

Teenage theft – causes and reasons essay sample



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1) Introduction

1. 1) Theft – Crime in Focus

Theft is the unlawful taking of belongings of others, it comprises of burglary, shoplifting, housebreak and break-ins. It can include taking a pen from a friend without informing or even stealing ideas and words of someone and claiming as it yours. Theft is an indecent activity which shows how unethical the person is, but unfortunately its presence has been there in our society for along time. Stealing is an evil which usually leads to other evils such as drinking, drugs etc and can take the entire personality of a person to a negative route.

Even the younger generations of our society are occupied in stealing, which signifies a terrifying future for our state in the coming years. There are loads of news in the newspapers and television regarding teenagers being engaged in theft which shows how widespread this trend has become in our society.

The most common way that teenagers steal is through shoplifting which is carrying, hiding or taking goods from a stop with the objective of not paying for the products. It is as easy as this, you like a product, you want it, but you do not want to pay for it, so you simply take it. This leads you to commit an illegal act for which you can be taken under custody.

It has become prevalent for teenagers to shoplift quite often, they comprehend that there is a risk involved in it but they still want to “ play the game”.

Mainly teen theft is a crisis revolving around influence, drugs, and attention. There are many reasons accountable for teenagers indulging in this crime which are discussed ahead

2.) Review of Research

2. 1) Reasons Highlighted

Some teenagers steal as they feel that they will conform to a group if they behave in such a manner. In order to be liked by people and impress them they take part in such activities. This behavior is known as peer pressure it is a very influential way to lead teenager to other evils such as smoking, drinking, drugs, etc too. To be considered cool in front of friends teenagers usually steal. A person should stick to what his stance instead of changing his moral value in order to be accepted by others. (Hutchinson, 2006)

Although it is more frequent in children to lack self control and steal things which they desire for but it is also a source of theft in teenagers. Along with lacking self control there is also a want to have the similar things as other friends. When teenagers cannot find the money for fashionable designer clothes or expensive trendy jewelry as their friends, they try to acquire it through illegal channels.

Parents should keep a track of the belongings their children possess and see to it if they notice curious things about their children's possession. If so they should take measures to find out how their children got hold of those possessions is a necessity.

Some teenagers steal when they are neglected at home or they are considered less important as compared to their siblings. They steal to get hold of the lost attention from their parents. If parents are supposing that their teenagers are stealing in order to be noticed, parents should give their teens the help they need before they end up having a criminal record. At this stage the teens feel very insecure and unloved, so parents should try to give them a lot of love and affection which will assist the teenagers to quit stealing.

Furthermore, some teens steal as they want some adventure and excitement in their life. They steal just for the sake of fun, most of the time they do not even have interest in the thing they are stealing.

Mostly friends help each other in these circumstances by looking after each other, so their friends do not get caught in the process. Even if you assist your friends in the process of stealing you can be put on trial for that. Once again it is the duty of the parents to keep an eye on their children that does not mean pestering them all time, but keeping a track of their friends and activities.

Stressful circumstances can also direct teenagers to steal; these reasons can be owing to troubles they are having with friends and family. When teenagers are stressed out, confused, disturbed and miserable they steal to be relaxed mentally. But the point is that problems will not be solved through stealing in fact they can increase due to them.

It is a proven fact that 55% of the teenagers who shoplift at such a young age usually continue it in their adult hood as well. Hence we need to guide

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these deviated teenagers early on through counseling from parents, teachers and counselors. (Brown , 2008)

Stealing can significantly boost teenagers self esteem, especially if they are insecure. It gives them an opportunity to show that they can also be as bad as their friends. This actually gives them a positive feeling about themselves but takes them on the wrong path. Parents are usually role models for their children and if they bring not permitted material from their offices or boast about how they got free stuff because of a mistake made by the supermarket clerk. Children and teenagers adapt to these actions and do not consider stealing as a crime.

Parents should carry out ethical behavior if they want their children to be on the right track. It will be impossible to stop teenagers from these unethical modes of conduct if parents are acting as a negative role model.

Sometimes teenage boys steal since they want to impress girls; they believe theft will displays a cool act. This will lead to attain likeliness amongst females.

2. 2) Literature Review

There has been a lot of information published on reasons owing for teenagers stealing in the article “ Shoplifting” published by the National Crime Prevention Control of U. S. it talks about how teen shoplifting can problems for teenagers, their effect on the community, the reasons why they shop lift, what will be the end be like for teenage shoplifters.

Firstly it discusses what impact teenage shop lifting has on the perception of the shopkeeper of the teenagers. They are looked upon with suspicion by the shopkeepers and some also limit the number of teenagers that can enter a particular store at a time. Since a huge number of teens participate in shoplifting shopkeepers have a negative impression about them.

Moreover teenagers do not get jobs easily due the reasons discussed above; also even if a teenager does not have the intention of stealing they are looked upon with doubt because of the perception of the shopkeeper that most teenagers indulge these malpractices.

Thirty percent of the shops close down because of teenagers shoplifting and young employees stealing goods. These lead to a significant amount of losses for the owners, due to these reasons people have to travel further to get goods and services. Additionally there has been an increase in the prices of commodities by the shop owners because they have to pay more for security cameras and guards to safeguard their goods and services.

Furthermore fewer jobs will be available for the teenagers in the future, as the shopkeepers will not be able to meet the expense of hiring a lot of employees, as their stores will not make enough money for the compensation of the employees.

