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Turning Home Boredom during the Outbreak of COVID-19 into Thriving at Home and Career Self-Management

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Turning Home Boredom during the Outbreak of COVID-19 into Thriving at Home and Career Self-Management:The Role of Online Leisure Crafting

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Turning Home Boredom during the Outbreak of COVID-19 into Thriving at Home and

Career Self-Management: The Role of Online Leisure Crafting

Abstract

Purpose: We studied whether boredom at home due to social isolation during the COVID-19

pandemic may motivate individuals to engage in online leisure crafting, thereby contributing to

their thriving at home and career self-management. We also examined whether individuals'

growth need strength influences the impact of home boredom on online leisure crafting.

Design/Methodology/Approach: We performed a two-wave longitudinal study involving a

group of employees from the hospitality industry (N=340) in Mainland China. We evaluated

home boredom, online leisure crafting, and growth need strength at Time 1 and thriving at home

and career self-management two months later at Time 2.

Findings: The respondents' experience of home boredom had a time-lagged effect on their

thriving at home and career self-management via online leisure crafting. Additionally, their

growth need strength amplified the positive impact of home boredom on online leisure crafting.

Originality: We offer insights for the boredom literature regarding how individuals' home

boredom caused by social isolation during the COVID-19 pandemic might lead to their thriving

at home through online leisure crafting. We also provide insights for the leisure crafting

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literature regarding the role of online leisure crafting in individuals' thriving at home. We reveal

the role of growth need strength in the impact of home boredom on thriving at home through

online leisure crafting.

Practical Implications: Hospitality managers can motivate employees to engage in crafting

online leisure activities at home when they experience home boredom during the outbreak of

COVID-19, which may further allow them to experience thriving at home and engage in career

self-management. Additionally, managers can develop managerial interventions to improve the

growth need strength of employees with low growth need, which may, in turn, render these

employees less likely to tolerate home boredom, thereby increasing the positive impact of home

boredom on their online leisure crafting.

Keywords: Home boredom; Online leisure crafting; Career self-management; Thriving at home;

Growth need strength

Article Classification: Research paper

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Introduction

Since late 2019, the world population has been suffering from a coronavirus disease known as

COVID-19. To stop the spread of the disease, many countries (e.g., China, Italy, and the United

Kingdom) have adopted stay-at-home policies requiring both healthy and affected individuals to

quarantine (socially isolate) in their homes to maintain social distance. Other quarantine

methods, such as lockdowns, prohibitions of assembly, cancellations of personal and public

events, and travel restrictions, have also been implemented, resulting in tremendous disruption to

both countries and individuals worldwide (Usher *et al.*, 2020). Although social isolation and

distancing have been viewed as effective ways to slow transmission during pandemics (World

Health Organization, 2019), many recent studies have found that social isolation induces

boredom at home, which may damage physical and psychological health in the long term

(Banerjee and Rai, 2020; Williams *et al.*, 2020). However, little attention has been paid to

investigating how individuals deal proactively with boredom at home due to social isolation

during the COVID-19 pandemic. Investigating this issue is important because individuals are not

always passive responders to their environments; instead, they can play an active role in

managing their lives in their environments. Understanding how individuals deal with boredom at

home due to social isolation during the pandemic can help decision makers improve the quality

of life of individuals within a country and can help company managers promote better health and

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work/home behaviors among their employees while they are staying at home. To investigate this

issue, we adopt self-determination theory (Ryan and Deci, 2000) and self-regulation theory

(Leventhal *et al.*, 1984).

Boredom is defined as individuals' unwanted experience of having an unsatisfied desire

to be involved in a satisfying activity that leads to feelings of being stuck in a dissatisfying and

meaningless present (Fahlman *et al.*, 2013). Individuals experience boredom when they perceive

that they are unable to realize their values, passions, and desires under a specific living condition

(van Tilburg and Igou, 2012). Self-determination theory (Ryan and Deci, 2000) specifies that

people are naturally motivated to fulfill their needs (e.g., values and passions). They may attempt

to do so in other domains (e.g., virtual/digital) when they cannot do so in the original domain

(e.g., home or work). Studies have also revealed that individuals may be intrinsically motivated

to make their lives meaningful (e.g., Petrou *et al.*, 2017). It is therefore conceivable that when

individuals experience home boredom due to social isolation during the COVID-19 pandemic,

they may strive to explore and pursue online activities through which they can satisfy their

unfulfilled desires and passions (i.e., online leisure crafting). This may help them experience

positivity and thrive in their home life during the pandemic. In this study, we examine whether

home boredom due to social isolation during the COVID-19 pandemic may help individuals

thrive at home by encouraging online leisure crafting.

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Studies have indicated that the extent to which boredom influences an individual's

behavior may be related to the individual's self-regulatory capacity (e.g., Fahlman *et al.*, 2013),

which is in line with self-regulation theory (Leventhal *et al.*, 1984). According to this theory,

self-regulation is an individual's capacity to control and evaluate his or her thoughts and feelings

in a specific situation and his or her subsequent behaviors to achieve a certain goal (Brown *et al.*,

1999; Zimmerman, 2000). In other words, individuals' self-regulatory capacity may moderate

the impact of boredom at home on their subsequent behavior (e.g., online leisure crafting).

Empirical studies suggest that growth need strength plays a crucial role in individuals' ability to

tolerate boredom and in their motivation, stimulated by the impact of boredom, to deal with a

boring environment (e.g., Fisherl, 1993; van Hooff and van Hooft, 2017). In alignment with self-

regulation theory, we investigate the moderating role of growth need strength in the relationship

between home boredom due to social isolation during the COVID-19 pandemic and online

leisure crafting.

