

POSTER

REVISITING THE FIVE FINGER DISCOUNT: SHOPLIFTING AS A REPRODUCTIVE STRATEGY FOR INCREASING MATE VALUE

Shairy Jimenez-Delgado*, Povheng Yam, Nathan Boone, Camille Burns, Alice L. Zhang, Francesca Messina, Rayann Elka Medina, Amanda Hahn

California Polytechnic University, Humboldt, Arcata, USA

[*sj1045@humboldt.edu](mailto:sj1045@humboldt.edu)

ABSTRACT

Using social media to conduct human ethological research, this study seeks to replicate previous findings showing that online displays of shoplifting are driven by reproductive strategies to increase mate value. Shoplifting, or taking an item from a store without paying for it, is commonly shared on social media platforms. A previous study by Bourgeois et al. (2019) found that shoplifting, displayed by users on the social media website Tumblr, is used as a strategy to increase perceived mate value; they found that 70.3% of items were mating relevant items, whereas only 29.6% were unrelated. The current study utilized similar methods to collect 150 photographs from Tumblr users featuring a total of 1744 stolen items. Two different coders then categorized these items into one of 17 different categories which were then grouped as either mating relevant (fragrance, hair care, jewelery, makeup, skin care, lingerie) or non-mating relevant (arts and crafts, clothing, entertainment, food, home decor, pet supplies, school supplies, technology, toys, and other). Results show that 58.8% of stolen items were mating relevant, while 41.2% were non-mating relevant. These findings are consistent with previous work showing that a significant number of stolen items showcased online are related to appearance enhancement. These results support the notion that reproductive strategies aimed at increasing mate value are a primary underlying factor driving the online display of shoplifted items.