Regret appraisals, Coping Styles of Regret and Subjective Well-Being in Middle Aged Women

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Abstract. The present study aimed to investigate how different coping styles of regret appraisals and experiences affect subjective well-being in middle aged women. Data was collected from 40–65 year old women residing in D city and K province, using a self-administered questionnaire. For data analysis, SPSS/WIN 21.0 was used to conduct t-tests, ANOVAs, Pearson’s correlation coefficients, and hierarchical regression analysis. The hierarchical regression analysis showed that life satisfaction, as an aspect of subjective well-being, increased with higher monthly income, lower regret intensity, and greater pursuit of alternative goals. Meanwhile, with psychological well-being, as another aspect of subjective well-being, was found to be positively affected by better perceived health, more rumination on regret, more separation of goals, and greater pursuit of alternative goals.

Keywords: Regret, Middle aged women, Subjective well-being, Life satisfaction, psychological well-being

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Middle aged women experience an increased sense of freedom as their child-raising responsibilities decrease, which leads them to redirect their potential abilities. Meanwhile, from a physiological perspective, they experience the developmental crisis of

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the menopause, and they experience psychosocial obstacles, including pressure, emptiness, and guilt with respect to their role within the family[1].

Regret is a natural and essential phenomenon in human development. People are usually sensitive to their own failure, and regret not having made better choices. In particular, when a personally important decision leads to a bad outcome, or the individual is sure that there were better choices, the sense of regret causes severe psychological pain[2].

Subjective well-being broadly consists of life satisfaction and psychological well-being, where life satisfaction is one’s perceived evaluation of life as a whole[3].

Subjective well-being may differ depending on coping styles of regret, and in middle aged women, coping styles for regretful experiences are both a defense mechanism to protect the self, and also contribute to the resolution of problems. Different regret coping styles will have different effects on middle aged women[4].

The results of the present study will be valuable as foundational data for the development of programs to promote subjective well-being in middle-aged women with different coping styles of regret.

1.2 Purpose

The aim of the present study is to investigate the relationships between regret appraisals, coping styles of regret, and the extent and major variables of subjective well-being, and also to ascertain the factors that influence subjective well-being.

2 Methods

2.1 Study Design

The present study uses a descriptive survey method to ascertain the effects of regret appraisals and coping styles of regret on subjective well-being in middle aged women.

2.2 Participants and Data collection

40–65 year old women were recruited as subjects from among the parents of students at two universities in D city and K province. The survey was conducted by the authors and 2 trained research assistants between 23rd August and 23rd September 2015. Data was collected from 200 consenting participants. The final analysis was conducted on 180 questionnaires, after 20 had been excluded for incomplete answers, meaning that the number of subjects was considered suitable for this study.
2.3 Instruments

Regret appraisals

For regret appraisals, the regret domain, intensity, and frequency were measured. The regret domain was measured using the scale of life’s major regret domains by Roese & Summerville (2005) [4], and adapted by Mi-Jeong Joo (2009)[5]. This scale consists of 12 regret domains. Regret intensity and regret frequency measures using the 7-point scales of Mi-Yeong Han et al. (2010)[6]. These scales range from 1–7 points, with higher scores representing higher regret intensity or frequency.

Coping styles of regret

Regret coping styles were measured using the coping styles scale for regret experiences in old age, developed by Kyung Yoo (2010)[7], based on a previous study by Wrosch et al. (2003)[8]. The scale is composed of a total of 12 questions, 4 questions each for the sub-factors of rumination on regret, goal separation, and pursuit of alternative goals. This instrument uses a 5-point Likert scale, with higher scores signifying positive regret coping styles. In this study, Cronbach’s α coefficient was .69 overall, .80 for rumination on regret, .81 for goal separation, and .66 for establishment of alternative goals.

Subjective well-being

Life satisfaction was measured using the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) developed by Diener, Emmons, Larsen, and Griffin(1985)[9]. This instrument consists of 5 questions each measured on a 7-point Likert scale, with total scores in the range of 5–35 points, and higher scores indicating higher life satisfaction. Cronbach’s α coefficient in the present study was .90.

Psychological well-being was measured using the Intensity and Time Affect Scale (ITAS) of Diener, Smith, and Fujita(1995)[10]. This instrument consists of a total of 24 questions measured on a 7-point Likert scale. The range of possible scores is 24–158 points, with higher scores indicating more positive psychological well-being. The Cronbach’s α coefficient in this study was .92.

2.4 Data Analysis

Data analysis was performed using SPSS/WIN 21.0, and descriptive statistics, such as frequency, means, and standard deviation, were used to analyze general characteristics, regret appraisals, and the main variables in the present study. T-tests and ANOVAs were used to test the differences between general characteristics, regret appraisals, and the main variables, while Pearson’s correlation coefficients were used to analyze correlations between the main variables. A hierarchical regression analysis
was used to analyze the impact of general characteristics, regret appraisals, and coping styles of regret on subjective well-being.

### 3 Result

The explanatory power of each factor affecting subjective well-being was analyzed through a hierarchical regression analysis. In Model 1, a monthly income of ≥6 million KRW explained 7.9% of variation in life satisfaction ($F=8.654$, $P<.001$); in Model 2 monthly income <2 million KRW, monthly income ≥6 million KRW, and regret intensity ≥5 explained 10% of variation in life satisfaction ($F=7.917$, $P<.001$); in Model 3 monthly income <2 million KRW, monthly income ≥6 million KRW, regret intensity ≥5, and pursuit of alternative goals explained 15% of variation in life satisfaction ($F=8.932$, $P<.001$). These results were statistically significant. The variable that best explained life satisfaction was regret intensity ($\beta=.954$, $p<.05$) (Table 1).

Table 1. Factors influencing life satisfaction in middle aged women (N=180)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variable</th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th>Model 2</th>
<th>Model 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B    $\beta$</td>
<td>$t$</td>
<td>B    $\beta$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly Income (&lt;2 million KRW)</td>
<td>-2.212</td>
<td>-.127</td>
<td>-1.733</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regret Intensity (≥5)</td>
<td>-2.366</td>
<td>-.175</td>
<td>-2.441*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pursuit of Alternative Goals</td>
<td>.676</td>
<td>.207</td>
<td>3.267*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>17.779</td>
<td>31.349***</td>
<td>19.408</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| $R^2$                        | .089 | .119 | .170 |
| $R^2$ adj                     | .079 | .104 | .151 |
| $F$                          | 8.654*** | 7.917*** | 8.932*** |

In order to investigate the factors that impact psychological well-being, In Model 1, positive perceived health (“healthy) explained 7.8% of variation in affective well-being ($F=6.071$, $P<.001$); in Model 2 positive perceived health and regret frequency ≥4 explained 11% of variation in psychological well-being ($F=5.189$, $P<.001$), and in Model 3 positive subjective health, rumination on regrets, goal separation, and pursuit of alternative goals explained 15% of variation in affective well-being ($F=12.243$, $P<.001$). These results were statistically significant. The variable that best explained affective well-being was rumination on regrets, a sub-factor of regret coping styles ($\beta=.410$, $p<.001$). These results were statistically significant. (Table 2).
### 4 Conclusions

This study confirmed that regret appraisals and coping styles of regret affect subjective well-being in middle aged women. As one aspect of subjective well-being, life satisfaction increased with higher monthly income, lower regret intensity, and better pursuit of alternative goals. Meanwhile the other aspect of subjective well-being, psychological well-being was found to increase with better perceived health, more rumination on regrets, better goal separation, and better pursuit of alternative goals.

### References


