

Chapter Four: Conclusion and Evaluation

Now that I have analysed the data I have collected, I can accept or reject my original hypothesis based on my findings.

My hypothesis was:

The larger the supermarket, the larger the sphere of influence.

It was shown in my analysis section that Safeway has a sphere of influence that is 2.58% larger than Aldi, a small difference, but has twice the floor space of Aldi. This information is shown on pages 11-16. This means that there is either no connection between the two, or that one supermarket has a sphere of influence that is unusual for its size. I continued to investigate reasons that could mean the second possibility is true in my analysis section. I first looked at the reasons given for shopping at the supermarkets by the shoppers. This can be seen on page 17. This found that 66% of people who shopped at Aldi did so because they thought it was better value for money, and 44% of Safeway's shoppers shopped there because of better quality goods. This shows a different appeal at each of the supermarkets. Due to the number of responses from Aldi claiming value for money, I studied a shopping basket survey to see if the claims were justified and therefore a possible reason for the unexpected results. The results were distorted by extreme values, so they were disregarded and it was found that Aldi was 12.95% cheaper than Safeway. This is on page 18. This is a possible reason for the hypothesis to seem incorrect at first glance. I then continued to look at the importance the sample placed on different factors when choosing which supermarket they shopped at. Again it showed that the largest proportion of people (32%) chose their supermarket depending on its price. This is different to Safeway where the largest proportion chose their supermarket based on convenience. This again shows the different appeals of the two supermarkets, and the choice of Safeway due to convenience could account for the low difference between the spheres of influence. I finally studied the pedestrian flow into each of the supermarkets for 20 minutes. The information I found in this section made me change my mind about the possibility of my hypothesis being correct. The pedestrian flow showed that 238% more people went to Safeway than Aldi in a set time period. This made me think that it is possible that the floor space is connected with the *number* of people who go to the supermarkets than the distance they travel.

Overall I have decided to reject my hypothesis. It has been shown in this investigation that other factors seem to affect the sphere of influence, and therefore it is difficult to prove any single hypothesis, as there are many different factors that are not controlled affecting the data. I have though managed to identify a clear relationship. I have noticed that the floor space of the supermarket is linked with the number of people who shop there. Therefore I reject my hypothesis, but feel that if further work were to be done, that the floor space would be linked with the number of people who shop there.

Accuracy and Reliability of Sample:

I attempted to limit the variation in results due to time and date, by using comparable times as is shown on page 9, but the questionnaires were inevitably taken over a period of time, and therefore are not correct for any precise moment in

time. Also, this means that as two dates one week apart were used it is highly likely that some people were asked questionnaires twice, and that therefore there is an element of bias in the sample.

Limitations Of Methods Used:

My largest limitation was the sample size. This is because the smaller the sample size, the larger the difference an anomalous result will have. Therefore for more accurate results a larger sample would be used. This was not possible in the small enquiry I conducted, as there was a limit to the amount of time I could spend conducting my fieldwork. To try and eliminate any anomalous results I questioned one hundred and then chose using the random function on a calculator fifty of the one hundred samples. If the postcode was unrecognised by <http://www.streetmap.co.uk> then I randomly chose another questionnaire. This process was designed to prevent any bias from false results given to me as a practical joke or by accident.

Another limitation of the methods I used was that it was impossible to ask everyone who passed by to answer a questionnaire as it took approximately one minute to ask each questionnaire. Therefore If I were to do the questionnaires with unlimited resources I would have a larger team asking the questionnaires so that nobody was missed.

Limitations Of My Conclusions:

The conclusions I have made cannot be proven definitively as there are many other factors that I have identified to be suspected of affecting the sphere of influence. I have drawn the conclusions I believe to be correct but there will always be alternative points of view that are also valid. I cannot make definite conclusions at the scale upon which I am working, as there is variation within individual supermarkets, internally they are different, and therefore the internal aspects have the ability to affect the sphere of influence. Overall I think that my conclusions are the most rational considering the data I have collected and that most people will agree with them.

Amendments For Future Reference:

If I were to do this investigation in the future with unlimited resources I would make some changes and use this investigation as a pilot study. Below are the changes I would make.

1. Have a larger task force so that nobody was missed out whilst I was asking a questionnaire.
2. Study the link between number of people who shop at supermarkets and floor space rather than sphere of influence and floor space.
3. Take a larger sample for more accurate results

Bibliography:

The following are the books I used to help me with this investigation:

Understanding GCSE Geography Bowen and Pallister 1999	Page 3
Geography An Integrated Approach David Waugh 1999	Page 4
Fieldwork Firsthand Peter Glynn 1988	Methodology

Below are the websites that I used when doing this investigation:

http://www.streetmap.co.uk	Pages 3, 5, and 12
http://www.multimap.com	Pages 13 and 14
http://www.pupilvision.com	All of project

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