Comparing 2 shopping centres

Comparing 2 Shopping Centres
Aims and Hypotheses
AIMS
1. To find out which shopping centre has the greatest variety and number of shops and services
2. To determine the quality of the shopping centres
3. To discover how large the catchment areas are of both shopping centres
4. To find out the proportion of convenience good shops to comparison good shops in the shopping centres
5. To determine as to whether pedestrian flow varies within each shopping centre
HYPOTHESES
1. Chester-le-Street has both a greater variety of shops and services and a larger number of shops and services than Birtley
2. Birtley has less comparison good shops than Chester-le-Street
3. The quality of both shopping centres could be improved by the provision of further amenities
4. Chester-le-Street has a much larger cachtment area than Birtley
5. Pedestrian flow varies considerably along the main shopping street in each centre
Organisation of Fieldwork
This is how my coursework is going to be organised :-
Method
Hypothesis 1 - results and analysis
Hypothesis 2 - results and analysis
Hypothesis 3 - results and analysis
Hypothesis 4 - results and analysis
Hypothesis 5 - results and analysis
Conclusion
Method
In order to investigate my aims and hypothesis, the following was carried out :-
We collected data from Chester-le-Street and Birtley. We did this on the morning of 22nd June 2000 in Birtley, and on the morning of 28th June 2000 in Chester - le-Street. I worked with James Moffat and Christopher Fullard. To compare the situations of Birtley and Chester-le-Street, see figure 1, the map on page 10. Exactly the same methods of data collection was carried out at each centre.
I collected data for the hypothesis relating to 'types and variety of shops´ by visiting Birtley and Chester-le-Street and walking along their respective shopping centres, which is shown highlighted in yellow on figures 2 and 3 on pages 11 and 12. I drew a small box to scale to represent each shop or service on my map. I placed a number or letter in each box to represent the type of shop or service it was. For example, I would place an 'A´ in the box on the map to represent a bank. I would then put a tally next to bank on my list of services, see figure 5 for an example of what was used on page 14. I decided to start the Birtley survey at the bottom of Harrass Bank and end at the Birtley Library because the majority of shops are in this area. Similarly, the area studied in Chester-le-Street focused on the main shopping area.
For the 'pedestrian flow´ hypothesis each person was given a specific place to stand. To see who stood where, see figures 2 and 3 on pages 11 and 12. For example, I stood at point 9 indicated on the map for Birtley. At precisely 10:30am in Birtley, and 11:30am in Chester-le-Street, everyone made a tally of people passing them from each direction for a period of ten minutes. The tally was put into the box at the bottom of figure 4 on page 13.

For the 'where people came from´ hypothesis and 'shopping centre improvement´ hypothesis, we did a survey by randomly asking people to give each criteria a mark from 1-5. This is known as random sampling when you are not able to ask everyone, but ask a few people and hope they are representative of everyone. However, the time of day this survey was carried out meant that it was mainly old people who were asked and this could cause the results to become biased. Our class sample size was about 140. See my blank questionnaire, figure 4 on page 13 as an example of what I used.
If I were to attempt this investigation again, I could improve on the accuracy of my map by drawing it more carefully. I could also have obtained more accurate results from my questionnaire if the class sample size was greater.
All questionnaires, tally charts etc will be found in the appendices.
Hypothesis 1

My hypothesis was that Chester-le-Street has both a greater variety of shops and a larger number of shops and services than Birtley.
My results seem to prove that my hypothesis is correct, because figure 8 shows that Birtley only has 86 shops and services compared to Chester-le-Streets 142. It also says that Chester-le-Street has an equal amount of comparison and convenience shops while Birtley has mainly convenience shops, and so less variety. Figure 7 clearly shows that Chester-le-Street has more variety, because Chester-le-Streets bars are higher in every category except food.
I think that my results prove that Chester-le-Street has a greater number and variety of shops and services than Birtley because Birtley is a smaller town than Chester-le-Street, so there is more locals to go shopping in Chester-le-Street. Also, people come from nearby towns and villages to shop at Chester-le-Street, while the majority of shoppers in Birtley live in Birtley.
My original hypothesis has been proved correct, which is that Chester-le-Street has both a greater variety of shops and services and a larger number of shops and services than Birtley. However, I don´t think that my investigations proved without doubt that my hypothesis has been true. This is because that I didn´t carry out my survey across the whole of Birtley or Chester-le-Street.
Hypothesis 2