In this research, we aim to contribute to the literature in several ways. First, we

investigate whether individuals' boredom at home as a result of social isolation during the

COVID-19 pandemic may lead them to perform online leisure crafting that helps them thrive at

home. According to self-determination theory, we investigate the mediating effect of online

leisure crafting on the association between home boredom and thriving at home. Our insights

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into how home boredom may promote thriving at home through online leisure crafting contribute

to the boredom and leisure crafting literature. Specifically, the existing boredom literature

focuses on investigating managerial interventions to reduce boredom. Less attention has been

paid to whether and how individuals proactively deal with boredom in a way that benefits them,

given that they are not always passively affected by their environment. We offer insights for the

boredom literature regarding how individuals' home boredom caused by social isolation during

the COVID-19 pandemic might lead to their thriving at home through online leisure crafting.

Moreover, leisure crafting has been investigated in recent studies (e.g., Berg *et al.*, 2010; Petrou

and Bakker, 2016; Petrou *et al.*, 2017), but it has mainly been conceptualized and studied in

terms of physical leisure crafting activity rather than digital activity (Berg *et al.*, 2010); thus,

there is insufficient literature regarding the benefits of digital leisure-crafting activities (i.e.,

online leisure crafting) for individuals. We provide insights for the leisure crafting literature

regarding the role of online leisure crafting in individuals' thriving at home. In addition, we are

unaware of existing studies that have investigated the relationship between online leisure crafting

and thriving at home. Such investigations are important, as they provide insights into how

crafting online leisure activities may help individuals thrive at home, especially when they

experience home boredom. Hence, the mediating role of online leisure crafting that we propose

plays a crucial role in understanding how individuals who experience home boredom may

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eventually thrive at home, which contributes to the literature on leisure crafting, home boredom

and thriving.

Second, based on self-regulation theory, we test the moderating effect of growth need

strength on the relationship between home boredom and online leisure crafting. Our insights into

how growth need strength may influence the impact of home boredom on online leisure crafting

also contribute to the boredom and leisure crafting literature. By testing the interaction effect of

growth need strength and home boredom on online leisure crafting, we reveal the role of self-

regulation in the impact of home boredom on thriving at home through online leisure crafting.

Third, by investigating the role of home boredom in home thriving and career self-management

through online leisure crafting during the COVID-19 pandemic, we extend the topical trend in

the hospitality management literature and contribute to the development of knowledge in the

hospitality industry (Ali *et al.*, 2019; Jiang and Wen, 2020).

Theoretical Background

The Impact of Home Boredom

Individuals feel bored when they are unable to fulfill their desires and passions by engaging in

satisfying activities and thus find their lives meaningless and unchallenging (Coughlan *et al.*,

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2019; Fahlman *et al.*, 2013; van Tilburg and Igou, 2012). In line with self-determination theory

(Ryan and Deci, 2000), we argue that boredom may serve as a motivator that stimulates

individuals to move from a situation of dissatisfaction to a situation that can satisfy their

unfulfilled desires and passions (Elpidorou, 2018). In other words, bored individuals may be

intrinsically motivated to do something else and attempt to escape a boring situation when

possible (e.g., Bench and Lench, 2013; Elpidorou, 2014; Fahlman *et al.*, 2013; van Tilburg and

Igou, 2012). Empirical studies have revealed that boredom motivates individuals to take goal-

oriented actions and to set and pursue alternative goals (e.g., Elpidorou, 2018); to realize and

practice their talents, thereby promoting personal growth (e.g., van Tilburg and Igou, 2011,

2012); and to increase the frequency with which they engage with or seek to broaden their social

network (e.g., Baker, 1992; Game, 2007). These behaviors motivated by boredom fall under the

conceptualization of leisure crafting. *Leisure crafting* refers to individuals' proactive pursuit of

leisure activities aimed at goal setting, human connection, and learning and personal

development (Petrou and Bakker, 2016). Leisure crafting and leisure participation are

conceptually different. While the former is an intentional and purposeful behavior the aim of

which is to fulfil the intention or purpose of the pursued leisure activities, the latter is

involvement in a leisure activity. Through leisure crafting, individuals shape leisure activities in

a manner that aligns with their desires (Berg *et al.*, 2010). In this study, the context in which

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boredom emerges is social isolation during the COVID-19 pandemic, which requires individuals

to stay at home; thus, bored individuals may be more likely to perform leisure crafting through

the internet (i.e., online leisure crafting) during this time. Our definition of *online leisure crafting*

is similar to that for leisure crafting. However, we propose that when performing online leisure

crafting, individuals proactively pursue leisure activities through the internet. Drawing on self-

determination theory, studies have found that leisure crafting allows individuals to develop a

better quality of life (e.g., Petrou and Bakker, 2016; Petrou *et al.*, 2017).

In this research, instead of investigating the direct effect of home boredom on

individuals' lives in general, we focus on behaviors that may influence specific elements of

individuals' lives. We test online leisure crafting and specific life outcomes (e.g., thriving at

home and career self-management) to investigate how home boredom may lead to these

outcomes through online leisure crafting. *Thriving* is conceptualized as an adaptive function

since it allows individuals to evaluate their forward progress, and it is defined as a psychological

state characterized by vitality and learning (Spreitzer *et al.*, 2005). *Vitality* is a sense of feeling

mentally and physically energized (Nix *et al.*, 1999), whereas *learning* is a sense of gaining and

practicing new knowledge and skills. Thriving individuals experience growth and momentum

through a sense of feeling energized and alive (i.e., vitality) and a sense that they are developing,

growing and becoming better at what they do (i.e., learning) (Porath *et al.*, 2012). They perceive

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that they are moving forward in life instead of being stuck in place (Spreitzer *et al.*, 2005).

Online leisure crafting enables individuals to learn and develop (learning and personal

development) and allows them to set and commit to new goals (goal setting) through the leisure

activities they pursue at home through the internet; in turn, these experiences allow them to

experience thriving at home. Empirical studies have found that individuals may avail themselves

of the internet to develop goals and learn new knowledge and skills that may enrich their

personal life (e.g., Bonk *et al.*, 2015). Human connection, which is another core element of

online leisure crafting, provides individuals with opportunities to obtain resources, such as

mental support and learning resources, that can enrich their daily life through their social

networks (e.g., Haythornthwaite and De Laat, 2010; Huxhold *et al.*, 2013), which may in turn

enable them to experience thriving at home.

