Geography Coursework Croydon

An investigation to compare one particular sports store, JJB, situated in two areas of Croydon, the CBD and a Retail Park

By Jess McFarlane 10WM

<u>Introduction and Aims</u>

This project was based on a trip to Croydon investigating the differences of two of the same store situated in two different areas. This was done in a sense to compare the stores due to situation mainly. The aim was to investigate and record information on the number of people who visit the stores and the reasons why. A number count was taken so that when we come to evaluating the results and concluding the method, it makes it an easier task to compare which of the two stores is more accustomed to the use of the public due to their situation in the area. Both JJB stores, which are a huge chain of sport stores spreading across the UK, we were there to record different information on the certain people that visited the store so that we can find out whether if it was susceptible and complied to their needs in terms of situation, so for example if it was easy to access. We are also investigating what the surrounding environment was like and whether it encouraged the public to shop there again. And we received our responses by asking the following questions to the pedestrians that we entering and leaving the JJB stores:

- Why did you visit this particular store and not the other in…(either Croydon CBD or the retail park, depending on what store we were situated at the time)
- What their age was? (We did not ask this directly as we did not to be rude so we made an accurate assumption)
- How did you get to this store today?
- How often do you visit this store?
- What their sex was (again this was not asked as it is obvious)
- What are the first three letters of your postcode?

Once these questions were established and then asked, we would need to set a group of hypothesise so that we can make predictions about certain subjects of the matter and then use these to compare the stores and then use the collected results to prove or disprove the hypothesise. We would also need to collect primary and secondary data, and when I say primary I mean asking the public directly and recording down information of surrounding environment with sketches, photographs etc. And secondary data is when I find for example maps of Croydon via the Internet so that I can use my results to see where people have travel to go to the store. I then would present the data in a range of graphs and tables so that it again would make things easier so that I could compare the two stores in the nature of the whole project. An analysis and conclusion of the data would then have to be given so that I could disprove or prove any theories or

hypothesise. I would then finally conclude and analyse the whole project, commenting on aspects that for example went wrong and ways in which I could fix these problems with certain theories etc.
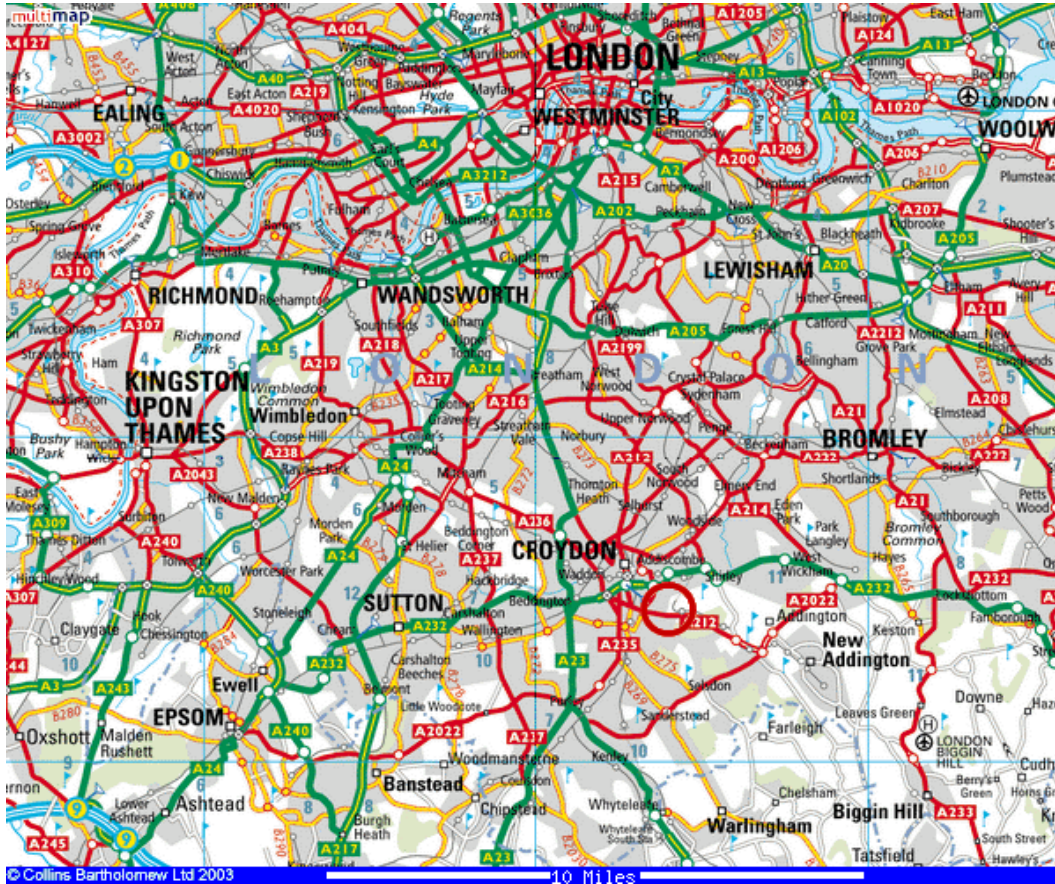
Croydon on this map is situated in the red circle. The actual borough of Croydon is the actual map that is being shown. This is a little less detailed of the city itself but gives us of an idea of where the city is located amongst South London. This map will become more useful when evaluating the results as a lot of the visitors to the JJB stores are from areas around the city as well, for example on the map where it says **CROYDON** just above that in lower case is a place called Thornton Heath and this is an area from which people visited the two JJB stores. Also with this map one can easily find their way around the area of Croydon and on this map both the Retail Park (the area in the bold blue circle) and Croydon CBD can easily be situated as with the map on the next page.

