Shoplifting in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

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Abstract—the research was conducted using the self report of shoplifters who apprehended in the supermarket while stealing. 943 shoplifters in three years were interviewed right after the stealing act and before calling the police. The aim of the study is to know the shoplifting characteristics in Saudi Arabia, including the trait of shoplifters and the situation of the supermarkets where the stealing takes place. The analysis based on the written information about each thief as the documentary research method. Descriptive statistics as well as some inferential statistics were employed. The result shows that there are differences between genders, age groups, occupations, time of the day, days of the week, months, way of stealing, individual or group of thieves and other supermarket situations in the type of items stolen, total price and the count of items. The result and the recommendation will serve as a guide for retailers where, when and who to look at to prevent shoplifting.

Keywords—Shoplifting, stealing, theft, supermarket.

I. INTRODUCTION

THIS study is based on the shoplifters profiles where found in the archive of a chain stores in one supermarket company in Riyadh , Saudi Arabia. Shoplifting, defined as "theft from the selling floor while a store is open for business" [1]. Shoplifting also defined as "the act of taking or stealing something, or otherwise attempting to deprive a retail store of the full value of their merchandise" [2].There are many classifications for shoplifters. The most famous classification is by Cameron, who classifies the shoplifters into two types. They are "Booster and Snitch". Boosters are commercial shoplifters, comprising about 10% of shoplifters, who steal to sell. They have well-defined contacts with criminal subcultures, and they shift from one form of illegal vocation to another. This grouping in essence, is descriptive of professional shoplifter/criminal. Snitch, is described as pilferers, comprising about 90% of shoplifters, who do not resell the items they steal, nor do they share in the values of the professional shoplifter. However, they are also not desperately poor people stealing out of necessity, nor were they observed to have compulsive, neurotic personalities. Although snitches are chronic shoplifters, they are otherwise "respectable" citizens and have little or no contact with criminal groups. Moore extended cameron's typology, utilizing five dimensions to determine patterns of shoplifting.

The first type described by Moore was the "impulse shoplifter," comprising 15.4%. These individuals had limited shoplifting activity. When stopped by security personnel, an intense emotional reaction of embarrassment followed. The second grouping was that of the "occasional shoplifter," comprising 15%. They reported having taken items 3 to 10 times during the previous year. This is because of a

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challenging act or complying with peer pressure. The third type was that of the "episodic shoplifter," comprising 1.7% of Moor's sample. These individuals engaged in periodic episodes of shoplifting. Shoplifting occurred irregularly, and was usually triggered by psychosocial stressors. The fourth and largest category, comprising 56.4% of the sample, was defined as "amateur shoplifters." They made conscious decisions to steal and were aware of its illegality. The remaining 11.7% of the subject were identified as "semi-professional shoplifting." Shoplifting had become a part of their life-style, and they engaged in this activity at least weekly. They employed more skilled techniques in their shoplifting. They were also the only group to engage in some reselling of merchandise. Financial benefit and compensation were considered the primary motivational factors for shoplifting in this group [3].

There are other differing types of shoplifters by Shulman divides shoplifters into seven (7) distinct groups, each with certain identifiable characteristics and expected responses if they are caught. The percentage that follows is Shulman's estimate as to the percentage of the total shoplifting population that the particular group comprises [4].

(1) Addictive-compulsive shoplifters: 75%. This group emotionally has a lot of repressed anger and often exhibits signs of other compulsive addictions, such as overeating, shopping, drug use, or gambling. These people often give to others and don't take care of themselves. Typically, they will steal items that are often inexpensive, and then give them to others as gifts. If caught, they will show guilt, shame, or remorse. Often, they will breakdown and cry when caught and confronted. (2) Professionals, who steal for profit or lifestyle: 5%. Professionals will try to steal high-end, expensive items, often stealing multiple items at one time. Many carry tools and utensils on them to assist with the theft. Most likely, this group will resist arrest if confronted and will attempt to flee the store. If caught and detained, they will remain cool and calm, showing no remorse or emotion. (3) The impoverished, who steal out of economic need: 5%. Typically, they will steal necessities, like food, diapers, toiletries, or children's clothing. Often, their manner of dress and hygiene may be poor. If caught, they will usually show remorse, but state their frustration with their lack of money, and may voice hostility against a "System" that keeps them impoverished. (4) The thrill seekers, who steal on a dare or for excitement: 5%. These shoplifters will often steal in groups. Many teenagers fall into this category. (5) Drug and gambling addicts, who steal to pay for their habit: 5%. Like professionals, they prefer stealing expensive, high end items, usually multiple items at a time. Their appearance often shows signs of substance abuse. They often carry drugs or drug paraphernalia on themselves. They are usually less careful than the Professional, but will likely arrest and flee the store if confronted. (6) Kleptomaniacs are those who steal for no reason: 1%. Kleptomaniacs are impulsive and often careless.

