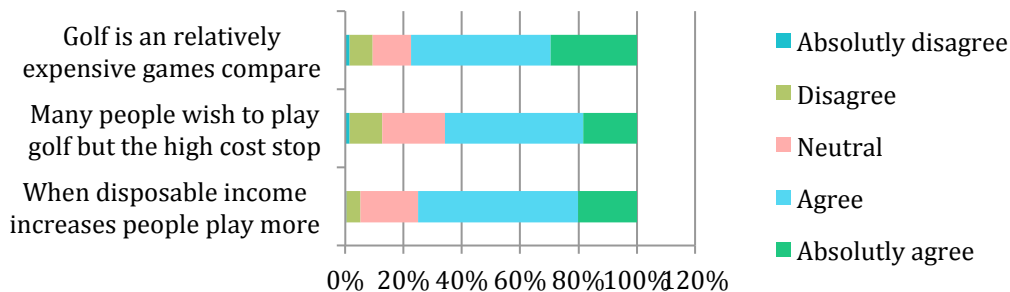
	Absolutely disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Absolutely agree
Price are the sign of quality	2%	18%	31%	36%	14%
Exclusivity	2%	16%	44%	26%	11%
Golf course quality	0%	6%	18%	54%	22%
Played by famous professional player	1%	7%	30%	45%	17%
Champion course	1%	6%	29%	48%	17%
Responds:213					

Q22: The golf industry in China has grown as a result of Chinese economy growth. Score 1 means disagree most, Score 5 means agree most



	Score 1	Score 2	Score 3	Score 4	Score 5	Average Score
The golf industry in China has grown as a result of Chinese economy growth	5.63% 12	2.35% 5	26.29% 56	30.05% 64	35.68% 76	3.88
Responds: 213						

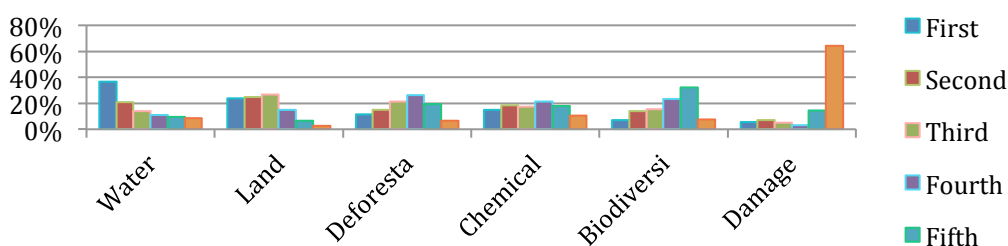
Q23: Golf development and disposable income, to what extent do you agree with this statements?



	Absolutely disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Absolutely agree
Golf is an relatively expensive games compare with others	1%	8%	13%	48%	30%
Many people wish to play golf but the high cost stop them	1%	11%	22%	47%	18%
When disposable income increases people play more golf	0%	5%	20%	55%	20%

Responds:213

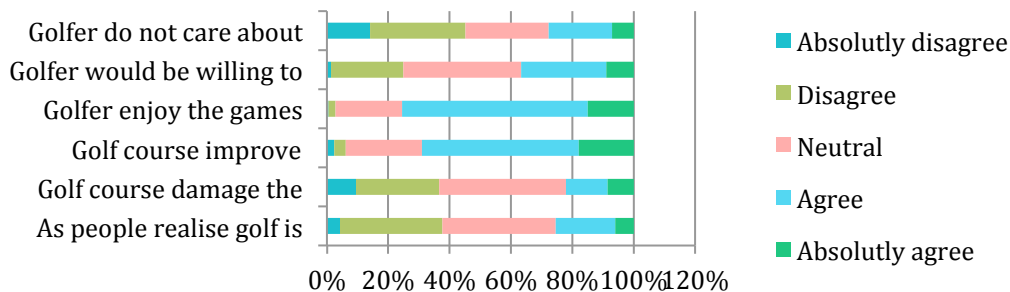
Q24: What is the most serious challenge for golf courses in your region. Please ranking according to the seriousness. First is most serious;



	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth	Sixth	Average Ranking
Water shortage	37%	21%	14%	11%	9%	8%	2.6103
Land invasion	24%	25%	27%	15%	7%	3%	2.6383
Deforestation	12%	15%	21%	26%	19%	7%	3.46
Chemical damage	15%	18%	17%	21%	18%	10%	3.3945
Biodiversity	7%	14%	15%	23%	32%	8%	3.8256
Damage to landscape	6%	7%	5%	3%	15%	64%	5.0702

