

The Moderating Effect of Regulatory Focus on the Effect of Inaction Inertia: The Mediating Effect of Anticipated Regret and Satisfaction

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Abstract

Inaction inertia occurs when bypassing an initial action opportunity has the effect of decreasing the likelihood that subsequent similar action opportunities will be taken. The primary purpose of this study was to examine the moderating role of individual difference of regulatory focus on the inaction inertia effect. We conducted an experiment using a scenario in order to examine the proposed ideas: 2(regulatory focus: promotion vs. prevention) * 2(difference in attractiveness: large vs. small) subject-between design. Subjects experienced regret higher when a more attractive previous opportunity was forgone rather than a relatively less attractive one. For prevention-focused people, the changes in the levels of anticipated inaction regret, anticipated inaction and action satisfaction were not significant regardless of differences in the magnitude of attractiveness between a missed opportunity in the past and the current, new opportunity. However, changes in these three variables were quite significant for promotion-focused people based on differences in attractiveness. In other words, if the change in discount rates is large compared to when it is small, the level of anticipated inaction regret for promotion-focused people was reduced and that of anticipated inaction satisfaction increased while that of anticipated action satisfaction was also reduced. Further, anticipated inaction satisfaction functioned as a mediator between the interaction of difference in attractiveness and regulatory focus and the likelihood to act taking the current opportunity. Several theoretical and practical implications were discussed based on those results.

Keywords: Anticipated Regret, Anticipated Satisfaction, Counterfactual Thinking, Regulatory Focus, The Inaction Inertia Effect

1. Introduction

Tykcinski, Pittman and Tuttle¹ suggested a concept known as “the inaction inertia effect”. The inaction inertia effect is a phenomenon in which, after a person faces an initial action opportunity to take an action or not (for instance in purchasing an item) and chooses not to take the action, he or she continues to refrain from taking any actions even if the current action opportunity similar to the earlier one is offered. The inaction inertia effect, in the broad sense, can be conceptualized as the phenomenon in

which missing the initial action opportunities eventually reduces the likelihood for an action to be carried out later in similar situations [1 p. 794] while, in a narrower, more specific context, is defined as the “phenomenon in which missing attractive initial action opportunities decreases the likelihood of an action to take place later when a relatively less attractive opportunity is presented”.

Although numerous studies have discovered under which conditions such phenomena occur after Tykcinski et al.¹ first introduced the inaction inertia effect, not many researches concentrate on examining how people react

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differently to this phenomenon²⁻⁵. Therefore, the first and foremost purpose of this research is to investigate what type of effects that regulatory focus⁶ has on the inaction inertia effect. The reason is that since the inaction inertia effect shows how an individual reacts to subsequent action opportunities based on the outcome of any previous actions, how he or she controls him or herself as time progresses, when faced with the outcome of his/her past actions definitely affects the choices for actions in later opportunities that can result in either a loss or a gain.

The second purpose is to find out the effect of not only the anticipated counterfactual regret on inaction inertia effect but also the anticipated counterfactual satisfaction. As counterfactual thinking refers to contemplating about an event in a different way after it has already taken place, thinking of other alternatives even before a certain incident occurs is called anticipated counterfactual thinking, or prefectural thinking. Studies on prefectural thinking show that such events contribute in avoiding negative counterfactual thinking, or regret, that is able to take place in near future⁷. The aforementioned anticipated counterfactual thinking can be said to deal with the effects of negative prefectural thinking on inaction inertia. However, there has not been any proven knowledge that explains what role the positive prefectural thinking that customers possess has on inaction inertia effect. Thus, this research not only anticipates, when presented with subsequent opportunities, the negative outcome resulting from action or inaction but also examines how anticipation of a positive outcome influences the inaction inertia effect. With an assumption that such anticipation of positive mental experience would weaken the inaction inertia effect; this research pursues to prove the assumption through experiments.

2. The Influence of Anticipated Regret and Satisfaction as Mechanism for the Inaction Inertia Effect

Studies on anticipated counterfactual regret on decision-making have stated that people certainly think about the regret that they may feel after they either take or does not take a particular action⁸. When a new, subsequent opportunity is encountered after a forgone initial opportunity, people may think of two types of counterfactual regret: the regret anticipated from taking an action and that from taking no action. Except for the study done by Sevdalis,

Harvey and Yip⁹, there has never been any research, among those on the inaction inertia effect, which breaks down anticipated counterfactual regret and examines the role of regret in-depth.

