

Coursera Capstone IBM Applied Data Science Capstone

Opening a New Shopping Mall in Delhi, India

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Introduction

For most of the people living in metro cities, visiting shopping malls is a great way to relax and enjoy themselves during weekends, holidays and even at regular days. They can do grocery shopping, dine at restaurants, shop at the various fashion outlets, watch movies and indulge in many more activities. Shopping malls are like a one-stop destination for all types of shoppers for all activities. For retailers, the central location and the large crowd at the shopping malls provides a great distribution channel to market their products and services. Property developers are also taking advantage of this trend to build more shopping malls to cater to the demand. As a result, there are huge number of shopping malls in the capital city of India i.e. Delhi and many more are being built. Opening shopping malls allows property developers to earn consistent rental income. Of course, as with any business decision, opening a new shopping mall requires serious consideration and is a lot more complicated than it seems. Particularly, the location of the shopping mall is one of the most important decisions that will determine whether the mall will be a success or a failure.

Business Problem

The objective of this capstone project is to analyse and select the best locations in the capital city Delhi, India to open a new shopping mall. Using data science methodology and machine learning techniques like clustering, this project aims to provide solutions to answer the business question: In the capital city Delhi, India, if a property developer is looking to open a new shopping mall, where would you recommend that they open it?

Target Audience of this project

This project is particularly useful to property developers and investors looking to open or invest in new shopping malls in the capital city of India i.e. Delhi. Also, it could suggest businessmen if they should open a shop in particular malls as opening a shop at place which is already crowded with shops may not lead to much business. This project is timely as the city is currently suffering from oversupply of shopping malls in particular areas, however due to increasing migration of people to capital city for job opportunities, the places which used to be less crowded are becoming populated. People living at these places have to travel to existing shopping malls, if they could have new

shopping malls nearby, they will surely visit nearest shopping malls in their own areas.

Data

To solve the problem, we will need the following data:

- List of neighbourhoods Delhi. This defines the scope of this project which is confined to the city of Delhi, the capital city of India in Asia.
- Latitude and longitude coordinates of those neighbourhoods. This is required in order to plot the map and also to get the venue data.
- Venue data, particularly data related to shopping malls. We will use this data to perform clustering on the neighbourhoods.

Sources of data and methods to extract them

This Wikipedia page (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Neighbourhoods_in_Delhi) contains a list of neighbourhoods in Delhi, with a total of 142 neighbourhoods. We will use web scraping techniques to extract the data from the Wikipedia page, with the help of Python requests and BeautifulSoup packages. Then we will get the geographical coordinates of the neighbourhoods using Python Geocoder package which will give us the latitude and longitude coordinates of the neighbourhoods.

After that, we will use Foursquare API to get the venue data for those neighbourhoods. Foursquare has one of the largest database of 105+ million places and is used by over 125,000 developers. Foursquare API will provide many categories of the venue data, we are particularly interested in the Shopping Mall category in order to help us to solve the business problem put forward. This is a project that will make use of many data science skills, from web scraping (Wikipedia), working with API (Foursquare), data cleaning, data wrangling, to machine learning (K-means clustering) and map visualization (Folium). In the next section, we will present the Methodology section where we will discuss the steps taken in this project, the data analysis that we did and the machine learning technique that was used.

Methodology

Firstly, we need to get the list of neighbourhoods in the city of Delhi. Fortunately, the list is available