Our rationale for considering career self-management in addition to investigating thriving

at home is that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many companies have collapsed or have started

downsizing, including those in hospitality and other service sectors (e.g., hotels, airlines, travel

agencies, restaurants, and shopping malls). Self-determination theory (Ryan and Deci, 2000)

proposes that individuals are proactive in satisfying their innate needs in a cross-domain manner.

When employees in these industries perceive a high risk of being laid off (Bagnera *et al.*, 2020;

Karim *et al.*, 2020), they may be motivated to think about and take further actions to manage

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their careers during this difficult time of social isolation and boredom at home. In other words,

from a work perspective, career self-management may be a way for employees to fulfill innate

needs when they experience boredom at home. In this regard, investigations of career self-

management during social isolation may provide important practical insights into human

resource management, particularly in the hospitality or service industry. *Career management*

refers to "attempts made to influence the career development of one of more people" (Arnold,

1997, p. 19). *Career self-management* is defined as "a process by which individuals develop,

implement, and monitor career goals and strategies" (Greenhaus *et al.*, 2010, p. 12). Studies have

found that individuals may seek ongoing improvement in their current job, prepare themselves to

move to another job, or do both simultaneously to manage their career (e.g., Kossek *et al.*, 1998).

As online leisure crafting involves goal setting, human connection, and learning and personal

development through the internet, we claim that although individuals are socially isolated at

home during the COVID-19 pandemic, they may have opportunities to access information to

make plans and set goals for their career by using the internet (e.g., Robinson *et al.*, 2000); to

maintain contacts with people at their jobs or to build contacts with people in areas where they

would like to work (e.g., Hooley, 2012); and to look for career-related training or qualifications

(e.g., Schmeeckle, 2003), thereby contributing to their career self-management. Supporting this,

recent hospitality studies revealed that hospitality employees tend to have ample control over

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their work (e.g., Lee and Ravichandran, 2019), which may imply that these employees are more

likely to perform career self-management when they have the opportunity (e.g., through online

leisure crafting). Notably, we do not assume a causal relationship between career self-

management and thriving at home, since existing studies have suggested distinguishing between

thriving at work and thriving at home (e.g., Spreitzer *et al.*, 2012) and since empirical evidence

has shown that career self-management contributes to thriving at work rather than thriving at

home (e.g., Porath *et al.*, 2012; Wilhelm and Hirschi, 2019). Considering the above, we propose

the following hypotheses:

> *Hypothesis 1a. Online leisure crafting mediates the negative relationship between home*
>
> *boredom and thriving at home.*
>
> *Hypothesis 1b. Online leisure crafting mediates the negative relationship between home*
>
> *boredom and career self-management.*

The Role of Growth Need Strength

Self-regulation theory (Leventhal *et al.*, 1984) proposes that individuals' capacity to control and

evaluate their thoughts and feelings regarding a given situation influences the impact of the

perceived situation on their subsequent behavior (Brown *et al.*, 1999; Leventhal *et al.*, 1984;

Zimmerman, 2000). In this research, we claim that growth need strength may regulate how

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individuals perceive a given life situation and thus may affect the impact of the situation on their

subsequent behavior. *Growth need strength* refers to the need and desire to move forward in life

(Hackman and Oldham, 1975) and indicates individuals' internal expectations and desires in

relation to what they aim for in their life domains (Bottger and Chew, 1986; Spector, 1985).

Growth need strength varies among individuals. Those with high growth need strength may be

intrinsically motivated to learn, develop and become better at what they do (e.g., Das, 1991;

Hackman and Oldham, 1980; Shalley *et al.*, 2009). Therefore, these individuals seek more

meaningful and challenging lives, and this drive allows them to improve themselves more than

those with low growth need strength (e.g., Bottger and Chew, 1986; Shalley *et al.*, 2009; Spector,

1985). Thus, in line with self-regulation theory, we claim that individuals with high growth need

strength may be less likely than those with low growth need strength to tolerate boredom at home

due to social isolation during the COVID-19 pandemic, which strengthens the positive impact of

home boredom on their online leisure crafting. Thus, individuals who strongly desire to move

forward in life intend to grow and develop and would like to have a meaningful life. They are

therefore less likely to tolerate home boredom than their counterparts. Consequently, the impact

of home boredom on subsequent behavior, such as online leisure crafting, may be stronger for

those with high growth need strength than for their counterparts. We examine the moderating

role of individuals' growth need strength in the positive relationship between home boredom due

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to social isolation during the COVID-19 pandemic and online leisure crafting. We propose the

following hypothesis and present the research framework in Figure 1. To test the hypotheses, we

performed a two-wave longitudinal study among a group of employees from Mainland China to

examine whether online leisure crafting mediates the negative relationships between home

boredom and thriving at home and career self-management to examine the moderating role of

growth need strength.

> *Hypothesis 2. Home boredom has a stronger positive relationship with online leisure*
>
> *crafting for individuals who have a high (vs. low) growth need strength.*

Research Method

Participants and Procedure

Using a two-wave study design, we studied a group of employees from several service sectors

(e.g., travel agencies, coffee shops, and hotels) in the hospitality industry in Mainland China.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, most of the provinces in Mainland China have been on

lockdown; many service sectors in the hospitality industry are unable to run their businesses as in

the past, and employees have had to stay at home at all times (Pan *et al.*, 2020). Therefore,

during social isolation, employees may experience home boredom, which may in turn affect their

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online leisure crafting. Before administering the survey, we collaborated with a survey company

in Mainland China to contact and acquire consent to participate from employees who worked in

service sectors in the hospitality industry. These employees were ensured of the anonymity of

their responses and the confidentiality of the collected data. Their participation was voluntary.

