

GCSE Geography Coursework 2007

**Finding out the Sphere of influence of a CBD
highstreet and an out of town area**

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Introduction

The sphere of influence of a retail area is how far someone will travel to use the shops and services available there. It is a distance usually measured in miles or kilometers. Different types of retail areas will have different sized spheres of influence. For example a place like London attracts customers on a multinational level whereas a local high street is likely to have a far smaller sphere of influence. The sphere of influence can be affected by many different factors varying from the range of shops available to the order of the goods sold there. Some factors that affect the sphere of influence are: the range of shops, the range of goods, the infrastructure of the area, the methods of transport that are around the area, the type of people who live nearby, the crime rate and appeal of the area, the order of the goods sold, the local population of the area and the presence of the internet.

The range of shops is not only the number of different types of shops but also the size of the shops themselves. Specialist shops will increase an area's sphere of influence whereas if all the shops are the same the sphere of influence will decrease. The range of goods is the variety of goods for sale in a retail area. The sphere of influence is likely to be larger if there is a large range of goods. The order of a good is how expensive something is. Low order goods are things we buy on a weekly basis. They are usually cheap. Examples include food and other everyday things. Medium order goods are bought every few months or so. They are normally not very expensive but not cheap either. The best example is clothes.

The infrastructure of the area is whether or not there are roads and railways in and around the area. It also includes the quality of these roads and railways. It also includes the presence and price of car parks. Good infrastructure means the sphere of influence is likely to increase as it is easy to get and people will enjoy getting there but poor infrastructure means that the sphere of influence is likely to decrease as people have trouble getting there. The presence of public transport including buses, trams and trains is important because not everyone has a car so some people's only way of getting to a retail area is via public transport. This does not only include the presence of routes but also the price and how often these methods of transport run.

The appeal of a retail area can greatly affect the sphere of influence. If an area is very dirty with a bad crime rate and not much greenery then people may not feel safe shopping there or might prefer to shop somewhere else. On the other hand if an area is clean, has lots of plants, places to sit and a low crime rate people will prefer to shop there so the sphere of influence will increase. The types of people who live in the area can also affect the sphere of influence of a retail area. If the people who live nearby are predominately elderly then it is likely their shopping needs will differ.

The size of the local population affects the sphere of influence indirectly. For example if an area has a large population it will have better shops and services; whereas a village in the middle of nowhere with 100 inhabitants will have next to no sphere of influence. The growth of the internet has meant that many people don't need to travel at all in order to get even their low order goods. This means it will affect the sphere of influence of many retail areas as people just won't use them. This has a greatest effect on retail parks with huge specialist shops as people can now buy these goods over the internet to save themselves the hassle.

We are going to study how the sphere of influence is different in two different types of retail area. The CBD of a town, and a large retail park. In theory the large retail park should have the larger sphere of influence as the type of goods it sells are generally high order goods that people will travel a long way to get. Retail parks tend to have fewer customers than CBDs but these customers have traveled further. This is because a CBD generally has a large range of shops, a large range of goods and lots of public transport leading in and out of it. The types of goods generally sold in a CBD are medium and low order goods meaning people will visit there more often. However most CBDs will be the same so a person will normally only travel to the closest one meaning they have a small sphere of influence.

Aim

In this study we aim to compare the sizes of the sphere of influence of two different retail areas and find out why they are different. We want to study the factors that affect the sphere of influence as well.

Hypothesis

- **I think that the retail park will have a larger sphere of influence than the highstreet in the CBD.**

I think this because of the nature of the shops there and the goods they sell. A large retail park is likely to hold large specialist and DIY shops which sell high order goods. This means it is likely to have a large sphere of influence.

- **I think shops in the retail park will be on average larger than shops on a highstreet**

I think this because of the location of the two retail areas. In an out of town shopping area the land is quite cheap so companies can afford to build big shops where as on a highstreet the land is very expensive so shops will be quite small.

- **I think there will be more public transport leading in and out of the CBD than in and out of the out of town retail park.**

I think this because more people go to the CBD than go to the out of town retail area. Because of this I think there will be more public transport routes.