They will often take items they don't need and can't use, like stealing shoes that don't fit. If caught, many will admit they are kleptomaniacs and do not feel much remorse or shame. They will often use common excuses, like "I don't remember taking it", or "I don't know why I took it because I don't even need it". (7) The absent minded: 1% People in hurry, elderly people, people on medications or those who would have cognitive or memory issues [4].

Kleptomania has long concerned retailers. First described in 1816, it has been a controversial topic among psychiatrists, legal authorities, retail store managers—and the opinionated public—ever since. Kleptomania is a good case illustration of the development of thought in marketing-related areas. The article presents an intellectual history of thought on kleptomania, critically examining why ideas about it developed, were challenged, and were in some cases modified over two centuries. Skeptics have decried kleptomania as an invalid psychiatric concept exploited in legal defenses of wealthy lady shoplifters. At the turn of the twentieth century, kleptomania was strongly linked with the rapidly blossoming department stores, and "department store kleptomaniacs" were a widely held social stereotype that had political implications. Organized thought on kleptomania has, over nearly two centuries, reflected and changed with dominant approaches to psychiatry in specific and social thought in general. Yet real progress has been made [5].

Shoplifting is a major problem for the retail trade in western countries. However, knowledge about shoplifting and the intermediate stages between shoplifting and kleptomania is poor. The aim of a study was to illuminate repetitive shoplifting, the crimes and the persons behind the crimes, some of whom may be kleptomaniacs. Kleptomania has strong compulsive features. Thus, we decided to base this study on suspects caught shoplifting three times or more in 1993 according to the Stockholm Police Department's register. During the study period 78 females and 299 males had been caught shoplifting three times or more, totaling 1802 occasions. The police register contained information about when and where the crime took place, the value and type of goods, the name, address and age of the suspect and if he or she denied the crime. Males stole more electronic items and the females more clothes, perfume and cosmetics. The value of the stolen items was about the same between the sexes, however. Monday to Thursday, as well as late afternoons were the most common times for being caught. In the majority of cases the shoplifters were unemployed. The shoplifting episodes were further divided into those which took place far from home and those which took place in the vicinity of the shoplifter's home. Housewives and old-age pensioners shoplifted in the vicinity of their homes more often than others which tend to indicate transportation limitations [6].

One study examined delinquent risk behavior defined as shoplifting involvement from a social domain perspective. Aspects of adolescent self-concepts associated with significant others and self-worth were explored as predictors of self-perception of morality. The sample (N = 155) comprised Caucasian students aged 14 to 18 enrolled in one high school in a Southwest state. More than half of the adolescents had self-reported shoplifting involvement. Independent two-step regression analyses were conducted for the two shoplifting involvement groups. Peer social acceptance was a strong positive predictor of self-worth for adolescents with shoplifting involvement, whereas the strongest predictor for adolescents with no shoplifting involvement was parent–child relationships. Strong direct paths linked peer social acceptance, self-worth, and self-perception of morality for adolescents with shoplifting involvement, and parent–child relationships, self-worth, and self-perception of morality for adolescents with no shoplifting involvement. Educational implications for programs focusing on adolescent self-concept and moral development are discussed [7].