A total of 704 employees were invited, and 511 agreed to participate in the survey. A

total of 511 questionnaires were distributed at Time 1, and 398 usable responses were gathered

(response rate of 78%). At Time 1, we evaluated all predictor variables, including home

boredom, online leisure crafting, growth need strength and demographic variables. At Time 2,

two months after the completion of the Time 1 survey, we conducted the final survey to measure

the respondents' thriving at home and career self-management. We asked the previous 398

respondents to complete these two measures. A total of 340 usable responses were eventually

collected (response rate of 85%). Among the respondents, 57.9% were male. Over half of the

respondents were within the age range of 21 to 25 years (55.9%); the next largest age groups

were 26 to 30 years (40.6%) and 31 to 35 years (3.5%). Most of the respondents (65%) had

completed their undergraduate study and received a degree; some had attended some college

(18.2%). A total of 27.9% of the respondents worked in travel agencies, 23.6% worked in

coffee/tea shops, 17.6% worked in restaurants, 17.1% worked in private hotels, and 13.8%

worked in tourism parks. A total of 44.4% of respondents had worked at their job for 1-2 years,

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31.5% for 1-6 months, and 24.1% for 6 months-1 year. A total of 47.6% of the respondents

worked 4 to 6 hours a day, 34.2% worked from 2 to 4 hours, and 18.2% worked from 6 to 8

hours. Most of the respondents either lived with roommates/friends (42.6%) or lived alone

(38.8%); the rest lived with their husbands/wives (11.2%) or parents (7.3%).

Measures

We amended the items as needed for use in this research. We used a back-translation procedure,

performed by two professional translators who were colleagues of the author, to translate all the

measurement items from English to Chinese while maintaining the original meanings of the

items (Brislin, 1980).

We evaluated home boredom by using six revised items (Cronbach's α=.82;

X2/df=7.382; GFI=.980; AGFI=.900; CFI=.970; RMR=.037) from the scale developed by

Reijseger *et al.* (2013). The scale was originally used to evaluate work boredom. We revised the

items by replacing "work" with "home". Sample items are "At home, time goes by very slowly"

and "At home, there is not so much to do". All items were scored on a 7-point scale ranging from

0 (*Never*) to 6 (*Very often*).

We evaluated online leisure crafting via nine revised items (Cronbach's α=.86;

X2/df=2.796; GFI=.992; AGFI=.961; CFI=.994; RMR=.019) from the scale by Petrou and

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Bakker (2016). We revised the original items to reflect the online context by adding "through the

internet/online" where appropriate. Sample items are "I try to build relationships through online

leisure activities" and "I try to find challenging activities online". All items were scored on a 7-

point scale ranging from 1 (*Strongly disagree*) to 7 (*Strongly agree*).

We evaluated thriving at home by using ten revised items (Cronbach's α=.79;

X2/df=1.194; GFI=.997; AGFI=.983; CFI=.998; RMR=.019) from the scale proposed by Porath

et al. (2012). The scale was originally developed to evaluate thriving at work. We revised the

items by replacing "work" with "home". Sample items are "At home, I find myself learning

often" and "At home, I have energy and spirit". All items were scored on a 5-point scale ranging

from 1 (*Strongly disagree*) to 5 (*Strongly agree*).

We evaluated career self-management by using eighteen revised items (Cronbach's

α=.79; X2/df=5.306; GFI=.968; AGFI=.903; CFI=.971; RMR=.043) from the scale by Sturges *et

al.* (2002). Sample items are "I have introduced myself to people who can influence my career"

and "I have taken on extra activities that will look good on my CV". All items were scored on a

7-point scale ranging from 1 (*Strongly disagree*) to 7 (*Strongly agree*).

We evaluated growth need strength via six revised items (Cronbach's α=.83;

X2/df=7.095; GFI=.981; AGFI=.906; CFI=.976; RMR=.028) from the scale by Hackman and

Oldham (1974). The scale was originally developed for the work context. We revised the items

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for general use by replacing "in my job" with "in my life". Sample items are "I would like to

have stimulating and challenging work in my life" and "I would like to have opportunities for

personal growth and development in my life". All items were scored on a 7-point scale ranging

from 1 (*I would not want this at all*) to 7 (*I would very much want this*).

Following Bernerth and Aguinis's (2016) suggestion, we included several demographic

variables, such as age (e.g., Haight *et al.*, 2002), educational background (e.g., Appelbaum *et al.*,

2002), sector, number of hours worked per day (e.g., Sturges, 2008), gender (e.g., Edwards *et al.*,

1999; Gomez-Baya *et al.*, 2019), tenure (e.g., Kleine *et al.*, 2019), and cohabitation (e.g., Lau,

2012), as these variables have been theoretically shown to affect thriving, career self-

management, or both.

Results

We summarized the Pearson correlation results of the measures as well as the measures' mean

and standard deviation in Table I. We controlled for cohabitation (r=-.11, p<.05) and age (r=-.14,

p<.05) in the subsequent analysis since they were significantly associated with the outcome

measures (i.e., thriving at home and/or career self-management). As all measures were self-

reported, before testing the proposed hypothesis, we carried out the single-factor test proposed

by Harman (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003) and performed a confirmatory factor analysis by entering all

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items into the same model (Iverson and Maguire, 2000) to examine whether common method

variance might be an issue in this study. The results of Harman's single-factor test showed that

the variance explained by the main factor (18.84%) did not explain a large portion of the

common variance among measurements. The results of the confirmatory factor analysis revealed

poor model fit indices for the tested model (X2/df=13.556; GFI=.520; AGFI=.407; CFI=.319;

RMR=.222). These results suggest that common method variance was not a detrimental issue.

