Results: Hypothesis 1

All regrets were classified according to whether the decisions made were for action or inaction. Two separate correlation analyses were then conducted to test whether level of justification and strength of justification would be differentially related to orientation as a consequence of decision type. The first correlation analysis involved action decisions and the second involved inaction decisions.

The first hypothesis was partially supported in that the levels and strength of justification were significantly higher for rational decision makers than for spontaneous decision makers. This indicates that spontaneous decision-makers may not rely on justification of their decisions to the extent that rational decision-makers do.

Conclusion

In line with the DAM’s predictions, we found that inaction-oriented decision-makers showed greater levels of justification for their inaction decisions, but not their action decisions. This indicates that, at least for inaction-oriented decision-makers, decisions which incur the greatest level of justification are those consistent with our orientation. However, the present study only partially supported the hypothesis as no such pattern existed for spontaneous decision-makers. The failure to find any such pattern for spontaneous decision-makers may indicate that a desire for decision consistency is not evident for spontaneous individuals.

We also found that rational decision-makers felt greater hot emotions for action decisions than inaction decisions. However, there were no other differences in negative affect between decision types for either rational or spontaneous decision-makers. This may indicate decision-orientation has little bearing on negative affect. It may also be the case that hot emotions are associated with regrettable decisions (i.e., anger, guilt or embarrassment) as they reflect an orientation mismatch. Regret intensity and wistful and despair emotions may reflect more global concerns about the negative outcome and its impact rather than the pathway to regret.
The decision appraisal model of regret

Towers, AJ

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