

How shoppers see the world: shopping within the area of consumer behaviour

[Business](#), [Marketing](#)



1. 0 Introduction

The aim for this study is to carry out a comprehensive literature review on the topic of shoplifting within the area of consumer behaviour. The topic will discuss who engage with shoplifting within the consumer behaviour theories. The area will also discuss how consumer engages with shoplifting and why they shoplift, which will lead to the justification of that particular behaviour. Also within the justifications it will discuss the outcomes of this action, if it is a personal gain or potential profit.

Shoplifting has concluded to be one of the worrying and less understood in the area of consumer behaviour, which can come to surprise that of the literature being rather limited (Cole, 1989). Normally, this area of investigation is concentrated on reflecting the potential budget and benefits that occur within shoplifting, which Johnson, (1991) stated in the three elements of young shoplifting manners that consist of experiential, financial and societal. However, Belson (1975) argues that shoplifting can easily be examined within the area of observed motivation grounded by the area of perceived eagerness. Klemke (1982) agrees stating that motivation is usually what triggers an individual to behave in a certain way. Social influences for motivation within shoplifting were seemed to be unnoticed (Moore, 1983).

2. 0 How shoplifters see the world

A significant difference was recognized within the profiles of shoplifter and non-shoplifters by Beck and McIntyre (1997) stating that the evaluation data from Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI) was provided information about three types of categorized fields. The three branded

categorise areas contains of one time shoplifters, lingering shoplifters or never shoplifted. While the self-report data from MMPI was carefully analysed it discovered that the high rate of shoplifting group was suggestively higher within the psychopathic deviancy scale, which reflects on the psychological level of the individual's behaviour. It displayed that shoplifters had two levels up for rebelliousness than individuals that do not shoplifters, which is not a high difference (Skinner, 1957).

However, within the lingering shoplifters it has shown a large difference within the scale of psychological aspect. Both males and females was analysed as a male positioning, which discovered that the collective profile for this group was measured to be reflective of psychological behaviour (Kraut, 1976). Females that have been measured to be depressed and sex role interested have reached a high level in the scale of psychological aspect (Ferster and Skinner, 1957). The interpretation that was obtained from this measurement is that even though these females are very comparable with chronic shoplifters concerning masculine positioned and anti-establishment attitude their somatic fears and their current depression categorise them as individual that would turn their emotions within themselves rather than against others. Therefore, they are less likely to use these emotions as hostility towards others (Ray, 1987).

Males that were measured to be paranoiac and sex role concerned have also reached a high level within the scale of psychological aspect (Mills, 2000). Within the male's area the interpretation that was obtained enclosed that the individuals tend to be immature, hostile individual and interpersonal

sensitive and female interested. These males have shown to have strong anti-social approach as well. However this occurs due to their passivity, they are most likely to not recurrence the shoplifting performance due to the fears that occurs (McShane and Noonan, 1993). Moore (1983) reflected within these measurements by observing 80 full-time university students that was convicted for shoplifting and discovered that there was no substantial difference between their characters. However, some within the research disavow to shoplifting. The shoplifter's illegal act was considered to be recognized as mental and emotional issues.

Theobservationalalso showed that the second largest attribute of motivation was of the deviance personality (Rachlin, 1991). These types of individuals have the personality of rebellious and uncharacteristic towards public norms and social perspective which leads to no expression of guilt for committing shoplifting offense and was also of range when they eventually become caught. However, Ray et. al (1983) argues that from his research it was discovered that the individuals contained of large amount of confusion and depression which leads to fear. These types of individuals that shoplift are usually experiencing socialstress, economic pressure and depression. They are also expected to place a high worth of material belongings and also have a negative outlook towards the law (Fletcher, 2000). These numerous combinations of motivational factors can produce a complete image of the shoplifting behaviour (Klemke, 1992). The complex factors that occur within motivational and characteristics of shoplifting appear to be progressively treasured within the researchers.

3.0 Why do individuals shoplifting

Individuals can have many different reasons for shoplifting. It all can measure to the situation the individual is in. According to Ajzen (1991) the theory of planned behaviour gives the purpose to why individuals behave in a certain way. The three stages to the theory of planned behaviour is attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioural. The attitude that an individual has towards certain behaviour such as shoplifting determines the behaviour the individuals decide to take and the outcome that occurs with the action (East, 1997). The subject norm describes to degree that other individuals find that action acceptable or unacceptable. The last stage of the theory is the perceived behavioural control that measured the difficulties of accomplishing the behaviour. These theoretical factors combined conclude the influence behaviour and how they interact with each other (Foxall and Goldsmith, 1994).

The attitude is evaluated by the belief the individual has toward the action, such as if it is a positive or a negative act. In this area shoplifting is seen as a negative act due to being a illegal manner. Herring (2008) stated that shoplifting is a criminal offence due to the individual having the behaviour of obtaining an item that is in a financial range. This behaviour has not been seen as a large offence if the shoplifting only happened once, but if it is a regular occurrence it can be seen as a deeper issue (Fletcher, 2000).