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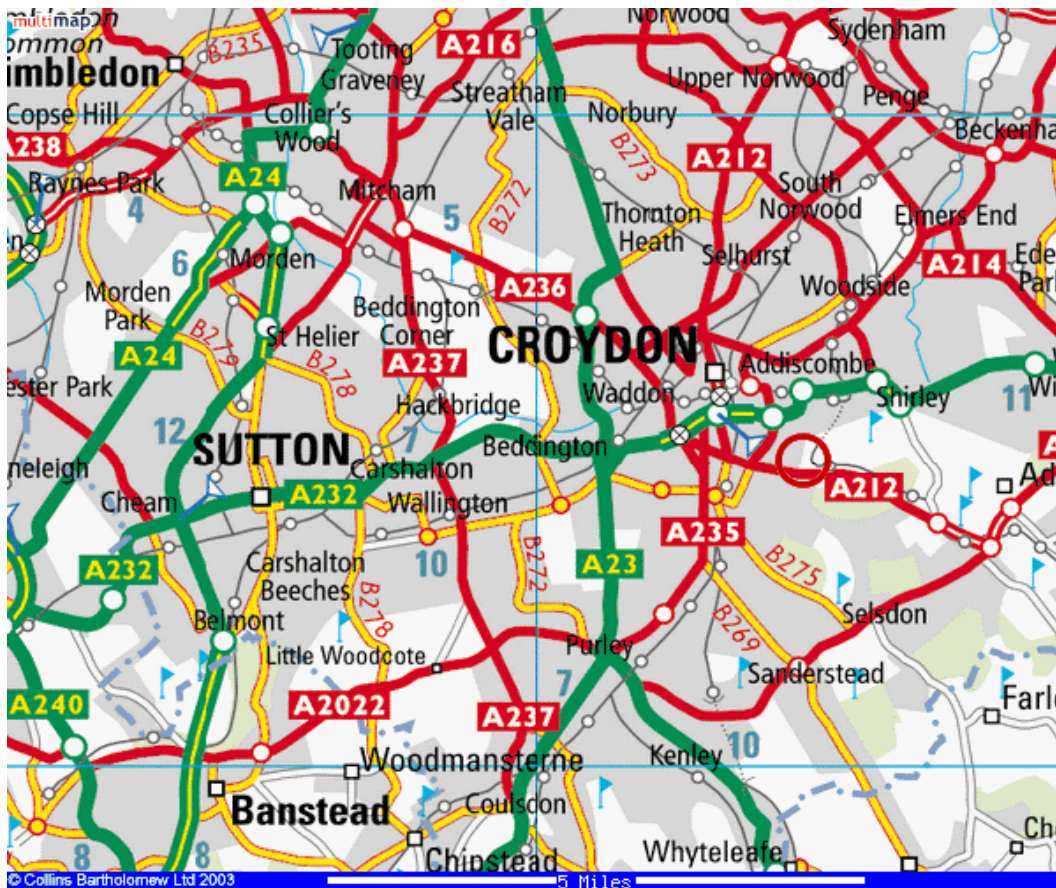
But I was wrong in saying that the map on the page before would be easier to study as this map is an even more in close detailed look on Croydon and the area surrounding it. This map in fact is more user friendly, as it is easier to observe Croydon and its surrounding area. So this means that the retail park can still be located along with the CBD.

There are some other questions surrounding the area of the Retail Park that will be answered within the hypotheses. Some questions like why larger stores are moving out of the CBD and into the outskirts but even though it may seem more inaccessible, one could think that it is more accessible due to the fact of the new rule of the congestion charge and there maybe less concern with traffic. There is also space to build larger stores on the outskirts because of the restricted space and expense of land in the CBD. These questions could prove to be a large factor on how the two stores compare due to the fact that these could reinforce the side of the retail park into becoming more of a public accessible and usable area.

