

Wholesale & Retail LEADERSHIP CHAIR

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CALL FOR MORE TRAINING FOR SURVIVALIST RETAILERS

A study into survivalist retailers in the Khayelitsha area has found that this evolving sector has the potential to create jobs, thereby reducing poverty and aiding the economic growth of the country. However this is unlikely to happen without specific interventions and support.

The study, titled 'The Unique Role of the Survivalist Retail Entrepreneur in Job Creation and Poverty Reduction' called for targeted programmes, including basic business skills training, to boost motivation levels and self-efficacy of retailers who fall within this category. The study underscores previous research, which suggests that survivalist retail entrepreneurs in South Africa are severely neglected in terms of small business development initiatives and support services.

People who fall within this category typically operate on a small scale with the primary objective of supporting themselves and their families. They offer a wide range of services, from running spaza shops and hair salons to offering furniture upholstery.

As such, survivalist retailers form a significant part of the informal sector and have a role to play in overcoming the country's socio-economic challenges.

"Informal sector entrepreneurs are generally not registered and do not pay tax, nevertheless, this should not diminish government's confidence in supplying this group with the necessary resources to help them grow in the interests of overall economic development," says Professor Roger Mason, Wholesale & Retail Leadership Chair at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology, who commissioned the study.

The study was the first of its kind, indicating a new vista for retail entrepreneurship research. According to the research team, further study needs to be done into micro enterprises (generally dominated by women) and immigrant groups who operate successfully in township environments.

For more information contact:

Professor Roger Mason

Wholesale & Retail Leadership Chair

Tel: 021 460 3040

Fax: 086 680 9632

Email: masonr@cput.ac.za



RETAIL BUSINESS MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT Business Faculty

Postal address PO Box 652 Cape Town 8000 South Africa
Physical address Room 2.2, Commerce Building, c/o Keizersgracht & Tennant Street, Zonnebloem
Tel 021 464 7260 **Fax** 086 680 9632 **Email** info@wrlc.org.za www.wrlc.org.za