

Meadowhall v. Sheffield



Geography Coursework
Bushra Akram

Geography Coursework- Summer 2003

Introduction

Our coursework is based on Meadowhall shopping centre and Sheffield city centre. We visited both places to collect data. The main theme of this coursework is to compare Meadowhall with Sheffield city centre. The key question is:

The great success of outer town shopping centres like Meadowhall has been because they are much better for both shoppers and retailers than traditional shopping centres like Sheffield CBD. Do you agree?

Meadowhall is situated at the edge of Sheffield; it is one of the seven major out of town shopping centres in the U.K. Meadowhall opened on 4th September 1990, since this time Meadowhall has continued to grow in popularity. One of the reasons for this rapid growth was because of the area that surrounds it. Sheffield's most popular attractions are within a couple of miles of Meadowhall shopping centre e.g. The Don Valley Stadiums, Sheffield Arena and the Sheffield city airport. These attractions have developed the success of Meadowhall. From my research I will be assessing how successful Meadowhall is compared to Sheffield city centre.

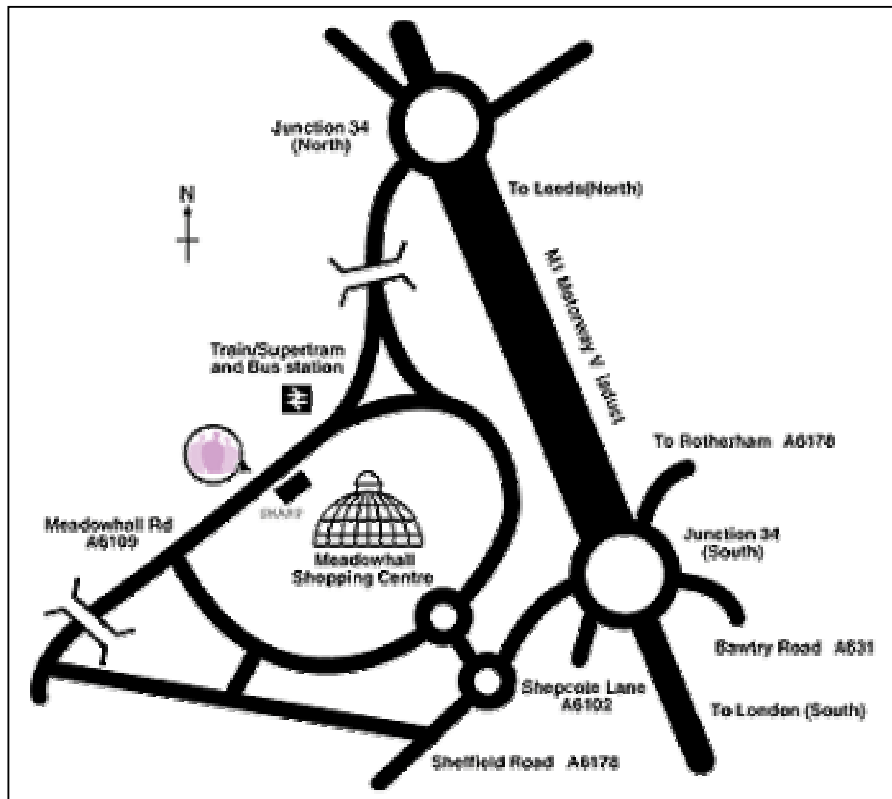
The Sheffield city centre is a traditional place for the local people of Sheffield to shop. Sheffield is located in South Yorkshire and it attracts local customers, as it is easy for local people to access.

Over the years shopping has become a very widespread and important activity, customers want to find what they looking for easily and not worry about car parking, or want to find a wide range of products to meets their standards and shop in a clean and safe environment. From the data I collected I will be showing why people prefer Meadowhall shopping centre or Sheffield city centre.

I am going to answer the key question in different sections; I have split my evidence into four divisions:

- To compare the range and quality of shops
- Ease of access to centres, and also for disabled customers
- To determine the environmental quality of shopping centres
- To discover how large the attraction areas of both shopping centres
- Conclusion
- Evaluation

For each of these sections I am going to include the consider shoppers and retailers. I will present my evidence using various types of graphs and maps.



