



Problem Solving and Innovation

BMSW4019

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Speaker Notes

The rise of shop lifting in the UK. Why do we experience it? what can it mean and how exactly does it affect the retailers? Throughout this report there will be a gathering of information sourced from various locations to explore the possible root cause analysis and what factors contribute to the documented increase of behaviour within England and Wales.

The increase in retail crime is being described by Wilson, Conelly (2025) as “out of control”. Figures released from the British Retail Consortium (BRC) who currently represent over 200 retail stores, revealed a staggering 2 billion a year loss due to the

increase of crimes. Violence and abuse rose by 50% in the past year and 340% since 2020 according to Ironside (2025). While these figures are alarmingly eye opening, behind these numbers, it is the shop workers who are put on the front line daily. Many workers face violent threats and experience physical harm whilst simply carrying out their job, such as verifying age restricted products, refusing service to aggressive customers. On the occasion they could confront shoplifters (although it is not recommended due to safety concerns), these confrontations could potentially lead to violent outbursts towards staff. Some incidents also involve the use of weapons according to the Office of National Statistics, (2025). Crime reports to the police are averaged to be over 2,000 everyday according to (CRB(b), 2025). However, (Gov, 2025) claims 35% of retailers claim they were happy with the response and handling of the police when assistance is required for retail crimes, however 41% were left unhappy with the handling with police due to not receiving a response urgently enough. One very well-known retailer, Asda, has taken action to help support and reduce its retail theft by introducing a technology that can capture the images and integrate them into their existing CCTV network. This technology is known as facial recognition. The aim of this is to scan images and then compare them to a list of known individuals who may or have committed criminal activity on the Asda site (Asda, 2025).

Root Cause Analysis;

While it is important to understand the information and question why these crimes are being committed repeatedly. Using the 5 why's model it was easier to break down and understand piece by piece how it escalated and always question why, explains (A business professor, 2024). The root cause to the rise in retail is a build-up of internal and external matters ranging from government funding cuts, shortages on local food banks and the lack of support within deprived communities alongside the lack of assistance by police. The decrease in security by companies and much much more. With so much to consider it is impossible to have 1 clear answer to the root causes of retail crimes.

Conclusion;

After analysing the information, it is clear how the rise in retail crime will likely continue unless the retailers act against these offenders but to address this with rational critical thinking. There is help and support available to the companies but with the increase of costs this will inevitably have a mass impact on the business contributing to further costs overall. With new laws and regulations regarding the safety of the workers, the increase should decrease the frontline effects. Introducing more tougher laws, and introduce better policing may also help reduce the growing craze before it enhances any more than it is.

References;

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