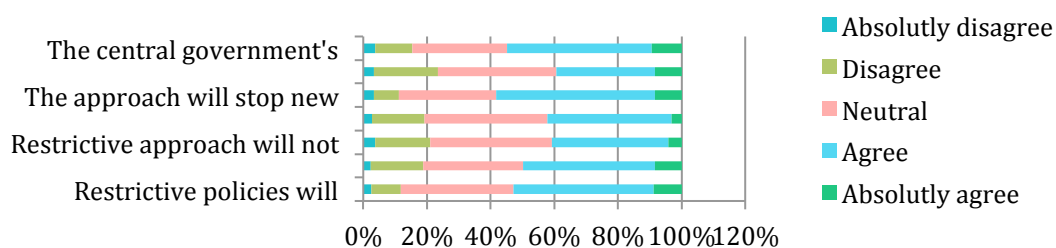
Responds:213

Q25: Golf course and sustainable development, to what extent do you agree with these statements



	Absolutely disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Absolutely agree
Golfer do not care about sustainability	14%	31%	27%	21%	7%
Golfer would be willing to pay higher price for sustainable golf courses	1%	23%	38%	28%	9%
Golfer enjoy the games outdoors	0%	2%	22%	61%	15%
Golf course improve landscape	2%	4%	25%	51%	18%
Golf course damage the environment	9%	27%	41%	14%	8%
As people realise golf is damaging the environment they will stop or play less golf	4%	33%	37%	19%	6%
Responds:213					

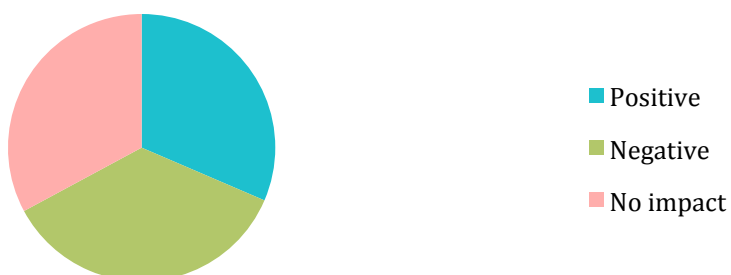
Q26: Golf and current approach from government, to what extent do you agree with these statements



	Absolutely disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Absolutely agree
The central government's current approach toward golf is the most restrictive in the last 30 years	4%	12%	30%	46%	9%
This approach will slow down golf development in China	3%	20%	37%	31%	8%
The approach will stop new entrance	3%	8%	31%	50%	8%
Restrict approach will benefit	3%	16%	38%	39%	3%

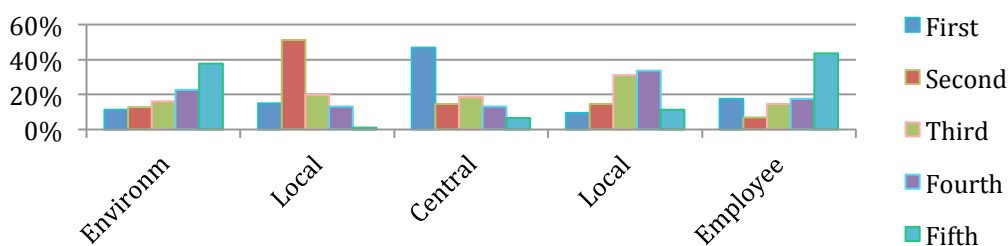
existing golf courses					
Restrictive approach will not stop golf development in China	4%	17%	38%	37%	4%
Restrictive approach will make golf more expensive	2%	16%	31%	41%	8%
Restrictive policies will gradually correct golf development in China	2%	9%	35%	44%	9%
Responds:213					