This map shows Sheffield and Meadowhall at the edge of the city

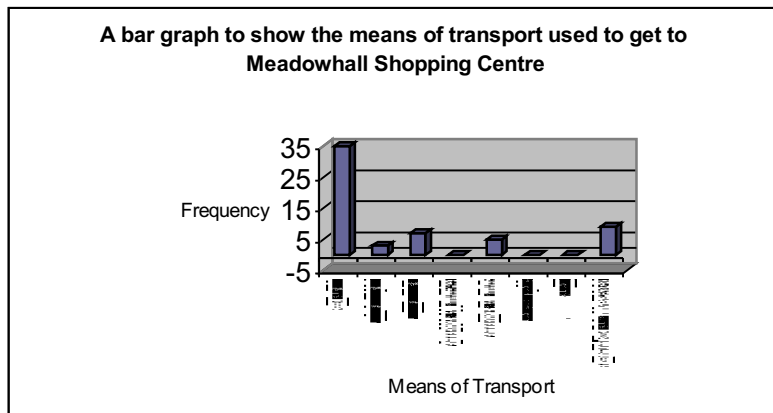
Range and quality of shops

By looking at the map provided the teacher of the part of Sheffield we studied (the next page), and the Meadowhall leaflet, I can already see that the ranges of shops in Meadowhall are varied on a large scale. On the other hand the Sheffield city centre had a limited amount of shops. The reason for this could be that we only investigated part of the CBD called Fargate. Facts show that Sheffield CBD has a larger number of shops and services than Meadowhall. However this doesn't affect the amount of customers in favour of the quality of shops.

Ease of access to the centres:

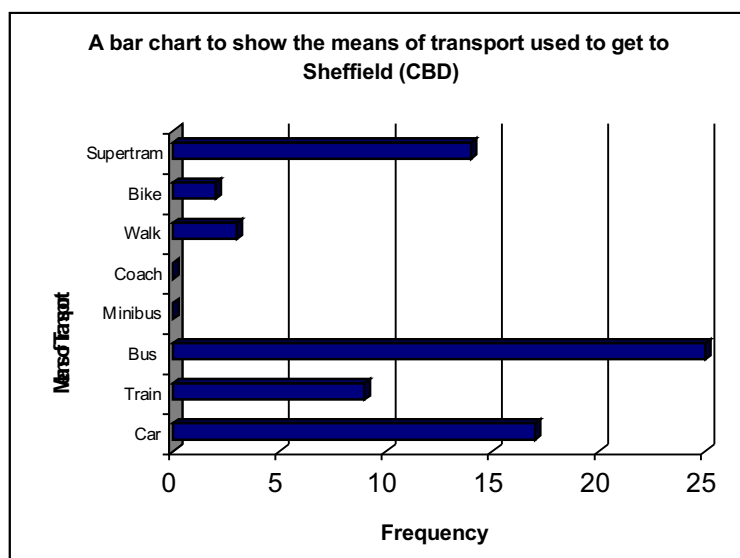
One of the most important reasons why Meadowhall has been increasing in customers and in terms of business more than Sheffield CBD is because of straightforward accessing to Meadowhall. There are many different methods of transport to and from Meadowhall: car, coach, bus, trains and for nearby customers the super tram.

Evidence from the environmental quality survey showed that Meadowhall has exceptional road access. As easy access is what customers want and Meadowhall provides this.



I have obtained the following evidence from our questionnaire results that we collected as a group to show that the most popular method of transport to Meadowhall was by car. Simply because Meadowhall provides more than 12,600 **free** parking spaces. This is a major attraction because customers won't have to worry about finding a place to park when they come to shop or they wouldn't have to worry about the cars security.

Alternatively Sheffield city centre was considered poor (environmental quality survey) for its ease of access this is obvious because the shopping centre is located in the central business district where there is less opportunity for car parking. The following evidence shows what kind of transport customers used to reach Sheffield city centre:



So analysing this graph I can see that Sheffield city centre customers use more public transport i.e. busses, as it is the CBD there is a bus station for the local people to shop in the city centre and use public transport to get back home. Public transport may also be popular for accessing to Sheffield city centre because mostly local people shop there and live nearby so they don't use their cars because there is no easy car parking.

Super tram is also a very convenient source of transport as it is a cheap and easy transport running through the Sheffield CBD, it also takes customers to Meadowhall. But people who prefer to shop in Sheffield have there own reasons, although Meadowhall is very easy accessible from the city centre.