Another study explored juvenile delinquents' moral reasoning and behavioral intention to steal clothing using age group and the aligned theories of planned behavior and cognitive developmental moralization. Participants (n = 100) were preteen and teen first-time theft/shoplifting offenders participating in a diversion program aimed at preventing future offenses. Factor analysis revealed three strongly correlated dimensions of moral reasoning: risk and need (preconventional ethics), and peers (conventional ethics). Multiple regressions predicted positive moral reasoning that justified stealing clothing for risk, need, and peers by preteens but not teens. Risk and need, but not peers or age group, predicted behavioral intention to steal clothing. Developmental shift existed from preteens to teens in their moral reasoning to steal clothing. Juvenile delinquents that identified with preconventional ethics exhibited behavioral intention to steal clothing [8].

Empirical results verify the notion that emotions are important in explaining the aberrant consumer act of shoplifting. Age appears to moderate the relative effect of beliefs and emotions in a shoplifting scenario. Although adult consumers' moral beliefs provide more explanatory power in their shoplifting decision calculus, emotions are more important in explaining adolescent shoplifting behavior. Specifically, adults' behavioral intentions to shoplift are affected by their moral beliefs, with attitude toward the act of shoplifting serving as a partial mediator of these effects. College-aged respondents are largely influenced by beliefs concerning the moral equity of shoplifting. In contrast, both beliefs and emotions influence adolescents significantly, with emotions, specifically fear and power, having a greater impact [9].

An empirical paper examines the under-researched topic of the spatial and temporal distribution of shoplifting using police crime records for Cardiff city centre in 1993. As recorded shoplifting incidents are a small sample of the whole, the patterns identified and the explanations suggested are necessarily tentative. The 'opportunities' offered by particular store types are seen to influence the concentration of shoplifting incidents, which are particularly associated with variety, clothing, department and record stores. The 'high levels of shopping activity' in these store types, and their location in the busiest areas of the city centre, emerge as explanatory factors. In addition, shops which front on to the open-street appear more likely to attract shoplifting than those in enclosed malls due to the greater 'opportunity' to escape from the former. Shoplifting is also concentrated in the pre-Easter, pre-summer holiday and pre-Christmas holiday seasons; towards the end of the week; and in the late morning

and throughout the afternoon. Again, the explanatory significance of 'high levels of shopping activity' at these times is suggested. The offenders are shown to be drawn disproportionately from the younger age-groups, and are more likely to be male than the predominantly female shopping population would suggest. The spatial pattern of shoplifting is also influenced by the store types and parts of the city centre which have the greatest appeal for youthful shoplifters, at the times when they are most likely to frequent the shopping centre [10].

Some studies suggest that the perceived certainty of punishment has little or no effect on subsequent offending. Some researchers, however, argue that perceived certainty deters offending among some types of people but not among others. This article contributes to this line of argument by examining whether the effect of perceived certainty on offending is conditioned by the individual's social environment, specifically the individual's level of association with delinquent peers. Using longitudinal data from a sample of high school students, the authors find that perceived certainty only predicts offending among youth with no or some delinquent peers [11]. There is also a contradictory position of retail managers, responsible for controlling the pilferage problem but also involved in its very stimulation. It also highlights the considerable attention given to the store environment as a cause of shoplifting [12].

The theory of planned behavior predicts behavioral intention using three independent constructs. Attitude toward the behavior explains the individual's degree of favorable or unfavorable evaluation of a behavior. Subjective norm predicts the individual's perception of the degree of social pressure to perform or not perform a behavior. Perceived behavioral control is the individual's perception of how easy or difficult it will be to perform a behavior [8].

Although customer theft is traditionally researched from a criminological or psychological perspective, shoplifting is investigated as consumer behavior, demonstrating that well-defined models of normal consumer behavior can be applied to aberrant behavior such as shop theft. Empirical research is used to show how adults and teenagers form belief systems that amount to rational intentions in the decision to shoplift. The theory of planned behaviour was used as the basis for two self-report surveys which investigated the interaction between consumers' attitudes and beliefs about shoplifting and their perceptions of retail security. The first survey utilised a sample of shoppers from the South East Midlands; the second a sample of school students from the same area (861 respondents in total, 109 respondents admitting to shoplifting in the previous year). Both studies indicate that the decision to shoplift is influenced by pro-shoplifting attitudes, social factors, opportunities for shoplifting and perceptions of low risks of apprehension. This implies that the deterrent messages we use must be reassessed [13].