Q27: How do you think the government approach has impact on your business



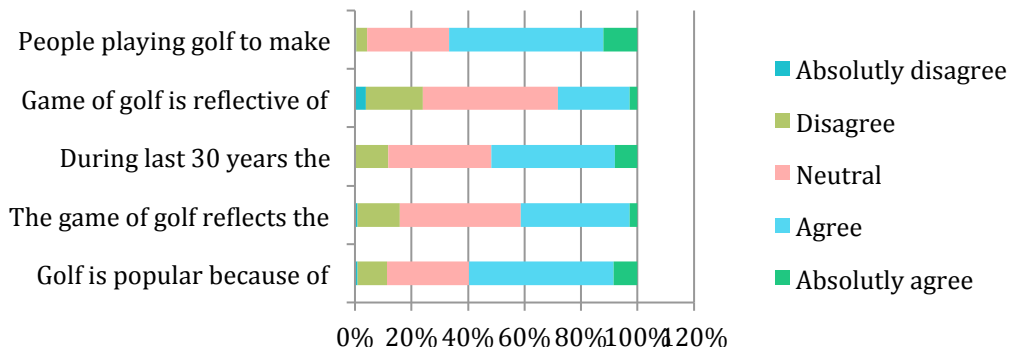
Answers	Responds
Positive	67
Negative	76
No impact	70
Responds:213	

**Q28:Which of the following has affected your business the most?
Please ranking, First is affecting most, fifth is affecting least**



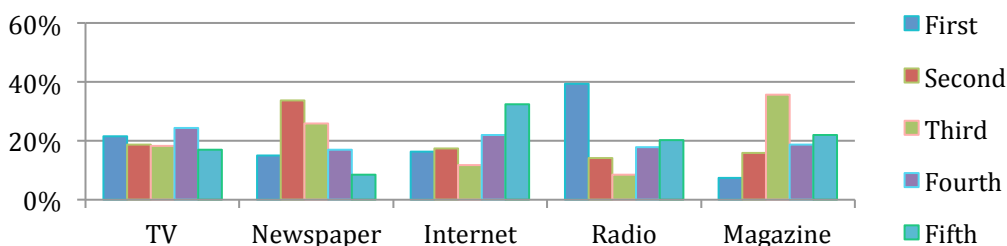
	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth	Average Ranking
Environmentalism	11%	13%	16%	23%	38%	3.6247
Local Government	15%	51%	20%	13%	1%	2.3382
Central Government	47%	15%	19%	13%	7%	2.1784
Local Residence	9%	15%	31%	34%	11%	3.2301
Employees (Insufficient employees or negative attitude to work)	17%	7%	15%	17%	44%	3.6288
Responds:213						

Q29: To what extent do you agree with these statements



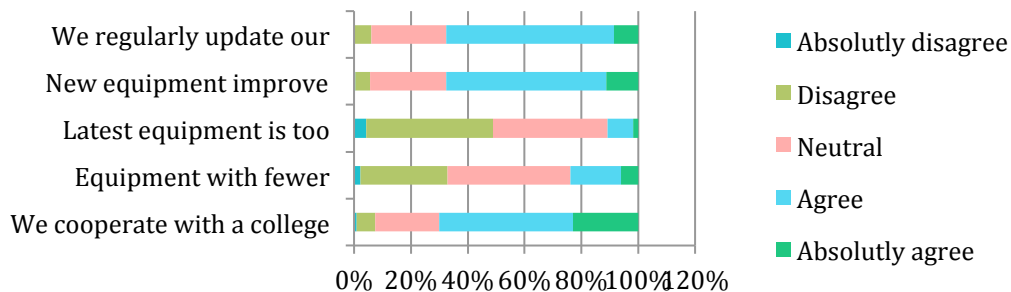
	Absolutely disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Absolutely agree
People playing golf to make friends	0%	4%	29%	54%	12%
Game of golf is reflective of traditional Chinese value	4%	20%	48%	25%	3%
During last 30 years the game of golf reflects more western value and culture	0%	12%	37%	44%	8%
The game of golf reflects the attitude and value of the younger generation	1%	15%	43%	38%	3%
Golf is popular because of the new trend of healthy thinking	1%	10%	29%	51%	8%
Responds:213					

Q30: Please rank the following options from the sources that least influencing golfer (1) to the sources that most influencing golfers (5)



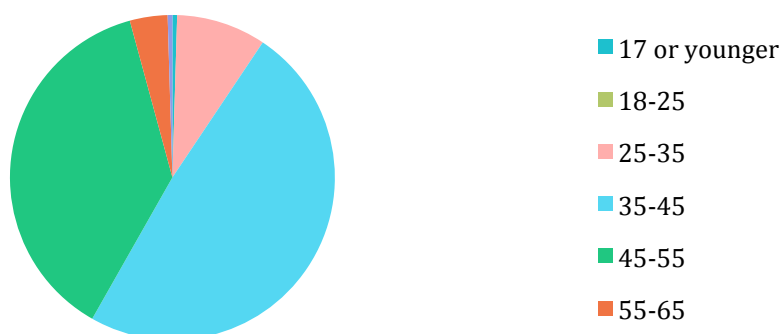
	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth	Average Ranking
TV	22%	19%	18%	24%	17%	2.9623
Newspaper	15%	34%	26%	17%	8%	2.6993
Internet	16%	17%	12%	22%	32%	3.3662
Radio	39%	14%	8%	18%	20%	2.6526
Magazine	8%	16%	36%	19%	22%	3.3194
Responds:213						

