

AN EVALUATION OF DETECTION METHODS USED TO REDUCE  
SHOPLIFTING IN THE SIX SUPERMARKETS  
IN EMPORIA, KANSAS

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## CHAPTER I

### THE PROBLEM AND DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

It is estimated that the supermarkets of Emporia, Kansas, lose thousands of dollars annually through shoplifting. How much of this shoplifting can be reduced is hard to determine. Robert E. O'Neil states that much of the shoplifting that takes place in supermarkets could be eliminated if an analytical study of the problem were made.<sup>1</sup> Shoplifting is not new to this immediate vicinity nor is it a problem that has sprouted overnight.<sup>2</sup> For many years shoplifting has been a source of financial loss for supermarkets.<sup>3</sup> Since shoplifting is known to exist and will continue to exist, it would seem advantageous to try to reduce this loss. The future of supermarkets is based upon profits through successful operations; therefore, it is deemed desirable to reduce shoplifting to increase profits. If it could be found which method or methods detect shoplifting best and if these methods reduce losses, then research in this direction would be beneficial.

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<sup>1</sup>R. E. O'Neil, "How to Reduce Shoplifting Losses," Progressive Grocer, 40:54, July, 1961.

<sup>2</sup>Statement by manager of Store B, personal interview.

<sup>3</sup>O'Neil, op. cit., p. 55.

By the use of information concerning detection methods that work well in supermarkets within the population selected, these managers could be more effective in reducing shoplifting losses by using the best methods or if none work well to discontinue the use of them. The reduction of shoplifting losses would serve a double purpose in that a loss of gross profit might be avoided, and an arrest and probable prosecution might be prevented. The reduction or discontinuance of faulty detection methods might mean increased profits by saving the expense of these detection methods.

## I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. The threefold purpose of this study, concerning the selected population, is to (1) determine the methods used to detect shoplifting in the six supermarkets, (2) determine if these detection methods reduce shopper theft, and (3) conclude if methods that work best are determinable. To reach this goal the study will (1) ascertain the detection methods used in these supermarkets, (2) compare the detection methods used in one supermarket with those used by the other supermarkets, (3) compare floor space with dollars of loss, and (4) conclude, as far as possible, if detection methods would



help decrease shopper theft in Emporia, or if they reduce losses at all.

Importance of the study. "Shoplifting is increasing when margins are low to meet new forms of competition and when net profits are sagging."<sup>4</sup> The store with a one per cent margin of net profit that has a dollar article stolen loses the profit on one hundred dollars worth of sales.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, it becomes obvious that articles stolen by shopper theft can cost a supermarket a loss of profit. This loss, if prevented, would aid in the achievement of a higher margin of profit or a lower sales price. This in turn would be an aid to all parties concerned. It would help the owners by allowing them to use this profit in a manner they see fit for the furtherance of business. It would aid the buyer by not having to make up for the loss through higher prices paid for goods. It would aid the shoplifter and potential shoplifter by reducing the temptation of stealing. A worthwhile goal is then sought both by research and by store managers in trying to reduce the temptation to steal. If a satisfactory solution to

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Keith M. Rogers, Detection and Prevention of Business Losses (New York: Arco Publishing Company, Inc., 1962), p. 13.

this problem could be found, it not only would aid the supermarkets of Emporia, Kansas, financially, but undoubtedly would prevent some people from being prosecuted. R. E. O'Neil,<sup>6</sup> Roy C. Taylor,<sup>7</sup> Alex Lee Gregory,<sup>8</sup> Norman Jaskan,<sup>9</sup> and the Yale Transport Company<sup>10</sup> express the opinion that by using detection methods and thereby reducing the temptation to steal pilfering can be reduced. It seems that this statement would follow through to customer theft.

"Some customers do not like to be watched constantly; therefore, stores have to be careful to avoid some detection methods in order not to drive customers away."

For instance, a manager cannot have an employee follow each customer while the customer is in his store; however, he cannot be without some type of security system. In the first instance his trade and profits would be reduced because of customers feeling uncomfortable, and his profits

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<sup>6</sup>O'Neil, op. cit., p. 55.

<sup>7</sup>Roy E. Taylor, "Employee Dishonesty," Best's Insurance News, Fire and Casualty Edition, 61:64, January, 1961.

<sup>8</sup>Alex Lee Gregory, "Why Workers Steal," Saturday Evening Post, 235:71, November 10, 1962.

<sup>9</sup>Norman Jaskan, "How You Can Curtail Employee Dishonesty," American Business, 20:16, November, 1959.

<sup>10</sup>"Why Let Pilfering Drain Your Company's Profits," Fleet Owner, 55:82, April, 1960.

would be lower because of higher wage cost. In the second instance many writers reason that stealing would be without risk and therefore greatly increased.

This study will compare data obtained from one store with that of other stores in an attempt to determine which detection methods affect shoplifting and which measures are lacking in results. It is hoped by making this comparison between stores that supermarket managers and owners will be better prepared to meet the problem of shoplifting in their stores.

Limitations of the study. This study is limited to the six supermarkets in Emporia, Kansas. Managers and employees of these six supermarkets were interviewed. It is hoped that this study will guide others into research in this field.

A second limitation was that the study depended a great deal on manager's and employee's knowledge of shopper theft in their store. Some supermarkets gave information directly from records and thus provided more accurate information. It was decided that by interviewing the managers and the employees of the stores a more accurate study could be made than by sending out questionnaires for each employee and manager to answer.

Losses from shoplifting cannot be factually determined. Shoplifting losses can be estimated only.<sup>11</sup> Estimates of shoplifting losses are made by guessing how much of the store's shrinkage, which can be factually determined, is due to shoplifting. Factors involved include evidence of pilferage, persons caught stealing goods, and estimating the number of items thought to be stolen. There are other shrinkage problems which the manager considers. These are breakage, employee theft, and errors in procedure or records. By guessing at shrinkage problems and known losses from shoplifting, a manager can make a fairly accurate estimate of losses due to shoplifting.

— This study will cover only shopper thefts, and not what is lost through inaccurate inventory procedure, employee theft, breakage, employee mistakes, or shipment shortages. Therefore, this study will rely on the store manager's records and knowledge and the employee's knowledge as to what is taken by shoppers.

It is realized that findings of a study submitted to only six supermarket managers carry a limited amount of weight; yet it is possible that an initial study is

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<sup>11</sup>"Trade Up Triggers Fresh Look at Store Security," Chain Store Age, 36:30b, November, 1960.

worthwhile. This study, because of its limitations in scope and distribution, cannot be used for extensive generalization; however, since there are only six supermarkets in Emporia, the study returns may at least suggest the probable situation throughout Emporia, Kansas, and in some respects be related to other cities.

Sources of data. Related literature, store managers in Emporia, school officials, officers of the law, state and city statutes, and records pertinent to shoplifting are some of the sources of data that were used in this study.

Related literature was used to supplement and give backing or conflicting statements to data gathered in Emporia. With this combination better understanding of the problem was found.

Store managers and the chief of police in Emporia were interviewed personally. Through data gained from these interviews information concerning shoplifting in Emporia was found.

State and city statutes were studied to give an understanding of the law on shoplifting in Kansas and Emporia. With this knowledge an understanding of what the police can do and what the manager of a store must have to arrest and prosecute was obtained.

Method of obtaining data. Interviews were the main method of obtaining data. The interview form was made, clarified, and compared with related literature to make certain that the results obtained from the interview with managers would cover the necessary field. Then an interview of the store manager was conducted to determine detection methods used by supermarket managers to reduce shoplifting. Employees were interviewed to determine their knowledge of watching for shoplifters.

It was decided that the interview was the best means of obtaining information since more reliable data can be found by going to the interviewee rather than sending him a questionnaire.<sup>12</sup> To keep the interview the same in each case, a questionnaire was made for the interviewer to follow and fill out as the interview progressed. In this manner, it was found that the results were fairly consistent.

In order to avoid identifying the supermarkets used, the supermarkets were coded by use of the letters "A" to "F" inclusive. Hereafter the selected supermarkets will be referred to as A, B, C, and so forth.

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<sup>12</sup>Robert M. W. Travers, An Introduction to Research (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1958), p. 182.

## II. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

Detection methods. Those methods used in a store to observe the act of shoplifting, including devices such as mirrors or peepholes, employees, and training programs.

Employee theft. The stealing of goods carried in a shop by an employee of that shop is employee theft.

Gross sales. A total of all retail sales made by a store is its gross sales.

Shoplifting. Shoplifting is the act of a shopper stealing goods exposed for sale.

Shortages. Articles for which there is an invoice or other evidence of having been received in the store, but which cannot be accounted for through inventory, spot check, sales slip, or other means are interpreted as shortages in stock.

Spot Check. A count of a certain article in stock to determine if it is in agreement with total purchases and breakages is a spot check. Such a check will show to an extent if the article is being stolen or not.

Supermarkets. A departmentalized, usually self service, retail grocery store of a chain store system or an independent store which sells foods and other household items to the general public is a supermarket.



## CHAPTER II

### SURVEY OF RELATED LITERATURE

Inventory shortages have been a problem for many years. Causes of these shortages run from honest mistakes to planned theft. Shoplifting is estimated to be about 25 per cent of inventory shortage.<sup>1</sup> For an understanding of factors that reduce shoplifting, an overall view of methods to detect shoplifting is needed. This chapter will describe briefly some of the methods of detecting shoplifting used in stores outside of Emporia, their problems of detection, and some of their solutions to these problems.

Chain Store Age Study. Chains are still meeting competition with a "trade-up expansion" program. But with trade-up expansion programs, changing laws, stores becoming more vulnerable to professional shoplifters and more inviting to the amateur thief, chain stores need to take another look at their security programs. It was found that only one great variety store chain has a formal security organization with a full time officer at this time, but

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<sup>1</sup>Al Zavelle, "Panel on Self-Service Techniques, Pilferage Control," Publishers Weekly, 175:30, May 11, 1959.

every chain has established security procedures that are being geared to meet current situations and problems.<sup>2</sup>

Keeping records, careful controls, and making sure that the records and controls are being kept is crucial to a successful security program, but most variety store men agree that a good security program needs fully-oriented shopper service.<sup>3</sup>

According to this study there are many theories as to what is the best way to curtail theft, but whether it is to make people aware of the possible flaws and shortcomings, to catch them in the act, or to remove the temptation is not known. There are many things a store executive can do to reduce theft. Plain-clothes men operate as the main apprehender against the professional operators; whereas, the uniformed men frustrate the amateur. It is felt by some executives that the best way to curtail theft is a combination of a plain-clothes man and a uniformed man so that many of the professionals may be apprehended and most of the amateurs, who might be tempted, are frightened away.

Other control devices include such things as the manager knowing the present laws regarding theft, how to

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<sup>2</sup>"Trade-up Triggers Fresh Look at Store Security Programs," Chain Store Age, 36:30b-30c, November, 1960.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

catch a suspect, and what to do after catching a suspect. A store needs strict rules covering closing. It, also, needs bulletins and newsletters informing personnel of the latest rackets, current laws, and legislation.

Special measures such as security showcases, television, and two way mirrors are a deterrent to theft and should not be underestimated as cloak and dagger measures.