However, even though individual's area aware of this negativity, they still perform this act due to the circumstances they are in or the psychological behaviour the individual has. Though the attitude is seen as a negative

behaviour, individual can become influenced to perform by the subject norm (Albarracin, et. al, 2005).

The subjective norm is the pressure the individual is given in order to shoplift. The individual can experience different types of pressure, such as social pressure, economical needs etc. Ajzen (2002) stated that individual's strongest influence tends to be from group influences. However, Pelphrey and Carter (2008) argue that financial issues can be the main barrier of the influences. But it all comes down to the specific situation the individual is in. Every individual have their own motivation for pursuing the behaviour of shoplifting, it can be measured in different way, which will be expanded further (Wicker, 1969). However, once the influence have been effective and the action is about to be performed, it can be measured on how difficult the action could be, which is the perceived behavioural control.

The difficulties that can occur within perceived behavioural control can be studies in two factors which are moral norm, estimating the effect of individual morality on shoplifting behaviour (Parmelee and Perkins, 2010). The moral norm of shoplifting is that it is a negative behaviour each means that the difficulties that might occur is security (Albarracin, et. al, 2005). Every illegal manner has their way of uncovering which in this case it is used securities such as cameras and security guards. Estimating the effectiveness of individual morality in shoplifting behaviour depend on what level the person is in. For instance, if it is one time occurrence more fear might prevent the person from shoplifting. However, if it is a regular occurrence the

individual might be more persuasive unless they were discovered by others (Tonglet, 2002).

4.0 Classification of shoplifting

Shoplifting can be divided in two general categories, which are amateur that includes the satisfaction of stealing and psychological need. Amateur contains of teenagers, kleptomaniacs, housewives, alcoholic, vagrants and drug addicts (Lewison and DeLozier, 1982). The second category which is the emotional need is usually specialised shoplifters who shoplift has a career. However, once given the opportunity or reason, individuals from most customer group will shoplift (Outcalt, 1990). Guffey et. al (1979) stated that in every social class and demographical groups shoplifting can always occur.

A research by National institute of justice (1991) stated that 80 per cent of the individuals that shoplift are usually not caught, which concludes that any individual can be a shoplifter and out of all the incidences of shoplifting one in five shoplifters are professionals (Griffin, 1989). However, even though a large amount of individuals do not get arrested, one-half of those that do become arrested are usually teenagers (Thornton, 1992). It also has shown that some shoplifters tend to shoplift in group, such as teenagers and professional, which tend to use the tactic of shoplifting in groups to cover items (Verrill, 1984).

A study that was considered by Cameron (1964) was the two elements of profitable shoplifters, which are professionals and kleptomaniacs.

Professionals are the individuals that would steal to sell and have a distinct

contact with subcultures. These types of individual carry tools and instruments on them to assist with the theft. This group would possibly struggle arrest if they would get confronted and will attempt to flee the store. If caught and detained, they will remain cool and calm, showing no remorse or emotion (Outcalt, 1990).

Kleptomaniacs are rather different from professionals. They are chronic shoplifter but also respectable inhabitants, which means they would not sell the stolen item. Griffin (1989) argues that there is a different group of shoplifters, which is rational and non-rational. Rational is the individual that shoplift with a purpose and non-rational are individuals with no motivation by need or desire (Solomon. M et. al, 2010). Individuals that classifies as kleptomaniacs are individuals that are impulsive and often careless. They would take items that they don't need and cannot use, for instance stealing shoes that don't fit. If these individuals would get caught, numerous of them would probably admit they are kleptomaniacs and do not feel much remorse or shame (Verrill, 1984).

4. 1 Demographical Perspective

In the area of shoplifting, the demographics that occur are the gender, age and race of the individuals. The different age groups that shoplift can vary due to having different needs. Callen and Ownbey (2003) stated that individuals under the age of 20 tend to be the largest rate that shoplift due to the excitement that they feel when shoplifting. However, Wilkes (1978) argues that the individuals that are absent minded are a quite large rate of

shoplifter as well. The absent minded are individuals that are in a hurry such as elderly individuals.

These type of individuals are sometime on medications or probably would have memory or cognitive issues (Wilkes, 1978). However, East (1997) stated that male and females reasons for shoplifting can be different due to the different ways of thinking. Klemke (1992) argues that females are more influenced to shoplift due to having the psychological influences that motivates to shoplift. For instance, when a female decides to shoplift it is psychological seen to be a very bizarre behaviour. But, when a male shoplift it is seen to be a rebellious act to perform, in this way shoplifting for males and females perceived in different ways.

But not only males and females that can be perceived in different ways, an individual's ethnicity can make a different to individuals. As Oliphant and Oliphant (2001) stated individuals that are so called "black" ethnic tend to be perceived as the largest amount of shoplifters. However it has shown that it is quite equal. However, it has shown that "white" and "black" ethnicities shoplift for different reason. For instance "black" ethnic tend to shoplift for items that is mostly needed in a daily bases and are quite inexpensive, while "white" ethnic tend to shoplift for group pressure or just for the thrill (Callen and Ownbey, 2003).