In broad terms, the theory of planned behavior is found to be well supported by empirical evidence. Intentions to perform behaviors of different kinds can be predicted with high accuracy from attitudes toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control; and these intentions, together with perceptions of behavioral control, account for considerable variance in actual behavior. Attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control are shown to be related to appropriate sets of salient behavioral, normative, and control beliefs about the behavior, but the exact nature of these relations is still uncertain. Expectancy, value formulations are found to be only partly successful in dealing with these relations. Optimal rescaling of expectancy and value measures is offered as a means of dealing with measurement limitations. Finally, inclusion of past behavior in the prediction equation is shown to provide a means of testing the theory*s sufficiency, another issue that remains unresolved. The limited available evidence concerning this question shows that the theory is predicting behavior quite well in comparison to the ceiling imposed by behavioral reliability [14].

Using a random sample of university students to test general strain theory (GST), the study expanded on previous tests of strain theory in two ways. First, situational anger was measured, a construct that had not been used thus far in assessments of general strain. In addition, this research examined the role of social support networks as a conditioning influence on the effects of strain and anger on intentions to commit three types of criminal behavior (serious assault, shoplifting, and driving under the influence of alcohol [DUI]). The results provided mixed support for GST. While the link between anger and crime was confirmed, the nature of that relationship in some cases ran counter to the theory. Moreover, the evidence indicated that the role of social support networks was complex, and varied as a conditioning influence on intentions to engage in criminal activities [15].

II. METHOD

Data are from the collected self-report of any consumer who committed theft in the supermarkets during the normal work business. 16 stores are under the investigation. The name and identity of the company is kept anonymous for business and privacy reasons. It was the duty of appointed security officer to interview anyone caught while stealing in the store before releasing or calling the police. In three years the total of 943 shoplifters are interviewed. The form of interview was designed by the company's security department. The researcher collected the reports and analyzed them. The reports used mainly by the company to follow up cases with the police and the court, and these reports used by the researcher as the main source of information. The form consists of 28 original variables and 20 transformed variables. Three variables serve as the dependent variables, they are: the type of items stolen, the count of items stolen and the total price of all items stolen in each theft case. There are number of independent variables they are: age, sex, occupation, time, day, month, shift, day or night, store residential social class, store volume, theft way and procedures. Mainly descriptive statistics were used for analysis, with the inferential statistics using Anova and Chi-Square. Anova used as the comparison statistical technique for price of items stolen as well as the count of items. Chi-Square used for variable "item". Number of transformation procedures were done to prepare some data for statistical analysis.

III. RESULT

A. Stolen items analysis

TABLE I
ITEMS STOLEN

Items stolen	N	%
Candy	208	22.1
Grocery	45	4.8
Produce	13	1.4
H & P	214	22.7
Razors & blades	74	7.8
Stationary	67	7.1
Clothes	57	6.0
Toys	107	11.3
Cigarette	36	3.8
Electric	53	5.6
House ware	19	2.0
dairy & deli	3	.3
Hardware	8	.8
Meat	2	.2
Sweepstakes	10	1.1
Bakery	1	.1
Cash	2	.2
Total	919	97.5
Missing	24	2.5
Total	943	100.0

The most stolen item in the supermarket is H & P I and the least is bakery. Table 1 gives more details about the other stolen items and their order. Also there are some other results from the comparison between values of some variables. They are following

- When using Pearson Chi-Square for testing the differences between values, there is a significant difference between sexes in stolen items, P = 0.0001. The result shows that females (52.3%) tend to steal H & P items more than any other items, but males (23.1%) steal sweet. Sweet comes second for females (18.2%) and H & P comes second for males (20.2%).

- There is a significant difference between theft methods in stolen items, P = 0.0001. The result shows that H & P is stolen mostly in the pocket. Grocery mostly stolen in boxes. The most eaten items inside the supermarkets are the produce items such as fruit and vegetables. Snatchers mostly take the grocery and run from the stores (37.5% of escapees). Most of change price is happening for house ware items (50% of them).

- There is a significant difference between age groups in stolen items, P = 0.0001. The result shows that H & P items are most stolen across age groups except for children (44.8%) and teenagers (32.1%) they mostly steal sweet candy then toys.