The R. E. O'Neil Study. Three hundred and eight companies were questioned and 64 per cent said that shoplifting was an increasing problem. These companies operated 2,918 stores with a volume of three billion dollars yearly. The results showed that 1,960 food stores lost 260 million dollars in profit or one half of one percent of total sales.<sup>4</sup> The study went on to state that the average theft of all the stores was \$1.11, but in stores doing more than 500,000 dollars in sales a year the average theft was \$1.45.

Mr. O'Neil reasoned with figures such as these it is no wonder that supermarkets are interested in curtailing shoplifting. Most stores O'Neil questioned felt that with

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<sup>4</sup>Robert E. O'Neil, "How to Reduce Shoplifting Losses," Progressive Grocer, 40:55, July, 1961.

intelligent handling, companies could reduce shoplifting, but not eliminate it. Mr. O'Neil thinks this can be done with the simplest of steps and at little or no cost. Some store managers felt that the most important method is prevention by removing the temptation to steal. Temptations such as numerous blind alleys in the store, small valuable items placed where they cannot be watched, poor lighting, selling bulky products in unsealed bags, ignoring customers, and permitting lax checkouts occur in many stores.

The study also found that women are the most frequent offenders, but this was probably because they are the most frequent shoppers. The study found that the most popular items stolen are the smaller, higher priced items, and the most popular days are the busy ones. Such methods were used as switching prices, hiding items on children, and hiding items in high top boots, socks, hats, boxes, books, cereal boxes, baby carriages, pocketbooks, overalls, umbrellas, and gloves. A cereal box that has the new easy open top can be emptied and cigarettes stored inside the package and closed again. Pizza boxes make good places to store valuable phonograph records.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 58

According to operators and security people most familiar with anti-shoplifting work, vigorous prosecution is the best policy in the long run for the prevention of shoplifting. The exception to this rule is one timers and children. Laws need to be tightened and better law enforcement practiced. Any grocer can help to improve laws if he will work with other merchants in exerting enough influence on legislators to change the laws so that the merchant will be less open to libel suits.

Store managers can help keep losses down by keeping records and exchanging information with fellow merchants regarding shoplifters' methods and repeat shoplifters. Pictures should be taken of known shoplifters, and copies passed to each store so that one timers can be saved and third time repeaters can be prosecuted. It is the manager or owner who plays the key role. He must keep employees informed as to the methods of shoplifters, how to spot them, and how far the employee can go in apprehending a shoplifter.

A person on seeing a shopper taking something should note what was taken, where it was put, the time and place, and not let the suspect out of his sight. Only the manager or owner should do the apprehending. The suspect should be invited to a private room. The manager should be firm, calm, not lay a hand on the shoplifter, make sure a female

witness is present, and call the police. A scene can damage the store's reputation.

Some stores get together and put on a "blitz" where shoplifters are the target. In Detroit, stores combined for a two day effort or "blitz" to catch as many shoplifters as possible with a lot of publicity. They caught and prosecuted fifty-eight shoppers. The number of shoplifters was decreased from twenty-five to forty per store per week before the drive, to three to five per store per week after the drive, and shoplifting was a long time (sic) in climbing upward again.<sup>6</sup>

East Bay Food Dealers' Association members were suffering a \$3.63 loss per shoplifting trip, and there were one hundred and thirty shoplifting trips per store per month. They set up a central file index with telephone hookups to every store. A phone call was all it took to determine if a shoplifter was a first offender. Houston, Texas, staged a similar drive where forty shoplifters were caught in four days among whom were teenagers and persons from fine homes.

Richard O'Good of the Michigan Retailers' Association believes that the "blitz" is good, but effects are short

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 71.

lived. He feels that a "blitz" is needed monthly or that there should be a continuous drive to catch shoplifters.<sup>7</sup>

Office Appliance Study. Shoplifting can happen anywhere, and almost any size item can be taken. Office appliance dealers report that items stolen cover almost their whole inventory. But high on the list are the smaller items that can be easily lifted such as pens, pencils, and similar items. However, such big items as portable typewriters and calculators were listed as stolen by dealers who admitted they thought shoplifting was limited to little things.

"The best prevention is education, and you should indoctrinate your store employees to always be aware of the possibility of shoplifting."<sup>8</sup> Employees should be taught that the amateur and professional will probably not steal if they feel that they are being watched. Mirrors, blinking lights, buzzers, and bells give the prospective shoplifter a feeling of being watched. Employees should be informed not to lay small items on counters that can be brushed easily into a purse, and that high counters can be hidden behind

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>"The Shoplifter and You," Office Appliances, 114:34-35, September 4, 1961.

while taking from another counter. Usually the shoplifter is a middle aged, married woman who appears to be a respectable shopper. Professionals do not have a nervous air about them as amateurs do, and, also, they sometimes work in pairs by one distracting the clerk while the other steals.

Many people feel that most shoplifting is done by juveniles and kleptomaniacs which is probably true, but there is a large number of people who shoplift and do not fall into either category. Experts say that the true kleptomaniac is rare, but most shoplifters, when caught, will use that as an excuse if they feel that they can get away with it.<sup>9</sup> The real kleptomaniac steals by impulse which, of course, the professional does not; but, the professional will offer little or no resistance if caught and will offer to pay for the stolen article.

If the item stolen is small, or the offender is not a professional, the majority of stores will release them after they offer to pay for the article with nothing more than having them sign a release and giving them a lecture. The little items taken by amateurs can mount up in a very short time. With a little luck on the shoplifter's part and a little carelessness on the manager's part, shoplifters can carry away a sizeable share of the stock and profit.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.



Dorothy Crowe Study. Dorothy Crowe, a store detective, states that there are many people shoplifting that come from fine families, belong to civic organizations, have A-1 credit, and have children in college, but yet they still shoplift usually to outsmart the store, to get something for nothing, or to play a game.

Tempting merchandise on shelves and counters has stirred many a shopper into stealing. Also, since merchants usually do not prosecute shoppers who are not known shoplifters, the temptation is even greater. Once caught, an amateur might not steal in that store again, but in the next store, he would be more careful not to get caught. Some stores do not want to press charges, have conflicts with society people and high ranking officials, or deal with unpleasant publicity; so they get a confession for the insurance company and let the suspect go.

Dorothy Crowe reasons that stores need a centralized information center and stricter laws. Once caught a shoplifter should have his picture taken and distributed to other stores so that if he steals again, or it is learned that he is a repeater, he can be prosecuted. The shoplifter does not usually face a stiff sentence or fine. Courts need to be stricter by placing first offense

shoplifters on probation, and jailing the repeaters and professionals.<sup>11</sup>

- The Keith M. Rogers Study. Because losses continue to be high, more corrective measures are needed. Although there is no cure-all, losses can be materially decreased. Because of faulty detection methods and the many small businesses that operate on merchandise that is stolen, shoplifting has become a major problem. Figures on the extent of shoplifting are deceiving; since many of the losses--although reflected in inventory--are not reported to the police.

The general opinion is that most shoplifters are women. This may be true of the number of shoplifters apprehended, but the dollar value of goods stolen by men is higher than that stolen by women. While women shoplifters predominate in women's wear departments, there are more male professionals to be found in men's wear, appliances, warehouses, factories, and supermarkets. Shoplifters run from an amateur, kleptomaniac, juvenile, and vagrant to the professional and narcotic.

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<sup>11</sup>Dorothy Crowe, "Thieves I Have Known," Saturday Evening Post, 243:21, February 4, 1961.

Shoplifters like crowded first floors, aisles and counters piled high with merchandise, and articles displayed near exits, because taking and concealing such articles is easier. Also, toilet rooms are convenient for repacking or transferring articles. Christmas and other holidays afford special opportunities for the shoplifter, but shoplifting is not dependent on holidays; it is an all-year business. A careful check should always be maintained on unguarded merchandise on docks, loaded carts, and open bins; or when merchandise is near rest rooms and telephones or in crowded aisles and counters. By being alert and observant, the personnel of a store can stop a lot of theft.

No one but an experienced store detective, police officer, or appointed private detective should be allowed to take a shoplifter into custody. Since most shoplifters are repeaters, when the article taken is of little value, it is often better to wait for the thief to return in order to strengthen the case against her.<sup>12</sup> Be sure that the merchandise taken is from the store, since some "shoplifters" will place his own article on the shelf and "steal" it; thereby leaving the store open to libel. Do not touch the

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<sup>12</sup>Keith M. Rogers, Detection and Prevention of Business Losses (New York: Arco Publishing Company, Inc., 1962), p. 8.

person, and make sure that she has taken something. Always keep a woman with you when questioning a woman suspect. Co-operate with other businesses and organizations in solving the shoplifting problem.<sup>13</sup> Always remember that the person learns which stores are tight and to be avoided and which are wide open and easily plundered.

Panel on Pilferage Control. Mr. Al Zavelle, a New York University book store manager, states that shoplifters account for 25 per cent of inventory shrinkage. Honest shrinkage accounts for 50 per cent of loss, and the other 25 per cent is accounted for through store personnel.

He states that 75 per cent of the customer thefts are made by the American housewife, and that only 25 per cent is stolen by professional thieves. It must be realized that the housewife usually does most of the shopping.

It is Mr. Zavelle's opinion that you cannot tell an amateur from a professional any more. Also he states that shoplifters can be from six to ninety-six years old and that of thirty people indicted in a month, there was "a lawyer, a doctor's wife, an insurance executive, the daughter of a university professor, a bank teller, the wife

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 14.

of an industrialist, a U.S. Treasury Agent, and the manager of a store next door."<sup>14</sup>

The Ray J. Eichenlaub Study. Mr. Eichenlaub states that "shoplifting is at its peak to date and may become worse. Arrest laws are limited, and merchants are afraid to apprehend shoplifters."<sup>15</sup> There is even a six month's school where the trade of shoplifting is learned.<sup>16</sup>

Amateurs ordinarily steal merchandise for their own use. They are in all walks of life and dress well. Normally they are not people who have to steal, and when caught they profess to not knowing why they steal.

Professionals have many methods, and prefer certain types of stores from which to steal. They watch the date for grand openings; since they know the store will be crowded then, and it is easier to steal in a crowd. They often carry a large bag or a small purse in their hands; so that if they are being watched they can buy a small item and still not have to open their handbag to pay for it.

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<sup>14</sup>Panel, "Self-Service Techniques, Pilferage Control," Publishers Weekly, 175:30-31, May 11, 1951.

<sup>15</sup>Ray J. Eichenlaub, "Shoplifting--What is it Costing You, Mr. Dealer," Office Appliances, 108:144, November, 1958.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 155.

They have pockets under their arms, and their coats have big sleeves.

Also, there are crutch artists, and hook and harness artists who wear special skirts under the ordinary skirt with pockets resembling news dealer's aprons.<sup>17</sup>

The Chain Store Age Study, May, 1962. The Cutler Ridge Shopping Center of Miami works in co-operation with the center manager and police to catch and scare shoplifters away from their stores. Personnel are kept aware of what to watch for; what they can do, and how they can get immediate help from plain-clothes men, local police, and the central office. Managers have at hand local laws, safe methods of apprehension, and ways to report theft. Police officers help explain in staff meetings ways of setting traps, and the importance of prompt reporting.

Managers in all stores announce over loud speakers "Situation Zero." This warns personnel of the presence of shoplifters, makes shoppers pause, scares would-be thieves, and arouses store leaders to the need for alertness.