Ease of access within the centres and facilities provided

As we visited Meadowhall shopping centre and Sheffield city centre, I can compare the ease of access within the shopping centres and the facilities that were provided. We did not do a survey to do involving the facilities that were available at both centres but overall the questionnaire told us that Meadowhall had a pleasanter shopping environment.

As Meadowhall is in door it is very appealing for all customers including the disabled, especially through out the winter. They have provided extra facilities like lifts to make shopping more convenient and amusements i.e. cinema to make shopping more enjoyable. This obviously attracts more customers.

One good example that shows the poor facilities of Sheffield is the toilets; the toilets in the city centre are very unhygienic and uncomfortable they do not have facilities like nappy changing, bottle warming etc. However Meadowhall provides all these facilities.

Another advantage of Meadowhall would be the opening and closing times; they vary to suit the times of the customers. The use of escalators has been very successful. So obviously these facilities attract customers from other towns. So comparing this to Sheffield city centre, Sheffield CBD seems less attractive.

Access for deliveries

In an out of town shopping centre like Meadowhall receiving delivery goods is easier as it is located at the edge of the motorway. So retailers have an advantage. They also have an advantage of receiving their goods straight to where the stocks are kept. They have underground routes to deliver straight to the most convenient space. But for a city centre it is more difficult for goods to be delivered through the minor roads into the CBD. It is difficult for Sheffield retailers to receive their goods where they need them because the minor roads do not lead to the most convenient places. This picture shows that there is no way for vehicles to be taken into the Sheffield CBD. This is a disadvantage for the retailers as they may receive stock after a longer period of time because of the uneasiness of delivery transport.



Relating back to the key question the above evidence answers it, as Meadowhall is successful to both customers and retailers.

-Customers- as they have a wider variety of products and useful facilities which are not provided in the Sheffield city centre. They also have opportunities to entertainment etc.

-Retailers- as goods can be delivered faster and easily through the motorway, so they also have a wider range of products and this means more customers and profits.

Environmental Quality

The survey below shows the building quality, it gives an index number of between 0 and 10. The nearer the number to 10 the better is the quality of shops and environment.

Disadvantages											Advantages
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Ugly buildings											Attractive buildings
Rundown buildings											Well maintained buildings
Limited delivery area											Good delivery area
No convenient car park											Large car park
Very old buildings											Modern buildings
Many floors											Single floor
Untidy neighbourhood											Attractive neighbourhood
No room for expansion											Plenty of room for expansion
Neglected surroundings											Well maintained surroundings
Difficult for access											Excellent road access
SUB TOTALS											TOTAL=

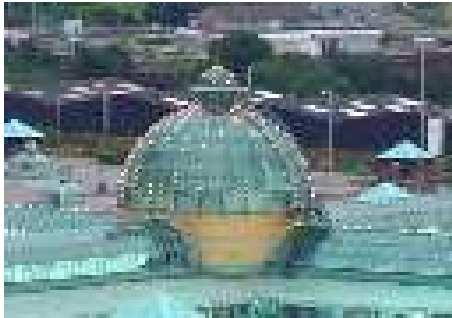
Location:
Sheffield CBD ☐

Meadowhall ☐

From my environmental quality survey I can conclude that Meadowhall is well maintained and attractive, it has modern designing and facilities. It has several free, large car parks. The delivery area is excellent, just as the road access is. The neighbourhood is attractive and the surroundings are well maintained. Unlike the CBD there is plenty of space for possible future expansion. For Meadowhall future expansions would mean more shops and a wider range of products to be transported this would create jobs for local residents.

In the Sheffield CBD the buildings are well maintained but not very attractive and modern. There is also a very limited delivery area because it would be very difficult for access as it is not an out of town shopping centre, which means there are no motorway or even main roads nearby. The surroundings of Sheffield city centre are not neglected therefore they must be cleaned out every so often.

So I can conclude that Meadowhall is better and more attractive than Sheffield and the centre also has more room for expansion. Although Sheffield is bigger than Meadowhall, Meadowhall has become more popular over the years. This picture below shows an attractive feature of Meadowhall shopping centre.



The building plays an important part in the environmental quality because of modernised and attractive buildings, which are more appealing to the public. This includes pleasant surroundings and regular cleaning around and outside the buildings.

I can now say that customers may prefer shopping in Meadowhall because of the car parks, as in Sheffield there are no convenient car parks for the customers to use. Another reason could also be because of the attractiveness and facilities.

