Preemptive Measures against Shoplifting Incidences

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Abstract - *This research entitled "Preemptive measures against shoplifting incidences" aimed to identify the preemptive measures against shoplifting. It specifically aimed to describe the prevalence of shoplifting incidences in commercial establishments in Batangas city in terms of the items commonly shoplifted, value of items shoplifted and time of the occurrence of shoplifting incidence, to determine the mode of operation used by shoplifters, to determine the preemptive measures implemented by commercial establishments against shoplifting incidences. It used the descriptive type of research and utilized 28 respondents composed of store employees. The study revealed that shoplifting is not highly prevalent in Batangas city because most of the preemptive measures are implemented by all business establishments. To alleviate problems involved in this research, an improved plan was proposed by the researchers.*

Keywords: Shoplifting, Commercial establishments, Preemptive measures

INTRODUCTION

Shoplifting generally refers to the theft of merchandise from a store or place of business. Shoplifting is a type of larceny, which simply means taking the property of someone else without their permission, and with the intent to permanently deprive the owner of the property taken. Shoplifting is considered a form of theft in the Philippines and is subject to prosecution. The penalty for shoplifting varies depending on the value of what was stolen. Prison time may be anywhere for one year to 20 (criminal.findlaw.com, 2016).

In the United States and elsewhere, theft commonly refers to the illegal taking and possessing of another's property, anything of value, with the intent to permanently deprive that person of the item or the value of the item taken. Shoplifting is a certain kind of theft (i.e., larceny-theft) that occurs at retail stores and commercial businesses. Theft and shoplifting are two types of property crime. Other property crimes are burglary, motor vehicle theft, and arson. While there are many kinds of theft, those discussed here are larceny-theft, burglary, and motor vehicle theft. None of these crimes features the use of force against people. Common examples of larceny-theft include stealing a bike or someone's wallet (pickpocketing), or taking things from a retail store, e.g., CDs or clothes.

The National Association of Shoplifting Prevention estimates that one in 11 people has shoplifted during hisor her lifetime and that men are as likely to shoplift aswomen (1). In fact, more than $13 billion worth of goods are stolen from retailers in the United States each year (2). Shoplifting results in significant costs to the legal system and commerce. Despite these costs, shoplifting has historically received relatively little attention from clinicians and researchers. As such, our understanding of the basic aspects of this behavior is incomplete.

Shoplifting and kleptomania are sometimes used synonymously, yet there are important differences between them. Shoplifting is a behavior defined by the theft of an item from a store, regardless of motivation or desire for the items (3). By contrast, kleptomania refers to a psychiatric diagnosis characterized by recurrent failure to resist impulses to steal objects that are not needed for personal use or for their monetary value. Individuals with kleptomania experience an increasing sense of tension immediately before committing the theft and gratification or release at the time of committing the theft. Furthermore, the stealing is not committed to express anger or vengeance. Thus, although shoplifting can be due to kleptomania, it can also be simply criminal behavior or a manifestation of conduct disorder, antisocial personality disorder, or bipolar disorder, among others. More generally, the relationship of shoplifting to other behaviors is poorly understood, and the prevalence of psychiatric disorders among people who shoplift is unknown (Am 2008).

Theft and shoplifting are important to address because they account for the largest portion of all criminal offending in the United States. Laws against them date back to ancient Roman law (e.g., Hammurabi Codes) and English common law. In those times, the crime of theft was rampant, and proscriptions about what to do with thieves dominated extant law. These codes and laws have played an important role in shaping modern criminal law in the United States. Today, the forces that motivate theft are powerful and ever present, and the consequences of theft are felt by individuals, businesses, communities, and government agencies.(criminal-justice.iresearchnet.com)

In Batangas City, there are lots of shoplifting incidents in different malls based on their own records but there are only few incidences reported in Batangas City police station. The mall chose not to report all the incidences but instead if the security personnel already caught the shoplifters in the act, they refer them to the management and usually required them to pay what they stole in triple price. Sometimes when the stolen item is of a small value the management just apply this procedure.

We chose to conduct this study because we see some shoplifting incidences on different malls in Batangas City so we want to know what are the different tactics or modus operandi of shoplifters. Also what are the different preemptive measures implemented by the malls and how they implement it.

