Enquiry 5: An indoor shopping mall

Aim: To investigate shop distribution patterns in an indoor shopping mall.

Research questions

1. What is the general layout of the shopping mall?
2. Do the mall's anchor / department stores occupy particularly strategic sites within the mall?
3. Do shops selling similar types of goods or services tend to cluster together in any way?
4. Where are shoppers' facilities like cafes, toilets and information points located?

Geographical context

Some types of business (e.g. banks, estate agents and solicitors) often cluster closely together in town centres. Others (e.g. post offices) are usually much further apart. It would be worthwhile investigating if business location patterns also occur within shopping malls.

Location identification techniques

- Map to locate the town where the mall survey is to take place.
- Street plan to locate the mall within the town's urban area.

Main health and safety issues

- Walk around the mall in pairs or groups – never alone.
- Know where your teachers, information kiosks and security points are located within the mall.
- Always carry a reliable mobile phone in case of emergencies.
- Be aware of pick-pocketing and other kinds of anti-social behaviour.

Data collection activities

- Obtaining a plan of the mall's layout.
- Checking the accuracy of the mall's plan because some businesses may have closed down and new ones started up.

Data collection resources required

- Clipboards, pencils.
- Camera – to take pictures of the mall's range of businesses and facilities.

Suggested sources of secondary data

- Internet sites operated by the company owning the mall and major site occupiers within it.

Recommended data presentation and analysis

- Completed plan of the mall, with similar types of business highlighted in different colours.
- Undertake nearest neighbour analysis calculations for selected business categories.
- Use appropriate graphs to display nearest neighbour calculations.