Retailers

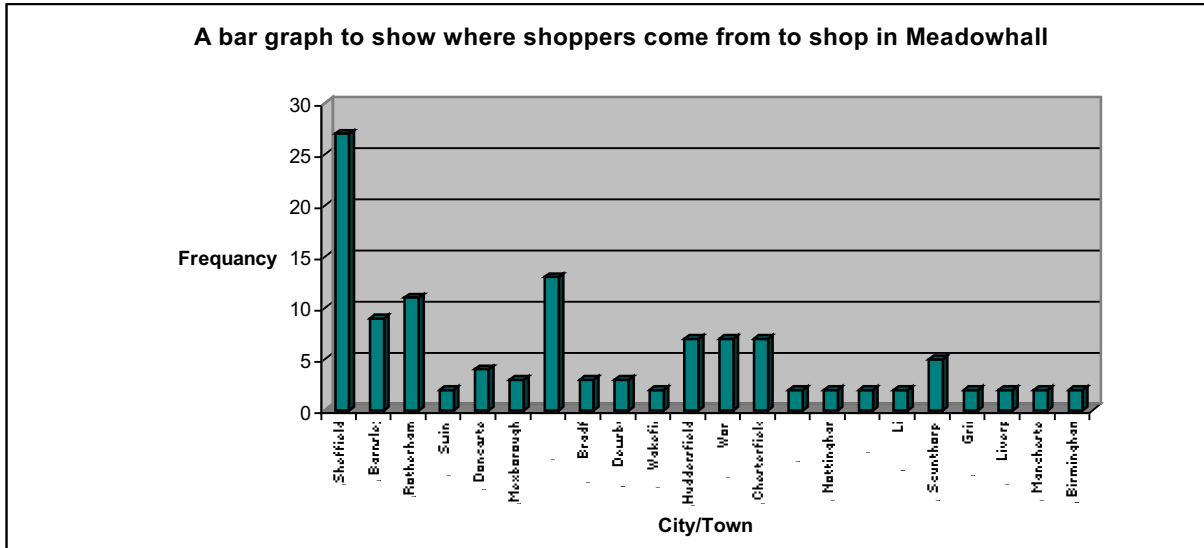
From this survey I can also bring about how retailers are affected by it. Firstly a good delivery area would provide more products and so a wider range of products i.e. the latest designs, for the retailers. In this way customers have a variety of products and retailers make extra profit. Meadowhall has this advantage.

In opposition Sheffield CBD has less number and range of products because of poor delivery rate. This also means fewer products to sell so less employers to pay, this shows that there is probably a smaller amount of retailers in Sheffield CBD than Meadowhall as they make less profit. So obviously more customers visit Meadowhall. As well as create jobs in Meadowhall; this would have made the local residents jobless in Sheffield when Meadowhall began to grow in popularity.

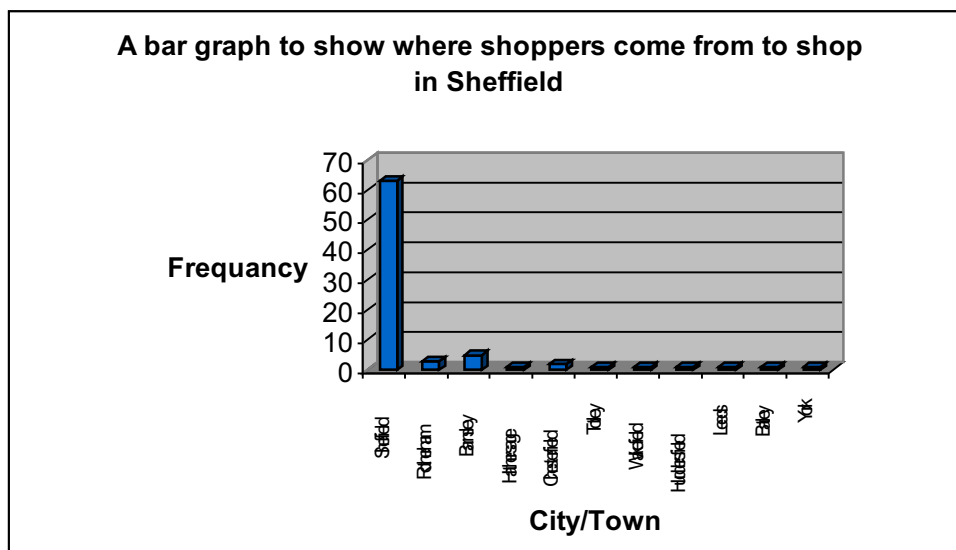
Questionnaire- where customers come from and why

We each completed six questionnaires from people in the Sheffield CBD and Meadowhall. We collected our data and put it all together to come up with a table to show where customers or visitors have come from. And another table to show why from eight different reasons that we provided.