- Despite the significant difference between shoplifters' occupations P = 0.0001, the H & P items are the most stolen items, except retired people who steal either sweet or electric items (50% of them) in each of these two items .

- There is no significant difference between the work shifts in stolen items, P =.245. this result indicates that people enforce to steal by personal trait rather than by the situation other.

- The total price of stolen items average is (29.08) and the number of items stolen average is (2.48).

B. Shoplifters' characteristics

TABLE II
GENDER

Sex	N	%	Stolen items count
male	852	90.3	2.38
female	91	9.7	3.46
Total	943	100.0	2.48

Males surpass females in committing shoplifting in Riyadh Saudi Arabia. There is a significant difference between males and females (F ANOVA = 9.824. P= 0.002) in the number of Items stolen in each case. Females outnumber males in this regard.

TABLE III
AGE GROUPS

age	N	%
Less than 10	59	6.3
Teens	305	32.3
Twenties	89	9.4
Thirties	117	12.4
Forties	80	8.5
Fifty and above	40	4.2
Total	690	73.2
System	253	26.8
Total	943	100.0

The average age is (23.82) years old. Teens' group (32.3%) is more likely to steal from the supermarket. The age has marginal positive correlation with the total price of items stolen (r = 0.08, P = 0.024).

TABLE IV
OCCUPATION

Occupation	N	%
Student	343	36.4
Teacher or trainer	9	1.0
Clerk	16	1.7
High profession	23	2.4
Medium profession	142	15.1
Normal worker	86	9.1
Militant	6	.6
Business man	1	.1
Diplomatic	1	.1
Retired	2	.2
Unemployed	12	1.3
High rank position	4	.4
Total	645	68.4
Missing	298	31.6
Total	943	100.0

There is a significant difference between shoplifters' occupations on the total price of items stolen (F = 6.021, P = 0.0001). Unemployed steal the largest value from stores (304.25 Saudi Riyals). The least total price is (12.89 Saudi Riyals) by students.

TABLE V
NO. OF SHOPLIFTERS

No. of thieves	N	%
1	750	79.5
2	117	12.4
3	36	3.8
4	24	2.5
5	3	.3
Total	930	98.6
Missing	13	1.4
Total	943	100.0

The mean number of thieves is (1.9). most of shoplifting cases committed by an individual alone (79.5%).

C. Time dimension of shoplifting

TABLE VI
DAY

DAY	N	%
Saturday	110	11.7
Sunday	117	12.4
Monday	90	9.5
Tuesday	105	11.1
Wednesday	133	14.1
Thursday	111	11.8
Friday	131	13.9
Total	797	84.5
Missing	146	15.5
Total	943	100.0

There is no big difference between the days of the week for shoplifting, but Wednesday surpass other days in shoplifting. This day however is the beginning of the weekend in Saudi Arabia.
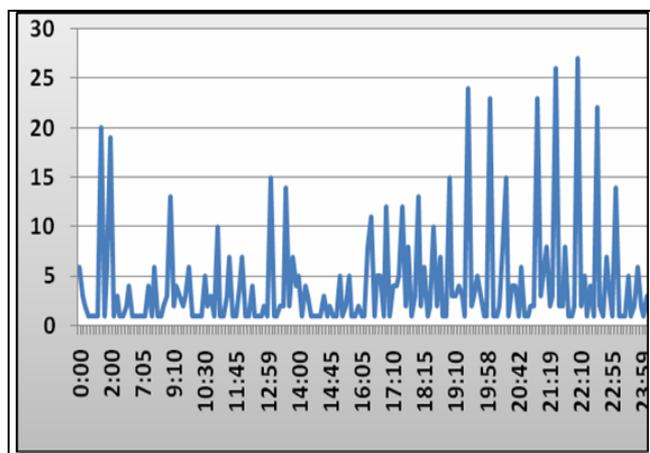

Fig. 1 24 hours analysis of shoplifting

By analyzing the 24 hours time for shoplifting it was found that from 9 to 10 pm is the most shoplifting occurrence in the day.