Persons caught are taken to the central office where the security officers of each store come down and take a look at the person so that the suspect can be later

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<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

recognized as a possible shoplifter. After police interviews have been held and proper identification is made, polaroid photos of each accused individual are taken for the record. Store owners feel that if thieves learn they will be arrested and sentenced they will keep away.<sup>18</sup>

The Robinson and Hass Study. Robinson and Hass in the report of their study state that "although the great majority of a store's customers are honest, a few people are unable to resist the temptation to 'lift' merchandise."<sup>19</sup> These researchers recommend the following precautions that a manager should establish:

1. Valuable merchandise that can be easily stolen should be displayed only in protected showcases. Salespeople, when showing expensive goods, should be taught to present only a few items at a time, and to put unwanted merchandise promptly back in the showcases.

2. Salespeople should be taught to be observant, to watch their merchandise, and to report any suspicious actions on the part of customers. It is the employee's responsibility to report all such cases to the manager and let him handle them.

3. For psychological purposes, as well as for assistance in cases of loss, the merchant should engage the services of an established protection agency.

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<sup>18</sup>"Centers Work out Warning Systems," Chain Store Age, 38:26, May, 1962.

<sup>19</sup>O. Preston Robinson and Kenneth B. Hass, How to Establish and Operate a Retail Store, (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1952), p. 383.

Detectives of such an agency can help to avert loss and can take over any cases that need investigation.

4. The merchant should learn to become aware of certain 'moves' or actions which may indicate that a customer is about to shoplift. For example, a person carrying a coat over her arm may rest her arm on merchandise on a counter while she examines items with her free hand. This may be perfectly honest action, but still there is the possibility that merchandise is being concealed beneath the coat. Customers carrying unpurchased merchandise from one section of the store to another should be carefully observed, as should persons who take items into rest rooms and telephone booths.<sup>20</sup>

The manager and the employees must be aware that actions of honest individuals are imitated by the dishonest individuals and great care should be taken in order not to make a false accusation which could result in serious trouble for the store and a resulting drop in sales.

Robinson (and Others) Study. The majority of smaller stores usually meet the problem of shopper theft through the establishment of systems, procedures, and supervision which are adequate to reduce loss hazards. Only the larger stores find their protection problem to be sufficiently complicated to warrant the organization of a separate department. In such a protection department the authors of this study list the following responsibilities which are usually provided for:

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<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 384.



1. Inside detective work. This division of the protection department, usually performed by plain-clothes detectives, is concerned primarily with the prevention and control of shoplifting.

2. Police protection. Many stores appoint a group of specially uniformed policemen and policewomen who are placed at strategic points throughout the store to protect and assist customers, to direct customers, to direct customer traffic, and to guard the store's property.

3. Investigation of store employees. A third phase of protection organization in a large store is concerned with special investigations, particularly in non-selling areas to discover and eliminate pilfering of merchandise on the part of the store employees.

4. Outside investigations. Outside investigations, as a part of the protection function, make collections on bad checks and overdrawn accounts, and may investigate applicants for positions of trust within the store.

5. Tube room and cashier department protection. Many larger stores provide special escorts and guards, uniformed and otherwise, to protect store employees who transport money from one section of the store to another and protect the sections of the store where cash accumulates in large amounts.

6. Lost-and-found operation. The store's protection department also provides for the operation of a lost-and-found department where customers and employees may be assisted in finding lost property.

7. Survey operation. The protection function may also include a special survey section responsible for studying reasons for excessive inventory shortages or other protection problems developing throughout the store.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>O. Preston Robinson and Others, Store Organization and Operation, (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1957), p. 435.

According to Robinson the function of protection departments which is related to shoplifting is that of "inside detective work." This work is that of the plain-clothes man who passes as a customer and is always on the alert for shoplifters. These detectives are trained to learn the movements of the eyes or hands of a person that indicate the actions of a suspected shoplifter. The job of store detective calls for special training.

Robinson found that usually an untrained detective is assigned to work with a trained one. The apprentice detective must learn the importance of assuming the right mental and physical attitude while patrolling the floors. Tension of any kind interferes with concentration and limits observation. The trainee must learn to relax face muscles and not to stare at people. Professional thieves are on the alert for people who stare at them or watch them closely and consider it a sign that they are under suspicion of stealing. They also learn to make a mental picture of anyone who stares at them; so that if in the future they should see the same person in the same place or area, they are very likely to become suspicious of that person. The detective must learn that any other action that might attract attention should be avoided.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 438.

The cardinal rule for detectives is always to keep the suspect in full view. During even brief moments the suspect may have an opportunity to conceal the merchandise or transfer it to some other person. A detective must be absolutely certain of the facts before accusing an individual of dishonesty. Shoplifting is a crime punishable by law and any case that is brought against a suspect must be based upon fact. There must be no assumptions or opinions made by the detective. The most important quality in a detective is accuracy in establishing evidence.

According to Robinson not only must the new detective acquire the proper mental and physical attitudes, he must learn the 'moves' by which shoplifting suspects may be recognized. He must distinguish between actions that may be classified as being definitely suspicious, and those that are the natural movements made by the average customer. To develop the ability to detect the difference between genuine and counterfeit action the beginner is taught to look at customers and call to the attention of the trained detective any moves that appear suspicious. Gradually, by having his suspects studied and the honest ones discarded, and at the same time by helping the trained detective with actual cases, he learns to recognize shoplifters. The new detective is not authorized to make an arrest until the

trained detective decides that the new detective has good judgment and can make accurate decisions.<sup>23</sup>

Robinson and his co-authors state that:

In considering material that may be counted as evidence in a shoplifting case, a detective first sets out to make sure there is enough outward expression on the part of the shoplifter. This intent may be shown in any one of several ways. The shoplifter may reveal her guilt in the way in which she looks at people before actually removing the merchandise from the counter. She may take the merchandise, leave the department, and then, when she feels herself safe in some other part of the store, examine the stolen merchandise, at the same time erasing the price or removing the price ticket entirely. Or she may take the merchandise into either a washroom or a telephone booth and there wrap it in a paper, put it in a bag, or conceal it under her coat. In addition to watching for one of these moves, the detective usually permits his shoplifter to leave the store and even walk for a distance from the store before making the arrest. Every effort is made to eliminate excuses given by shoplifters to the effect that: 'they weren't aware of what they were doing'; 'they had forgotten'; or 'they were looking for a friend'.

After the arrest has been made, the subject is usually taken back to the protection office, where she is questioned and informed of her position in the case. At the same time an effort is made to establish her identity; learn something of her history, occupation, and means of support; and check the store files and the mutual files of other stores to see if she has been arrested for shoplifting activities on any previous occasion. The subject is then either prosecuted or is allowed to go free after due record has been made of the case, depending entirely upon the conversation with her and upon what the store knows of her previous activities.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 439.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., pp. 440-441.

According to the Robinson study, many times no arrest is made even though there is evidence of intent to steal and a witness to the case. There may be some facts lacking in the case, or the detectives may merely feel that there is some reason why the shoplifters should not be arrested. In these cases a record is made describing the suspect, the merchandise that was taken, the department from which it was taken, the date, the time of day, the names of the detectives to whom the customer is 'known', and any other pertinent information. These records are filed and serve a good purpose in determining the truthfulness of the suspect's story if she is later arrested, and, also, in establishing the amount of merchandise that was taken. In the majority of cases, those shoplifters who steal once and are able to get away with it come back the second time, and if still undetected, return a third time, and so on, until they are finally arrested.<sup>25</sup>

Stores have been very cautious in making arrests of shoplifter suspects because the burden of proof of guilt lies with the store. Unless protected by insurance, a couple of false arrests could cost the store more than they might lose in a year's pilferages. For that reason, the store must be very careful in apprehending the suspect.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 442.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., p. 443.

## CHAPTER III

### DESIGN OF THE STUDY

Pertinent to this study are the interview schedule, tables, and figures. These are introduced with a report of the findings from each question asked in the interview form and followed by quotes from managers that apply to the subject. The summation of the above information is graphically shown by charts and graphs indicating the relationships and non-relationships found by comparing the number of detection methods one store has with those of another store.

It should be understood that methods used to detect shoplifting are composed of several factors and are seldom promulgated by any certain agency. Reliable means of determining fairly good methods used in supermarkets have passed from person to person and have only within the past few years become significant to the supermarket manager. There is only a small amount of literature available. The greatest per cent of this related literature is contained in periodicals.

The material in this study will be presented in the following order: (1) interview schedule with question,

answer, and explanation, (2) presentation of data through charts and graphs, and (3) summary.

### I. INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

The interview schedule was used as a guide in securing information from the supermarket managers in Emporia, Kansas. The information presented here is strictly an opinion of the supermarket managers. The manager is the person closest to the problem of shoplifting. He is, therefore, one of the best sources concerning the situation in Emporia for finding data pertaining to detection methods which seem to work the best and those methods which work poorly.

The interview schedule contained ten questions and twenty-one parts. The schedule was followed in the order of the questions when interviewing the managers. When necessary the questions were explained to the managers in order to obtain comparable answers.

The majority of the questions were formed so that the manager would need only to give simple "yes", "no", or one word answers.

## II. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS WITH EXPLANATIONS

Question 1. How many square feet of sales floor do you have?

<u>Answer.</u>	Store	A	B	C	D	E	F
	Square Feet	9,800	5,700	9,700	7,400	6,500	13,500

Explanation. This question was asked since it was easily answered and opened the interview with a single question. It also gives a size relationship among the stores. Stores ranged from 5,700 square feet to 13,500 square feet of selling space.

Question 2. How many of these detection methods do you have in your store now? (List of devices was shown to the manager.)

Answer. Store A: eight one-way mirrors, four peep holes, employees.

Store B: employees, two mechanical signals.

Store C: two peep holes, employees.

Store D: four two-way mirrors, one peep hole, one watcher from above, employees.

Store E: none.

Store F: three two-way mirrors, one peep hole, mechanical signals, employees.



Explanation. A card was presented to the manager after asking him question two. This card contained a list of detection methods for the manager. He was asked to check the number of detection methods he had in the store. The list contained two-way mirrors, peep holes, plain-clothes men, one-way mirrors, curtains, uniformed guards, watchers from above, mechanical signals used to alert personnel of the presence of shoplifters, and other detection devices used in reducing shoplifting in the store.

The total sum of detection methods used in Emporia supermarkets amounts to eight one-way mirrors, eight peep holes, three mechanical signals, seven two-way mirrors, one watcher from above, and five stores using employees to watch shoppers.

Question 3. Does your store place certain items such as high priced or small items near employees to reduce theft of these items? If so, list the items you have placed in such places.

Answer. It was found that in every store the manager did place high priced items near the checkout stands in order that they could be watched more closely. In all stores they were placed near the cashier or meat department.

Explanation. This question was asked to determine if managers took the precaution of placing items so that the item would be less likely to be stolen.

This question was used to determine if special placing of high priced items was a method used to prevent shoplifting. Mr. X of one store stated that proper placing of these items definitely reduced shoplifting losses of these items in his store.

Question 3a. If so, regarding question three, list the items you place in such places.

Answer. Such items listed were found to be cigarettes, razor blades, health and beauty aids, high priced electrical appliances, drugs, spices, and records.

Explanation. Cigarettes and razor blades were common placement items to all stores. The other items were placed in stores heterogenously. That is to say, that health and beauty aids were placed to be watched in one store, and not the other stores; that drugs were placed to be watched in one store and not the other stores, and so forth.