As criminology students this research gave us more significant information about shoplifting and how it could be prevented. This study will increase our knowledge on this specific crime that will help or that can be used in our future law enforcement career. By analyzing the modes of operation used by shoplifters, an improved preemptive measures could be devised and offered to concern individual, more particularly those in the business sectors.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The study generally aimed to identify the preemptive measures against shoplifting incidences among commercial establishments. Specifically; it aimed to (1) describe the prevalence of shoplifting incidences in commercial

establishments in Batangas city in terms of the items commonly shoplifted, value of items shoplifted and time of occurrence of shoplifting incidence (2) to determine the mode of operation used by shoplifters (3) to determine the preemptive measures implemented by commercial establishments against shoplifting incidences.

METHODS

Research Design

The main objective of this study is to determine the preemptive measures against shoplifting. With this objective in mind, the researchers used the descriptive type of research. The descriptive method is a fact finding method with adequate interpretation dealing with the questions based on the present and current phenomenon (Good, 2011). The researchers believed that this design is the most appropriate since the study involves the collection of data concerning the current status of the subject under study. As its name connotes, this method simply describes what exists.

Participants of the Study

The study utilized 28 respondents from different malls in Batangas City. All of them are store employees. The participants were only the one who accepted the questionnaire because some employees are not allowed to entertain the researchers.

Instrument

The researchers made used self-made questionnaire to gather needed information and it was validated by an expert. This was constructed through reading of different literature which served as basis for constructing the items used to answer objectives No.2 and 3 pertaining to mode of operations used by shoplifters and the preemptive measures used against shoplifting. The researchers presented the questionnaire to their thesis adviser and those people with expertise in the field for validation.

Procedure

The researchers after getting the approval of the owner/ manager of the commercial establishments proceeded with the dissemination of their questionnaire to the participants. They asked them if they can answer our questionnaire on thesis because it is one of the requirements in their course, assisting them if they had questions while they were answering. Then after they were finished, they collected the questionnaires for tallying and encoding so that they could send these to their statistician for statistical computation.

Data analysis

The data needed were tallied, encoded and interpreted using weighted mean which were used based on the objectives of the study. In addition, all data were computed using statistical software, PASW version 18 to further analyze the result of the study. The given scale was used to interpret the result of the data gathered in terms of prevalence: 3.50 – 4.00 = Highly Prevalent; 2.50 – 3.49 = Prevalent; 1.50 – 2.49 = Moderately Prevalent; 1.00 – 1.49 = Not at All

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Prevalence of Shoplifting Incidences in Commercial Establishments in Batangas City in terms of the Items Commonly Shoplifted

Indicators	WM	VI	Rank
1. Clothes	3.11	Prevalent	1
2. Perfume and other Cosmetic selected products	2.54	Prevalent	5
3. Gadgets	2.83	Prevalent	2
4. Can goods and other food selected products	2.63	Prevalent	3
5. Jewelry	2.57	Prevalent	4
6. School supplies	2.13	Moderately Prevalent	6
7. Others	2.07	Moderately Prevalent	7

As seen from the result of Table 1, the top most item was clothes since it obtained the highest mean value of 3.11. It was

followed by gadgets, can good and other food selected products and jewelry.

However, school supplies and others were the least rated as moderately prevalent with weighted mean scores of 2.13 and 2.07 respectively.

Clothing is the most prevalent because most of the stores or establishments in Batangas city are selling clothes like SM. Clothing is not just a basic need nowadays but also a trend to other people especially on teenagers so many people without money will temp to shoplift it. Moreover, clothes are easy to conceal thus the possibility of being detected is lesser. Then it was followed by gadgets with the weighted mean scores of 2.83. It's because shoplifters tend to steal high valued items and gadgets is one of them gadgets like cellphones are small items and can easily be concealed. Followed by canned goods and other food selected products with the weighted mean scores of 2.63 although food is another basic needs and people need it in everyday life, people will have a second thought of stealing it because it is bulky and difficult to conceal. In some cases, canned goods of smaller size and food items with lighter weight are commonly shoplifted. However, School supplies and others were the least rated as moderately prevalent with the weighted mean scores of 2.13 and 2.07 respectively. We think it's because not all people are studying or going to schools especially the common shoplifters, they don't need this kind of items that much.