Hypothesis

Below are some hypothesise:

- The number of people visiting will be lower in the retail park
- The people that visit the JJB store in the CBD will be more local
- The age of people visiting the JJB store in the CBD will be at a higher level
- More people will visit the retail park due to it's situation
- Method of transport will have a much different variation at both stores
- During the morning through to lunchtime in the retail park, the people count will be at a slow and steady rate and in the evening rise
- During the morning the people count will rise steadily and at lunchtime in the CBD store it will rise rapidly and during the evening decrease slightly and then steady off

Each hypothesis is explained below:

The number of people will decrease in the Retail Park

This will occur because of the fact that the CBD contains a wider variety of shop. The amount of retail is on a much broader basis whereas the retail park only has a select few shops that are available to the consumer to provide goods such as sports equipment. In the CBD more houses are built up around it, the CBD being the centre of Croydon and so it is relatively easy to access plus the public transport is rather well organised. The retail park however is on the outskirts of Croydon and by all means harder to get to. With only a tram service there the shops are still quite a distance especially for the elderly or handicapped or those with children. The retail park has less residence around and is more of an industrial area than a residential area. The only real way of accessing the retail park is by bike or car.

The people that visit the JJB store in the CBD will be more local

This would be due to the fact that the CBD store is more accessible than the retail park. As I explained above the public transport surrounding and entering the CBD is frequent and easy to use. I also think this because it is easy for people to quickly visit such stores in the CBD and as the residential area surrounding the CBD is high then it is obviously going to be used often. The CBD also contains a larger variety of shops and the ones surrounding JJB are popular. The JJB in the retail park is more of a mega store, containing a larger variety of items. Houses are not built in the CBD either because of the high price of land so they are built around.

The age of people visiting the JJB store in the CBD will be at a higher level

This will occur because of the CBD being more open and having a wide variety of shops. Because of the wide variety of shops it is more likely that the JJB store will be used more often. The JJB store is in a pedestrian's area, which is where pedestrians gather, this will boost the number of visits. Also from just observation and the photographs gathered of the amount of people and surrounding area, the CBD looks as though it is more of a popular place. The photograph below does not obviously show this but if you were to study it carefully there were large amount of attractions around the JJB store, which could work in two situations where they attract more people to the CBD and maybe therefore visit the JJB store as it is in the vicinity and actually in the centre of the high street of the CBD where most of the attractions were then this would encourage people to visit the store. On the other hand though this might in fact decrease the number of people who visit the shop as the attractions might make people not notice the shop and walk past, therefore affecting the number of people entering the store.

More people will visit the retail park due to it's situation

This may occur due to the fact that it might be easier to get to than the store in the CBD. The reasons being that with the recent congestion charge been put

into place, it has become increasingly difficult to enter Croydon's CBD not because of the compactness of the area but also due to the fact that a £5 congestion fee is now to be paid and this may discourage the public to enter the CBD by car therefore decreasing the number of people in the store. This may then lead to more people visiting the retail park as it is out of the area of the congestion charge and it has an ample amount of parking spaces. This is due to the fact that there is more space in the outskirts and land is cheaper, so it is a more favourable place for large superstores such as the one in Purley Way Retail Park.

Method of transport will have a much different variation at both stores

I predict that in the CBD more people will use public transport due to the fact of congestion charge etc. Not only being very compact for space, it is hard to find parking for pedestrian use. The congestion charge is just another reason for people not to use their owns cars or motorcycles because when the surrounding public transport is very often quite reliable nobody would wish to pay £5 to enter Croydon's CBD. And then when it comes to the retail park it is an almost certain that people will use their own means of transport, such as a car, as it is rather more difficult to access by public transport. There is a tram link but this is a good five minutes walk to the superstores, which may prove difficult for example a mother with a small child or an elderly person. As the photo below suggests, the parking space is more than enough and shows that many people use their cars.

During the morning through to lunchtime in the retail park, the people count will be at a slow and steady rate and in the evening rise

I have made up a small chart that can suggest the rate of the people count. Now as this is only a hypothesis it may not be true but it is rather hard to disprove or prove as I was only working at each store for an hour at the time, so it is more of a theory than a hypothesis.

During the morning the people count will rise steadily and at lunchtime in the CBD store it will raise rapidly and during the evening decrease slightly and then steady off

Again I have made up a small chart that can suggest the rate of the people count but in the CBD store instead. Now as this is only a hypothesis it may not be true but it is rather hard to disprove or prove as I was only working at each store for an hour at the time, so it is more of a theory than a hypothesis.

Data Collection-Methodology

Our study was conducted in Croydon, as it is the largest urban centre within a close proximity to the school.

The study was done with the class being split into groups of three and being assigned one of two routes. The first route, under which my group carried out our first task, was set in the Retail Park of Purley Way, on the outskirts of Croydon. Our primary task was to collect data of the following types:

- Why they visited that particular store
- What their age was
- What means of transport did they use
- How often they visited the store
- What their sex was
- What their postcode was

This data was collected in the purpose to determine which shop was more accustomed to the public use due to its particular position.

