

A Literature Review of Regret

Zhang Dian

School of Education, Yangtze University, Hubei, 434023 PRC China.

Type of Work: Peer Reviewed.

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.21013/jmss.v15.n4.p3>

How to cite this paper:

Dian, Z. (2019). A Literature Review of Regret. *IRA-International Journal of Management & Social Sciences* (ISSN 2455-2267), 15(4), 111-114. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.21013/jmss.v15.n4.p3>

© Institute of Research Advances.



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Non Commercial 4.0 International License subject to a proper citation to the publication source of the work.

Disclaimer: The scholarly papers as reviewed and published by the Institute of Research Advances (IRA) are the views and opinions of their respective authors and are not the views or opinions of the IRA. The IRA disclaims of any harm or loss caused due to the published content to any party.

Institute of Research Advances is an institutional publisher member of *Publishers International Linking Association Inc. (PILA-CrossRef)*, USA. The institute is an institutional signatory to the *Budapest Open Access Initiative, Hungary* advocating the open-access of scientific and scholarly knowledge. The Institute is a registered content provider under *Open Access Initiative Protocol for Metadata Harvesting (OAI-PMH)*.

The journal is indexed & included in *WorldCat Discovery Service (USA)*, *CrossRef Metadata Search (USA)*, *WorldCat (USA)*, *OCLC (USA)*, *Open J-Gate (India)*, *EZB (Germany)* *Scilit (Switzerland)*, *Airiti (China)*, *Bielefeld Academic Search Engine (BASE) of Bielefeld University, Germany*, *PKP Index of Simon Fraser University, Canada*.

ABSTRACT

Regret is an emotion closely related to people's daily life. This paper summarizes the research results on regret, including the definition of regret, the influencing factors of regret and the research status of regret.

Keywords: regret; influencing factors.

Instruction

Each of us might have encountered a situation in which, after we made a decision, no matter how reasonable this decision was at the time, if the results were not quite satisfactory, we would look back upon this decision and experience the feeling of regret. Sometimes the feeling of regret accompanies us for a long time, even for a lifetime. Shimanoff (1984) found that “regret” is one of the most important emotions that is often mentioned in people's daily life, which is second only to “like”. Regret has always been one of the important contents of psychological researches.

Definition of Regret

“Regret” is interpreted in the “Modern Chinese Dictionary” (2016) as “doing something wrong, and hating it in the heart”. Psychologists define “regret” as a negative emotion. Roese and Summerville (2005) believe that regret is a kind of guilt, self-blame and sad emotion, accompanied by individual reflection on a past life. Zeelenberg (1999) defines regret as a painful negative emotional experience, accompanied by self-blame and a clear desire for changing the current situation. Based on previous researches, Zeelenberg (2007) also proposed a more comprehensive concept of regret. He refers that regret is an individual's imagination or an emotional experience that is produced if other decisions or actions could be taken and the results would be better than now. This concept of regret has been recognized by most psychologists. They propose two conditions that cause regret: First, the individual has already known the outcome of previous actions or decisions; second, the individual imagines or realizes that it would be better if he or she took other decisions or behaviors.

Influencing Factors of Regret

There is a close relationship between the individual's decision process and regret. Therefore, the various factors that exist in the process of individual decision-making will also have a certain impact on regret.

First, decision-related factors.

Studies have shown that the scope and diversity of decision-making will affect regret to a certain extent. According to Iyengar and Lepper's study (2000), subjects under a wider range of selection conditions reported stronger regret and lower satisfaction. The large decision-making scope provides variability in results and also evokes more counterfactuals, therefore there is more regret. Sagi and Friedland's study (2007) is about the impact of diversity of decisions on decision-making regrets, and the results have shown that each option contains positive and negative components. When individuals make decisions, they always weigh the advantages and disadvantages, most of the regrets are caused by the positive aspects of the decisions that are

abandoned. That means by comprising the results, regret is produced. Chernev's study (2003) has confirmed that the loss of interest is also one of the factors influencing regret, he found that people with significant losses, whether in the long-term or short-term, have more regrets.

Second, personality-related factors.

Researchers have long found that there are differences in regret between different individuals, which means that some people often feel regret, while others rarely experience regret. Lauriola and Levin's study (2001) found that when the previous decision was wrong, the neurotic people feel stronger regret.

The sense of responsibility is also an essential factor. The production of regret does not only depend on comparing actual results with imaginary results, but also on the individual's degree of self-blame on the initial decision. Chinese researchers Zhang, Zhu and Luo's study (2009) has shown that in the absence of a sense of responsibility, people rarely regret, and sense of responsibility has a significant effect on the intensity of regret. The study of the brain mechanism showed that responsibility is an important factor in regret as well, Nicolle (2011) found that brain processes associated with regret depend on a sense of responsibility and that the amygdale plays a key role in the regret experience.

Research Status of Regret

Psychology researchers are concerned about the impact of regret on life satisfaction and mental function. They found that people who regretted the failure to complete the event and those who failed to get rid of these regrets had more severe depression, lower life satisfaction, and lower psychological adjustment. Some researchers also investigated the regrets of the elderly and found that women who have regrets in early adult life do not change their regrets, thus they are not in good health in old age.

In recent years, western researchers have conducted many studies on regrets from a positive perspective. Researchers studied regret and some negative emotions (such as depression, jealousy, anxiety, anger, sadness, etc.), they found that in negative emotions, regret is the most favorable. Psychologists believe that regret has the following advantages, it can 1. enhance the preparation for future actions; 2. deepen the understanding of the meaning of experiences, therefore one can have a better understanding of oneself (self-insight and self-construction); 3. help people to understand others' experience, therefore they will become more sympathetic; 4. promote the interrelationship between people.

References

- [1]. Shimanoff, S.B. Commonly named emotions in everyday conversations[J]. *Perceptual and Motor Skills*, 1984(58): 514.
- [2]. Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. *Modern Chinese Dictionary* (seventh edition) [M]. Beijing: The Commercial Press, 2016: 609.

- [3]. Roese, N.J., Summerville, A. What we regret most... and why[J]. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 2005(37): 1273-1285.
 - [4]. Zeelenberg, M. Anticipated regret, expected feedback and behavioral decision making[J]. *Journal of Behavioral Decision Making*, 1999(12): 93-106.
 - [5]. Zeelenberg, M., Pieters, R. A theory of regret regulation 1.0[J]. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 2007(17): 3-18.
 - [6]. Iyengar, S.S., Lepper, M.R. When choice is demotivating: Can one desire too much of a good thing[J]. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 2000(79): 995-1006.
 - [7]. Sagi, A., Friedland, N. The cost of richness: The effect of the size and diversity of decision sets on post-decision regret[J]. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 2007(93): 515-524.
 - [8]. Chernev, A. When more is less and less is more: The role of ideal point availability and assortment in consumer choice[J]. *The Journal of Consumer Research*, 2003(30): 170-183.
 - [9]. Lauriola, M., Levin, I.P. Personality traits and risky decision-making in a controlled experimental task: An exploratory study[J]. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 2001(31): 215-226.
 - [10]. Zhang Huijun, Zhu Xiangyao, Luo Yuejia. Cognitive neuroscience research of regret[J]. *Chinese Journal of Mental Health*, 2009(23): 68-72.
 - [11]. Nicolle, A., Dominik, R., Driver, J., Raymond, J. A role for the striatum in regret-related choice repetition[J]. *Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience*, 2011(23): 73-85.
-