Insert Table I about here

Following Preacher and Hayes (2004), we tested the indirect effects of online leisure

crafting on the relationships between home boredom and thriving at home and career self-

management for hypotheses 1a and 1b, respectively, by performing bootstrapping analyses with

1,000 resamples. The results, which are summarized in Table II, showed support for the indirect

effects of online leisure crafting on the relationships between home boredom and thriving at

home (indirect effect=.10, 95% CI=[.06, .14]) and between home boredom and career self-

management (indirect effect=.04, 95% CI=[.02, .06]). Since the direct effects of home boredom

on thriving at home (direct effect=-.18, $p< .001$) and on career self-management (direct

effect=-.09, $p< .001$) were significant, online leisure crafting partially mediated the negative

relationships between home boredom and thriving at home (hypothesis 1a) and career self-

management (hypothesis 1b).

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Insert Table II about here

To examine hypothesis 2, we conducted hierarchical regression analyses to test the

interaction effect of home boredom and growth need strength on online leisure crafting. We first

centered home boredom and growth need strength and then multiplied them to acquire the

interaction term (Aiken and West, 1991). The results, which are provided in Table III (Model 3),

showed that home boredom (β=.31, p< .001) and the interaction between home boredom and

growth need strength (β=.31, p< .001) in relation to online leisure crafting were significant,

though the relationship between growth need strength and online leisure crafting was

nonsignificant (β=-.07, p> .05). Since the interaction term was significant, we further conducted

a simple slope test and identified its interaction effect. We calculated the predicted values of

online leisure crafting for two groups: those who scored 1 standard deviation below the mean

and those who scored 1 standard deviation above the mean for home boredom and growth need

strength. The interaction plot is shown in Figure 2. The relationship between home boredom and

online leisure crafting was more positive for individuals with high growth need strength (b= .26,

p< .05) than for those with low growth need strength (b= .11, p< .05). Hypothesis 2 was

supported by the data.

Insert Table III about here

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Discussion

In this research, we aimed to study whether boredom at home due to social isolation during the

COVID-19 pandemic may motivate individuals to engage in online leisure crafting, thereby

contributing to their thriving at home and their career self-management. We also examined

whether individuals' growth need strength may play a role in influencing the impact of home

boredom on their online leisure crafting. The results supported our hypotheses. We conducted a

two-wave longitudinal study of a group of employees from sectors of the hospitality industry in

Mainland China. Our results showed that the respondents' experience of home boredom had a

time-lagged effect on their thriving at home and career self-management via their online leisure

crafting. We also revealed that the respondents' growth need strength amplified the positive

impact of their home boredom on their online leisure crafting.

Theoretical Implications

These results contribute to the literature theoretically in several ways. First, they support self-

determination theory from a longitudinal perspective. Our results demonstrated that respondents'

home boredom increased their online leisure crafting, which in turn benefitted their thriving at

home and their career self-management in the long term. In addition, although boredom issues

have been investigated previously (e.g., van Hooff and van Hooft, 2017), attention has been most

focused on related issues in the work context (e.g., work boredom). Our study may be one of the

first to investigate employees' boredom in the home domain and examine its long-term

time-lagged effect in a within-domain and a cross-domain manner by focusing on respondents'

thriving at home and their career self-management. We have therefore extended the boredom

literature by providing novel insights concerning home boredom.

Furthermore, adopting self-determination theory, we investigated the mediating role of

online leisure crafting in the relationship between home boredom and thriving at home. The

results provided empirical evidence that home boredom contributed to respondents' thriving at

home by motivating them to engage in online leisure crafting. Hence, we have extended the

literature on leisure crafting by demonstrating the effect of home boredom on online leisure

crafting and subsequent thriving at home. While leisure crafting has been investigated in recent

studies (e.g., Berg *et al.*, 2010; Petrou and Bakker, 2016; Petrou *et al.*, 2017), it has mainly been

conceptualized and studied as a physical rather than a digital activity (Berg *et al.*, 2010). There is

insufficient literature on the role of online leisure crafting, which is particularly relevant to

individuals who are socially isolated during the COVID-19 pandemic, in individuals' home

behavior. We have provided insights for the leisure crafting literature regarding the role of online

leisure crafting in individuals' thriving at home.

Second, based on self-determination theory, we provide insight into the interference

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effect of home boredom on individuals' work life by investigating how home boredom may

motivate individuals to engage in online leisure crafting, which contributes to their career self-

management. In addition to the fact that home boredom has not been studied sufficiently in the

literature, we are unaware of other studies that have examined the role of home boredom in

individuals' work behavior. We studied how the experience of boredom at home may motivate

individuals to engage in online leisure crafting, thereby improving their career self-management.

This investigation is particularly critical for extending the existing knowledge on boredom, since

individuals are not simply passive responders to their environments but instead can play an

active role in managing their lives in those environments, even if they are undesirable. In

addition, knowledge of the impact of home boredom on individuals' work behavior is still

lacking in the boredom literature. Therefore, to better understand boredom, especially home

boredom caused by social isolation during the COVID-19 pandemic, it is crucial to know

whether and how individuals engage in proactive behaviors, such as online leisure crafting, to

respond to their home boredom, which in turn enables them to engage in positive work behavior

(e.g., improved career self-management).

Third, we contribute to the leisure crafting and human resource management literature by

investigating career self-management as a work outcome. Since the outbreak of COVID-19, the

impact of the pandemic on individuals' work-related behaviors has been an important area of

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concern in organizational and human resource management research, since the pandemic has

caused a considerable number of companies, including those in the hospitality and other service

industries (e.g., hotels, airlines, travel agencies, restaurants, and shopping malls), to collapse or

downsize; many of these employees face the risk of losing their jobs in addition to the potential

difficulties of working at home due to social isolation (e.g., Bagnera *et al.*, 2020; Karim *et al.*,

2020). The consideration of career self-management is therefore crucial for adding new insights

to the human resource management literature regarding how individuals may take action to

manage their careers during this difficult time of social isolation. Therefore, it is also important

to recognize factors that may positively influence employees' career self-management during the

COVID-19 pandemic. In our research, we found that individuals' home boredom may result in

improved career self-management through online leisure crafting. Specifically, we suggest that

home boredom may motivate individuals to engage in online leisure crafting, thereby enriching

their career self-management. Our findings also contribute to the leisure crafting literature by

providing insights into the role of online leisure crafting in employees' work-related behaviors at

home.