Question 4. Does your store instruct employees on what to do if they see shoplifters?

Answer. All stores answered yes to this question.

Explanation. This question was asked to determine if the managers used as a detection method the instruction of personnel on how to detect and catch shoplifters. This method was used in all but one store to some extent.

Question 4a. If so, which employees are instructed? Full time, part time, or all employees?

<u>Answer.</u>	<u>Store</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>F</u>
	Full time	x					
	Part time						
	<u>All</u>		x	x	x	x	x

Explanation. This question was asked to ascertain whether or not the managers gave instruction to their employees concerning shoplifters. It was found that the manager of store A gave instruction to full time employees, and that the managers of the other supermarkets gave instruction to all of their employees.

Question 4b. If so, what are the employees to do when they see a shopper steal something?

Answer. In all cases the employee was to contact a key employee or the manager. In stores D and C this was

all that the employee was to do. In the other stores they were to watch the suspect closely and identify the object. In store A they were to watch, also, where the suspect put the articles taken. The employees of store E were to contact the manager when they saw a shoplifter. This act would not constitute training since the employee left the shoplifter. The employees of store E stated that the manager did not emphasize catching shoplifters.

Explanation. This question was used to determine the extent of knowledge passed on to the employee about shoplifting. Either the manager is assuming the employee knows what to do or that the manager can be contacted very quickly. These answers were lacking in the detail required of an employee according to the related literature.

Question 5. Has your store apprehended shoppers for shoplifting?

Answer. All of the stores answered yes to this question.

Explanation. This question was asked to see if the stores used detection methods to apprehend shoppers.

Question 5a. If so, what is the number of shoplifters that your store apprehended last year (1963)?

Answer. This question received answers of from three to fifty shoppers apprehended. In only two cases was the information obtained from permanent records. One of these stores apprehended twenty and the other seventeen shoppers. The manager of store E seemed to contradict himself in his answer to this question. When approached the first time this manager stated that they had caught one hundred shoplifters during the year; however, when asked the same question one week later, he stated that they had caught three shoplifters during the year. This store manager keeps no permanent records on shoplifters since he was afraid that a written record could leave his store open to a libel suit. It is evident that the manager of store E was relying on his memory when replying to the question. Manager of store E had also stated that he did not instruct clerks on apprehending shoplifters; yet he apprehended the largest number of shoplifters of any of the six supermarkets.

Explanation. This question was asked to determine to what extent the detection methods were helping. That is, if the methods used were resulting in catching shoplifters.

Question 5b. How many shoplifters were apprehended in the last three months?

Answer. It was found that 45 per cent of the persons caught were apprehended in the last three months (1963).

Explanation. This question was asked to determine if there was a greater amount of shoplifting during the last three months which was the Christmas shopping season. This definitely shows that the majority of the shoplifters apprehended are caught in the last three months of the year.

Question 6. Does the store take and record information about persons apprehended for shopper theft?

Answer. In answer to this question only two stores indicated that they recorded information about a persons characteristics. These were stores A and E.

Explanation. This question was asked to determine to what extent the stores were trying to prevent shoplifters from repeating their stealing. If the store had a description of the shoplifter, the employees could recognize a person that had stolen from them before and could even distribute the information to other stores so they could watch for the shoplifter.

Question 6a. If so, indicate on card "B" which characteristics were recorded.

Answer. Store A recorded only the item, amount, and signature. Store E recorded only the shoplifter's age and sex.

Explanation. This question was asked to ascertain whether or not these supermarket managers were compiling a file on known shoplifters that would give needed information in identifying a suspect later.

Question 7. Does your store give information to other stores?

Answer. Four of the stores gave information to the other stores. These stores were A, B, D, and F. However, they gave information concerning only ten or twelve shoplifters who came in frequently.

Explanation. This question was asked to determine if the stores co-operated with one another in trying to cut down on repeat shoplifters and new shoplifting methods that they had discovered.

Question 7a. Does your store give information to an association?

Answer. It was found that none of the stores gave information to any group.

Explanation. This question was asked to determine if the stores co-operated with each other in apprehending shoplifters, and in determining repeaters in methods of catching or preventing shoplifting.

Question 7b. Does your store give information to the police department?

Answer. Only one store, store A, gave information to the police department. This store also gave information to other stores and recorded information about shoplifters.

Explanation. This question was asked to determine if the stores co-operated with the police department in attempting to reduce their shoplifting losses. One store manager stated, "We do not give out information to the police department since the police do not do anything with the information when they receive it."

Question 7c. Does your store receive information concerning shoppers' theft?

Answer. Four of the stores, A, B, D, and F, obtained information from other agencies such as independent corporations, chain corporations, and other stores.



Explanation. This question was explained to mean that outside agencies were any agencies outside their own stores. This would include chain stores' literature.

Question 8. Does your store prosecute shoplifters?

Answer. Stores A, D, and F prosecuted shoplifters. Stores B, C, and E did not prosecute.

Explanation. The manager of store A stated, "Prosecution is best for the prevention of shoplifting . . . Without prosecution you would only be helping the person caught, and you would not be keeping people from shoplifting." This store quit prosecuting for two years and their losses increased to the extent that it was necessary to resume the action. Since resuming prosecution, their losses have decreased. According to the manager of store D, prosecuting was of little value since a person who shoplifts was usually mentally ill. The manager of this store used as his thesis the hypothesis that we prosecute robbers and other law breakers and yet we have a greater crime rate each year. The manager of store D suggested that these people need help; therefore, one should try to get them to go to church or send them to a psychiatrist. None of the stores made it a practice to prosecute a first offender. A

method used in lieu of prosecution was to have the offender sign a confession and pay for the goods.

Question 8a. If so, how many shoppers were prosecuted by your store last year (1963)?

Answer. Store A prosecuted twenty-four; stores B, C, D, and E prosecuted none; and store F prosecuted three.

Explanation. Store D prosecuted only severe cases. This store manager thought it sufficient to let the shoplifter "sweat it out" for a week or so before telling him "whether or not he would be prosecuted." The manager of store F expressed the opinion that by making examples of a few the word would get around. This manager prosecuted two college students and an Emporian. The manager of store A prosecuted many and will continue to do so. He states, "Rigid adherence lowers the losses, because potential thieves hear about it and realize that they, too, might be caught and prosecuted." However, managers of stores A, B, D, and F stated that a good case must be made against the shoplifter before the court would convict a person. (In 1964 the police department began taking full responsibility for prosecution. The store reported the case to the police, and subsequently the police department brought suit against the shoplifter.)

Question 8c. Does your store prosecute all shoppers apprehended?

Answer. All of the managers answered no to this question.

Explanation. As pointed out previously, all of the store managers did not prosecute. Again, it was found that the offenders caught for the first time usually stated that they had not stolen before nor would again. If after checking available records this was found to be true, usually the manager did not prosecute. Those persons who talked back, were indignant, or arrogant were prosecuted. An example of arrogance related by one store manager was of a woman who asked him to call her husband and that her husband would pay for the item taken; then the manager could let her go. The manager prosecuted her.

Question 9. Does your store take inventory?

Answer. All of the managers answered yes to this question.

Explanation. By taking inventory the managers had a better knowledge of their shrinkage problems than they would by not taking inventory. Even though the managers are

required by state law to take an annual inventory count, this question was asked to lead to the next question.

Question 9a. If so, how often does your store take inventory?

Answer. The manager of store A took inventory once a year plus a running inventory. Manager of store B took inventory three times annually. Managers of stores C, D, E and F took inventory once a year.

Explanation. The more inventory checks a manager made the more accurate he would be in making a shortage estimate.

Question 9b. Does your store run spot checks on goods believed to have been stolen?

Answer. Managers of stores A, B, and D ran spot checks. The managers of stores C, E, and F had not run spot checks.

Explanation. With spot checks managers could tell almost exactly how many units of the items being checked were stolen. Of course there is a possibility that an employee might not have tallied the item as being sold or have given too much to a customer for the amount paid.

Therefore, some stock shortages might be due to such causes.

Question 9c. If so, how often, and when was the last spot check?

Answer. Manager of store A made at least one spot check each week. The manager of store B ran spot checks six or eight times a year. Managers of stores C and E ran their last spot checks in December (1963) and did not plan any more. The managers of stores D and F ran them whenever they decided it was necessary.

Explanation. The manager of store A had one or more items under surveillance at all times. The manager of store B made checks depending on what items he thought were being taken. The manager of store D explained how often he ran spot checks, "At times our losses seem to become obvious, and it is at this time that we check." A store manager conducting more spot checks probably would have a better estimate of how many dollars of goods were being lost and be more aware of shoplifting losses.

Question 10. How many dollars worth of goods are taken from your store by shoplifters each year?

Answer. The annual loss as estimated by the respective store managers was approximately \$5,000 for store A; \$590 for store B; \$400 for store C; \$7,500 for store D; \$1,500 for store E; and \$3,000 for store F.

Explanation. This question was asking for confidential information and it usually required some persuasion to elicit this from the managers. The figures given were estimates as to dollar amounts at retail price of goods thought to have been shoplifted. Due to the hesitancy of the managers, they were asked to give an approximate figure.

Question 10a. What is the loss from shoplifting as a per cent of total net sales?

Answer. The loss as stated by the respective store managers was two per cent for store A, one-half of one per cent for store B, one fourth of one per cent for store C, three per cent for store D, and one per cent for stores E and F.

Explanation. This question was used to obtain a comparison figure to use with the number of methods for detecting shoplifting thereby obtaining data showing if detection methods in one store reduce loss more than in another store.

Question 10b. What per cent of shortages is due to customer theft?

Answer. The per cent of shortages due to customer theft as stated by the respective store managers was 60 per cent for store A, 40 per cent for store C, 65 per cent for store D, 99 per cent for store E, and 90 per cent for store F. The manager of store B stated that he could not give an educated estimate of the per cent of shortages due to customer theft in his store.

Explanation. This question determined how much of a store's shrinkage was due to shoplifting. Stores E and F had a sizeable amount of shopper theft.

Question 10c. List other items that shrinkage of merchandise results from.

Answer. Items listed by the store managers included employees, damage, and loss in transit.

Explanation. This question was asked to determine if the managers were aware of other forms of shrinkage. All of the managers were aware of other shrinkage problems; although, some stated that other losses were very low, as little as one per cent of their total stock shortages.

## CHAPTER IV

### PRESENTATION OF THE DATA

In order to present and interpret the many facts of data concerning the six supermarkets, it was necessary to use one table, Table I, and seven graphs, Figures 1 through 7.

For the purpose of this study, it was necessary to obtain information of a classified nature from the managers of the six supermarkets in Emporia, Kansas. Information received concerned square footage of the store, shrinkage as a per cent of net sales, per cent of shrinkage due to shoplifting, total number of detection methods, number of persons apprehended for shoplifting, number of persons prosecuted for shoplifting, and amount of clerk training. This information was treated in such a manner that no firm was identified.

