

Shoplifting and its effect to the society



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In the United States, retail theft had been one of the main concerns that the society had seen. Through the news papers and entertainment shows, various celebrities are reported to have been capable of shoplifting. Such crime had been very disturbing to watch in television and to read in news paper. It is known that Hollywood houses the most gorgeous and talented actors and actresses. Given that they have the most glamorous job in the world; celebrities are also privileged to have huge amounts of salaries every time they do any movie, commercial, print ad or the likes.

In addition celebrities, most especially the popular ones are given gifts just for the reason of “ nothing. ” Which such, celebrities could have all the material things that they could have. Therefore, celebrities do not need to shoplift any materials in department stores or other places because they get stuffs for free. In many incidents, Winona Ryder is one of the many celebrities who were caught shoplifting in different stores in Saks Fifth Avenue. Ryder was found to have stolen \$5, 560 worth of merchandise: “... Marc Jacobs Sweater worth \$760.

Frederic Fekkai Hair adornments worth \$600 and several pairs of socks, including a cashmere pair from Donna Karan worth \$80, inside two shopping bags and a garment bag” (Lyman). Ryder’s case became internationally popular due to the scandal that she was in. It was somehow questionable why Ryder had done such thing. However, through the courts trials and investigation, Ryder was found guilty and was issued to be convicted of two counts of shoplifting (Lyman). With the situation of Ryder, a normal individual might question: what is the reason for her to do such thing? Was she already poor? Was she on drugs?

Does Winona have a psychological disorder? Such questions arise when such issues are being discussed. However in order to find out, the reason behind shoplifting causes must be first given attention. In the written work of Joan Sweeny she stated that “ shoplifting do not conform to people’s typical notions of what criminals are supposed to be like. (ctd. in Turner and Cash 62). Shoplifters are opposed to other types of criminals, are neither lower class nor uneducated (Sweeney 62). ” In addition, “ Shoplifters do no exhibit mental illness (ctd. in Moore) and they are not “ kleptomanias” (Sweeney 62).

Most of the time, it was said that teenagers are often the group of people who are prone to commit shoplifting. In addition, it was also studied that the middle class individuals are known to be the ones to be involved such crimes. Through the studies made by Sweeney, it is stated that the people who are guilty of shoplifting is motivated by the factor of money. Other individuals who shoplift stated that they did such thing due to the thrill of the act and peer pressure. While others practice this kind of behavior due to immorality, in fact one of the subjects stated that “ I wanted something and I didn’t want to pay for it. (Sweeney 64).

Based upon this study, it is observable that shoplifters have similar reasons for committing this untoward action. A study regarding shoplifting and its relation with different variances such as: gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status (SES) as well as the subject’s perceptions of themselves when it comes to their money spending was conducted. The findings of the study show that none of these aforementioned factors could explain shoplifting

variance except for the factor of gender. It is observable in the results that males shoplifted more than females.

Moreover, the attitudes of the subjects with regards to shoplifting were also invaluable but almost all of them agreed that shoplifting is an unacceptable behavior. However, less than half of the subjects perceive that shoplifting could be considered as acceptable under specific circumstances like desperation or need (Sweeney 65). Shoplifting has many forms, it can be considered as petty or grand theft. Nevertheless, the effects of shoplifting have detrimental consequences to everyone. The immediate people who are put in a disadvantageous situation are the business owners, customers, teenagers, and even the whole society at large.

Approximately sixteen billion dollars are lost yearly by the United States businesses because of shoplifting. In relation to this, one out of three businesses fails due to this same practice (" Effects of Shoplifting").

Shoplifting is also harmful to consumers. Increase in prices is observable when stores try to make up for the cost of the goods that was stolen. In this sense, consumers who are not responsible for this untoward act have to carry its burdens. This is exemplified by the fact that an average family spends about three hundred dollars annually in order to fund the cost of stolen goods.

Sometimes, the increase in price discourages consumers to patronize certain businesses, which has a negative effect in the economy (" Effects of Shoplifting"). Since teenagers are usually the culprit of shoplifting, they are more susceptible to the unfavorable effects of it. Discrimination against teen

are often seen in most shops due to the behavior of those who commit shoplifting, others who are innocent also have to suffer its consequences. This kind of situation creates suspicion among store owners with almost all teenagers and in the same manner; teenagers are discouraged to enter such establishments (“ Effects of Shoplifting”).

In conclusion, there are various reasons that motivate an individual to commit shoplifting. The people that are most prone in committing such kind of crime are teenagers because of peer pressure and most especially the thrill or excitement that shoplifting gives to them. However, shoplifting must be immediately addressed due to the detrimental effects that it has. The consequences of shoplifting do not only affect business owners or consumers but it creates problem for the whole society.