My hypothesis was that Birtley has less comparison good shops than Chester-le-Street. A convenience goods shop is a shop that sells everyday goods that you wouldn´t expect people to compare prices between shops, for example a bakery. A comparison goods shop is a shop that sells expensive products that you would probably compare with other similar type shops, for example an electronic appliances store.
My results seem to back up that hypothesis, because, as figure 11 shows, Birtley has 28 comparison shops compared to Chester-le-Streets 55 comparison shops. That means that 39% of Birtley´s shops are comparison shops, while 50% of the shops in Chester-le-Street are comparison shops.
I think that my results prove that Chester-le-Street has more comparison shops because Birtley is mainly for Birtley residents to do their day-to-day shopping, while Chester-le-Street is more likely to have people coming from other towns or villages especially to buy more expensive products, for example a television.
My original hypothesis, which was that Birtley has less comparison goods shops than Chester-le-Street was correct. However, I don´t think that my investigation has proved without doubt that my hypothesis is true. This is because I believe that my fieldwork is limited as we only surveyed the main shopping centres of the respective towns, and not any shops in other parts of either Birtley or Chester-le-Street.
Hypothesis 3

My hypothesis was that the quality of both shopping centres could be improved by the provision of further amenities.
My results do back up my hypothesis, as they both did not score brilliantly on the questionnaire which was carried out. Although Chester-le-Street performed better than Birtley, as can be seen from the two graphs, it only scored 1,865 points out of a possible 5,000 points. Birtley didn´t even get half, scoring 1,454 out of 5,000. Figure 15 shows how both towns scores compare with the total possible score. Figure 16 shows how Birtley and Chester-le-Street compared on each question, showing that Chester-le-Street did better on every single question. However, of the people I interviewed, both towns did better than the overall scores suggest. This can be shown on figure 18.
I think my results take this pattern because both Birtley and Chester-le-Street are old towns, and few new amenities have been built as the areas have become more run down. I don´t think that either Birtley or Chester-le-Street are as bad as their respective scores in the questionnaires suggest.
My original hypothesis, that both shopping centres could be improved by the provision of further amenities has been proved true. To be more sure of my results, I would have more people asked the questionnaire as only a very small amount of people were asked it compared to the populations of the two towns.
Hypothesis 4
My hypothesis was that Chester-le-Street has a much larger catchment area than Birtley.
This hypothesis is proven by the map figure 22, which proves that Chester-le-Street has more people coming from other towns than Birtley.
Chester-le-Street´s sphere of influence is far greater on the map than Birtley´s sphere of influence is. Figures 20 and 21also show the same pattern, which is that Chester-le-Street has far more shoppers from other towns than Birtley.
I think that this is the case because Chester-le-Street has a greater variety and number of shops than Birtley, so more people would prefer to go to Chester-le-Street than Birtley to do their shopping, especially if they want to buy an expensive good like a microwave or television. This is because their choice would be restricted if they went to Birtley, because there would then be less shops to visit.
My original hypothesis was proved correct, although I once again think that a greater number of people surveyed would of made my results far more accurate. This is because I don´t believe that enough people were asked in proportion to the respective populations of Birtley and Chester-le-Street
Hypothesis 5

My hypothesis was that pedestrian flow varies considerably along the main shopping street in each centre.
My results, shown in figure 23, show that lots of pedestrians passed by point 9 in Birtley, and in points 8 and 6 in Chester-le-Street. Few pedestrians walked passed points 1 and 13 in Birtley and point 14 in Chester-le-Street. This can be shown visually on figures 24 and 25. Unfortunately, due to absences, there is no data available for points 3 and 4 in Birtley, and for points 9 and 12 in Chester-le-Street. My results seem to prove that the pedestrian flow varies along the respective shopping centres. For example, in Birtley, point 9 has far more people passing by than point 1. The difference between points 14 and 6 in Chester-le-Street is even greater. However, Birtley is mainly evenly spread out and not greatly varied apart from one or two points.
I think that my results take this pattern because the majority of shoppers are gravitated towards the larger shops. Point 9 is the busiest in Birtley, and that is directly next to a large Safeways for example. There are no shops next to point 1 in Birtley, and that´s why so few people pass by.
I think it is difficult to say whether my original hypothesis has been proved true