Fourth, with self-regulation theory as a part of our theoretical underpinning, we

investigated the moderating role of growth need strength in the relationship between home

boredom and online leisure crafting. We discovered that growth need strength amplified the

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positive impact of home boredom on online leisure crafting. Our results are thus supported by

self-regulation theory. In other words, growth need strength regulates how individuals perceive

their home domain in terms of the level of boredom they can tolerate, thereby affecting the

impact of their perceived home boredom on their subsequent behaviors, such as online leisure

crafting. Our results suggest that individuals with high growth need strength may be less likely

than those with low growth need strength to tolerate home boredom due to social isolation during

COVID-19; this low tolerance for boredom thereby strengthens the positive effect of boredom at

home on their online leisure crafting, since online leisure crafting enables them to set and reach

new goals, connect with people and learn and grow. Our findings echo existing studies' findings

that individuals with high growth need strength may be intrinsically motivated to learn, develop,

and pursue a better self (e.g., Das, 1991; Hackman and Oldham, 1980; Shalley *et al.*, 2009) and

may seek stimulating, challenging, and meaningful lives (e.g., Bottger and Chew, 1986; Shalley

et al., 2009; Spector, 1985).

Practical Implications

In this research, we show that home boredom due to social isolation during the COVID-19

pandemic may lead to thriving at home as well as career self-management through online leisure

crafting. Our results demonstrated the positive effect of home boredom on individuals' home and

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work life through their online leisure crafting. It is not our intention to encourage home boredom.

Rather, we claim that it is crucial for managers, especially those in the hospitality industry, to

encourage their employees to engage in healthy behaviors, such as online leisure crafting, when

they experience boredom during social isolation at home during the COVID-19 pandemic. This

may be done by simply reminding employees to take actions (e.g., online leisure crafting) that

help them to thrive at home and to engage in career management when they feel bored. It is also

crucial for managers to reinforce such behavior by providing managerial interventions that

enable employees to engage in online leisure crafting effectively. This may be done by

encouraging employees to pursue online leisure activities oriented toward setting and pursuing

personal life goals through relevant online apps, to get in touch with people in their social

networks through online communication tools (e.g., Skype and WeChat), and to learn nonwork

skills and knowledge that may be useful at both home and work through existing learning

platforms (e.g., Masterclass and Udemy) when they experience boredom at home while being

socially isolated during the pandemic. Such reinforcement may help employees engage in

effective online leisure crafting when they experience home boredom, which may in turn

contribute to both thriving at home and career self-management.

We also found that growth need strength amplifies the positive relationship between

home boredom and online leisure crafting. Our results suggest that individuals with high growth

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need strength may be more likely than their counterparts with low growth need strength to turn

home boredom into thriving at home and career self-management through online leisure crafting.

Therefore, we suggest that managers develop managerial interventions to increase the growth

need strength of employees with low levels of it. This may in turn make those employees less

likely to tolerate home boredom, thereby increasing the positive impact of home boredom on

their online leisure crafting. Such interventions may include informing employees about the

harmful impact of home boredom on their home life and of the urgent need to prepare for work

in the post-COVID-19 workplace after social isolation mandates are lifted by engaging in

continuous development and growth while at home. It is conceivable that increasing a sense of

urgency and the need to move forward in life at home and at work may improve employees'

growth need strength (Bottger and Chew, 1986; Hackman and Oldham, 1975; Spector, 1985),

thereby improving the impact of home boredom on their online leisure crafting. This may

consequently help them thrive at home and improve their career self-management.

Conclusion

Based on self-determination theory and self-regulation theory, we demonstrated that home

boredom benefits employees' thriving at home and career self-management by motivating them

to engage in online leisure crafting. We also showed that growth need strength plays a

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moderating role in the relationship between home boredom and online leisure crafting. Future

research may adopt our proposed model as a blueprint for investigating the role of home

boredom in employees' work and home behaviors across industries and countries. Organizations

in the hospitality industry, such as those studied in this research, and interested practitioners may

use our results and findings as a crucial reference for further managerial interventions to promote

better home and work behaviors among employees staying at home due to social isolation

mandates during the COVID-19 pandemic. We hope to promote attitude and behavior changes

among hospitality employees in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has been

strongly encouraged by recent studies in contemporary hospitality management (e.g., Baum and

Hai, 2020; Baum *et al.*, 2020).

Limitations and Future Research

Some research limitations and directions for future research are presented. First, the respondents

in our research were from the hospitality industry in Mainland China. Our results may not be

effectively generalizable to other industries and countries. However, this issue is common to

existing studies, and there is no evidence in the literature that Chinese employees are more likely

to either underreport or overreport their home boredom, online leisure crafting, thriving at home,

career self-management, or growth need strength than employees of other nationalities.

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However, we still encourage future research to test our model by studying employees from other

industries and countries to improve the generalizability of our results.

Second, the survey was based on self-reports, which may raise concerns related to

common method bias. However, all focal measures in this research were related to the

individuals' mental state and their own behaviors at home due to social isolation during the

COVID-19 pandemic, information suitable for self-report. In addition, we adopted a two-month

time interval for data collection to reduce bias and allow a more rigorous examination of the

proposed hypotheses. We also performed the analyses suggested by Podsakoff *et al.* (2003) and

Iverson and Maguire (2000) to provide empirical evidence that common method bias was not a

significant issue. Additionally, existing studies have suggested that correlated errors should not

produce spurious interactions but should reduce true interactions (e.g., Schmitt, 1994). In this

light, our results regarding the interaction may not be affected by common method bias.

However, we still encourage future research to retest our model by adopting variables that can be

objectively measured (e.g., the frequency/hours/types of online leisure crafting in a specific

period).