About 24% of the shoplifters are teenagers between the age of 13 and 17 years. Mostly teens are involved are theft rather than the professionals as they have the perception that they wont get caught and be sent to jail. The study in this article also shows that most of the teenagers steal from the places they shop at most often. (Boesky, 2007)

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Desperate people who steal for their basic necessities and professional thieves also make up a part of shoplifters but they are a small population, the majority shoplifters are the teens. Usually the teenagers with habits such as drugs, alcohol and smoking lead them to continue stealing so they can afford the expenses of these ways of life.

Many teenagers shoplift as they have an opinion that it's a big shop and taking few things will not affect them rather they will just put them in their business expense. While many teenagers do not want to be called a "chicken" by their friends the basic reason behind it is fun and excitement.

The shopkeepers usually catch the shoplifters and sent them to the police, if they have committed this offence for the first time they may be released. The shoplifting done by teenagers can be passed on to the juvenile office, and then the juvenile court decides the punishment.

Interviews are conducted from shoplifter's parents, neighbors and teachers since they have to write a report on the crime. Generally juvenile police records are confidential but such information sometimes does get leaked out and affects the person in future.

" Teen Finance - Do as I Do" by Chris Rudolph, CPA is also a very good article which highlights the reason why teenagers steal. It puts light on the fact that " parents want their children to do what they want them to do rather than what they do for them self." They show that it is ok for them to be happy when their bank account gets credited with extra money.

Teenagers follow the footsteps of their parents and if parents are not following the law and think they are superior it. Children will obviously be more likely to be a part of this misconduct.

Parents can prevent teenagers from stealing for sometime till when they are living with there parents but when they move out they are more likely to steal in the future. It is the parent's attitude which has to be changed rather than the teenagers as " actions speak louder than words" which will automatically lead to a positive behavior amongst the teenagers (Rudolph,)

In the article " Shoplift and pay a huge price" by Colleen Dugan it emphasizes on the outcomes of shoplifting. It tells that teenagers shoplift the most and they have the least fear against it but it also tells that the outcomes of stealing can be really dreadful. Moreover stores make losses of about \$50 billion each year due to shoplifting. That is why the prices of clothing and accessories are increasing.

Shoplifting doesn't seem like such a difficult job but nowadays the security level in malls and supermarkets is so high that there are a lot of chances of getting caught. Cameras are placed in unimaginable hidden areas where they can trace the shoplifters and catch them. (Dugan,)

In " Why Do Shoplifters Steal...And Why Do So Many Continue To Steal Even After Getting Caught?" by Peter Berlin the author puts light on ways how shoplifting is attributed to different people sum people steal to " substitute their losses" which can be owing to a divorce, a death of a loved one or loss of investments. It can also be because of trying to get relief from depression, monotony and confusions.

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It has also been found that 57% of the people get caught in their first attempt to shoplift. Still end up being habitual to it as shoplifting is highly addictive. (Berlin,)

“ Shoplifting - Girls Who Steal” from the teen magazine Seventeen published in 1992 presents explanation that girls feel more brave when they shoplift with their friends as they do not feel the sense of loneliness of stealing alone. Besides that shoplifting does not seem like such a ‘ big’ crime when others are doing it too and hence it helps reduce the guilt factor amongst the girl teens. The article also presents a conclusion, that making people shameful about the deed they have committed will not stop them from repeating the crime, on the other hand making them realize that what they are doing is wrong and immoral will help them discontinue engaging in the crime.

“ Caught! An In-Depth Look into the World of Shoplifting and Its Consequences.” By Verde Magazine , this editorial analyzes how the conditions of getting away from shoplifting have become very harsh due to the increased awareness and alertness amongst the shopkeepers. The shops are filled with concealed security cameras and other devices that highly enhance the protection of their shops. That forces the shoplifters to refrain from stealing as the probability of getting caught has amplified a great deal. (Su,)

“ We All Pay the Costs — Stop the Shoplifters” by Sharon Stevens and Betty Feather is an article which put light on the price the society has to pay due to shoplifting. This article gives us facts that for a family of four people shoplifting increases their annual expenditure by \$300 a year.

It also discusses Kleptomaniacs which is the physiological disorder that motivates a person to steal, in this condition the person steals for no particular reason. But they constitute a minute amount of the total population of people who shoplift, the majority of the people who shoplift are in their adolescence stage. (Feather, Stevens,)

3. 0) Conclusion

In short shoplifting for millions of our people is simply a way of dealing with tense conditions in life. Just like some people take up alcohol, smoking, drugs etc others get addicted to smoking. It is essential that these teenagers who have issues related to committing theft should be given proper consultation by family members, school teachers and student counselors.

Stealing doesn't depend on reasons such as being rich or poor, being literate or illiterate, being superior or awful. Teenagers can in any time in life, commit this crime for no such logical reason. The important thing is that parents and teachers have to give these troubled teenagers love and affection, listen to them and try to understand them. So they can be safe from this misconduct.

Parents should give their child psychological supports to deal with their undesirable habit, instead of making the teenager feel like he is loathed amongst the family. Conversely they should be educated that such behavior is intolerable in the family.

Teenagers should have the guts to "say no" to their friends when they think that the action they are taking is morally incorrect. They should learn to

take their own stand about their ethical and religious values steadfastly stick to them.

Another point is that being a teenager, you cannot escape from punishments. If you have committed a crime you will be treated accordingly. The point is do not indulge in these negative acts and secure your future.

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