We used Croydon because as I said above it is the largest urban centre close to the school. It has everything we require i.e. the CBD and the retail Park. The CBD is a large commercial area as is the retail park but contains a lot more shopping facilities where as the retail park only really offers a few more specialized on a larger scale. For example both the parts of Croydon contain a JJB store, the main focused area of this coursework, but the one in the retail park is on a much larger scale offering a larger choice of product, which in a way is better for business and is theoretically more popular and more accommodating for people in the way that more support and help should be provided with such a large scale store.

The CBD contains many office buildings as well and offers jobs and services for people that do not only live in the area but also come from miles around. This is due to the fact that because it is a large area for a CBD, the job offers available are widely spread out and also the services provided are considered to be the best around due to a large variety of shops and public transport to and from the CBD.

The study was conducted in groups because it proves to work easier as if there are more people available it is easier to collect primary data and there is a larger scale of help on hand. Another reason maybe is because one factor of our data collection, the people count maybe difficult for one person to handle on their own and it may require two people. And when I say this I mean that if there were a lot of people entering the store, too many for one person to handle then another person could do the same job and at the end of the data collection both of the results could be compared and averaged out, to produce the best result. It also enabled groups to split up and do different jobs of data collection and in the case of my group we worked out a system where, two people stand at the door of the shop, one carrying out the job of the people count and the other asking the questionnaire to a group of selected individuals entering and exiting the store. The other person meanwhile would walk around within

the vicinity of the store and would collect photographs and rough sketches of the area around, to give information of what distracted people to not entering the store and etc. Each person performed all of three duties, obviously at different times, so that we could compare our results and if need be use our results due to any data that might have gone wrong in the process, for example one person could have counted twice as many people entering the shop in their scheduled time slot where another person counted a lot less and this would seem unfair so an even result of the two would be made.

We conducted the data collection early in the morning in the retail park. The first questionnaire time was recorded at 9:01 am and we had started our data collection at 8:59 am. It was slow to start off with, as it was still reasonably early in the morning for someone to be shopping. Each person (three in total) had twenty minutes to perform his duty and collect the data within. This time space allowed each person to collect a fair amount of data so that it is easy to compare results. All of the data that was collected was in fact primary data, all from a personal viewpoint. Unfortunately when doing the data collection at an early time could be considered unfair, and the results may turn out different due to the fact that less people turn up. What I mean by this is how people maybe less motivated to get up at such an early hour and start their shopping; and especially when it was on a Thursday and this was the only night that the store was open later than usual, so it may have meant that more people may visit in the evening, maybe more after work as the hypothesis above suggests.

We then proceeded to Croydon's CBD, where we carried out the same process of each having our individual time slot and carrying out each process but only had fifteen minutes each due to time restrictions. We had time periods to collect our data so that when analysing it would become easier to compare results at the same time periods.

The time we did our data collection in the CBD was maybe more unfair because it was at lunch time and this is when people from work have breaks and this therefore means the streets fill up with more people and the higher chance of more people visiting the stores. But from the results obtained this is clearly not evident. We did encounter a problem though whilst collecting the data in the CBD though. The store is also directly in the middle of the high street and because of this factor there were a lot distractions, which easily could have put customers off to enter the shop, as they may not take any notice of it. Unfortunately there was an aerobics show occurring directly outside the shop and this distracted customers and the people count for the store was rather low unfortunately. There were three other distractions occurring around the stores vicinity where there was a street entertainer, an OAP convention and a fire truck in the middle of the street. All of these factors affected our data quite severely as this reduced the amount of people available to visit the store. One other factor may have also affected our data collection slightly as it was late night shopping in Croydon that evening and this would have encouraged more people to visit stores later rather than in midday. The store is also directly in the middle of the high street and because of this factor there were a lot distractions, which easily could have put customers off to enter the store, as they may not take any notice of it.

To justify the reason of the collection of data is to say that we did it sorely for one purpose; to compare the effects of positions of shops for different reasons as stated above. We collected the ages of the people visiting the store to prove what age groups vary in visiting, and form the results we found out that peoples ages varied from 20-50. We next collected the type of travel to compare, which type was more popular in the retail park and which was more popular in the CBD. This can also be said for the rest of the data collected.

Some proof of our data being collected personally is form the pictures displayed below. The two pictures are of the distractions in the CBD and the surrounding environment of the retail park. Photographs were taken to backup any points I made about the surrounding features of the CBD and the retail park. If you notice that in the pictures of the retail park the surrounding environment is of a good quality. There is a lot of scenery and this maybe an attraction for some of the public. As picture number 1 suggests the scenery is quite stunning especially for a well built up and such a publicly used area. It maybe an attraction because people may think that if such and industrialised area with such a large public access was being so well kept up and looking nice this might reflect on the image of the stores that are available. Whereas in picture two the area is clearly sign posted and easy to use with clear markings telling where one to for example exit the vicinity. This is another boost for customer satisfaction and again may reflect on the stores image.