But in the United States clothing is not prevalent and ranked as 9th item most shoplifted. We've all walked out of the store with one of those bulky and impossible-to-remove security tags on an item of clothing we just bought. While it's an inconvenience to go back in to have the tag removed, the retailer is just trying to protect one of its easily snatched goods. Since stores are required to provide a certain level of privacy when people are trying on clothes, thieves are given a space where they can go to hide items. Many shoplifters will wear baggy clothing so that they can hide the stolen clothing inside it or simply put it on under what they were wearing. This is especially easy in stores without pesky fitting room attendants making sure you don't take more than six items in the room at a time. While the most prevalent item shoplifted there was meat because meat has often emerged as

the top item stolen from stores, as regular shoppers and kleptomaniacs alike feel the urge to slide a steak into their coat pocket.(2011 businessinsurancequotes.org)

Table 2. Prevalence of Shoplifting Incidences in Commercial Establishments in Batangas City in terms of the Value of Items Shoplifted

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1. Below Php100	2.04	Moderately Prevalent	4
2. Php100-500	2.64	Prevalent	3
3.Php500-Php1000	3.13	Prevalent	2
4. Above Php1000	3.30	Prevalent	1

Based on Table 2, items which is above Php1000 are the most prevalent items shoplifted with the weighted mean scores of 3.30 while items below Php100 are the least prevalent items shoplifted with the weighted mean scores of 2.04.

Items which are above Php1000 are the most prevalent because these are the items that are very eye catching to the shop lifters, examples are gadgets or branded clothing. These also are easy to sell if they would like to convert these into cash. It is followed by Php500-1000 with a weighted mean of 3.13. These items include foods and other food selected product then Php100-500 items with a weighted mean of 2.64. It is because these items are not so important to others especially to the shoplifters. The least prevalent is the items which is below100 because these include items that are not so valuable to the shoplifters and may not be easy to dispose as well. Examples of these items are Pens and other school supplies. However, in other countries shoplifters commonly steal from $2 to $200 per incident depending upon the type of store and item(s) chosen. (www.shopliftingprevention.org).

According to the result of Table 3, it shows that shoplifting is most prevalent at late in the afternoon with the score of 3.00 while it is not prevalent at midnight with the score of 1.50.

Table 3. Prevalence of Shoplifting Incidences in Commercial Establishments in Batangas City in terms of the Time of occurrence

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1. Early in the morning	2.00	Moderately Prevalent	4.5
2. Noon	2.68	Prevalent	2
3. Late in the afternoon	3.00	Prevalent	1
4. Early in the evening	2.29	Moderately Prevalent	3
5. Midnight	1.50	Moderately Prevalent	6
6. Late in the evening	2.00	Moderately Prevalent	4.5

Most of the Shoplifters work at late in the afternoon because there are a lot of people around and the employees of the stores are busy at this time so they are less likely to be caught. Other times the employees are already exhausted and least alert to observe the behavior of shoppers, especially the shoplifters. Then at by noon time with the weighted mean scores of 2.68 because some employees are taking a break at this time. Then it was followed by early in the evening with the weighted mean scores of 2.29. Early in the evening is not so prevalent because at this time there are fewer people in the mall so the shoplifters are more possible to be caught. Followed by early in the morning and late in the evening with the same score of 4.5 and then last is at the midnight because most of the stores are close at this time and other shoplifters are sleeping. Most shoplifting occurs when stores are busiest, with the majority of incidents occurring late in the week, between Wednesday and Saturday. As mentioned, juveniles commit much shoplifting, and consequently, high-risk times include non-school days during the late mornings, and afternoons into the evening (www.popcenter.org).

On Table 4, you can see the rankings of the most common mode of operation or modus operandi of shoplifters, the most common modus operandi is that shoplifters use confusion routine with the score of 3.43 while the least common modus operandi of shoplifters is shoplifters exchanges price tags to lower price items (price tag switching) with the score of 2.14.