Third, we suggest that future research examine different variables that may affect the

relationship between home boredom and online leisure crafting to extend our study results. For

example, studies have found that individuals who are open to experience tend to engage in

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different activities (e.g., Jackson *et al.*, 2012) and that extraverts tend to seek social attention

(e.g., Ashton *et al.*, 2002), which they may be less likely to obtain while being socially isolated

during the COVID-19 pandemic. These individuals may be more likely to experience a high

level of home boredom than their counterparts. Therefore, future research might investigate the

role of openness to experience and extraversion in the relationship between home boredom and

online leisure crafting.

Similarly, we suggest that future studies investigate different outcomes to better

understand the role of online leisure crafting in the hospitality industry to identify additional

practical implications. Recent studies have revealed that job satisfaction and career mobility play

an important role in hospitality (e.g., Kong *et al.*, 2018; Tolkach and Tung, 2019). Online leisure

crafting allows individuals to learn and grow professionally, which may improve their

satisfaction at work. In addition, as online leisure crafting benefits career self-management, it

may be that online leisure crafting affects career mobility. Similarly, studies have shown that a

decrease in career commitment predicts employee turnover (e.g., Gebbels *et al.*, 2020). Given

that online leisure crafting allows individuals to manage their careers, whether it may help

improve their career commitment and even retention is worthy of further investigation (Chang

and Busser, 2020; Gupta, 2019). Given the above, future research may investigate the role of

online leisure crafting in these outcomes to further extend our model.

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Fourth, the boundary of our model can be extended further. In our study, we did not

consider the role of managers and organizations in the model. It is likely that employees may

interact with managers online as a work alternative to maintain social isolation during the

COVID-19 pandemic. In the hospitality industry, leadership has been a crucial issue in recent

years (Baum, 2019). It could be valuable to investigate how leadership may play a role in our

model to provide additional theoretical implications and practical implications for the hospitality

industry.

Fifth, home boredom may be caused by contexts other than social isolation during the

COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, we may not be able to generalize our results or broaden the

discussion to contexts that induce home boredom other than the one we studied without further

theoretical and empirical examination. Therefore, future research should reexamine our model by

adapting it for other contexts that induce home boredom to strengthen the generalizability of our

results. We also suggest that future research investigate the antecedents of home boredom in the

context of social isolation during the COVID-19 pandemic as well as in other contexts and

should further examine the role of those antecedents in different aspects of online leisure crafting

(e.g., goal setting, human connection, and development and growth) to better understand why

home boredom may benefit online leisure crafting.

Finally, during social isolation, individuals may work from home. Working from home

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may have an impact on individuals' experience of home boredom, as their work may interfere

with their home life. It is likely that those who must work more at home may experience less or

have less opportunity to experience home boredom than their counterparts. In this light, future

research may extend our model by examining the moderating role of working from home.

Furthermore, individuals who work in different industries, different sectors within the same

industry (e.g., hospitality), or different positions within the same sector may experience different

levels of home boredom while working from home due to differences in their job characteristics

(Koekemoer and Mostert, 2006). Koekemoer and Mostert (2006) claim that job characteristics

are unique within different occupations across industries and may affect individuals'

psychological state in different ways. We therefore suggest that future research be conducted

with heterogeneous populations to improve the generalizability of our results or to reexamine our

model by controlling for these work-related elements to minimize potential biases that may have

had an impact on our results.

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Tables

Table I. Means, standard deviations, and Pearson correlation analysis results

Variables[1]	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Gender	1.58	.49	-											
2. Age	2.48	.57	.04	-										
3. Education	3.48	.77	.31***	-.17**	-									
4. Sector	3.81	1.88	-.04	-.30***	-.37***	-								
5. Tenure	3.13	.86	-.32***	-.19	-.04	.61***	-							
6. Working hours	2.84	.71	-.21***	.65***	.10	-.69***	-.39***	-						
7. Cohabitation	3.50	2.27	.37***	-.38	-.34***	.57***	.25***	-.73***	-					
8. Home boredom	3.44	1.39	-.08	-.11*	-.07	.11*	.07	-.13*	.06	(.82)				
9. Online leisure crafting	3.74	.50	-.09	-.14*	.00	.07	.09	-.09	.02	.27***	(.86)			
10. Thriving at home	3.88	1.11	-.04	-.14*	.06	.02	.05	-.06	-.01	-.22***	.47***	(.79)		
11. Career self-management	3.50	.58	-.07	-.02	.11	-.06	.02	.06	-.11*	-.20***	.35***	.60***	(.79)	
12. Growth need strength	3.32	1.45	-.09	-.08	-.07	.11*	.04	-.09	.07	.23***	.00	.00	-.05	(.83)

Note: *: $p<.05$; **: $p<.01$; ***: $p<.001$ (*N*=340 participants)

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Gender: 1= Female, 2= Male. Age: 1= Under 20 years, 2= 21-25 years, 3= 26-30 years, 4= 31-35 years, 5= 36-40 years, 6= 41-45

years and above. Education: 1= Some secondary school, 2= Secondary school completed, 3= Some college, 4= Bachelor's degree, 5=

Some postgraduate studies, 6= Postgraduate degree completed. Sector: 1= Restaurant, 2= Tourism park, 3= Coffee or tea shop, 4=

Private hotel, 5= Travel agency. Tenure: 1= less than 1 month, 2= 1-6 months, 3= 6 months-1 year, 4= 1-2 years, 5= 2-5 years, 6=

more than 5 years. Working hours: 1= less than 2 hours, 2= 2-4 hours, 3= 4-6 hours, 4= 6-8 hours, 5= over 8 hours. Cohabitation: 1=

Live alone, 2= With children, 3= With parents, 4= With husband/wife, 5= With siblings, 6= With roommates/friends, 7= With

relatives, 8= Other.

Parenthetical values represent reliability.