Information in Table I is a composite of data taken from the interview schedule. The data shown in column one relate to the amount of floor space the store used for displaying merchandise for sale. The space does not include storage space, rest rooms, or office space, but only that space which is used to sell merchandise to the shopper. Since shoplifters only take goods from the selling area,



TABLE I  
A COMPOSITE OF DATA FOR THE SIX SUPERMARKETS

Store	Square feet	Stock shortage as a per cent of net sales	Per cent of stock shortage due to shoplifting	Total number of detection methods	Number persons apprehended for shoplifting in 1963	Number persons prosecuted for shoplifting in 1963	Number yes answers to clerk training
A	9,800	2	60	13	35	24	4
B	5,700	$\frac{1}{2}$	45	3	30	0	3
C	9,700	$\frac{1}{4}$	40	3	24	0	1
D	7,400	3	65	7	20	0	3
E	6,500	1	99	0	3	0	0
F	13,500	1	90	6	17	3	3

NOTE: Table I should be read as follows: Store A had 9,800 square feet, a 2 per cent stock shortage as a per cent of net sales, 60 per cent of its shortages due to shoplifting, twelve detection methods, apprehended thirty-five persons for shoplifting, prosecuted twenty-four persons for shoplifting, and gave four yes answers to clerk training procedures.

this is the area stated. In regard to floor space, the chart indicates 9,800 square feet of selling space in store A; 5,700 square feet of selling space for store B; and the other stores are shown accordingly.

Column two states the amount of stock shortage as a per cent of net sales. In order that the figures in column two would be comparable with national figures, they are stated in per cent of net sales. Stores E and F were about the national average of around one-half of one per cent.<sup>1</sup>

Column three states the per cent of shortage due to shoplifting. It must be understood that supermarkets have other losses in addition to shoplifting. To find what per cent of shortage is due to shoplifting would give an insight into shoplifting losses with respect to the other losses.

Column four gives the total number of detection methods used in the store. These are mirrors, peep holes, signals, employees, and other methods that help to detect shoplifting.

Columns five and six state the number of persons apprehended for shoplifting and the number of persons prosecuted for shoplifting in 1963. Apprehending is to

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<sup>1</sup>Robert E. O'Neil, "How to Reduce Shoplifting Losses," Progressive Grocer, 40:55, July, 1961.

catch a shoplifter with the goods, and to prosecute is to bring the shoplifter to court. To prosecute does not mean that the shoplifter was convicted.

The number of yes answers to the clerk training that the managers gave is stated in column seven. This is the total yes answers the managers gave when asked whether or not they instructed their employees to do certain things such as watch where the shoplifter put the goods, what time the shoplifter took the goods, where the shoplifter obtained the product, and so forth. The manager received one point for each of these items he told the employees about.

Figures 1 through 7 are used for explaining Table I and for comparing data found in Table I.

Figure 1 shows the amount of floor space used for the purposes of displaying merchandise for sale to the customers. Since the supermarkets are of different sizes, it was deemed necessary to determine if the total sales were about equal to the size of the store. That is if a larger store had larger sales. It was found that the total sales and size of store were directly related. The stores ranged in size from 5,700 to 13,700 square feet.

Figure 2, page 55, outlines the percentage of stock shortage due to shoplifting for the six stores of Emporia. Based on losses of all types, with the total of all losses

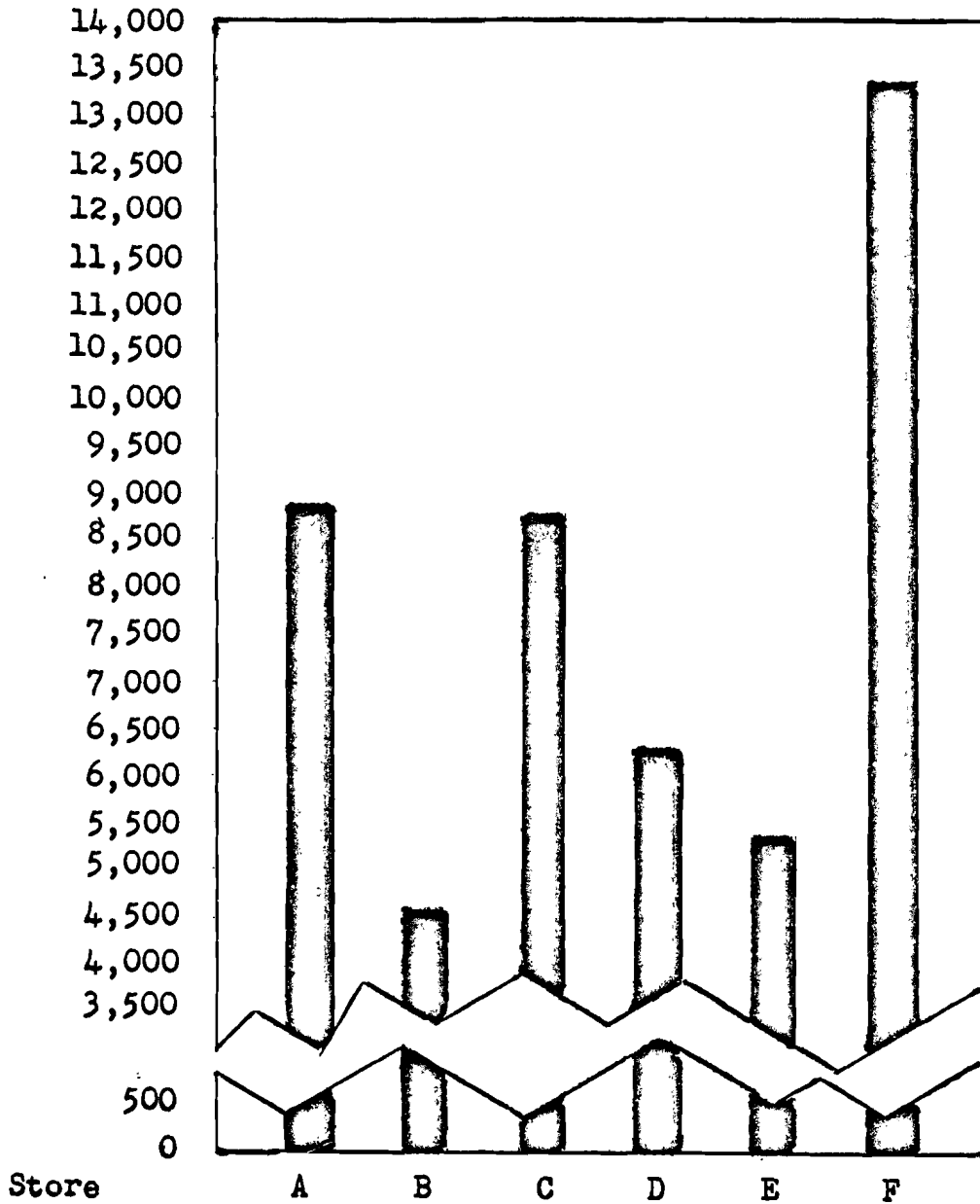


FIGURE 1

FLOOR SPACE IN SQUARE FEET  
FOR THE SIX SUPERMARKETS

NOTE: Figure 1 should be read as follows:  
Store A had 9,800 square feet of floor space.

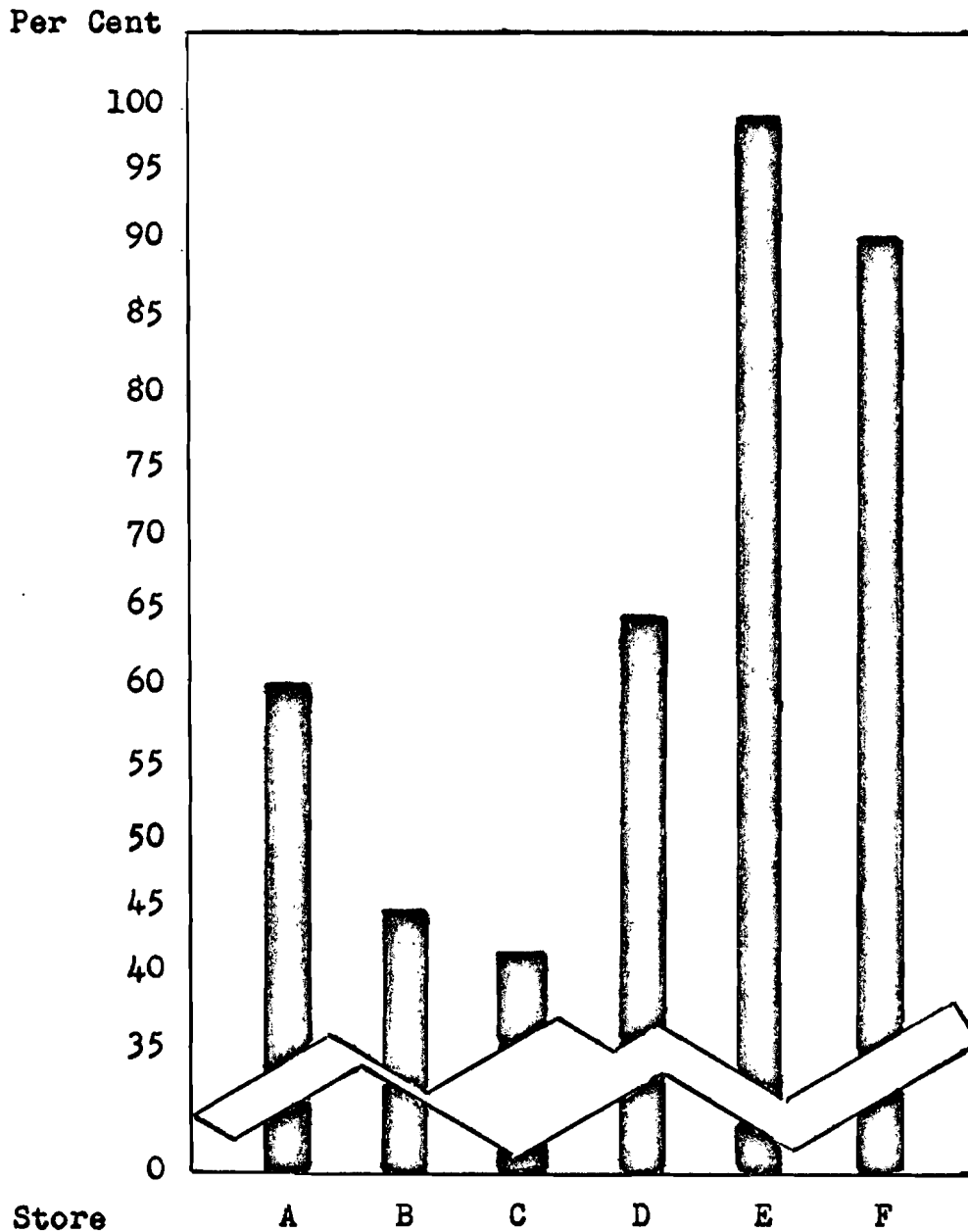


FIGURE 2

PER CENT OF STOCK SHORTAGE DUE TO SHOPLIFTING  
FROM THE SIX SUPERMARKETS

NOTE: Figure 2 should be read as follows: In store A 60 per cent of the stock shortages was due to shoplifting.

being 100 per cent, stores E and F indicated that the majority of their losses, 99 and 90 per cent respectively, was due to shoplifting. On the other hand, stores B and C attributed only 45 and 40 per cent of their losses to shoplifting.

Figure 3 shows the total number of detection methods each store had at the time of the interview. These detection methods had been in use in all of the stores for at least one year, that is since June, 1962, or before. By comparing the number of such methods with the stock shortage as a per cent of net sales, the conclusion of whether or not these detection methods reduce loss may be deduced. Figure 3 indicates that the store with the most detection methods, A, had next to the largest per cent of stock shortages. Store D had the second largest number of detection methods, seven, and had the greatest shortages. Stores B, C, and F followed the same pattern in that the one with the most detection methods had the most losses.