It is not clear whether or not the anticipated counterfactual regret mentioned in most researches on the inaction inertia effect is based on taking an action or not taking any action^{1,10,11}. The focus of many of these researches dealing with anticipated counterfactual regret seems to be the idea that, regardless of the type of anticipated counterfactual regret, people simply do not like to regret, which leads to the creation of inaction inertia phenomenon. From these studies' standpoint, reasons that anticipated counterfactual regret causes inaction inertia are as follows: In other words, (having already lost a good opportunity for a purchase) if an action is taken at a less attractive second opportunity (say, if a purchase is made), then this action would continuously haunt the individual with a painful reminder that a more attractive initial opportunity slipped away, and this would eventually stop him or herself from taking any action in the current opportunity to erase any memories of the loss in the past. From this perspective, the anticipated counterfactual regret suggested by Tykocinski et al.¹⁰, looks to be that resulting from taking an action in a tacit manner.

As seen from the studies on the role of anticipated counterfactual regret in decision-making⁸, people anticipate the act of regret in both situations of action and inaction. And, the results of the research done by Sevdalis et al.⁹ which deals with both types of regret induced from action and inaction, state that the anticipated inaction regret (the type of anticipated regret generated from not buying the certain item at the second opportunity) contributes more to inaction inertia effect than the anticipated action regret (the type of anticipated regret generated from actually purchasing the item at the second chance). These results are actually in direct contrast to the tacit assumption made by Tykocinski et al.¹⁰ who declared that anticipated action regrets contribute to inaction inertia effect more significantly. Sevdalis et al.¹⁴ regarded these results as odd and strange but, knowing that the items used for their research scenarios were university textbooks, it is only natural for such results to be produced. That is, for university students to miss a golden opportunity to purchase textbooks that would be needed for the upcoming semester at a discount, it will come back to them as a regretful experience. However, since missing another opportunity to buy textbooks at a cheaper price will definitely cause a severe inconvenience throughout the semester, anticipated

inaction regret, rather than action regret, will increase the students' chance of making the purchases.

2.1 The Influence of Anticipated Counterfactual Satisfaction on Behavioral Intention

Whatever case it may be, when people encounter new opportunities for action, they must decide whether to act or not and also think about the gains and losses for each scenario. If the anticipated action and inaction regrets mentioned previously are mental conditions as a result of having expected a negative outcome even before facing with a second opportunity for action, the potential satisfaction from anticipated action or inaction, which is a positive outcome, can also be considered: for example, thinking of the satisfactory feeling that can be obtained from either making or not making a certain purchase. Previous research demonstrated that the preferences of consumers are influenced only via imagination of the future outcome without actual experiences¹² and it has been observed that merely imagining the future outcome still increases the perceived occurrence possibility of an event^{13,14}. These results show that, though the anticipated counterfactual regret can either strengthen or weaken the inaction inertia effect, thinking of anticipated counterfactual satisfaction may also weaken it. But it has been difficult to find any research on inaction inertia effect that examines what kind of impact that anticipated positive outcome has. In addition to anticipated action and inaction regrets previously mentioned, this research aims to investigate the effect that anticipated satisfaction from taking an action (positive outcomes of a purchase) and that from taking no action (positive outcomes due to a non-purchase) have on inaction inertia effect.

3. The Role of Regulatory Focus in Response on Anticipated Outcomes

One may still be dominated by the outcome based on the decision made in the past while another would rather make a completely fresh choice regardless of the past outcome. One of many variables that can help explain these differences in people is self-regulation as a motivation system, which refers to the capability or motivation to change people's reactions and responses. According to the regu-

latory focus theory by Higgins⁶, people have motivation for either promotion focus or prevention focus depending on what their orientation of self-regulation is. These two types of focus can be conceptualized as not only static individual characteristics but also characteristics that may vary based on specific manipulation of a situation¹⁵.

According to the regulatory focus theory proposed by Higgins⁶, promotion-focused people set maximal goals that they desire to accomplish since they bear in mind the pursuit of ideal but, on the other hand, prevention-focused people set minimal goals that they absolutely have to achieve because they view meeting the target as a necessity^{16,17}. In short, the promotion-focused people act with eagerness to maximize the gain even though it may be a risky move, as the prevention-focused people conservatively act with vigilance to minimize the losses^{18,19}.

Based on these characteristics for different types of regulatory focus, success or failure feedback in an attempt to achieve a goal will have different effects on people's actions later on. Idson and Higgins²⁰ in their research gave anagram assignments to individuals with high motivation for promotion or prevention. Results revealed that, if promotion-focused people have received a feedback of success, they would show good performances with their assignments even after some time has passed but, after having received a feedback of failure, their performance noticeably dropped. With people who possess a high motivation for prevention, however, the trend is a complete opposite. This study helps predict that, in terms of inaction inertia effect, prevention-focused people and promotion-focused people may display different patterns of reaction. It is because an inaction inertia effect can be said to be a provision of a second action opportunity after receiving a feedback of failure at the initial one.

4. The Study: The Role of Regulatory Focus and Anticipated Regret and Satisfaction in the Inaction Inertia Effect

Even though people can predict both negative and positive outcome to take place in near future, studies of inaction inertia only mention about potential regrets they may feel in the face of a negative outcome while no research has been done on the satisfaction experienced as a result of a positive outcome. Thus, the first goal of this study is

to thoroughly examine the detailed effect of anticipated regret and satisfaction on inaction inertia (that is, when an action is taken or not taken).

The second goal of this research is to look at how the role of detailed forms and valuation of regret due to inaction inertia will change based on different types of regulatory focus. Cate and John²¹ suggest that there are two different dimensions in perceiving the future depending on what people focus on: opportunities or limitations of the future. Also, Zacher and de Lange²² studies the two different types of regulatory focus, focus on opportunity (belief one has in how many new goals, plans and possibilities that he or she may have in the future) and focus on limitation (how much one perceives on the limitations and constraints he or she will be faced with in the future), and the relationship between them through a longitudinal research using their method to perceive the future. According to their research, regardless of how distant of a future from now is being discussed, promotion focus shows a significant correlation with the focus on opportunity and prevention focus with focus on limitation; however, the opposite combinations, between promotion focus and focus on limitation or prevention focus and focus on opportunity, display no significant correlation. This research also implies that promotion-focused people are optimistic that another attractive opportunity, similar to the one they once missed but prevention-focused people may have a defensive thinking that even the attractiveness of the current opportunity would vanish for those that follow. This can lead to two deductions. First is that there is a higher possibility that promotion-focused people will show inaction inertia behavior than prevention-focused people, and the other is that their valuation of newly provided opportunities will be different. In other words, while promotion-focused people evaluate the attractiveness of the current opportunity based on that of a previously lost opportunity (a discount rate that one did not take advantage of, for instance), prevention-focused people instead assess the attractiveness of the current opportunity comparing to an unattractive opportunity in the past (fixed price of a product, for example).

5. Method

5.1 Experimental Design and Participants

A total number of 136 university students were randomly chosen for an experimental condition by the mixed design

of 2 (difference in attractiveness: small vs. large) x 2 (regulatory focus: promotion- or prevention-focus). Among the subjects, 44% (56 people) were men while 56% (70 people) were women, their mean age was 21.5 (SD=2.1), and the age distribution ranged from 18, the youngest, to 27, the oldest.

5.2 Material and Procedure

The experiment was conducted in a classroom where lectures took place. Every participant received an experimental material and a booklet with questions. The first page contained a message showing gratitude towards the participants for taking part of the experiment, and the following page described the scenario for manipulation of regulatory focus, which refers to the one proposed in Experiment 2 performed by Shah and Higgins¹⁷. Having read this scenario, the participants provided answers to three questions for the manipulation check.

Next, a scenario for manipulating the perception of attractiveness differences was proposed. All of the previous research on inaction inertia performed after the initial research done by Tykocinski et al.¹ have used scenarios, which asks what one would do if a greatly attractive opportunity is lost before encountering a relatively less attractive one. The scenario in this research referenced the one used by Lee et al.³ and it can be summarized as follows. Via an advertisement, a group of subjects finds out that a fitness center near their houses is selling memberships at the discounted rate of 50% from the normal price of 110,000 KRW (for large discounts only; 15% for smaller discounts) but does not purchase memberships during the sale period only to see another ad that the same fitness center is now selling its memberships with only a 10% discount. Having read the scenario, the subjects were asked to respond about the anticipated regret and satisfaction from buying or not buying at the second opportunity as well as the purpose and value of the purchase at the latter opportunity.

5.3 Measures

5.3.1 Manipulation Check

The participants answered the three questions for manipulation check of regulatory focus²³: the possibility of completing the special program (11-point scale, 1=0%, 11=100%), the possibility of producing an outcome greater than a medium level by the end of the program (11-point scale, 1=none, 11=very likely), and how much

help you perceive that producing such an outcome will bring (11-point scale, 1=no help at all, 11=a great help). Then, the participants responded to questions that aim to check how differently they perceive the level of attractiveness of the discounts: “how attractive do you think was the 15% [50%] discount opportunity?” (7-point scale, 1=not attractive, 7=very attractive).

5.3.2 Anticipated Regret and Satisfaction

Also measured were the anticipated regret and satisfaction that may be generated from making or not making the purchase at the second opportunity. The subjects responded with the regret and satisfaction predicted from inaction (no purchase) or action (making a purchase) at the second opportunity. To find out the level of anticipated regret or satisfaction resulting from buying or not buying the fitness center membership at the newly given opportunity (when 10% discount is announced), the subjects were asked, “If you (do not) purchase the membership with a 10% discount, how much will you regret (be satisfied)?” and answered in a 7-point scale (1 = no regret at all, 7 = very regretful).

5.3.3 Valuation

The participants were asked to write specific prices of the fitness center membership for which they are willing to pay at the second opportunity. Under the conditions in which attractiveness differences are small, the minimum value was 50,000 KRW, the maximum 110,000 KRW, and the average was 84,290 KRW ($SD = 15,500$ KRW). When attractiveness differences are large, the minimum value was 100,000 KRW, the maximum 110,000 KRW, and the average was 68,270 ($SD = 21,170$ KRW).

5.3.4 Purchase Intention

The subjects were also asked if they intend to purchase the membership at the second opportunity: “how likely are you to purchase the fitness club membership with a 10% discount?” in 7-point scale (1 = not thinking of buying, 7 = intend to buy).

6. Results

6.1 Manipulation Check

By using ANOVA, which has regulatory focus and perception of attractiveness difference as independent

variables, the two variables were checked if they have been manipulated according to researchers' intentions. The manipulation check on regulatory focus was performed through the following three questions. First, the ANOVA results on the possibility of completing the special program revealed that only the main effect of regulatory focus is significant, $F(1, 132) = 11.34$, $p < .01$, and that promotion-focused people ($M = 9.40$, $SD = 1.18$) tend to perceive the possibility of completely finishing the program greater than prevention-focused people ($M = 8.41$, $SD = 2.07$). Secondly, the results on the possibility of producing a greater-than-medium-level outcome by the end of the program also showed that the main effect of regulatory focus is significant, $F(1, 132) = 7.660$, $p < .01$. For this question also, promotion-focused people ($M = 8.67$, $SD = 1.48$) predicted that such an outcome would be produced more strongly than prevention-focused people ($M = 7.92$, $SD = 1.61$). Lastly, promotion-focused people ($M = 6.25$, $SD = .85$) perceived that producing an outcome higher than a medium level would be of a great help more than prevention-focused people ($M = 5.75$, $SD = 1.14$), $F(1, 132) = 7.59$, $p < .01$.

Next, a manipulation check was conducted to see whether or not the subjects' perception on the difference in the discounted rates (50% à 10% for one condition, 15% à 10% in another) was significant. According to 2x2 ANOVA results, the main effect of attractiveness differences ($F(1,132) = 14.36$, $p < .000$) proved to be significant while that of regulatory focus ($F(1,132) = .907$, n.s.) as well as the interaction effect between the two variables were not ($F(1,132) = 2.31$, n.s.). Looking at the degree of perception of attractiveness for each condition, the significant change was $M = 4.42$ ($SD = 1.734$) when the difference in price is small and $M = 5.48$ ($SD = 1.681$) when it is large.

6.2 Correlation among Variables

The correlation ($r = .072$) between anticipated inaction regret and action regret was not significant. While the correlation ($r = -.231$, $p < .01$) between anticipated inaction satisfaction and action satisfaction was significant, the correlation coefficient is not sufficient to conclude that these two concepts are in opposite of each other. It also means that the results would be more meaningful if the anticipated inaction regret and satisfaction were more sophisticated.

Table 1. Statistics among variables

	Anticipated inaction regret	Anticipated action regret	Anticipated inaction satisfaction	Anticipated action satisfaction	value	Purchase intention
Anticipated inaction regret	2.88(1.37)					
Anticipated action regret	.072	3.95(1.52)				
Anticipated inaction satisfaction	-.283**	.326***	3.68(1.28)			
Anticipated action satisfaction	.412***	-.324***	-.231**	3.90(1.29)		
value	.315***	-.327***	-.407***	.323***	76.84(19.97)	
Purchase intention	.550***	-.218*	-.493***	.519***	.552***	3.52(1.76)

Note: correlation coefficients under diagonal, means and standard deviations (in parenthesis) on diagonal

6.3 The Moderating Effect of Regulatory Focus

Looking at the ANOVA results on the anticipated inaction regret, there was no main effect of attractiveness difference conditions but the main effect of regulatory focus was significant $F(1,132) = 6.04, p < .05$. That is, the level of anticipated inaction regret of prevention-focused people ($M = 3.17, SD = 1.30$) is greater than that of promotion-focused people ($M = 2.63, SD = 1.39$). The interaction effect of the two variables was also significant, $F(1, 132) = 6.04, p < .05$. Based on this, a simple main effect analysis was performed and its results revealed that, although the level of anticipated inaction regret for prevention-focused people did not show any significant differences whether the difference in attractiveness was large ($M = 3.25, SM = 1.11$) or small ($M = 3.11, SM = 1.45$), the level of anticipated inaction regret for regulatory focus, $F(1, 132) = 9.91, p < .01$, was reduced when the attractiveness difference is small ($M = 3.11, SM = 1.54$) compared to when it is large ($M = 2.14, SM = 1.02$).

The ANOVA results on anticipated action regret revealed the main effect of attractiveness difference conditions, $F(1, 132) = 21.34, p < .001$. That is, the subjects under the condition in which the price difference is large ($M = 4.56, SD = 1.45$) showed greater anticipated action regret than those under the condition with a small price difference ($M = 3.40, SD = 1.38$). The main effect of regulatory focus, $F(1, 132) = 1.26, n.s.$, and interaction effect, $F(1,132) = 2.88, n.s.$, were not significant.

For anticipated inaction satisfaction, the main effect for price differences, $F(1,132) = 4.47, p < .05$, and

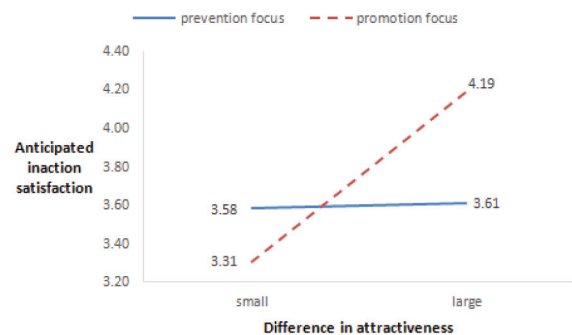


Figure 1. Influences of difference in attractiveness and regulatory-focus on anticipated inaction satisfaction.

interaction effect, $F(1,132) = 4.01, p < .05$, were significant. However, the main effect of regulatory focus was not significant, $F(1, 132) = .514, n.s.$ The anticipated inaction satisfaction for conditions with large price differences ($M = 3.94, SD = 1.39$) was greater than that with small price differences ($M = 3.44, SD = 1.14$). Also, though the level of anticipated inaction satisfaction for prevention-focused people did not vary much regardless of price differences ($M_{\text{small difference in attractiveness}} = 3.58, SD_{\text{small difference in attractiveness}} = .84; M_{\text{large difference in attractiveness}} = 3.61, SD_{\text{large difference in attractiveness}} = 1.34$), promotion-focused people showed greater anticipated inaction satisfaction when the price difference is large ($M = 4.19, SD = 1.39$) than when it is small ($M = 3.31, SD = 1.37$). The results of simple main effect verification on promotion-focused people have confirmed this, $F(1, 132) = 9.08, p < .01$.

For anticipated action satisfaction, the main effects of price differences ($F(1,132) = 2.62, n.s.$) and of regulatory

focus ($F(1,132) = 1.40$, n.s.) were not significant while only the interaction effect between the two variables was marginally significant ($F(1,132) = 3.78$, $p = .054$).

Looking at the ANOVA results on valuation, only the main effect of attractiveness difference, $F(1, 132) = 23.38$, $p < .001$, was significant. The main effect of regulatory focus ($F(1,132) = .55$, n.s.) and the interaction effect between the two variables ($F(1,132) = 1.06$, n.s.) were both not significant.

Looking at the ANOVA results on purchase intentions, the main effect of differences in attractiveness, $F(1, 132) = 6.79$, $p < .01$, and interaction effect, $F(1,132) = 9.47$, $p < .01$, were significant. On the other hand, the main effect of regulatory focus was not, $F(1,132) = 3.30$, n.s. The results of simple main effect analysis conducted based on these revealed that prevention-focused people did not show a

significant difference in purchase intentions whether the attractiveness difference is large ($M = 3.86$, $SD = 1.67$) or small ($M = 3.72$, $SD = 1.67$), but promotion-focused people's intentions of purchase decreased significantly when the attractive difference is small ($M = 4.08$, $SD = 1.76$), compared to when it is large ($M = 2.46$, $SD = 1.50$), $F(1, 132) = 17.17$, $p < .001$.

6.4 The Test of Mediated Moderating Effect

Through the analysis above, it has been discovered that the regulatory focus functions as a moderator for anticipated inaction regret, valuation and intentions for action. However, these results did not state whether or not the anticipated inaction regret and valuation function directly as a mediator for intentions for action. Therefore, a regression analysis has been employed for a mediated moderation effect analysis. Here, the independent variable is the interaction between attractiveness difference and regulatory focus while the dependent variable is intention of purchase and mediators are anticipated inaction regret as well as valuation²³.

Table 2 describes the case in which the mediator is anticipated inaction regret according to the mediated moderation verification procedure once proposed by Muller, Judd and Yzerbyt²⁹. Conditions of differences in attractiveness and the interactive term of regulatory focus were significant in regression equation 1 and 2, respectively. In regression equation 3, the interactive term of these two variables was significant but, since the effect

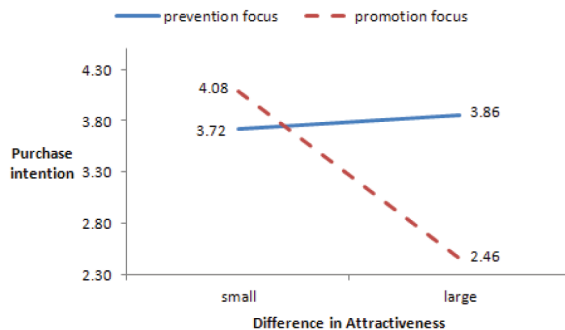


Figure 2. Influences of difference in attractiveness and regulatory-focus on purchase intention.

Table 2. The results of mediated moderation: Anticipated inaction satisfaction

Input variables	Regression 1		Regression 2		Regression 3	
	Purchase intention		Anticipated inaction satisfaction		Purchase intention	
	B	t	B	T	B	t
Difference in Attractiveness (X)	1.896	2.059*	-.841	-1.208	1.561	1.893
Regulatory Focus (Mo)	2.122	2.398*	-1.143	-1.709	.093	.090
XMo	-1.761	-3.077**	.865	2.004*	-1.405	-2.704**
Anticipated inaction satisfaction (Me)					-1.301	-3.561**
MeMo					.433	2.030*
R ²	.134		.068		.329	
F	6.782***		3.205*		12.637***	

* $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.001$

of anticipated inaction satisfaction is also significant, it has been verified that there are mediated moderation effects. Such results state that the effect of an interaction between attractiveness difference and regulatory focus on the intentions of purchase is mediated by the anticipated inaction satisfaction. Moreover, it can be said that a mediated moderation effect occurs because the magnitude of it, which is calculated according to the procedure specified by Morgan-Lopez and MacKinnon²⁴, is also significant.

7. Conclusions

This research has aimed to subdivide the concept of anticipated regret into anticipated inaction and action regrets and see what kind of effect they have on inaction inertia phenomena. From the same point of view, the role of a concept known as anticipated satisfaction, which has not been dealt with in inaction inertia effect studies, has been examined. Also considered is the moderating role of an individual difference variable known as regulatory focus as the inaction inertia effect becomes visible.

The findings and analyses are as follows. The first finding is related to the conceptual elaboration of anticipated regret as well as the introduction of the concept of anticipated satisfaction to studies on inaction inertia effect. It shows that it is meaningful to conceptualize the analysis of interactions between variables by separating cases in which actions are taken and not taken for both anticipated regret and satisfaction.

The second finding is related to the moderation effect of regulatory focus on anticipated regret and satisfaction. For prevention-focused people, the changes in the levels of anticipated inaction regret, anticipated inaction and action satisfaction were not significant regardless of differences in the magnitude of attractiveness between a missed opportunity in the past and the current, new opportunity. However, changes in these three variables were quite significant for promotion-focused people based on differences in attractiveness. In other words, if the change in discount rates is large compared to when it is small, the level of anticipated inaction regret for promotion-focused people was reduced and that of anticipated inaction satisfaction increased while that of anticipated action satisfaction was also reduced. Thus, promotion-focused people's intentions of purchase dropped when faced with a new but relatively less attractive opportunity but for prevention-focused people, the intentions of

purchase maintained a certain level regardless of the changes in the magnitude of attractiveness.

The final finding is regarding the mediated moderation effect. The fact that the level of anticipated regret and satisfaction and intentions for action has changed based on the attractiveness and regulatory focus does not mean that the anticipated regret and satisfaction are antecedents of intentions for action. Thus, verification of mediated moderation in which regulatory focus is the moderator and regret and satisfaction are mediators has been performed. As a result, the anticipated inaction regret did not function as a mediator despite the expectations of the previous researches. In fact, it was discovered that the anticipated inaction satisfaction is the one functioning as a mediator.

This research will make a few academic contributions. First, the research will carry a significant meaning in revealing the role of anticipated satisfaction, a concept that has not been talked about in studies on inaction inertia effect. Numerous researches related to inaction inertia have suggested that regret is a major reason for inaction inertia whether it is an escape from experienced regret²⁵ or avoidance due to anticipated regret¹¹. But the results of this research show that anticipated inaction satisfaction, rather than regret, could be the reason more directly related to inaction inertia phenomena. It is particularly more meaningful in that it unearths how the process changes based on the moderator. Secondly, in accordance with the research by Sevdalis et al.⁹, this research has elaborated on the anticipated regret by distinguishing between when an action is taken and when it is not taken and also explained how these contribute to the inaction inertia effect. Third, this research is significant since it has proven for the first time the fact that regulatory focus moderates inaction inertia effect. In fact, Van Putten, Zeelenberg and Van Dijk²⁶ once stated through deductive reasoning that regulatory focus will control the inaction inertia effect but their suggestion is the complete opposite from what the results of this research tell us. They predicted that prevention-focused people will have a greater possibility to show inaction inertia effect than promotion-focused people.

This research will also provide several marketing implications in addition to the theoretical ones explained previously. First of all, this research states that, when carrying out policies on pricing, it is more appropriate to apply a series of smaller discount rates rather than

applying a single, large discount rate. Secondly, the research shows that inaction inertia effect was displayed more in promotion-focused people, instead of prevention-focused people. This implies that, when a company plans for price discount strategies, it needs to tactically send messages to customers so that they would have more of a prevention-focused mental state.

Just like other studies that have been done, this research also contains a few limitations in analyses and applications. Based on these, several follow-up researches are to be proposed. Above all, this research has manipulated attractiveness with costs of products. Marketing promotion policies employed by companies are not limited to pricing only so there must be a research that expands the concept of attractiveness beyond pricing. Next, even if the attractiveness of a product is manipulated using pricing, the degree of attractiveness customers feel towards discounted rates applied to the product can vary depending on its normal price. This must be considered when analyzing the research results. Third, in the real world, almost all products and services have their own brands and these brands' influence on consumers is vastly different. To this day, however, there is no research on the inaction inertia, including this one, which has talked about influences of brands, which definitely must be investigated in a following research.

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