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Table II. The bootstrapping analysis results for hypotheses 1a and 1b

Indirect paths	Bootstrapping		
	Direct effect	Indirect effect	95% confidence interval (indirect effect)
Home boredom→ Online leisure crafting → Thriving at home	-.18***	.10	[.06, .14]
Home boredom→ Online leisure crafting → Career self-management	-.09***	.04	[.02, .06]

Note: ***: $p<.001$ (N=340 participants)

Bootstrap sample size =1,000

Table III. Interaction effect of home boredom and growth need strength on online leisure crafting

Model	Standardized coefficients		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Control variables			
Cohabitation	-.04	-.04	-.06
Age	-.15*	-.13*	-.13*
Predictive variables			
Home boredom		.28***	.31***
Growth need strength		-.08	-.07
Interaction terms			
Home boredom ×Growth need strength			.31***
ΔR^2	.01*	.08***	.16***

Note: **: $p<.01$; ***: $p<.001$ (N=340 participants)
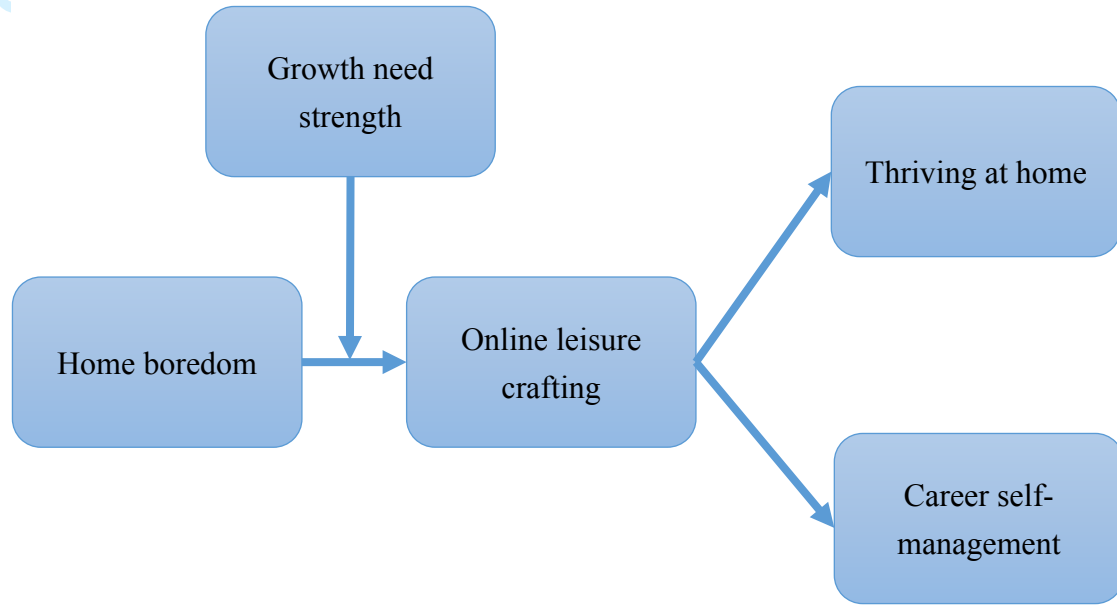
Figures

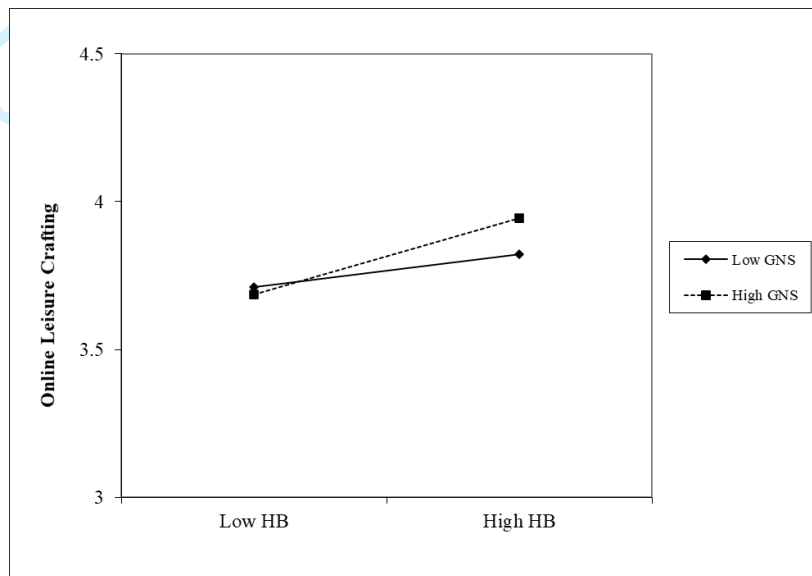**Figure 1.** Research framework of this study

Figure 2. Moderating effect of growth need strength on the relationship between home boredom

and online leisure crafting

1
2
3
4   **Response to the Editor**
5
6
7
8   Dear Editor,
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10
11
12
13   It was our pleasure to read your compliments of our work. We thank you for your
14
15   careful review of our paper and your constructive comments and input. Below, we
16
17   provide our responses to your comments and changes applied in our revision. We list
18
19
20   your original review comments below in bold.
21
22
23
24   1. **Change subheading of Result to Results in page 18.**
25
26   **Response:** Thank you for your constructive comment. We have changed
27
28   subheading of Result to Results in page 18.
29
30
31
32
33   2. **Move the section of Limitations and future research after the Conclusions**
34
35   **section and just before the reference list.**
36
37   **Response:** Thank you for your constructive comment. We have moved the section
38
39   of Limitations and future research after the Conclusions section and just
40
41
42   before the reference list.
43
44
45
46   3. **Proofread your article one more time and also cross-check your**
47
48   **references.**
49
50
51   **Response:** Thank you for your constructive comment. We have again proofread
52
53   our article and checked the appropriateness and accuracy of all references in
54
55   the text and references section. Please refer to the editing certificate we
56
57   attached in the submission.
58
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1

Thank you again for your input in this review regarding the revision. We are grateful

for your help in further improving the paper.

The Authors

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