The pictures from the CBD are slightly more different though. There is less of a scenic view in the centre of Croydon because it is more of an urbanised place and there is little room for something like that. I do not think that this would discourage the public into visiting the JJB store, as this is not a major concern for anyone. But you do notice that there is a lot of entertainment happening, which would encourage more people, so this could affect the people count quite severely in two ways. It could discourage customers to enter the store as I have explained before or it could encourage them again as I explained before. You also notice in the picture below that there are many people in the vicinity of the JJB store, the reason being was because it was at lunchtime and many people had entered the high street.

The photos were taken in the CBD and the retail park for a pure comparison reason. This makes it so much easy to analyse and conclude because of the visual aspect of the project. It is easy to link and comparisons and can also be used to prove or disprove any theories that maybe thought up.

Picture one is showing the nature and environment of the high street just outside of the store, just so you can recognise what affects they might have on the people count of the store. And picture number two is the type of entertainment that was happening around the store.

The next two pages are the results received by the questionnaires that were asked to the select few customers.

These results were obtained by the three of us doing our set individual task in the time set, for both the retail park and the CBD. The same questions were asked at both locations so that it was made into a fair test and so that during the conclusion and evaluation, an easy comparison could be made between the two stores. The following questions were asked:

1. Why did you visit this particular store and not the other in…(either Croydon CBD or the retail park, depending on what store we were situated at the time)
2. What their age was? (We did not ask this directly as we did not to be rude so we made an accurate assumption)
3. How did you get to this store today?
4. How often do you visit this store?
5. What their sex was (again this was not asked as it is obvious)
6. What are the first three letters of your postcode?

Question one was asked for a pure comparison reason. We received results for example "I didn't know the other existed", and as this occurred in both stores twice, this shows that the results were quite varied. Question two was asked so that we could understand and evaluate the most frequent age group that visited both stores. And after the median has been found in both the stores, it again can be used for comparison and then link to other reasons as why for example a younger generation visited the JJB store in the CBD. Question two was asked so that we could compare the means of transport, which also again gives us a good comparison of the nature of the store, whether it is either convenient or not to get for example the retail park. These sets of results can be used to conclude some hypothesise that has been made. Question four was then asked so once again it can be a purely comparison basis and so they can be used to prove or disprove any hypothesise. Question five was asked so that we could know what sex the store appealed to more. And finally question six was asked so we could investigate where people came from to get to the store and whether a store had more of a widely spread usage of customers for example if they came from far away or if the store was more locally used. It is quite obvious that these results were made for pure comparison reasons as I have tried to explain above.