Figure 4, page 58, shows the number of persons prosecuted for shoplifting. In this case also store A had the largest number of prosecutions and the second largest number of losses. Store F had the second highest number of prosecutions, but an average number of losses.



FIGURE 3

TOTAL NUMBER OF DETECTION METHODS  
FOR THE SIX SUPERMARKETS

NOTE: Figure 3 should be read as follows: Store A had thirteen detection methods.

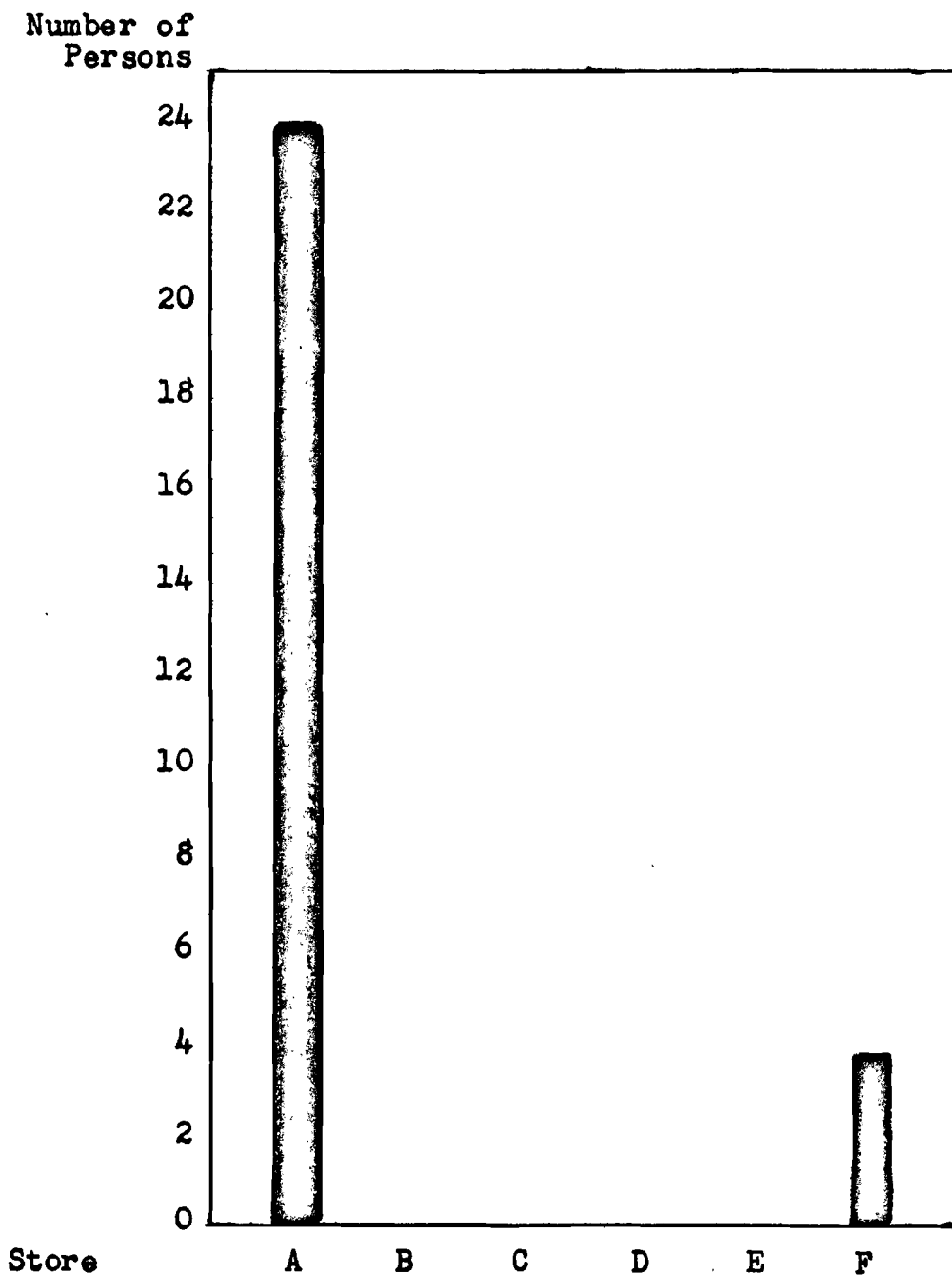


FIGURE 4

NUMBER OF PERSONS PROSECUTED FOR SHOPLIFTING  
FROM THE SIX SUPERMARKETS

NOTE: Figure 4 should be read as follows: Twenty-four persons were prosecuted by store A for shoplifting.



Figure 5 shows stock shortage as a per cent of net sales for the six supermarkets in Emporia, Kansas. This figure indicates that store D attributed the greatest amount of its stock shortages to shoplifting. Store A had the next greatest loss and the remaining stores were clustered around one per cent or less than one per cent loss.

Figure 6, page 61, shows the amount of clerk training the managers gave to the employees. A comparison of the amount of clerk training and the amount of loss shows that the more clerk training there is the more the losses. Store A had the most training and next to the largest amount of loss. Stores B and C had less clerk training and lower losses than stores A and D. Store D had the second highest clerk training and the highest loss. Store E had no clerk training and a lower loss than stores A and D which had high clerk training.

Figure 7, page 62, shows the number of persons apprehended for shoplifting. Store A had the greatest number of persons apprehended and the second largest loss. Store E had the smallest number of persons apprehended and an average loss. Store D had the largest loss and apprehended an average number of persons. Even though managers of stores A and E strongly advised apprehending shoplifters

Per Cent

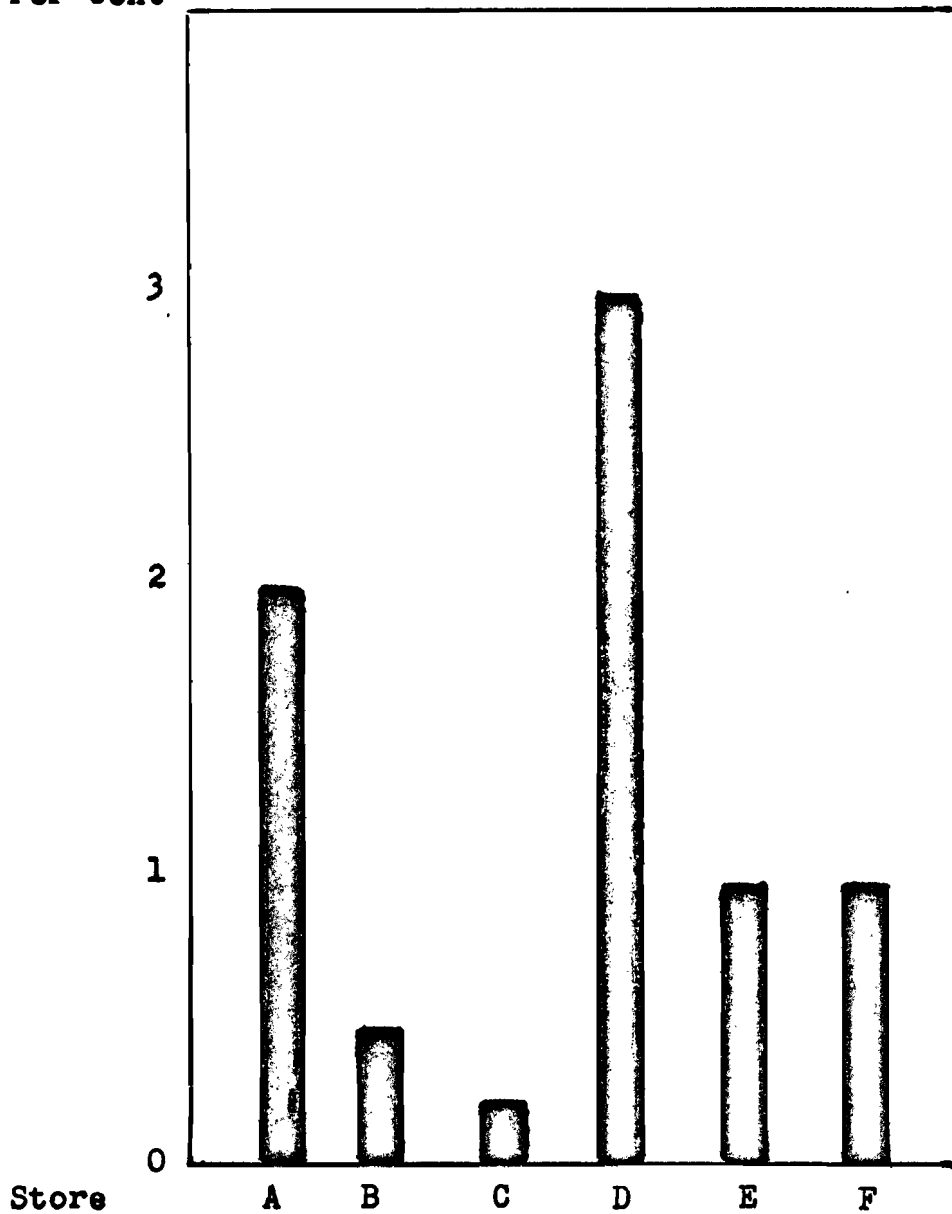


FIGURE 5

STOCK SHORTAGE AS A PER CENT OF NET SALES  
FOR THE SIX SUPERMARKETS

NOTE: Figure 5 should be read as follows: Store A had a two per cent stock shortage as a per cent of net sales.

