

The Five Whys Analysis is a problem solving technique that involves asking “why?” five times to uncover the root cause of a problem.(Tredgar,2024) This method, originally developed by Sakichi Toyoda for Toyota, helps identify the underlying issues rather than just addressing surface level symptoms. By digging deeper into a problem, businesses can find the real cause and fix it properly, making sure it doesn’t happen again.

The retail industry in the UK is currently facing a significant challenge with a sharp increase in shoplifting incidents.(dabo,2025) Recent reports show that shoplifting is at its highest level in 20 years, with a 30% rise in cases over the past year. This increase is due to several reasons, including financial struggles, fewer police responses, and more thefts by organized crime groups.

- Why has shoplifting increased? Shoplifting has increased because people are struggling with higher cost of living and financial strain on individuals.
- Why are people experiencing financial strain? People are struggling with money because prices are rising, but their pay isn’t increasing.
- Why are people experiencing financial strain? Inflation is high because it costs more to make things, and there are problems getting supplies.(Zejneba,2022)
- Why are supply chains disrupted? Supply chains are struggling because of the big world event like COVID-19 and conflicts between countries.
- Why have global events caused such disruption? Global events have caused disruptions due to unforeseen circumstances like pandemics and conflicts.

Several key factors have influenced the increase in shoplifting:

- Economic pressures: The ongoing cost-of-living crisis has placed a very big financial strain on many households.(dabo,2025)
- Lack of policing: Insufficient police presence has made shoplifters more confident.
- Strict rules for punishment: shoplifters can only be prosecuted if they steal over £200, which some say makes stealing more common
- Organized criminal gangs: Shoplifting is increasingly being carried out by organized criminal gangs targeting high-value items for resale.

From the Five Whys Analysis shows that shoplifting is increasing because of money problems, social issues, and weak systems. To fix this, we need better financial support, more police, and stricter punishments. Solving these problems will help make stores safer by tackling the root causes, retailers can create safer and more secure shopping environment.

References;

1. Tredgar (2024) reliability.com [Root Cause Analysis with 5 Whys Technique \(With Examples\)](#)

2. Dabo (2025) retail insight Network [UK retailers brace for rising costs and inflation in 2025](#)
3. Zejneba (2022) Hulkapps.com [The Rise of Shoplifting in England and Wales: An In-depth Analysis](#)