Stockport Coursework

Introduction

This piece of coursework involves a study into a large shopping centre. We will be studying the Stockport shopping district, also called Merseyway, and how it used by the public.

Stockport is situated in South Manchester. The main centre is surrounded by smaller towns like Cheadle and Bramhall. The area is easily accessible by private transport and public transport. There are numerous, frequent bus services to and from all of the surrounding areas. The M60 Manchester Ring Road), and the A6 are the main road links which provide access to Stockport for buses and cars.

The coursework will be split into different sections. Each of these sections will collate different data, which will all be brought together to show us different things about Stockport as a place, and how people use it a shopping centre. The different areas are:

- Land use – This will tell us how the land in Stockport is used. With Stockport being a large town there should be a lot of high order goods stores.
- Shop quality and street appearance- This will tell us how different areas are represented, usually linked to the level of goods they offer.
- Pedestrian count- This tells us the number of people in different areas, therefore showing us which areas are the busiest, and the quietest.
- Questionnaire- this tells us the shopping habits of people using the Merseyway shopping centre.

Hypothesis

This investigation is to find out about Stockport, how it used as a shopping centre, and what peoples shopping habits are. I have predicted

various things that I think will be true about Stockport, and the people who use it. The predictions will help us compare my results with who I had expected of Stockport. They will show us if there is a trend in shopping. The predictions I came up with are:

- That people go to Stockport to buy high order goods. – This is because Stockport has a larger amount of high order stores than most other surrounding towns, like Hyde or Ashton. People have a greater amount of shops in which they can compare prices and eventually purchase the lowest priced product. This is not an available option in somewhere like Hyde because there are far fewer high order goods stores that sell the same products.

- People do not visit Stockport as often as their local shops. – This is because Stockport offers mainly high order goods which are needed on few occasions (TVs, beds, etc). Not many shops in Stockport sell everyday items like bread and milk. There are more local shops, which sell low order goods, per squared kilometre in smaller towns and residential areas than there are in Stockport centre. This means that people generally live nearer to a local shop than Stockport; therefore they have to travel less. It is not convenient to visit Stockport very often unless you live very close.

- People are willing to travel further to Stockport – This is because Stockport offers a large shopping community with a huge variety of different stores. The prices in large chain stores are generally cheaper than in local shops and smaller towns with only one or two larger shops. This is because all the chain stores are near each other and therefore have more competition with each other. The cheaper prices for better quality, high order goods attracts large amounts of shoppers. In Stockport people can find if not all, the majority of items they would need. This means that people only need to visit on an occasional basis.

- Most people travel by car – This is because cars offer fast and convenient travel. There is no waiting for buses, taxis or trains and Stockport has a large amount of car park spaces available. Also people with lots of shopping can easily transport it home. Cars also work out cheaper than buses if a short distance is being travelled and there are more people sharing the car journey.

- Similar types of shops or services group together – This is an advantage to shops and customers. Shops can compare prices more easily to lower their prices to attract more people, they can compete. Shoppers can also easily compare prices and choose th e lowest. This can be done all in one small area, without a long walk to another shop selling the same object.

- We will see and ask more females the questions in our questionnaire – This is because most males would be at work. Many females wouldn't be at work because they retire before men and they therefore have more time to go and visit Stockport. The majority of the females we see will therefore be 60+ although a few will be aged 40 – 60. Younger people will be at school, college or work.

Method

We carried out the survey of Stockport on Friday 29th October 2001The class group split up into groups of 2 – 3 people per group. We were then assigned different tasks (see introduction). Each group completed the assigned task then moved onto the next one. To complete all the tasks we spent about 5 hours in Stockport, this gave us plenty of time to get all necessary information and find out anything extra.

As there were totally different sets of information to be collected, each different set was recorded dif ferently. The questionnaire results were collected in a table with headings for each question asked, plus extra columns for gender and guessed age. The pedestrian count was recorded onto a simple map of Merseyway, showing the key points after doing the counts. Each shop was numbered on a more detailed map and the corresponding names were written alongside the correct numbers in our field books. Also, each different land use (RH, RM, etc) had a colour to match a key; this enables us to see what shop types ar e where in Stockport. The key is on the map of all Stockport centre, each shops is colour coded depending on their type. The different colours enable us to see if certain types of shops group together. This helps prove my fifth hypothesis.

After collecting and compiling all our data from each group, I put it all into tally charts and tables so that I could easily count up each lot of data. This would enable me to put all the data into graphs and charts which would then help me prove my hypothesis.