<u>Content Page</u>

Postcode Results for the Retail Park

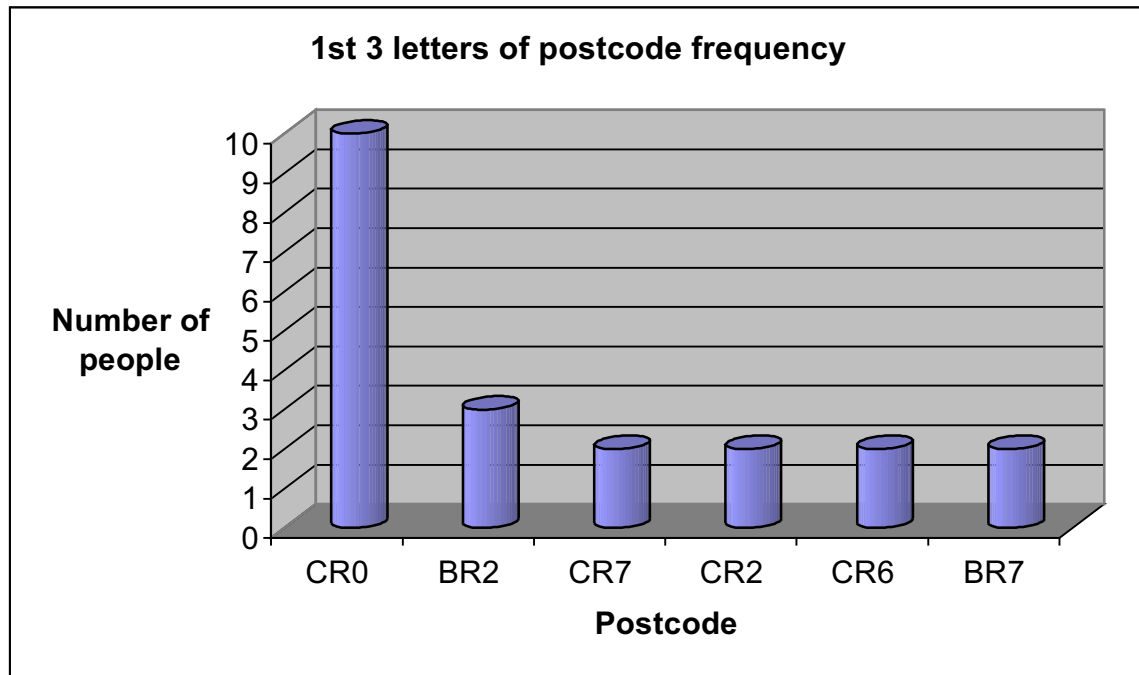**1st 3 letters of postcode frequency**
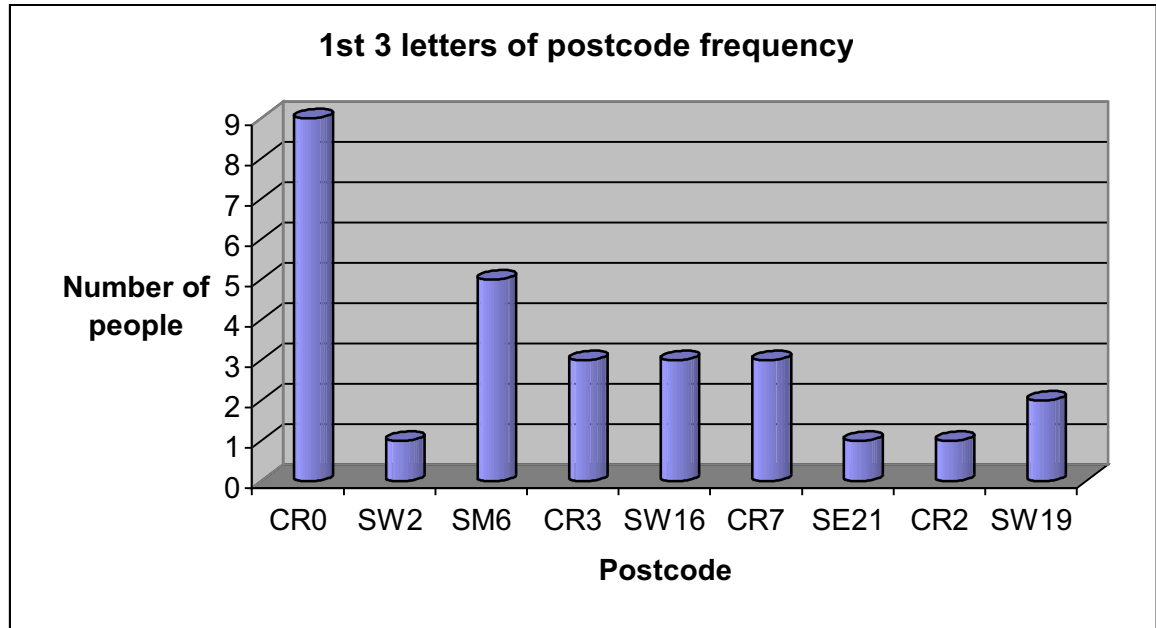
This graph shows the frequency of a particular postcode. The graph contains the beginning of nine different postcodes, all of which at least one person had come from that particular area to get to the JJB store in the retail park. The reason for doing this was so that I could observe the areas from where people came from to visit the store. From my research on the Internet and unfortunately not being able to find postcode maps on either the Internet or the library, I instead decided to investigate the areas manually but not am able to represent them on any kind of map. From my research though I have found out these areas all represent closely related areas to the retail park. So this newfound information could disprove the hypothesis I made up about people being more local to the JJB store in the CBD.

With this data though compared to the other I can honestly say that there are a lot more types of postcode present. This could show that the store is used more non locally than the CBD store, because this could suggest that more people visit form more areas even though they are still reasonably local.

I can also say that I think it was easier to collect data in the retail park as no one was in a rush and everyone had time to answer. This is why our data results were at a much higher rate than the CBD. I can conclude that the results were very varified and so this proved hard to understand and depict sufficient details from it. Although I have come to the conclusion that the retail park was used by the public on a much broader area of postcodes than the CBD store and this is probably due to the fact that

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it is such a larger store and offers more to the consumer and in some respects easier to get to as I have explained before.

Postcode Results for the CBD

1st 3 letters of postcode frequency

A bar chart titled "1st 3 letters of postcode frequency" with y-axis "Number of people" ranging from 0 to 10, and x-axis "Postcode". CR0 ≈ 10, BR2 ≈ 3, CR7 ≈ 2, CR2 ≈ 2, CR6 ≈ 2, BR7 ≈ 2.