Table 4. Mode of Operation used by shoplifters

Indicators	WM	VI	Rank
1. Shoplifters wear articles out of the store.	2.59	Prevalent	7
2. Shoplifters had an accomplice acting as a shield or lookout	3.41	Prevalent	2
3. Shoplifters use confusion routine or tactic	3.43	Prevalent	1
4. Shoplifters exchanges price tags to lower price items (price tag switching)	2.14	Moderately Prevalent	10
5. Shoplifters creates disturbance	2.96	Prevalent	4
6. Shoplifters use professional devices	2.67	Prevalent	5
7. Shoplifters use booster box where shoplifted items are pushed into a box	2.36	Moderately Prevalent	9
8. Shoplifters have an extra or extended pockets to conceal small stolen items	3.18	Prevalent	3
9. Using booster belts hooks or fastened to a belt in such a way that merchandizing can be hung and concealed into	2.64	Prevalent	6
10. Using booster bloomers that can be worn under a full skirt	2.58	Prevalent	8

Confusion routine is on the top because it is easy to do especially when the shoplifter is professional because all he have to do is to distract the salesperson and then conceal the item that he wants, other common modus operandi on the rankings are shoplifters had an accomplice acting as a shield or lookout with the weighted mean value of 3.41 because it can help shoplifters to hide the items and warn them if there is someone looking or coming then shoplifters have an extra or extended pockets with the weighted mean value of 3.18 because it helps shoplifters to conceal small stolen items. Then the least common modus operandi of shoplifters is that shoplifters exchanges price tags to lower price items (price tag switching) with the score of 2.14 because it is hard to exchange price tags especially in a large establishments because of the CCTV camera and not all items on the store has price tags. Other modus operandi that is not so common are shoplifters use booster box where shoplifted items

are pushed into a box, and using booster belts hooks or fastened to a belt in such a way that merchandizing can be hung and concealed into. (purplehorn.blogspot.com)

Table 5. Preemptive Measures Implemented by Commercial Establishments against Shoplifting

Indicators	WM	VI	Rank
1. Establishments are equipped with security personnel	3.46	Implemented	5
2. Security Personnel are well trained	3.36	Implemented	8
3. Security guards have metal detector to detect unusual item used in shoplifting	3.14	Implemented	11.5
4. Store is Organized and products well placed	3.64	Fully Implemented	3
5. Alertness of mall personnel to the mode of operation	3.46	Implemented	5
6. Policies on baggage brought by costumers are implemented	3.39	Implemented	7
7. Cashiers are trained to watch price tags and detect price tag switching	3.79	Fully Implemented	2
8. Utilize code which enables staff to alert each other of suspicious activities	3.29	Implemented	10
9. Establishments are equipped with CCTV	3.82	Fully Implemented	1
10. All corners have mirrors and all areas are well lighted	3.14	Implemented	11.5
11. Personnel conducts of physical inventory in a regular basis	3.57	Fully Implemented	4
12. Employment of watchers in plain clothes for detection of shoplifters	3.32	Implemented	9
Composite Mean	**3.45**	**Implemented**	

Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 = Fully Implemented; 2.50 – 3.49 = Implemented; 1.50 – 2.49 = Moderately Implemented; 1.00 – 1.49 = Not Implemented.

Based from the result, different commercial establishments implemented the above mentioned preemptive measures against shoplifting. Establishments are equipped with CCTV got the highest mean score of 3.82 and rated fully implemented. It is because one of the most common and effective ways to detect shoplifters. Items such as cashiers are trained to

watch price tags and detect price tag switching, store is organized and products well placed and personnel conducts of physical inventory in an regular basis were are also fully implemented by the different establishments because most of the establishments in Batangas hire personnel who are well trained, they are required to organize the products properly and to conduct physical inventory.

Conversely, other preemptive measures were also implemented and employment of watchers in plain clothes for detection of shoplifters, utilize code which enables staff to alert each other of suspicious activities, security guards have metal detector to detect unusual item used in shoplifting and all corners have mirrors and all areas are well lighted got the lowest weighted mean values of 3.32, 3.29 and 3.14 respectively. Most of the malls in Batangas have security guards but only the big establishments have a metal detector and not all malls have mirrors in every corner because they are already equipped with CCTV. One of the most effective tools to prevent shoplifting is good store management. Retailers should also use store layout, adequate inventory controls and follow common security practices to combat shoplifting.(www.thebalance.com)

CONCLUSION

The most commonly shoplifted item is clothes and items which is above Php1000 are the most prevalent items shoplifted. Then shoplifting is most prevalent at late in the afternoon. The most common modus operandi used by shoplifters was confusion routine. The most implemented preemptive measures is the use of CCTV on all business establishment.

RECOMMENDATION

That all business establishments in Batangas City exercise more vigilance in the protection of their items for sale at all times. That mirrors be installed in critical corners of the stores as additional protective device for CCTV corners. That competent and vigilant security personnel be employed to main critical areas in the store

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