I used my results from where people came from and illustrated them into bar graphs and into a desire line map.



This bar graph shows that more people from a higher distance of places visited Meadowhall. The following graph shows the results for where the customer\ visitors came from to Sheffield CBD:



Comparing these two graphs we can see that more people from different and distant places visited Meadowhall, whereas most of the Sheffield city centres customers were local. , Some of the customers where from nearby counties i.e. West Yorkshire, Batley.

I also produced desire line graphs to illustrate how large the catchment area was (next page). The desire line map shows the same result from the bar graphs. It gives us a clear idea that people came from further away visited Meadowhall, and I have also shown how much the distant was.

The next question in the questionnaire was why they decided to shoo where they were shopping. They had eight choices and also other choices, which they could state. The following pie chart shows us why people visited Meadowhall:

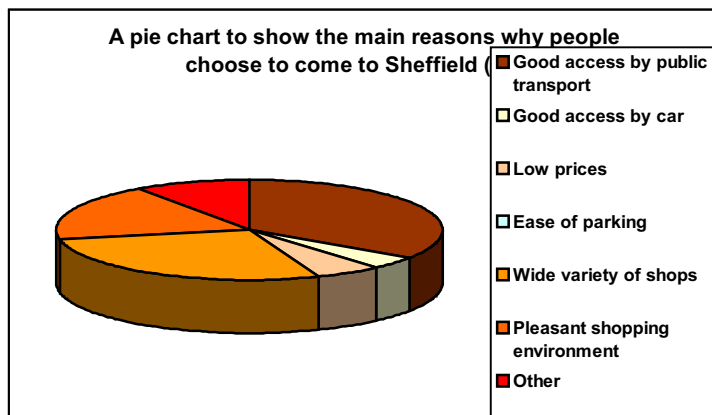


This pie chat shows that the top three reasons why they choose to shop in Meadow hall are:

- Good access by care
- Ease of parking
- Wide variety of shops

All three reasons are what make Meadowhall popular and attractive. And this is why Meadowhall is successful today. Out of town shopping centres provide the above, which make shopping more convenient for people.

The pie chart below shows the main reasons why people choose o come to Sheffield city centre:



This pie chart shows that the three most popular reasons were:

- Good access by public transport
- Wide variety of shops
- Pleasant shopping environment

These reasons are very successful within a traditional central business district, as they need cheap and easy transport such as buses and super trams. And it is a pleasant environment during the summer when people may want to shop outside than inside.

Relating back to the key question I can say that more people must prefer shopping in Meadowhall as they come from distant places to shop there, this makes it successful. I can also say that the free car parking system is a huge attraction to customers.

Conclusion

From my evidence Meadowhall is better appointed and appealing to every visitor like myself. Presenting all my evidence I think I can come to a conclusion to say that I agree with the key question, because in centres like Meadowhall business has increased in many ways. One example could be that if a product from the same branch were to be sold in a shop in Meadowhall it would make more profit than it would in Sheffield city centre. When visitors come to shop they do not think about prices but things like because it is an out of town shopping centre at the edge of a city and next to the M1, the route is very easy to find.

One big reason why out of town shopping centres are more popular within customers is because they are advertised through media. So retailer's higher prices knowing customers would be interested. Although out of town shopping centres are rare. There are only 7 major out of town shopping centres and the government have decided that no more should be build. Retailers in traditional shopping centres would loose they jobs.

Central business districts are obviously very important to local residents who may visit because they can buy quality for less. It may also be an issue when a visitor goes to shop but only needs to purchase a few products. Personally I would prefer city centres than out of town shopping centres, because they are traditional and are open.

Evaluation

During my investigation I think that my results are fairly accurate and reliable to present and prove. I have supported the ideas towards the key question. If I were to criticize my experiment I would use more resources to make more reliable proof. I would include retailer's questionnaires in my investigation and try to study it in more depth. But overall I am pleased with my investigation.