TABLE VI
DAYS OF THE MONTH

Days	Hijrah		Gregorian	
	N	%	N	%
From 1 to 10	304	32.2	297	31.5
From 11 to 20	321	34.0	295	31.3
From 21 to 31	317	33.6	350	37.1
Total	942	99.9	942	99.9
Missing	1	.1	1	.1
Total	943	100.0	943	100.0

It is noticed that there is no big differences between the day groups of the month both in Hejrah and Gregorian month.

TABLE VII
MONTH

Months	N Hijrah months	N Gregorian months
1	74	141
2	58	115
3	97	78
4	72	76
5	53	58
6	75	68
7	128	59
8	128	75
9	92	86
10	53	99
11	48	33
12	64	54
Total	942	942

Month number 7 and 8 in Hijrah is close to month 1 and 2 Gregorian month when the theft of supermarket occurs more than other months of the year. This however is in winter season. This can be explained by people most in need in the winter or close to certain occasions such as befor the month of Ramadan.

TABLE VIII
WORKING SHIFTS

working shifts	N	%
First shift	202	21.4
Second shift	474	50.3
Third shift	75	8.0
Total	751	79.6
System	192	20.4
Total	943	100.0

The second shift experiences more theft than the other two shifts in the day. The second shift start from 4 pm to 12 midnight where the business is in its highest in Saudi Arabia.

TABLE IX
MONTH

Day or night	N	%
Day	333	35.3
Night	418	44.3
Total	751	79.6
Missing	192	20.4
Total	943	100.0

No noticeable difference between the day and the night,

maybe because the second shift located between these to times.

D. Theft action

TABLE X
MONTH

Theft way	N	%
In pocket	104	11.0
In purse	16	1.7
In clothes	99	10.5
Add extra weight	3	.3
In box	6	.6
Behind	4	.4
Change price	4	.4
Eat or drink	9	1.0
Run or exit from entrance	10	1.1
Total	255	27.0
Missing	688	73.0
Total	943	100.0

There is a significant difference between theft ways on the total price of items stolen ($F = 7.354$, $P = 0.0001$). The using of boxes to steal items from the store is the highest value among other ways. Boxes also has the highest number of stolen items ($F = 5.327$, $P = 0.0001$.

TABLE XI
MONTH

Dealing with theft	N	%
Sent to police	183	19.4
Sign consent	455	48.3
Pay fine	238	25.2
Send free	17	1.8
Escape	13	1.4
Handed to sponsor	3	.3
Total	909	96.4
System	34	3.6
Total	943	100.0

Due to the large number of shoplifter and the time needed to pursue the shoplifting cases to the police and the court supermarkets deal with shoplifter ether by the signing of consent form not to repeat the act again or ask for fine to pay. This May be due to the nature of thieves as minors or ladies or some labors, who might lose their jobs, if the case reported to the police. This is the kind of concern by security officers when they handed the person to the police.

E. Social Environment

TABLE XII
SALE'S STORE RANK

Sale's store rank	N	%
High volume stores	325	34.5
Medium volume stores	402	42.6
Low volume stores	213	22.6
Total	940	99.7
Missing	3	.3
Total	943	100.0

Medium volume stores are most likely to be hit by the shoplifters more than other stores. This is because the large number of customer visiting the store.

TABLE XIII
RESIDENTS' SOCIAL CLASS

Residents' social class	N	%
High class	236	25.0
Medium class	375	39.8
Low class	329	34.9
Total	940	99.7
Missing	3	.3
Total	943	100.0

Medium class residency around the supermarket is most likely to increase the shoplifting more than the areas with low class or high class.

TABLE XIV
COMMERCIAL & RESIDENTIAL AREAS

Commercial & residential areas	N	%
Commercial area	492	52.2
Residential area	448	47.5
Total	940	99.7
Missing	3	.3
Total	943	100.0

Commercial areas encourage shoplifting more than the residential area.

TABLE XV
RESIDENTS' NATIONALITIES

Residents' nationalities	N	%
Saudi	569	60.3
Non Saudi	371	39.3
Total	940	99.7
Missing	3	.3
Total	943	100.0

When the area inhabited mostly by Saudi nationals the shoplifting is surpassing the areas with expatriates.

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