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**The Relationship of Regret and
the Negative Impact of Life Events on
Life Satisfaction**

**A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of
the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Psychology
at Massey University**

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Dedicated

to the memory of my late Father

Stheyeti Ramaswami Purushottam Naidu

and to my Mother

Jayaletchimy Singaravelu Govindasamy Naidu (Sarah)

ABSTRACT

The present study provided a comparative, descriptive account, across age and gender, of the content and incidence of regret along ten domains; namely, career, finance, leisure, health, family relationships, relationships with friends, intimate relationships, sexual relations, education, and spiritual or religious life. The relationships between regret and life satisfaction, negative impact of life events and life satisfaction, and regret and negative impact of life events were also investigated. The role of negative impact of life events as a mediator and moderator of the relationship between regret and life satisfaction was also explored. The questionnaire comprised an 11-item life satisfaction scale, a modified 46-item Life Experiences Survey, a specifically developed 83-item regret scale and a 20-item regret scale validity check. One hundred and sixty-one adults, comprising 71 males and 90 females, across an age range of 22 to 82 years, completed the questionnaire. Results showed that most respondents experienced some form of regret and these tended to cluster around Family Relationships, Health and Spiritual or Religious Life. Age and gender differences were found mainly at the domain level, with female and older adults reporting regret in more domains than males and younger adults. Overall levels of life satisfaction were clustered along a narrow band ranging from equally satisfied and dissatisfied, to pleased. The level of negative impact of life events showed no age or gender differences. Individuals experiencing greater regret and negative impact of life events, also reported lower life satisfaction. Individuals who reported greater negative impact of life events also reported experiencing higher levels of regret. Negative impact of life events was found to both moderate and partially mediate the relationship between regret and life satisfaction. The study also identified age and gender to be salient to regret research, especially at the domain level. It is suggested that future research focuses its efforts at the domain level, so that the relational complexities that exist

between regret and life satisfaction that have hitherto remained hidden in research conducted at a global level can be unmasked.

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