4. 2 The Social Influences toward Shoplifting

Social influences can occur in every area of an individual's life. Within shoplifting it tends to occur within teenagers. The young individuals can become easily influenced due to the need of belonging somewhere. The

theory used to measure social influences is the social cognitive theory, which is the subgroup to the cognitive theory (Solomon. M, 2010).

This theory mainly concentrates on the way individuals learn to portray the behaviour of other individuals (Rachlin, 1991). It can be seen in area such as peer pressure which is commonly occurred within shoplifting. The theory has four steps which are observing individuals, learning the observation, follow the behaviour and learn how to follow the behaviour Thornton, J. (1992).

An individual goes through these stages in order to feel needed. For instance, there are individuals that seemed to become pressured into shoplifting due to wanting to join a certain popular group. Shulman. T. D (2006) stated that these shoplifters would repeatedly steal in groups, which would lead to a criminal offence. However, while the individual is going through these stages, they seem to not be aware of the seriousness of a crime until the crime as already been committed. This occurs due to the person only being concerned about becoming a part of a group (Outcalt, 1990).

4. 3 The Social classes of shoplifting

In the shoplifting area there are two levels of social classes, which are low-class and upper-class. According to some researcher somewhat few studies has shown that socioeconomic statues can have an impact in shoplifting behaviour. For research it was discovered that within this field the individuals that do become caught from shoplifting are not characteristic of all shoplifters (Ray and Birar, 1988). The individuals that is most likely to

shoplift within this zone of individuals that are unemployed. Within the research of Parmelee and Perkins (2010), males within this area were unwilling to inform details about their employment to the researcher due to having the anxiety of risking their careers. However, it was discovered that the relationship between the shoplifters and social class is a very strong bond.

Within the low class it was shown that the main shoplifters are youths compared to the upper class. Observing a study of the youth within shoplifting discovered that the youngsters that shoplift have change behaviour throughout the years due to become more modern within the association between socioeconomics and shoplifters have developed to a more advanced level (Gold, 1970). However, the relationship between them two has become stronger for the females and weaker for the males due to being able to be controlled by the individual's lust of the opposite sex (Hindelang et. al, 1981).

The chronic shoplifters of low class are usually the individuals who shoplift due of economic need. They are the type of individual that would shoplift due to being financially restricted (Tonglet, 2002). Normally, they will steal items that the individual is in need of, such as food, diapers, toiletries, or children's clothing. Frequently, these individuals' manners of appearance and hygiene may be poor. If caught, they would possibly show remorse, but state their frustration with their lack of money, and may express hostility against the " System" that keeps them impoverished (Shulman. T. D, 2006). The motivation that occurs due to economic improvement is the main reason

to why individuals shoplift. Some of the characters go through discomfort and anger from experiencing the poverty and unfairness from society (Foxall and Goldsmith, 1994).

4.5 The Culture effect of shoplifting

Culture classifies areas of behaviour into discontinuous units of value in society. Areas that get measured within the behaviour of shoplifting are norm, mores, conventions and custom (Solomon. M, 2010). Norms measure the acceptable and unacceptable of the individual's behaviour, which get measured by the mores. Mores is the moral standards of the behaviour (Kandel et. al, 1986). Customs tend to be around the behaviour that last over time. However, in unacceptable behaviours such as shoplifting, it can tend to become within a group. Conventions include the ties that are conducted in the everyday life, which in this area are individuals that shoplift as a living (Huizinga et. al, 1989). The largest are of the subculture within shoplifting is substance abuse.

Substance abuse is an identified subculture that reflects well on the mixture of poor coping abilities with the attitude towards an antisocial behaviour, which is the usual of an individual involvement within the street-level drug scene (Van Kammen and Loeber, 1994). According to Shulman. T. D (2006) this group emotionally has a lot of suppressed anger and also establish signs of other obsessive habits, such as over eating, shopping, drug use, or gambling.

These forms of individuals prefer give to others and do not take care of themselves. Naturally, they would possibly steal items that are inexpensive,

and tend to give the stolen item to others as gifts. If caught, they will show guilt, shame, or remorse (Dembo et. al, 1994). Often, they will breakdown and cry when caught and confronted. Numerous of researches have described shoplifting as a career of many obsessive habits in a low income area (Shulman. T. D, 2006).

5. 0 Conclusion

In conclusion, what have been gathered from this theoretical framework is that individuals that shoplift depend on the person level in the psychological scale, such as the motivation that is occurred within the situation that the individual is in. This would give an idea on how an individual personality is, depending on what level in the scale they are in. The motivation that is developed creates the behaviour act for the individual. A planned for behaviour for shoplifting goes through the process of thinking if the act is a negative fact, what will happen if this act get fulfilled and lastly how it is perceived.

Motivation factors become influenced by different classification within shoplifting such as the demographical influences, which entail the different gender, ethnicity and age. These three elements can make a difference on how an individual is perceived in the society. Social influences can make an influence on individuals by peer pressure which is commonly used around teenagers.

However, social class can motivate an individual as well, but this can differ depending on the low and upper classes. Low class tend to shoplift item an

individual is in need of in a daily bases. The individuals that become effective of cultureenvironmentcan occur within substance abuse.

6. 0 References

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