

# Research in regard to shoplifting psychology essay



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

In critically reviewing the research in regard to shoplifting done by the security manager, a definition of research will be stated and the following aspects will be analysed and critiqued. Initially, throughout the essay the manager would be complemented for taking the initiative to conduct a research founded on a concern to deal with shoplifting, and the research methodologies used to examine the problem. This would be followed by a critical analysis to identify the strength and weaknesses, beginning with examining the first stage of the investigations which looks at the research problems to determine if the author provided a good argument for the research. The essay will focus on the following, a literature review to determine if the researcher reviewed sufficient information before conducting the research. Methods used during the process of the survey are in compliance with established theories such as qualitative, which include unstructured interviews, observation study, also a comparison between qualitative and quantitative research methods. In addition special attention will be paid to the data collection methods together with the examination of existing information and the ethical violations by the researcher which compromised the validity and reliability of the investigation. The final discussion and interpretation to determine of the finding of the research to determine if the discussion fit with the data collected, taking into consideration if any limitations were encountered which could have influenced the discussion from presenting a logical based result.

Research by definition, according to the (Merriam-Webster online Dictionary) states it is a studious inquiry or examination especially, investigations or experimentations aimed at the discovery and interpretation of facts, revision

of accepted theories or laws in the light of new facts, or practical application of such new or revised theories or laws: The collecting of information about a particular subject.

### Research Problem

All security managers should be complimented for the initiative to conduct a research which would assist in examining and addressing some of the concerns they were faced with in their organization. On the other hand, in the initial stage of any research there are some fundamental stages that need to be followed in order for the research report to be truly noteworthy. The author indicated the objective for his research was to study shoplifting by costumers and focus on a number of other aspects within the store. These included the volume of shoplifting, the influence of the new CCTV equipment on such and why people actually shoplift. When conducting research it is important to identify the following: “ What exactly one wants to study? Why it is worth studying? Does the proposed study contribute to our general understanding of crime or its policy response”? (Maxfield & Babbie, 2008: 111). The researcher should also begin by clearly identifying the problem and providing a good argument for significance and determining its relevance (Rodgers (1997). The manager needs to acknowledge that in order to achieve the objective of any research report, there are guidelines that ought to be meticulously evaluated in conducting such an exercise.

### Literature Review

An acknowledgement of some previous research on shoplifting previously done is noteworthy. However, the manager’s opinion that none for the

<https://assignbuster.com/research-in-regard-to-shoplifting-psychology-essay/>

particular shop was done, and earlier research was not relevant, to the existing research, could seriously put the study at a disadvantage. One of the most important elements in the beginning of a research project is the literature review. According to (Hart 1998 cited in Bell 2008: 99) “ without it, you will not acquire an understanding of your topic, of what has already been done on it, how it has been researched, and what are the key issues”. A literature review proposes to offer an overview of relevant literature published on the topic, taking the four stages into consideration. Problem formulation, which considers the topic being examined and what are the component issues, literature research includes finding materials relevant to the subject being explored, data evaluation to determine which literature makes a significant contribution to understanding the topic, and analysis and interpretation of the findings and conclusion of pertinent literature. (Department of Criminology, 2010). The absence of a literature review from the research denied the author critical information that could have assisted in addressing the concerns of shop lifting at the store and a guide for the project.

## Research Method

As a consequence of the number of things under consideration by the researcher with regard to shoplifting at the store, research methods needed to be developed for the study. These take into account using all the necessary processes to achieve the best outcome (Schutt 2004: 16) “ states a researcher can get a clearer picture of the social reality being studied by viewing it observed his method included the use of quantitative research by making use of official data and questionnaires in addition to qualitative data <https://assignbuster.com/research-in-regard-to-shoplifting-psychology-essay/>

by having interviews, also observation studies. “ Both qualitative and quantitative methods are useful and legitimate. And some research situation and topics require elements of both approaches” (Maxfield & Babbie, 2008: 26). The importance of research methods should not be underestimated, when seeking to find answers or correct a problem of a social reality. Hence research methodologies form an integral part of any research to be conducted, which has the key to observing the same thing from a different viewpoint.

### Qualitative research

The official data used to determine the volume of shoplifting at the shop were computerised records of inventory taken into the shop as compared to goods sold or otherwise accounted for. However, this measure does not accurately determine the reason for high numbers of unaccounted items at the store, for there could be a number of other factors that could have led to such increasing numbers within the four-month period under review, (Maxfield & Babbie. 2008: 306 states “ Store inventory records could be used to estimate losses by customer theft, but this obscures the difference between shoplifting by customers and employee theft”. Qualitative methods used in studying data as part of the investigation is commendable, qualitative research is the form of research that is not concerned or interested in what is true or false or what can be proved or disproved, as well as considering the way people understand things and patterns of behaviour. activities that make up this method of research incorporates , interviews, observations, analysing interactions and conversations including analysing documents,(Department of Criminology, 2010). The assumption that

shoplifting was on the increase in as much as security officers were catching more people at the shop and the past week two persons were processed by police together with more dodgy persons stopping over at the shop was based purely on observations and lacked adequate data whereby they could have appropriately measure the variables.