As visible from the graph, it shows that there are a lot less postcode areas in the Croydon CBD store so this could actually prove my hypothesis. From my research I have found out that these postcode areas are a lot more local than the postcode areas from the retail park and as I have proved that they are closer this obviously proves that my hypothesis is correct. These postcodes are actually in Croydon and a surrounding town called Bromley.

I used a bar chart to represent this data as I thought it gives the clearest possible view and the postcode data. There is no real other way of representing this data graphically so easy enough to recognise what the distribution was like. And even though it is a boring graph to use as I said before it is the most capable graph of getting the message across.

I must say though in the CBD it was much harder to ask people the questionnaire as they were always in a rush or going to work and as it was lunchtime this may have affected our end results. In conclusion I personally think that this store is more locally usable and maybe therefore a better store to use. In comparison I can say that even though the retail park has many upsides as I have explained in quite some depth before, I still think the CBD store prevails, once again for reasons explained before.

Type of Transport

Legend:
- Foot
- Bus
- Car
- Tram
- Train
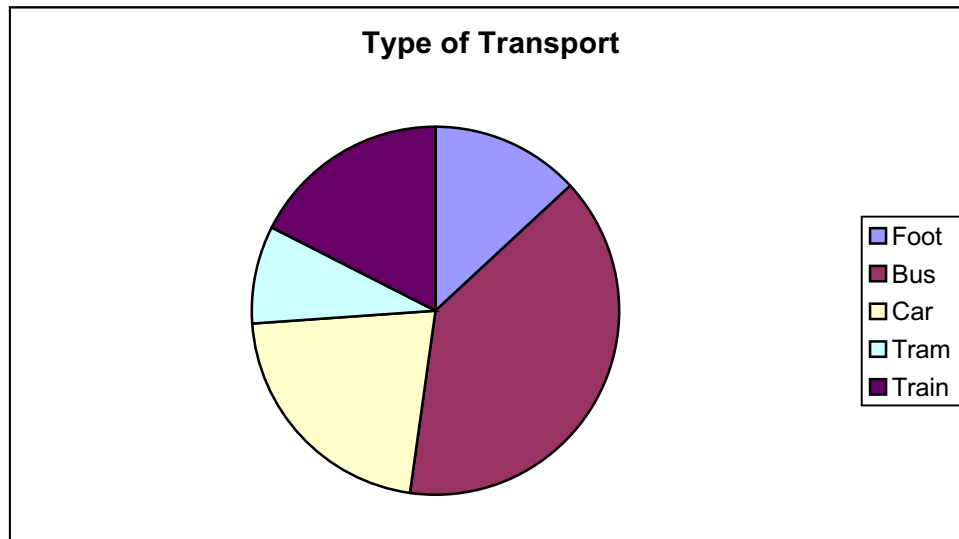
Even though I know this is a simple graph to illustrate such a thing but it is probably the easiest to use and most comprehensive when coming to evaluate. It displays the data well and gets to the point of which type of transport is used more frequently. From this data it is possible to see that quite a variation of transport was used to visit the CBD store. This maybe shows that people may visit the store knowing that they could not use their own means of transport but have to use more public transport. This graph is ideal for answering the hypothesis about the complete variation of method of transport to each store. This proves that people use public transport to go to the CBD, as it is hard to park and for other reasons as explained on page on page 7. Out of the whole type of transport, personal cars only accounted for about 22%, which displays the fact that due to the situation of the store people use public transport.

Type of Transport

■	Car
■	Tram
□	Bike
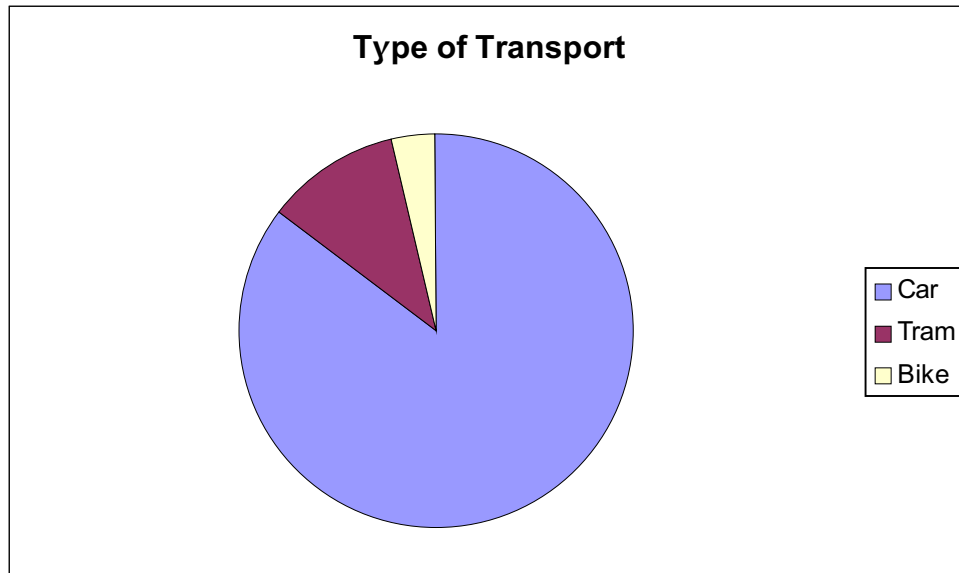
This graph can be used to answer two hypotheses; the method of transport will have a large variation at both stores and how the retail park will be more popular due to its situation. It is quite obvious that from the above graph the most popular type of transport is very much different to the CBD. This is due to situation really. Because the store is on the outskirts and reasonably hard to reach via public transport, a more endorsed type of transport is used. The car count prevails in this graph and shows that there is a large variation in transport. There is minimal use of public transport to the store and this could show another thing. The store could in fact be more publicly used due to its situation as for reasons explained in the hypothesis before. I personally can't remember having a larger people count for the retail park and so to reinforce this fact I have constructed a people count graph below.

