

# The rational choice theory

Law



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The paper "The Rational Choice Theory" is an outstanding example of a law essay.

The theory bases that criminals are enticed to crime because of the benefits they get from the crime. The urge to commit a crime is dependent on the fact that the benefits of the crime are greater than the benefits of not committing the crime. This reasoning drives the offenders to take the risk of being apprehended by the law and indulge in crime to reap its benefits (Harrower, 2001).

Several studies have argued that shoplifters use this theory to drive them to grab merchandise from malls, shops and convenient stores without pay. The shoplifters are driven by the benefits of getting free goods from their crimes. The shoplifters, however rudimentary their descriptions seem, weighs the risk of being apprehended for the benefits of the goods.

During this decision-making process, the shoplifters consider several factors. They consider time constraints as there is usually a limited time span to pull off shoplifting without being caught. These decision process is often hurried and dependant on the shoplifter's cognitive ability. The rational choice perspectives by the shoplifter include factors such as incentive, anticipated payoff, risks involved and their skills. All these factors combine to make the shoplifting opportunities differentially attractive to the criminals.

Most shoplifting crimes occur in the night and secluded areas of the malls. These are low-risk times and places respectively for the criminals to take away the goods. This shows that the criminals have weighed the benefits and costs. They choose to steal the goods at low-risk places and time to reap the benefits of their endeavours. Studies have also suggested that several shoplifting crimes have been committed by mall employees who are enticed

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by the comfort that they are at a lower risk of being caught while the benefits of the theft are high.

This theory clearly explains some of the tendencies of most criminals. The urge to commit the crime is driven by the benefits of the crime and controlled by the fear of getting apprehended and charged.