## Interviews

Unstructured interviews were used to determine the amount of shoplifting at the shop. Nevertheless, in conducting interviews be it structured or unstructured there must be some ethical consideration when using this method. According to Hart and Bond (1995: 198-201 cited in Bell 2008 : 44) “ action research in health and social care, provide examples of different types of code of practice or protocol, which requires researchers to ensure that participants are fully aware of the purpose of the research and understand their rights”. The manager choice of semi-structured interviews must be highly praised, for unstructured interviews are most appropriate when researchers have little knowledge about a topic and when it’s reasonable for them to have a casual conversation with a subject (Maxfield & Babbie, 2008: 288). Interviews with both line managers and other records indicated that there was a great deal of shoplifting taking place at the shop. However, both interviews were not conducted at the proper time to elicit the information necessary in assisting the manager to come to a conclusion as to determine that shop lifting was on the increase at the shop. This factors could have result in bias as there is always dangers in research carried out by individual researchers, particularly those who have strong views about the topic they are researching (Bell, 2008: 166). Structured or unstructured

<https://assignbuster.com/research-in-regard-to-shoplifting-psychology-essay/>

interviews must comply with the general ethics of undertaking such an exercise for many organizations now have ethical guidelines, codes of practice and protocols (Bell, 2008: 57)

### Observational study

Observation study was one of the methods used by the researcher to determine why people shoplift. While this is one of the methods by which investigation could be used to collect data, it is not an easy option, according to (Nisbet 1977: 15 cited in Bell, 2008: 184) careful planning and piloting are essential, and it takes practice to get the most out of this technique.

However, once mastered, it can reveal characteristics of group or individuals, which would have been impossible to discover by another means. An afternoon spent walking around the store watching for people shoplifting was done by the security manager in order to collect data; this can be explained as solo observation. However, there is always a danger of accusation of bias or misinterpretation with this type of observation (Bell, 2008: 185). In conducting observation studies be it structured or unstructured, participant or non-participant; there are certain guide lines to follow in order to achieve exactly what you need to know. To begin with consideration should be given as to what information is needed and what approach should be adopted also pilot your method and invite someone to observe with you and compare notes afterwards to see if you saw the same thing (Bell, 2008: 185). This emphasizes the point that even though the observation study was unstructured the basic principle for this type of investigation was lacking. On the other hand, the researcher must be commended for employing this

method to assist with obtaining the necessary information to establish why people shoplift.

### Quantitative research

Quantitative research methods as compared to qualitative research methods differ primarily in their analytical objectives. While qualitative explores attitudes, and experiences through such methods as interviews, observations, analysing interactions and conversations, including analysing documents,(Department of Criminology, 2010). On the other hand quantitative research generates data through the use of a large scale survey via methods such as questionnaires and structured interviews. This type of research reaches many more people, but the contact with target groups is much quicker than it is in qualitative research (Sanchez, 2006) . The researcher decision to design a questionnaire to address why people shoplift is certainly a step in the right direction towards achieving this objective. However, in exercising this option, and considering the survey is likely to get the information required, a well designed questionnaire must be produced that will be acceptable and should pose no problem at the analysis and interpretation stage(Bell, 2008: 136 ). The author points out that he gave out 30 questionnaires to his friends and also to get their friends to fill it in,(Gill, 2005: 313) stated self administered questionnaire can produce unreliable data as results depend on respondents.(Bell, 2008: 148 ) also states, “ There are distinct advantages in being able to give questionnaires to respondents personally. You can explain the purpose of the study, and in some cases questionnaires can be completed on the spot. You are likely to get better cooperation if you can establish personal contact”. The method employed

<https://assignbuster.com/research-in-regard-to-shoplifting-psychology-essay/>



the researcher in delivering the questionnaire could have compromised the information received on their return.