Purley Way store
People Count
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This was in the space of an hour but is relatively small. This maybe due to the fact that it was still so early in the morning and so less people visited the store but then on the other hand we did have an hour in which to do this and only 45 minutes in the CBD so a little leeway has to be given for both set of results. And form the graph on the next page, this next little table can prove that both the hypothesis that the people count in the retail park will be lower and disprove the fact that it is more popular due to situation. This is because the people count was a lot higher in the CBD, which obviously proves that it is more popular.

CBD store
People Count

As I said on the page before this little graph proves that fact that the CBD store was more popular due to situation and had a larger people count.

Age results for the CBD store
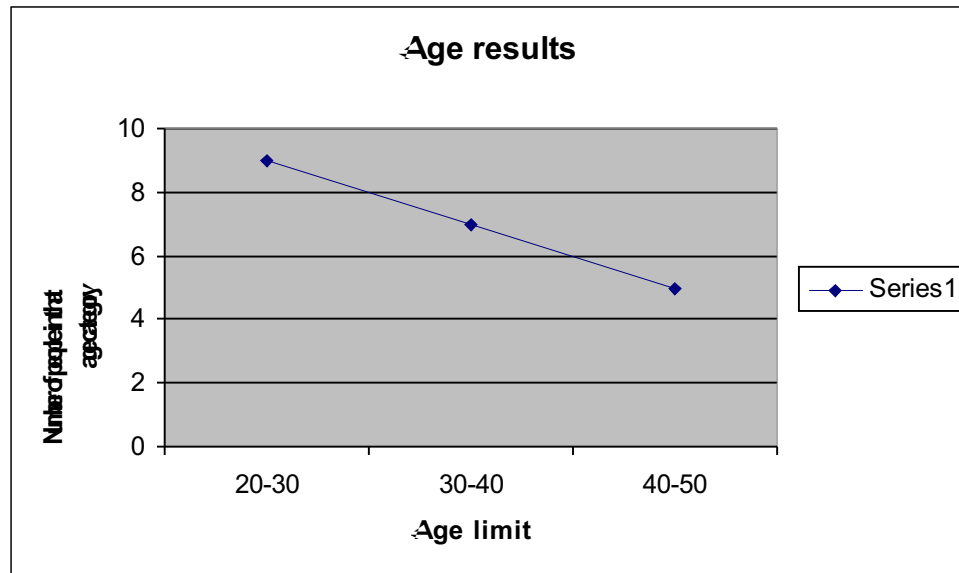
From the graph above I can answer the hypothesis about whether the age of people that visit the CBD store will be higher. And I can honestly say that form these results that I can disprove this theory. This is because it is quite obvious that the line if best fit is slanting down at a constant and proportional rate. This maybe due to the fact that Croydon is becoming more of a youthful populated area and so that this would make the streets more youthful. There is also the fact that JJB is more of a store that appeals to the younger generation due to its stock.

I chose to use a scatter as I thought it was the easiest possible way to represent such data. It gives us a clear view of the age categories visiting the CBD store and it is fairly easy to comprehend. This study could have been taken further by asking the specific ages of the people that I asked but this would be considered rude and I thought that this problem might have limited our research slightly as it would have been easier to analyze because we could then fully understand why the age groups visited the particular stores but these ages were only an estimate and they are not that precise. Next time it would be useful for extra time in which to undertake our challenge.

All I can say in the end though is how on the day of collecting the results there were minimal problems and it all worked out fine in the end. The project I think was a success and this coursework I hope was a success.

08/09/2003

<u>Bibliography</u>

In this coursework I did not use any Internet sites, books etc or any external knowledge on the subject. All I used was first hand ideas or ideas suggested by our teacher.