Answers

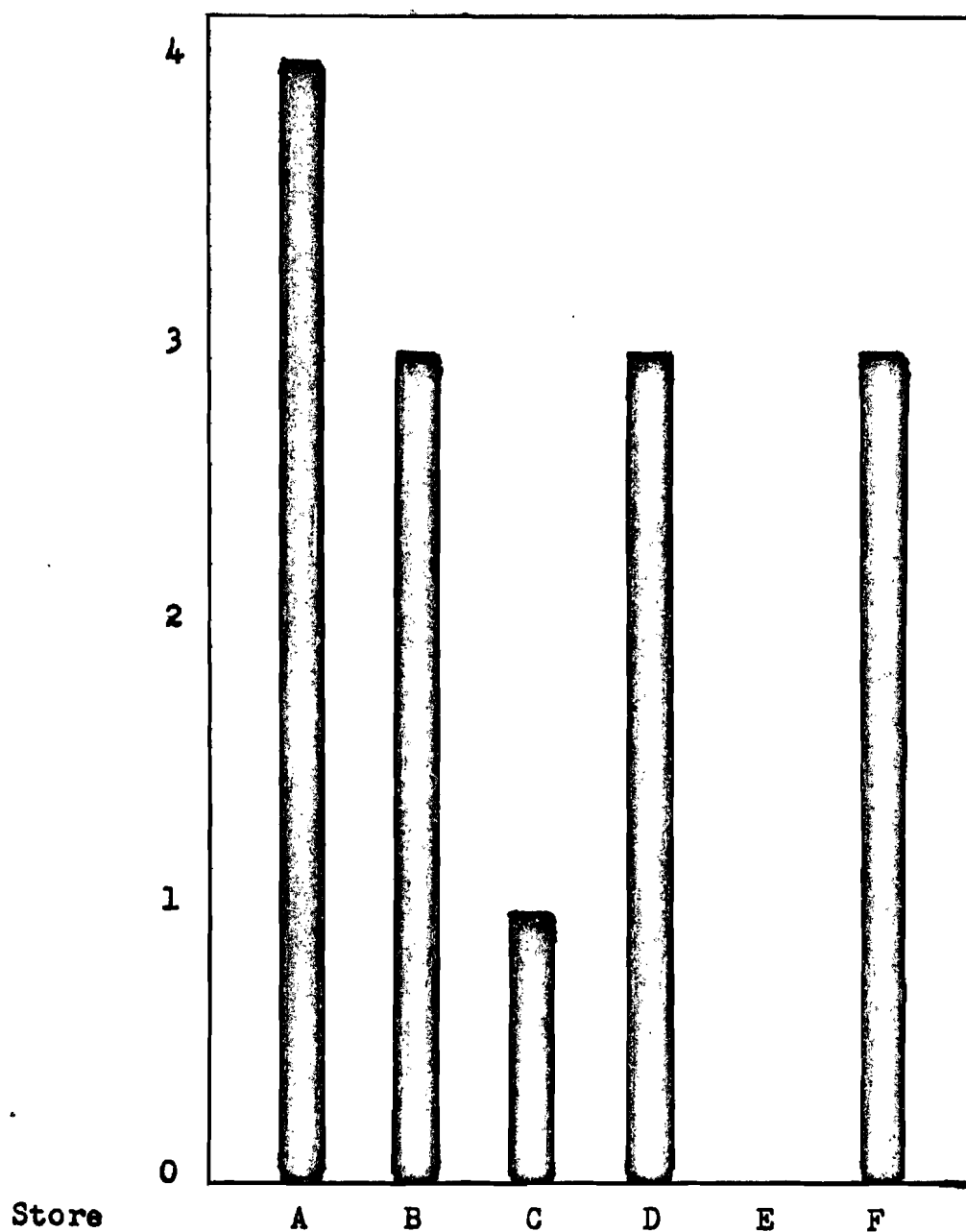


FIGURE 6

NUMBER OF YES ANSWERS TO CLERK TRAINING  
FOR THE SIX SUPERMARKETS

NOTE: Figure 6 should be read as follows: Store A gave four yes answers to the amount of clerk training it gave.

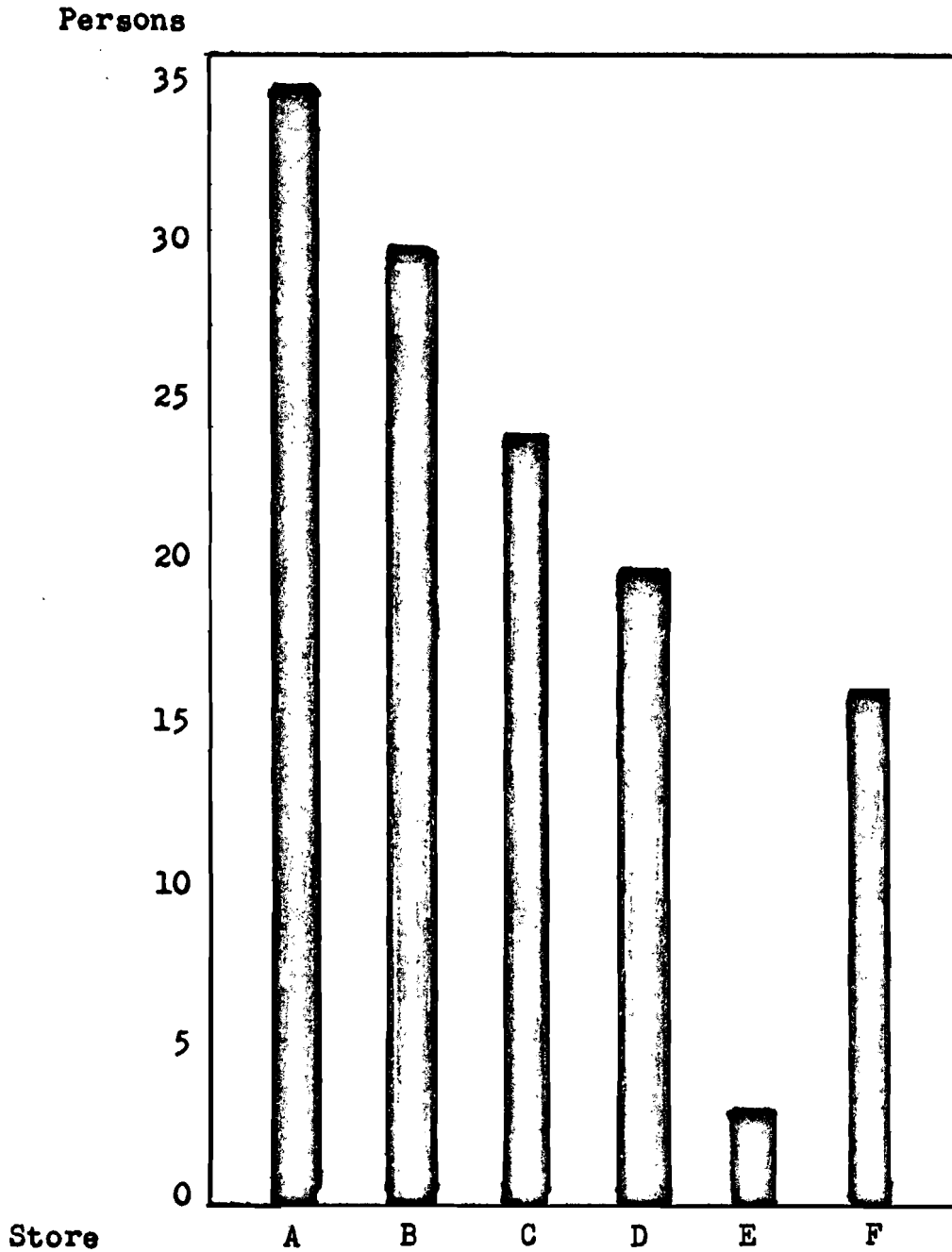


FIGURE 7

NUMBER PERSONS APPREHENDED FOR SHOPLIFTING  
FROM THE SIX SUPERMARKETS

NOTE: Figure 7 should be read as follows: Store A apprehended thirty-five persons for shoplifting.

to cut down losses, the figures indicate that apprehending shoplifters did not reduce losses in their stores.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### I. SUMMARY

The purpose of this study has been to determine: (1) the methods used to detect shoplifting in six supermarkets, (2) if these methods reduced losses from shoplifting, and (3) if methods that worked best were determinable.

In collecting data for this study it was necessary to visit managers of the six supermarkets in Emporia, Kansas, inspect the location of merchandise, watch and talk with employees to verify the manager's statements, and understand what is happening today in shoplifting as it related to supermarkets.

A basis for determining the detection methods used is found in Chapter III. Six interview schedules covering the number of detection methods each store had, the square feet of floor space, the amount of loss, and the comments of the managers were analysed. These six stores varied in location, area of floor space, and dollar volume of sales.

The information gathered is presented in summary form.

1. Of the six stores, store F was the largest having 13,500 square feet of selling space. Store B was the smallest having 5,700 square feet of selling space. Stores A and C had approximately 9,600 square feet of selling space each. Store D had 7,400 square feet of selling space, and store E had 6,500 square feet of selling space.

2. Store E was the only store that did not use detection methods. All of the other stores used some form of detection methods.

3. To reduce shopper theft all stores placed small or high priced items near checkout stands so that employees could watch the items. These items included drugs, cigarettes, candy, razor blades, and records.

4. All of the stores instructed personnel on how to catch shoplifters; however, the employees of store E did not seem to follow this instruction nor was the management interested in seeing that they did.

5. All of the stores apprehended shoppers for shoplifting. The managers of stores A, D, and F stated that they would prosecute shoplifters; however, only the managers of stores A and F actually prosecuted shoplifters during the year studied, 1963.

6. The personnel of store E apprehended the least number of shoplifters and the personnel of store A the

largest number. The employees of stores B, C, D, and F apprehended about the same number of shoplifters. Between seventeen and twenty-eight shoplifters were apprehended by the personnel of the six supermarkets during the year studied, 1963.

7. Only the managers of stores A and E recorded the shoplifter's characteristics. They recorded the age and sex of each person apprehended. The manager of store C stated that he did not record any information since it could be used against him. However, the manager of store B related one case where a person paid for the goods. The manager then destroyed the shoplifter's confession. Later the shoplifter sued the store because the store did not have proof of the person's stealing.

8. The managers of four stores, A, B, C, and F, gave information concerning shoplifting to other stores. None of the managers gave information to an association, and only the manager of store A gave information to the police department concerning shoplifting problems. The managers of stores A, B, D, and F received information from other agencies and stores. Managers of stores A, B, D, and F stated that the police department usually would not take any action against shoplifters. Because of the police department's seemingly lax attitude, these managers seldom



gave information to the police department unless the manager had an excellent case against a shoplifter.

9. Under certain circumstances all of the managers would let first time offenders be released without charges. Before releasing a shoplifter the manager of each store required that the shoplifter sign a confession and pay for the goods. In case of a belligerent shoplifter, it was the general procedure to notify the police, and to work with the police department in solving the case. This could take several forms. Sometimes charges were filed and dismissed. At other times it was necessary that the shoplifter be prosecuted.

10. All of the managers took inventory at least once each year. With the exception of managers of stores C and E all of the managers ran spot checks on merchandise which they thought was being stolen in quantity.

11. The retail value of the annual loss from shoplifters as estimated by the respective managers was \$5,000 for store A; \$590 for store B; \$400 for store C; \$7,500 for store D; \$1,500 for store E; and \$3,000 for store F.

12. The national average of goods stolen at retail prices as compared to the total net sales is one-half of one per cent. The stock shortage as a per cent of net sales as stated by the respective store managers was two

per cent for store A, one-half of one per cent for store B, one-fourth of one per cent for store C, three per cent for store D, and one per cent for stores E and F.

13. The per cent of stock shortages due to shoplifting as estimated by the respective managers was 60 per cent for store A, 40 per cent for store C, 65 per cent for store D, 99 per cent for store E, and 90 per cent for store F. The manager of store B did not know the per cent of shortages for his store. It should be noted that in making statements concerning figures of loss due to shoplifting that the managers of the stores under study indicated that all statements were made with some reservations. For instance, the manager of store B stated, "I do not have any proof of my statement except in an empirical sense." He stated that he had been with the store several years, and due to his past experience, he had come to the conclusion that his statements, although not based upon actual facts, could be construed as almost facts.

## II. CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions were made from the facts presented:

1. The amount of loss from shoplifting was not affected directly by the size of the store. Store F, the

largest of the stores, and store E, the second smallest, ranked third from the top in losses. On the other hand, store A, the second largest store, ranked second. Store C, third largest store, ranked the lowest. Store D, the fourth largest store, ranked the highest. Store B, the smallest store, ranked fifth in losses.

2. In the stores studied, detection methods seemingly did not reduce shoplifting losses. Store C had the smallest per cent of loss in comparison to sales and the second lowest number of detection methods (three). Store A had the fifth lowest loss and the highest number of detection methods (thirteen). Store D had the largest loss and next to the highest number of detection methods (seven).