Q31: Technology and golf club, to what extent do you agree with the following statements



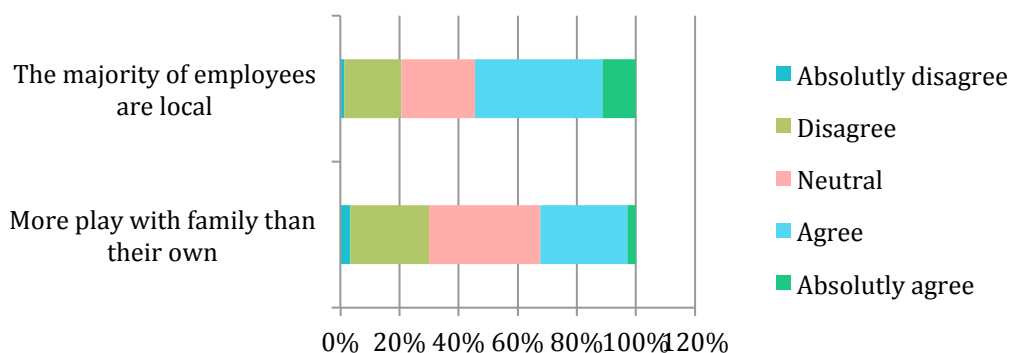
	Absolutely disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Absolutely agree
We regularly update our equipment	0%	6%	26%	59%	8%
New equipment improve efficiency and lower cost	0%	5%	27%	56%	11%
Latest equipment is too complicated to use	4%	45%	40%	9%	2%
Equipment with fewer function is better	2%	31%	43%	18%	6%
We cooperate with a college or university to improve our standard of services	1%	7%	23%	47%	23%
Responds:213					

Q32:What age group play most golf in China



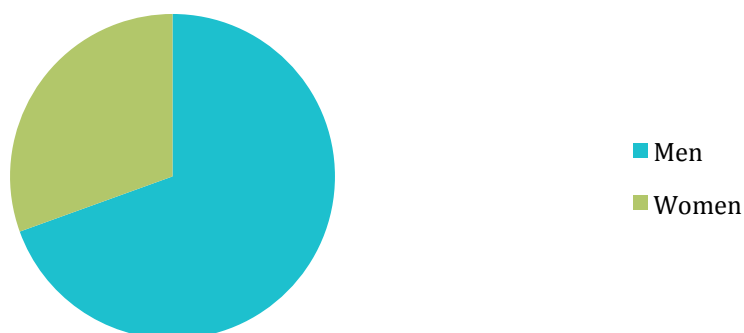
Answers	Responds
17 or younger	1
18-25	0
25-35	19
35-45	104
45-55	80
55-65	8
over 65	1
Responds: 213	

Q33: To what extent do you agree with these statements



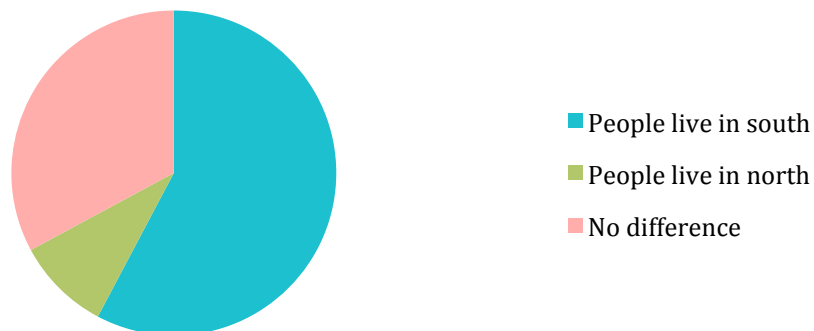
	Absolutely disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Absolutely agree
The majority of employees are local	1%	19%	25%	43%	11%
More play with family than their own	3%	27%	38%	30%	3%
Responds:213					