### Data collection and analysis

When deciding to carry out a research project, in the initial stages one should consider how to collect the evidence you require, additionally what is the best way to acquire the information (Bell, 2008: 115). The use of official data from the store to identify inventory taken into the shop in comparison to inventory accounted for, as well as unaccounted inventory must be applauded. Analysis of data for the periods under review to determine whether if any significant change in shoplifting before and after the introduction of CCTV confirmed that twenty percent of the inventory was not accounted for in both case. Hence it could not be proven there was a decrease in shoplifting. Generalization is a key concern in research design. We rarely have the resources to study the entire population that is of interest to us, so we have to select cases to study that allow our findings to be generalized to the population of interest. None the less since we can never be sure that our findings will hold under all conditions. We should be cautious in generalizing to populations that we do not actually sample. (Schutt, 2004: : 19). Interpretation of results collected from the questionnaire was based on assumptions and not from a proper examination of the data collected. Statements such as, most shoplifting is committed by females for the thrill is not accurate at the point of view two out of ten females answering the questionnaire shoplifted many times, which represents a mere twenty percent.(Bell, 2008: 110) writes research findings can be dangerous if they are used in an undisciplined way stating that the research proves x or y

<https://assignbuster.com/research-in-regard-to-shoplifting-psychology-essay/>

without any corroborating evidence to warrant such an assertion. In analysing data collected one should not make claims, which cannot be justified from the evidence presented.

### Ethical consideration

There is no sign throughout the entire research project where the investigator indicated that an ethic committee existed or permission from any supervisor to carry out the survey was granted. (Bell, 2008: 43) explains, at one time, it was possible to have permission for small pieces of research to be done by the head of a department. However, with era change in most cases the supervisor will be aware of any limitations or legal requirement related to researching and ensure that proper standards are in place during the preparation stages of collecting data. Ethical consideration should not be compromised when doing any research project, for any data collected from any of the research methods without consent from participants, create an inherent danger to the reliability and validity of the information collected, (Department of Criminology, 2010). The semi- structured interviews, with both line managers is an excellent research method, but they were unaware that an interview was been carried out at the time and information collected would be used by the researcher to inform certain conclusions.(Bell, 2008: 156) points out researchers still have a responsibility to explain as fully as possible what the research is about , why you wish to interview them, what will be involved an what you will do with the information obtained. During the observational study the young woman arrested for shoplifting and was offered a reward in exchange for information illustrates the importance for ethical concerns in obtaining information. The reliability of the information

<https://assignbuster.com/research-in-regard-to-shoplifting-psychology-essay/>

received through coercion will dispute the authenticity of the data collected. Whenever a research is conducted on persons the well being of the research participants must be top priority. The question of the research is of secondary importance. This explains that if a choice is made between doing harm to the participants and doing harm to the research, it is the research that is sacrificed (Sanchez, 2006).

### Discussion and Interpretation of findings

Raw data taken from the questionnaires, interviews and other methods used need to be recorded analysed and interpreted. (Bell, 2008: 203). The researcher's discussion and analysis as a consequence of the data collected, asserts that shoplifting is a real problem that is only going to get worse. However, the results presented did not indicate if the results fits with the data collected, any conclusions forwarded need to be accompanied by evidence to support its claim. Taking into consideration data collected during the research as compared to author's statements highlighted this fact. The findings needed to identify limitation of the study and how it affected the quality of the study; challenges encountered in collecting the questionnaire together with the low return ratio would have certainly compromised the fact as to why persons shoplift together with the ages and sex of the offenders. Gathering large amount of information in the hope that something will emerge is not recommended in small investigations also selecting research method which are suitable for the task and which can easily analysed, interpreted and presented (Bell, 2008: 203). Reliability and validity of the information to determine that CCTV is the solution to the problem is not supported by the statistical data presented. Before and after the installation

<https://assignbuster.com/research-in-regard-to-shoplifting-psychology-essay/>

of the CCTV simple arithmetical procedures related to percentage was not used to analyse the numbers so as to determine if shoplifting prior to and following produced significant changes. According to (Bassey, 1981: 85 cited in Bell 2008: 202)

An important criterion for judging the merit of case study is the extent to which the details are sufficient and appropriate for a teacher working in a similar situation to relate his decision making to that described in the case study. The reliability of a case study is more important than its generalizability.

Interpretation of the data collected requires greater analysis before revealing that several things were clear from the research.

In determining if a research project ought to be undertaken it must be resolved if the problem is clearly identified, together with providing a good argument for such an investigation. The objective of any research by its definition is aimed at the discovery and interpretation of facts. However, in striving to achieve such this requires the researcher follow the necessary steps that would assist in accomplishing the goals of the investigations. A literature review of previous researches could be an essential first step in understanding the subject. The utilization of multiple methods to study the research is recommended, which would assist to observe things from a perspective which could challenge or confirm the finding of one method with those of another. Both qualitative and quantitative used were legitimate and helpful in assisting to address the compilation and analysis of information. The differences between both methods were identified, and it was

understood that they varied primarily in their analytical objective, while qualitative methods are not keen in what is true or false or what can be proven or disproved. Quantitative on the other hand, produce data through the use of a large scale survey. The possibility of doing a research project should not prevent researchers from considering ethical issues, and aiming at the principle of one having the informed approval from the appropriate review board where the rights of human participants are protected. In the final discussion and analysis of data collected during the investigation, one has to be conscious of the fact that interpretation of the findings must be logically based before making any declaration.