Many variables were at work here. It could be that store managers did not have the same training in detecting shoplifters. It could mean that they looked at shoplifting and its hazards in a different manner. Most of all it seemed to indicate that the human element was at work here. That is if all managers had the same interest in shoplifting the results of the study would be more alike. The more interest a manager had in detection methods, the higher he seemed to find his losses to be.

3. Store managers that had more losses prosecuted to a greater degree. This was indicated by stores A and F.

They had the second and third highest number of losses. The attitude of store managers played an important part in this problem. It is possible that if all of the store managers thought alike or even more alike, this problem would be handled in a like manner by each of them.

In some cases, a store belonging to a chain has to follow company procedures. Such was the case for stores B and D. These stores did not prosecute because of company policy.

4. Stores that had the most loss also had more clerk training. Although the figures indicate that the more the training the more the loss, it is possible that certain factors entered here such as communication between the thesis writer, store manager, and employees. Another reason could be the small number of stores and short period utilized in this study. This could indicate that more stores need to be checked over a longer period of time. Other stores with average losses had about equal training, and all except store B had twice as much loss, or more than stores with a lack of clerk training. But here again, it seems quite likely that the more a manager tries to reduce shoplifting losses the more he becomes aware of stock shortages. Therefore, a manager with more detection devices might be more truly aware of his actual losses.

5. Losses from shoplifting did not seem to decrease when more shoppers were apprehended and prosecuted. The manager of store E thought that the information that a store had prosecuted a shoplifter did not get around to other shoplifters. He thought that the public was always in sympathy with the person apprehended. His statement in this regard was that "people as a whole just don't want other people punished." Thereby apprehending shoppers would not reduce losses from shoplifting unless the apprehensions were greatly publicized.

The manager's opinion of shoplifting greatly affected how much he thought he lost. The more detection methods, apprehensions, prosecutions, and clerk training a store had, the more the estimated loss. It is, therefore, feasible that a manager who takes note of shoplifting thinks there is more loss from it than he would recognize if he took no interest in the problem. Therefore, the manager of store A would naturally state a higher loss since his store had the greatest number of detection methods. His estimated loss for his store was the second highest in the group. The manager of store E did very little about the problem and his estimated loss for his store was fourth in the group. Another reason stated for managers reporting high losses was tax evasion. One manager stated that some managers, not

necessarily in Emporia, reported losses as being higher than they were to reduce taxes. However, this person was misinformed, since shrinkage problems are not deductible on tax reports.

The detection methods used in the six Emporia supermarkets were determined; however, it was found that these methods did not reduce shopper theft. In fact, the detection methods in use seemed to increase shopper theft--that is, they increased the awareness of the thefts which were occurring.

Only through more controlled inventory procedures could actual figures prove or disprove that detection methods reduce shoplifting losses.

Detection methods that work better than others to reduce shopper theft were not determined since none of the methods seemed to work effectively toward theft reduction.

### III. RECOMMENDATIONS

Every store in Emporia should recognize the problem of shoplifting and strive to do more about it by co-operating among themselves and with the police.

Related literature indicated that to reduce shoplifting a store should use several methods rather than devices. Among these are (1) employing or designating

personnel to watch, spot, and question shoplifters, (2) training employees so that they know what to look for and what to do in case they see people taking merchandise improperly, (3) obtaining bulletins for employers informing them of the latest methods of shoplifting, how to spot it, and the latest laws on shoplifting, (4) developing policies designed to remove the temptation of shoplifting, (5) co-operating with other stores in the same vicinity to effectively curtail shoplifting, and (6) arranging aisles so that there is a minimum number of blind alleys or other areas in which shoplifting is hard to detect.

The following recommendations are made to help Emporia merchants reduce their shoplifting losses:

1. Managers need to keep better records of stock shortages in order to determine how much is lost, and by applying the estimated proportion lost by shoplifting they will have a better idea of the amount lost through shoplifting.

2. Managers need more co-operation among themselves. They need to discuss their shoplifting problems to determine better solutions. Information on known shoplifters and first time offenders should be distributed among all store managers in order that the shoplifter can be recognized when he enters a store.

3. Managers need to give their clerks a better training program on how to apprehend shoplifters and what to do when they see someone taking merchandise.

4. Store managers need to have a good knowledge of the laws on shoplifting and the information needed in order to convict a person of shoplifting, and at the same time protect themselves against charges of false arrest.



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## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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**APPENDIX**

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR MANAGERS

Store Letter \_\_\_\_\_

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The Purpose of this interview schedule is to determine preventive measures that the store is using at the present time.

1. How many square feet of sales floor do you have? \_\_\_\_\_
2. How many of these preventive measures do you have in your store now? (Present card "A" to the interviewee and have him write the number of devices in the blank. If he has none, put 0 in the blank.) \_\_\_\_\_
3. Does your store place certain items such as high priced or small items near employees to reduce theft of these items? Y \_\_\_ N \_\_\_
  - a. If so, list the items you place in such places. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Check to see where they are) \_\_\_\_\_
4. Does your store instruct employees on what to do if they see a shoplifter? Y \_\_\_ N \_\_\_
  - a. If so, which employees are instructed? Full time \_\_\_ Part time \_\_\_ All \_\_\_
  - b. If so, what are the employees to do when they see a shopper steal something?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Has your store apprehended shoppers for shoplifting? Y \_\_\_ N \_\_\_
  - a. If so, what is the number of shoplifters that your store apprehended last year (1963)? \_\_\_\_\_ (Memory \_\_\_\_\_ Permanent record \_\_\_\_\_)
  - b. How many shop lifters were apprehended in the last three months? \_\_\_\_\_ (Memory \_\_\_\_\_ Permanent record \_\_\_\_\_)
6. Does your store take and record information about persons apprehended for shopper theft? Y \_\_\_ N \_\_\_
  - a. If so, indicate on card "B" which characteristics were taken.
7. Does your store give information to other stores? Y \_\_\_ N \_\_\_
  - a. Does your store give information to an association? Y \_\_\_ N \_\_\_
  - b. Does your store give information to a police department? Y \_\_\_ N \_\_\_
  - c. Does your store receive information concerning shopper theft from outside agencies? Y \_\_\_ N \_\_\_
  - d. If so, list these sources. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. Does your store prosecute shoplifters? Y \_\_\_ N \_\_\_
  - a. If so, how many shoppers were prosecuted by your store last year (1963)? \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. How many were prosecuted in the last three months? \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Does your store prosecute all shoppers apprehended? Y \_\_\_ N \_\_\_



CARD "A" Store Letter \_\_\_\_\_

Two-way mirrors \_\_\_\_\_ Peep holes \_\_\_\_\_ T.V. \_\_\_\_\_

One-way mirrors \_\_\_\_\_ Plain-clothes men \_\_\_\_\_ Curtains \_\_\_\_\_

Uniformed guards \_\_\_\_\_ Watcher from above \_\_\_\_\_

Mechanical signals used to alert personnel about the presence of shoplifters: buzzers \_\_\_\_\_ lights \_\_\_\_\_

other \_\_\_\_\_

Are other detection devices used to detect shoplifting in your store? \_\_\_\_\_

CARD "B" Store Letter \_\_\_\_\_

Physical characteristics:

Age \_\_\_\_\_ Color of eyes \_\_\_\_\_

Sex \_\_\_\_\_ Complexion \_\_\_\_\_

Height \_\_\_\_\_ Scars \_\_\_\_\_

Weight \_\_\_\_\_ Glasses \_\_\_\_\_

Build \_\_\_\_\_ Photograph obtained \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_

CARD "C"

Store Letter \_\_\_\_\_

**Background Characteristics:**

Employed \_\_\_\_\_

Employer \_\_\_\_\_

Family \_\_\_\_\_

In school \_\_\_\_\_

Name of school \_\_\_\_\_

Past records \_\_\_\_\_

Police \_\_\_\_\_

School \_\_\_\_\_

Church \_\_\_\_\_

Clubs \_\_\_\_\_



# STORE MANAGEMENT GROUP

## NATIONAL RETAIL MERCHANTS ASSOCIATION

March 8, 1963

\*GEORGE PLANT, *Manager*  
ANNE McNAMARA, *Asst. Manager*

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Executive Committee

Mr. Sid Anderson  
818 Market  
Emporia, Kansas

Dear Mr. Anderson:

The Association has published several reports dealing with the general subject of stock shortages rather than the specific problem of shoplifting. You will find these listed in the enclosed pamphlet. Also, I am enclosing a copy of our pamphlet "Watch Out for that Thief" which is widely used by stores to educate their personnel in shoplifting prevention.

You will also find enclosed an information sheet listing some general sources in the area of shoplifting prevention. The most important of these is undoubtedly "Modern Retail Security" by S. J. Curtis. This is a most comprehensive discussion of the whole problem and perhaps it would be available to you in some library to which you have access.

As for figures, we do publish each year a report called "Merchandising & Operating Results in Departmental Stores" which gives by store volume and by departments shortage percentages in relation to stores. You will also find this report listed in the enclosed publications pamphlet.



Unfortunately, the Association does not have facilities for extending credit to non-members. We should be very happy to fill your paid order for any of these reports at the membership price listed. The book "Modern Retail Security" would have to be ordered from the publisher.

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I hope that these comments and the material I am sending will be of some assistance to you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Anne McNamara".

Anne McNamara

AM:PR  
Enc.

## INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR EMPLOYEES

1. What are the hours of your employment?  
 From \_\_\_\_\_ o'clock to \_\_\_\_\_ o'clock on \_\_\_\_\_  
 From \_\_\_\_\_ o'clock to \_\_\_\_\_ o'clock on \_\_\_\_\_  
 From \_\_\_\_\_ o'clock to \_\_\_\_\_ o'clock on \_\_\_\_\_  
 a. How long have you worked here? Years \_\_\_\_\_ Months \_\_\_\_\_  
 b. Are you a full time employee? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Have you been instructed by the store on what to do if you see a shopper take something? Y \_\_\_ N \_\_\_  
 a. If so, when was the last time you were instructed? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Since you have been working here, have you apprehended a shoplifter?  
 Y \_\_\_ N \_\_\_  
 a. If so, how many? \_\_\_\_\_  
 b. Has the store ever prosecuted a shopper? \_\_\_\_\_  
 c. If so, how many since you have been here? \_\_\_\_\_  
 d. How many were prosecuted in 1962? \_\_\_\_\_  
 e. How many were prosecuted in 1963? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Have you ever seen a shopper steal something? Y \_\_\_ N \_\_\_ (If not, stop here)  
 a. How many have you seen? \_\_\_\_\_  
 b. How many did you see in 1962? \_\_\_\_\_  
 c. How many did you see in 1963? \_\_\_\_\_
5. What did you do when you saw someone take (steal) something?  
 report it to someone \_\_\_\_\_ watch the shopper continuously \_\_\_\_\_  
 notice the time . . . signal someone \_\_\_\_\_ notice the article \_\_\_\_\_  
 notice where he put the article \_\_\_\_\_ did nothing \_\_\_\_\_  
 other \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
6. What articles did you see stolen? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
7. Have any of the shoplifters that you saw take something been apprehended?  
 Y \_\_\_ N \_\_\_  
 a. How many were apprehended? \_\_\_\_\_  
 b. Were any of them prosecuted? Y \_\_\_ N \_\_\_  
 c. If so, How many? 1962 \_\_\_\_\_ 1963 \_\_\_\_\_