or false. This is because although Chester-le-Street´s pedestrian flow is varied considerably, Birtley´s is generally even throughout apart from a few exceptions, which are points 9, 13 and 1.
I think my results could have been improved by staying at our points for longer. This is because people who were at work while we were doing our pedestrian flow count may of gone to different places. For example, if the survey were done at night, the points nearby to pubs might have been busier, or if it were done during lunchtime, bakers and takeaways may have been busier.
Conclusion
I think that my coursework has proved that Chester-le-Street has a greater variety and number of shops, and also a better quality shopping centre than Birtley. This is why I believe that Chester-le-Street has a larger catchment area than Birtley. Another thing I have found is that Birtley has less comparison goods shops in proportion to convenience goods shops compared to Chester-le-Street. This, in my opinion, is another reason why more people shop at Chester-le-Street than Birtley.
I think that my project has been done fairly well, although I would of change some things if I could. One thing I would of changed is the amount of people interviewed for the questionnaires, because only about 140 people were interviewed in each town, and that is a tiny amount compared with the populations of both Birtley and Chester-le-Street, so I cannot be sure that our findings were representative of everybody´s views. I would also of preferred to have been given more time to do data collection, as I did have to work very efficiently to get everything done in time.

It can be seen that in Wallington the shops mainly sell convenience goods, whilst in Dorking there are more shops selling higher order comparison goods, mainly because Dorking serves more people as a centre than Wallington. People who shop in Wallington could go to Sutton, which is only another 5 or 10 minutes in the car, and only 2 stops down the train line.

The land use for both centres is fairly similar, there were mainly shops and banks/building societies, but at the outer reaches of both centres there were offices, particularly at count point 4 in Wallington, where the corresponding area of the land use map shows many offices.

It was evident in Wallington that there were mainly small independant shop units and very few national chain stores, while in Dorking, although very similar to Wallington in some areas there were more national chain stores then in Wallington. Again this is because Dorking has to serve more people being a rural server area, whilst people in Wallington are much more likely to go to Croydon or Sutton. It was found that there tended to be more national chain stores in the middle of the centre, rather than in its outer reaches, as national chain stores can afford to pay the higher prices for land in the PLVI.

The quality of goods in both centres were similar, in some areas Dorking rose above Wallington e.g. Count Point 5 in Dorking offered much higher quality goods than count point 5 in Wallington. This is just because of the size of the centres, Dorking is larger and therefore offers a wider range of goods.

The safety of crossing the high street in Dorking is very poor. It was not possible to cross the high street except at the traffic lights down by the fork end or if you were up the other end. So in this case Wallington scored better than Dorking at most points.

As I expected there were bigger shopping crowds in Dorking, mainly because it is a bigger, higher order centre, this also reinforces the data gained from the pedestrian counts, as the isopleth map for Dorking on a weekday (p.) shows more pedestrians as a total number than the map for Wallington on a weekday.

Both centres had very similar street cleanliness, there were no major areas of uncleanliness, but on the other hand, there were no areas which had absolutely no litter apart from point 3 in Wallington which scored 2 out 5.

The exterior appearance of shops in both centres was average, at 3 out of 5 points Dorking scored better than Wallington, but only by one point so there was no major difference between the two centres.

The traffic/pedestrian segregation was most definitely better in Dorking. As mentioned previously the pedestrians are not at road level in Dorking, the pavement is raised, this is a good safety precaution as it greatly lowers the risk of pedestrians being injured if there is a car crash. In Wallington there is a small section of raised pavement, and there are railings on some parts of the high street, but in comparison to Dorking, the segregation is not as good. This is perhaps another reason why Dorking draws bigger shopping crowds.

There was roughly the same number of vacant premises in Dorking as there were in Wallington, both centres having most premises occupied.

Overall Dorking scored better than Wallington at 4 of the 5 count points, the exception was count point 2, in Wallington this point is located right opposite WHSmith and Dorothy Perkins, what is considered as the PLVI of Wallington, therefore it should score better on the survey than point 2 in Dorking which is just out of the PLVI zone. Therefore we can say that, as a centre, Dorking has a better shopping street quality than Wallington.