in the Wikipedia page (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Neighbourhoods_in_Delhi). We will do web scraping using Python requests and BeautifulSoup packages to extract the list of neighbourhoods data. However, this is just a list of names. We need to get the geographical coordinates in the form of latitude and longitude in order to be able to use Foursquare API. To do so, we will use the wonderful Geocoder package that will allow us to convert address into geographical coordinates in the form of latitude and longitude. After gathering the data, we will populate the data into a pandas DataFrame and then visualize the neighbourhoods in a map using Folium package. This allows us to perform a sanity check to make sure that the geographical coordinates data returned by Geocoder are correctly plotted in the city of Delhi. Next, we will use Foursquare API to get the top 100 venues that are within a radius of 2000 meters. We need to register a Foursquare Developer Account in order to obtain the Foursquare ID and Foursquare secret key. We then make API calls to Foursquare passing in the geographical coordinates of the neighbourhoods in a Python loop. Foursquare will return the venue data in JSON format and we will extract the venue name, venue category, venue latitude and longitude. With the data, we can check how many venues were returned for each neighbourhood and examine how many unique categories can be curated from all the returned venues. Then, we will analyse each neighbourhood by grouping the rows by neighbourhood and taking the mean of the frequency of occurrence of each venue category. By doing so, we are also preparing the data for use in clustering. Since we are analysing the "Shopping Mall" data, we will filter the "Shopping Mall" as venue category for the neighbourhoods. Lastly, we will perform clustering on the data by using k-means clustering. K-means clustering algorithm identifies k number of centroids, and then allocates every data point to the nearest cluster, while keeping the centroids as small as possible. It is one of the simplest and popular unsupervised machine learning algorithms and is particularly suited to solve the problem for this project. We will cluster the neighbourhoods into 3 clusters based on their frequency of occurrence for "Shopping Mall". The results will allow us to identify which neighbourhoods have higher concentration of shopping malls while which neighbourhoods have fewer number of shopping malls. Based on the occurrence of shopping malls in different neighbourhoods, it will help us to answer the question as to which neighbourhoods are most suitable to open new shopping malls.

Results

The results from the k-means clustering show that we can categorize the neighbourhoods into 3 clusters based on the frequency of occurrence for “Shopping Mall”:

- Cluster 0: Neighbourhoods with low number to no existence of shopping malls
- Cluster 1: Neighbourhoods with moderate number of shopping malls
- Cluster 2: Neighbourhoods with high concentration of shopping malls

Discussion

Surprisingly most of Delhi's malls are located at locations very far from each other and importantly not in central region. Few, arguments could be given to justify it like government institutions and old markets like Chandni chowk are present there. However, still there are plenty of regions without shopping malls are present across Delhi. Cluster 0 is representing, clusters where no malls or very few exists. This represents a great opportunity and high potential areas to open new shopping malls as there is very little to no competition from existing malls. Meanwhile, shopping malls in cluster 1 are likely suffering from intense competition due to oversupply and high concentration of shopping malls. From another perspective, this also shows that the oversupply of shopping malls mostly happened in the areas of the city which have been developed few years ago, with older areas and very new ones still have very few shopping malls. Therefore, this project recommends property developers to capitalize on these findings to open new shopping malls in neighborhoods in cluster 0 with little to no competition. Property developers with unique selling propositions to stand out from the competition can also open new shopping malls in neighborhoods in cluster 1 with moderate competition. Lastly, property developers are advised to avoid neighborhoods in cluster 2 which already have high concentration of shopping malls and suffering from intense competition.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

In this project, we only consider one factor i.e. frequency of occurrence of shopping malls, there are other factors such as population and income of residents that could influence the location decision of a new shopping mall. However, to the best knowledge of this researcher such data are not available to the neighbourhood level required by this project. Future research could devise a methodology to estimate such data to be used in the clustering algorithm to determine the preferred locations to open a new shopping mall. In addition, this project made use of the free

Personal Developer's Account of Foursquare API that came with limitations as to the number of API calls and results returned. Future research could make use of paid account to bypass these limitations and obtain more results.

Conclusion

In this project, we have gone through the process of identifying the business problem, specifying the data required, extracting and preparing the data, performing machine learning by clustering the data into 3 clusters based on their similarities, and lastly providing recommendations to the relevant stakeholders i.e. property developers and investors regarding the best locations to open a new shopping mall. To answer the business question that was raised in the introduction section, the answer proposed by this project is: The neighbourhoods in cluster 0 are the most preferred locations to open a new shopping mall. The findings of this project will help the relevant stakeholders to capitalize on the opportunities on high potential locations while avoiding overcrowded areas in their decisions to open a new shopping mall.