Q34:Which of following group will grow faster in the next 10 years



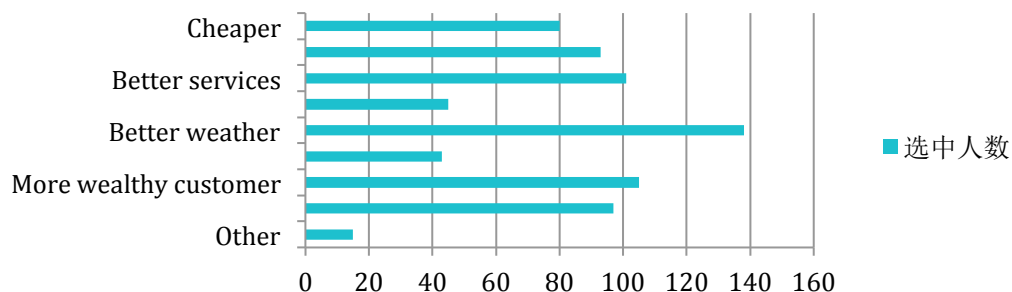
Answers	Responds
Men	148
Women	65
Responds:213	

Q35: Who do you believe are more likely to play golf



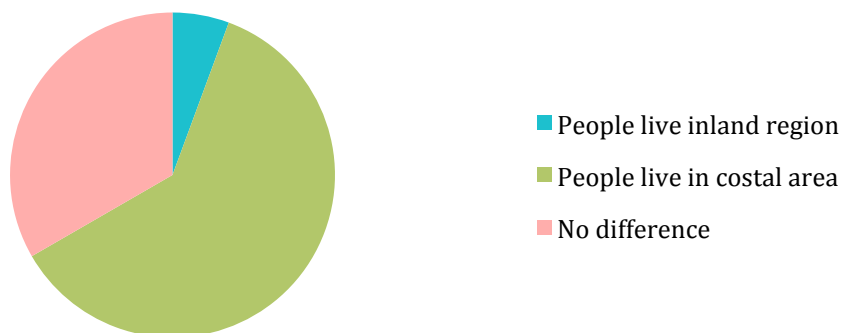
Answers	Responds
People live in south	123
People live in north	20
No difference	70
Responds:213	

Q36: Why do you think people live in this area more likely to play golf (multiple choices)



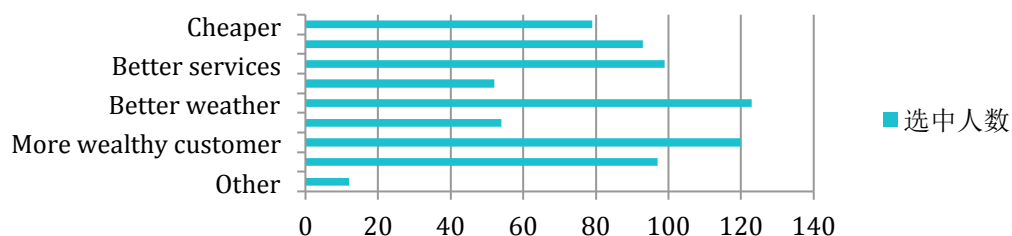
Answers	Responds
Cheaper	80
Better quality	93
Better services	101
Lower restriction	45
Better weather	138
More fashion	43
More wealthy customer	105
More chance to know high-class people	97
Other	15
Responds:213	

Q37: Who do you think are more likely to play golf



Answers	Responds
People live inland region	12
People live in costal area	130
No difference	71
Responds:213	

Q38:Why do you think people live in this area more likely to play golf (multiple choices)



Answers	Responds
Cheaper	79
Better quality	93
Better services	99
Lower restriction	52
Better weather	123
More fashion	54
More wealthy customer	120
More chance to know high-class people	97
Other	12
Responds:213	

Appendix 7: Correlation between recreation and factors

		Correlations					
		ECO	ENV	POL	TECH	GEO	CUL
REC	Pearson						
	Correlation	.187**	.124*	.097	.168**	-.051	.114*
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.003	.035	.079	.007	.229	.048
N		213	213	213	213	213	213

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed).

Appendix 8: Correlation between luxury product and factors

		Correlations					
		ECO	ENV	POL	TECH	GEO	CUL
LUX	Pearson Correlation	.346**	-.076	.262**	.079	.077	.192**
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	.134	.000	.124	.132	.002
	N	213	213	213	213	213	213

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed).