

Post-Purchase Consumer Regret Effecton Customer Satisfaction

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Abstract

This research paper examines the influence of post-purchase consumer regret on consumer satisfaction in Ajayi Crowther University, Oyo. The objectives of the study were to determine whether regrets (which are multidimensional) are experienced in consumer context. The paper proposes multiple dimensions of post-purchase consumer regret (PPCR) studies and validates a scale for measuring this construct. The study employed survey research using questionnaire to collect data from students of Ajayi Crowther University

Four hundred and two subjects responded to the questionnaire. Six hypotheses were tested using multiple regression analysis and analysis of variance with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The study found that the regret due to forgone alternative, change in significance, under consideration and over-consideration can have significant impact on customer satisfaction. Based on this finding, it was recommended that companies should be more concerned with consumer satisfaction as this will help develop a better business competitive environment.

Keywords: Post-purchase; satisfaction; Consumer regret; forgone alternative Under consideration; over consideration, Change in significance

INTRODUCTION

Previous researches have identified the existence of consumer experience, regretting what they bought and how they bought them (Zeelenberg and Pieters, 1999).

The level of consumer regret in our business environment shows that there is still a lack of exploration of the components of outcome regret and process regret and how each of these components is experienced in consumption context (Zeelenberg and Pieters, 1999)

Regret is a painful sensation that arises as a result of comparing "What is" with "What might have been" (Sugden 1995)

In other words, regret transpires when an obtained outcome compares unfavorably with an outcome that could have been better, had the individual chosen differently (Bell 1982, Tsiros and Mittal 2000). Businesses are daily faced with poor sales performances due to consumer dissatisfaction of product purchased (Landman 1993) while the purchase stage is more crucial from the manufacturer or marketer's perspective, the post-purchase behaviour indicates the ultimate satisfaction perceived by consumer and as a determinant of future purchase decision (Connolly and Zeelenberg 2002; Zeelenberg and Pieters 1999).

Companies are today in more competitive environment than before, so there is need to understand the influence of post-purchase, consumer regret on consumer satisfaction. We cannot live without desire; we cannot live without feelings and cannot live without regret (Tsiros and Mittal, 2000).

Regret is omnipresent in our lives and very few people are exempted from the sensation of regret. A study on verbal expressions of emotions developed by Shimanoff in 1984 shows that regret was the most pronounced negative emotion and love for positive emotion.

Research finding has also shown that regret is not only an emotional reaction to the bad result of decision but also a powerful force that motivate and directs one's behaviour (Churchill and Gilbert 1979)

Tsiros and Maltal (2000) postulations on the relationship, certainty and significance between satisfaction and regret converge with those of Inman et al (1997) and Taylor (1997) on the need to expunge negative influence of regret on satisfaction.

Thus, our satisfaction does not depend solely on what we receive but on what we could have received, noting that satisfactory purchase can lead to regret with the passing of time

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This research work looks into the problem of post purchase consumer regret which the customer face rather than satisfaction, after post-purchase of products and services.

The research work also look at important factors influencing post purchase behaviour in our business environment as to help proffer solutions to consumer regret on customer satisfaction in order to develop a better business environment.

OBJECTIVES AND HYPOTHESES

The objectives of the study which are inculcated in the hypotheses are as follows:

- Regret due to forgone alternative, Regret due to change in significance, Regret due to under-consideration and Regret due to over-consideration will jointly and independently predict consumer satisfaction.
- There will be main interactive effect of Regret due to forgone alternative and Regret due to change in significance on consumer satisfaction.
- There will be a significant relationship between Regret due to under-consideration and consumer satisfaction.
- There will be a significant relationship between Regret due to over-consideration and consumer satisfaction.
- There will be a significant relationship between Regret due to change in significance and consumer satisfaction.
- There will be a significant relationship between Regret due to forgone alternative and consumer satisfaction.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The paper aims to contribute to the knowledge on the influence of post-purchase consumer regret (PPCR) on consumer satisfaction.

It will assist to fill the gap created by industry, professionals and academia on how marketers and business owners can promote customer satisfaction.

The research will contribute to the advancement of knowledge in the society in general and in institutions of higher learning in particular.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAME WORK

Regret is an aversive cognitive emotion that people are motivated to avoid. Post purchase outcome regret is a comparison of individual's assessment of outcomes between what has been bought and what could have been bought. Scholars have also hypothesized that independence of outcomes, the quality of decision process, can also be regretted (Connolly and Zeelenberg 2002, Zeelenberg and Pieters 1999).

Process regret occurs when an individual compares his inferior decision process to a better alternative decision. Using decision justification theory (DJT). Colony and Zeelenberg (2002) argue that individuals regret due to the evaluation of outcome and also because of a decision made in an unjustifiable way. DJT postulates that the total amount of regret experienced as a result is a sum of regret experienced as a result of an outcome that is inferior to another outcome that has been rejected, plus the feeling of self-blame for the poor decision process.

Regret arises from individual expending cognitive efforts to consider the chosen option against the rejected option (Inman, Dyer and Jianmin, 1997). Individual must think in order to feel regret, this is because self-blame is a major component of regret. Sugden (1985) contends that the intensity of regret is often influenced by the level of individual responsibility taken as well as self-blame. One consistent finding is that regret tends to be greater when individual had more control over decisions (Gilovich and Medvec 1994)

Counterfactual thinking (CFT) is another area of regret which is the process of comparing reality with alternative possibility by constructing hypothetical scenarios to assess the attractiveness of alternative possibilities. In essence, CFT is not an evaluation of the outcome, but rather the thought process of how an outcome could have been prevented or altered to yield a more positive or negative outcome. CFT can be upward or downward. It is downward, when individual think about how circumstances could have been worse, while upward when the thinking is otherwise. In the context of consumer behaviour, individuals tend to engage in upward CFT after a negative purchase outcome.

Outcomes of Regret

Regret can come in various forms. There are regrets due to forgone alternatives that have been chosen against other alternative. This is when chosen alternative is believed to be inferior to the forgone alternative that could have been purchased. Here people evaluate outcome by comparing what they have received to what they could have received (Sugden 1985). Researchers assumed that outcomes of regretted alternative must be known to the buyer in order for the regret to occur. However, studies have shown that individual can experience regret even in the absence of known forgone alternatives (Tsiros and Mittal 2000).

Regret can also occur due to change in significance. This is when individual perceived diminish product utility from the time of purchase to a certain point in time after the purchase. When an individual buys a product, there is a certain use for it, however it sometimes happen to make the product less appropriate for that use, then the individual is open to feeling regret due to change in significance.

Regret due to under-consideration occurs when individual is skeptical of the heuristic processing that led to the purchase. Individuals assess the quality of their decision process by examining both implementation/execution and the amount of information they gathered (Janis & Maun, 1977).

Regret due to under-consideration occurs when an individual feel he has failed to implement the decision process or if he believes in hindsight that he lack the desired quality/quantity of information needed to make good decision.

Regret can also occur due to over-consideration, where individual regrets that he has put too much time and effort into the buying process. Over consideration is as a result of too much thinking, though “thinking leads to better decision” (Pieter and Verplanken, 1995).

Behavioural Consequences of Regret

Analysis show that regret can have diverse behavioural consequences such as-repurchasing intention, behaviour of complaint, the word of mouth, behavior inertia, return and abandonment, incompatibility between expectations and performances obtained.

These consequences often occur when there is no possible solution to regret felt and the feeling of self-blame.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

The research design for the study is a survey research design which measure two variables; independent and dependent variables. The independent variable is post-purchase consumer regret which is measured by four sub-variables (forgone alternative, change in significance, under consideration and over consideration) while the dependent variable is consumer satisfaction.

Sample

Five hundred (500) students of Ajayi Crowther University, Oyo were administered and four hundred and two (402) questionnaires were retrieved and found usable.

Sample of selling products within the University mini markets were collected for research measure.

Data Analysis

The demographic information was analysed using frequency counts and simple percentage.

The hypotheses were analysed using Pearson correlation, multiple regression, student's t-test and analysis of variance (ANOVA).

Hypothesis 1 was tested with multiple regression analyses

Hypotheses 2-6 were tested using student t-test

Hypotheses 3& 5 were tested with Pearson correlation and

Hypothesis 4 was tested using analysis of variance (ANOVA)

Research Instruments

The instrument for the study was questionnaire which measure the demographic information, post-purchase consumer regret and customer satisfaction.

The post purchase consumer regret was 16-items scales adapted from a scale developed by Creyer and Ross (1999) that measure level of regret experienced and self- recrimination. However, this measure of regret is uni-dimensional and it focus on measuring the level of regret experienced had one chosen differently, and the self-recrimination for selecting the wrong alternative.

Four items measured regret due to forgone alternative, regret due to change in significance, regret due to under consideration and regret to over consideration. The measure of post-purchase consumer regret (PPCR) scale development was adopted based on previous work by Seung Hwan Lee and JimeCotte (2009) on advances in consumer research which is 16 – item questionnaire, using 4 point format.

Data Presentation and Analyses

Table I Statistical Description of Demography

Sex	Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Male	210	52.2	52.2	52.2
Female	192	47.8	47.8	100.0
Total	402	100	100.0	

Source: field survey, 2013

Table I shows the respondents' response by gender. Out of total 402, 210 (52.2%) were males while 192 (47.8%) were females, implying more males than females.

Table II Ages of Respondents

Ages	Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
15-24yrs	90	22.4	22.4	22.4
25-29yrs	282	70.1	70.1	92.5
30-34yrs	30	7.5	7.5	100.0
Total	402	100	100.0	

Source: field survey, 2013

Table II shows distribution respondents by age 90(22.4%) fall within 15-24yrs, 282(70.1%) in age range of 25-29yrs, while 30(7.5%) fall within the range of 30-34yrs. The result shows that majority of respondent's age range is 25-29yrs.

Table III Mental status of Respondents

Ages	Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Status	390	97.0	97.0	97.0
Married	6	1.5	1.5	98.5
Divorced	6	1.5	1.5	100.0
Total	402	100.0	100.0	

Source: field survey, 2013

Table III shows that 390(97%) are single, 6(1.5%) married, while 6(1.5) were divorced

Table IV Respondents Academic level in the University

Level	Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
100	74	18.4	18.4	18.4
200	80	19.9	19.9	38.3
300	120	29.9	29.9	68.2
400	128	31.8	31.8	100.0
Total	402	100.0	100.0	

Source: field survey, 2013

Table IV shows academic levels of respondents in the University Result shows that 74(18.4%) were in 100level, 80(19.9%) in 200level, 120(29.9%) in 300level, while 128(31.8%) are in 400level.

Table V Distribution of Respondents by Faculty

Faculty	Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
SMS	43.0	43.0	43.0	43.0
Humanities	23.8	23.8	23.8	23.8
Natural Sciences	31.8	31.8	31.8	31.8

Source: field survey, 2013

Table V show the faculty of respondents from the analysis, it appears that 384(95.5%) were from Social & Management Sciences 6(1.5%) from Faculty of Natural Sciences, while 12(3.0%) of the respondents came from Faculty of Humanities.

Table VI Distribution of Respondents by Departments

Department	Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Business Administration	28	7.0	7.0	7.0
Accounting& finance	48	11.9	11.9	18.9
Economics	8	2.0	2.0	20.9
Comm.& Media Studies	94	23.4	23.4	44.3
English	68	16.9	16.9	61.2
History	28	7.0	7.0	68.2
ICT	16	4.0	4.0	72.1
Biochemistry	12	3.0	3.0	75.1
Industrial Chemistry	4	1.0	1.0	76.1
Microbiology	36	9.0	9.0	85.1
Geology	48	11.9	11.9	97.0
Physics with Electronics	4	1.0	1.0	98.0
Computer Science	8	2.0	2.0	100.0
Total	402	100.0	100.0	

Table VI show distribution of respondents by their departments. In it, 28(7.0%) of the respondents are from Business Administration 48(11.9%) from Accounting & finance, 8(2.0%) from Economics, 98(23.4%) from Communication & Media Studies, 68(16.9%) from English Department, 28(7.0%) from History 28(7.0%) are from ICT, 12(3.0%) from Biochemistry, 4(1.0%) from Industrial Chemistry, 4(1.0%) from Physics&Electronics 8(2.0%) from Computer Science, 36(9.%) from Microbiology and lastly 48(11.9%) from Geology.

HYPOTHESES TESTING

In order to examine the influence of post purchase on consumer regret satisfaction using AjayiCrowther University Oyo, as a case study, six hypotheses were formulated and tested.

HYPOTHESIS 1

H₁: Regret due to forgone alternative, Regret due to change in significance, Regret due to under- consideration and Regret due to over-consideration will jointly and independently predict consumer satisfaction.

Table VII: Table showing the relationship between Regret due to forgone alternative, Regret due to change in significance, Regret due to under-consideration and Regret due to over-consideration will jointly predict customer satisfaction.

Table VII

Variables	F-Ration	Sig of p	R	R ²	Adj. R ²	B	T	P
Forgone Alternatives	19.835	.000	.408	.167	.158	.882	2.695	.041
Change in significance						-204	-2.488	.013
Under-consideration						-120	-2.993	.000
Over-consideration						-193	-2.689	.007

The table above showed that the linear combination of the impact of Regret due to forgone alternative, Regret due to change in significance, Regret due to under-consideration and Regret to over-consideration will jointly and independently predict consumer satisfaction.

(F=19.835; R=.408, R².167, Adj. R²=.158; P<.05). The independent/ predictor variables jointly accounted for a variation of about 16.7% in organizational performance the following shows the various relative contributions and level of significance of the independentvariable: Regret due to forgone alternative (B=.882,P<.05), Regret due to change in significance (B=.204,P<.05), Regret due to under-consideration (B=.120,P<.05), Regret due to over-consideration (B=.193,P<.05), respectively. It can beconcluded that all independent variables, Regret due to forgone alternative, Regret due to change in significance, Regret due to under – consideration and Regret due to over – consideration jointly and independently predict consumer satisfaction . the alternative hypothesis (Hi) is accepted.

HYPOTHESIS 2

H₁: There will be main interactive effect of Regret due to forgone alternative and Regret due to change in significance on consumer satisfaction.

TABLE VIII

A table showing Pearson’s correlation between Regret due to forgone alternative and Regret due to change in significance on consumer satisfaction.

Variables	F-Ratio	Sig. of P	R	12 ²	Ady R ²	B	T	P
Forgone Alternative	31.718	.000	.370	.137	.133	-.014	-.192	.848
Change in Significance						-.360	-5.030	.000

**Sig. at 01 Level

The above Table display the result of the analysis of the maintenance effect of Regret due to forgone alternative and Regret due to change in significance on consumer satisfaction. The analysis reveals that both of Regret due to forgone alternative and Regret due to change in significance are negatively related to customer satisfaction Regret due to forgone alternative (B = -.014, T = -.192, P> 0.06). Regret due to change in significance (B =-.360, T = 030 – 5.030, P < 0.05). With these, it can be concluded that Regret due to change in significance in significant while Regret due to forgone alternative is not.

HYPOTHESIS 3

H₁: There will be a significant relationship between Regret due to under – consideration and consumer satisfaction.

Table IX

Variable	Mean	Std Dev.	N	R	P	Remark
Consumer Satisfaction	4.15422	.87702	402	-.369	.000	Sig
Regret due to under – consideration	2.7537	1.28704				

**Sig. at 01 Level

Source: Field survey, (2013)

00It is shown in the above table that there is no significant relationship (r = - .369**, N = 402, P < .05). Hence, it could be deduced that Regret due to under- consideration influence consumer satisfaction according to the study. Hence, the null hypothesis (Ho) is accepted.

HYPOTHESIS 4

H₁: There will be a significant relationship between Regret due to over – consideration and consumer satisfaction.

TABLE X

Variable	Mean	Std Dev.	N	R	P	Remark
Consumer Satisfaction	4.15422	.87702	402	-.367**	.000	Sig
Regret due to Over- consideration	2.8358	1.16330				

** Sig. at 01 Level

Source: Field Survey, (2013).

It is shown in the above table that there is no significant relationship between Regret due to over – consideration and consumer satisfaction (r = -.367**, N = 402, P < .05). Hence, it could be deduced that Regret due to over – consideration influence consumer satisfaction,according to the study.

HYPOTHESIS 5

H₁: There will be a significant relationship between Regret due to change in significance and consumer satisfaction.

TABLE XI

Variable	Mean	Std Dev.	N	R	P	Remark
Consumer Satisfaction	4.15422	.87702	402	-.370**	.000	Sig
Regret due to change in significance	2.7164	1.25111				

**Sig. at 01 Level

Source: Field Survey, (2013)

It is shown in the above table that there is no significant relationship between regret due to change in significance and consumer satisfaction. ($r = -.370^{**}$, $N = 402$, $P < .05$). Hence, it could be deduced that Regret due to change in significance influence consumer satisfaction according to the study.

HYPOTHESIS 6

H₁: There will be a significant relationship between regret due to forgone alternative and consumer satisfaction.

TABLE XII

Variable	Mean	Std Dev.	N	R	P	Remark
Consumer Satisfaction	4.15422	.87702	402	-.287**	.000	Sig
Regret Forgone alternative	2.7724	1.32575				

** Sig. at .01 Level

Source: Field Survey, (2013)

It is shown in the above table that there is no significant relationship between Regret due to forgone alternative and consumer satisfaction ($r = -.287^{**}$, $N = 402$, $P < .05$). Hence, it could be deduced that Regret due to forgone alternative influence consumer satisfaction according to the study.

Conclusion

The study examined the influence of post-purchase consumer Regret on customer satisfaction with reference to Ajayi Crowther University, Oyo, Oyo State, Nigeria.

The result showed that there was a significant difference between regrets due to forgone alternative and customer satisfaction. It also established that there was a significant relationship between variables and that there is significant difference in the main effect of post – purchase consumer regret and consumer satisfaction. It further indicated that there was significant relationship between out-come Regret and process Regret.

Inferring from, above, it therefore concluded that in order to better understand post- purchase consumer regret, it is important to consider each of the dimensions and the magnitude of regret experienced. It is the sum of regret experienced through each of the four dimensions that determine how much the individual regret a purchase.

Recommendation

Based on above findings the following are recommended: -

That companies should try and update themselves on the way to achieve and maintain customer satisfaction in the competitive market.

That companies should explore and exploit their areas of strength and use this to develop and create more effective customer satisfaction. In particular we encourage researchers to observe post – consumption behaviours such as repeat purchase intention, changes in attitude towards brand and complaint behavior.

Marketers should identify the area of customer regret so that they can direct more attention.

Finally, if marketers have better knowledge of the cause of consumer regret over their purchase, greater energy can be directed at reducing that extent of regret.

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