

DURBAN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

**DETERMINING THE SIGNIFICANT MARKETING MIX ELEMENTS INFLUENCING
SMALL RETAIL BUSINESSES' SUCCESS IN DURBAN CENTRAL**

MAHOHOMA NORMAN

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**DETERMINING THE SIGNIFICANT MARKETING MIX ELEMENTS INFLUENCING
SMALL RETAIL BUSINESSES' SUCCESS IN DURBAN CENTRAL**

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NORMAN MAHOHOMA

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APPROVED FOR FINAL SUBMISSION

Supervisor (Affiliation): _____ (signature)

Date: 4/08/2024

Co-Supervisor (Affiliation): _____ (signature) _____ Date: _____

ABSTRACT

The primary purpose of this research study is to determine the significant marketing mix elements influencing the success of small retail businesses in Durban Central, South Africa. Despite the acknowledgment of small businesses as crucial for economic growth, a high failure rate persists, with causes including funding challenges, management skill deficits and a lack of marketing expertise. Previous studies underscore the importance of addressing these factors for sustainable small business success. Employing quantitative techniques, this study analysed data collected from 217 small retail businesses in Durban Central using closed-ended questionnaires. Using SPSS 29.0, descriptive and inferential statistics were utilised to explore the relationship between marketing mix elements and business success. Key findings revealed a price-sensitive retail landscape, highlighting the importance of value-based pricing strategies. Additionally, promotion emerged as a pivotal driver of success, alongside factors such as competitive pricing and exceptional customer service. Furthermore, the study highlighted a predominant reliance on financial dimensions for assessing success, overshadowing factors like innovation and customer loyalty. The research proposed a conceptual framework integrating marketing mix elements with internal, market and external environments, centered on the 7Ps. Recommendations include prioritising marketing skills development, fostering creativity, exploring diverse financial support sources and implementing value-based pricing strategies. Furthermore, strategic collaboration with industry networks is advised to promote resilience and growth. The insights gained from this study offer valuable implications for small retail businesses in Durban Central and South Africa at large, informing strategies for enhanced marketing mix element application and ultimately contributing to business sustainability and economic prosperity.

Key words: Small retail businesses; Marketing mix elements; Success; Dimension of Success.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my late parents, Peter and Modesta Mahohoma, whose unwavering love, support and encouragement have been guiding lights throughout my academic journey. Though they are no longer with us, their values, sacrifices and enduring belief in my potential continue to inspire me every day. This achievement is a testament to their legacy and I am forever grateful for the foundation they laid and the lessons they imparted.

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, Norman Mahohoma declare that the work exhibited in this thesis is based on my research and that I have not submitted this thesis to any other institution of higher education to obtain an academic qualification.

03/04/2024

.....

Norman Mahohoma

.....

Date

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CPD	Continuous Professional Development
CRM	Customer Relationship Management
DCCI	Durban Chamber of Commerce and Industry
DUT	Durban University of Technology
GEM	Global Entrepreneurship Monitor
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
KZN	KwaZulu Natal
MSME	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises
NEAC	National Enterprise Amendment Act
NERSA	National Energy Regulator of South Africa
NBF	National Business Forum of South Africa
NSBA	National Small Businesses Act
NSEA	National Small Enterprise Act
SMME	Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises
SME	Small and Medium Enterprises
PCA	Principal Component Analysis
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences

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CHAPTER ONE: OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Small businesses are crucial for the economic development of South Africa since they help reduce poverty by creating jobs, generating income, revenue and promoting technological progression (Oji et al., 2017; Rambe, 2017). Policy makers, economists and business professionals widely concur that small businesses play a pivotal role in stimulating economic growth. The study conducted by Prasetyo and Kistanti (2020) emphasised the significant contribution of small businesses in mitigating unemployment, poverty and other societal challenges.

Although small businesses have great importance, more than 70% of small businesses in South Africa experience failure within the initial 5 to 7 years of establishment. Scholars and professionals do not generally reach a consensus regarding the reasons for this phenomenon (Bushe, 2019). Various obstacles impact the outcome of small retail businesses. Umadia and Kasztelnik (2020) pinpointed insufficient funding, frequent power outages, inadequate management and marketing skills and weak entrepreneurial orientation as the primary factors contributing to the remarkably low success rate of small businesses.

The marketing mix strategy enables small retail businesses to effectively address several consumer needs by strategically planning, executing and monitoring marketing promotions (Kang, Diao & Zanini, 2020). The marketing mix approach encompasses the 7Ps framework — Product, Price, Place, Promotion, People, Process and Physical Evidence, allowing small businesses to align their marketing efforts with consumer preferences. According to Fahy and Jobber (2019), the adoption of sustainable marketing practices is crucial for the success and survival of small businesses. Managers frequently attribute poor market conditions to problems such as insufficient market information, inadequate marketing tactics, incomplete product development and insufficient product commercialisation, as stated by Ejiogu et al. (2022). Inadequately strategised and implemented marketing initiatives lead to small businesses experiencing deficiencies in product quality, pricing suitability, promotional effectiveness and optimal placement and

location. The efficacy of a marketing mix strategy in small retail businesses hinges on the development of strategies to effectively target the appropriate client base and establish enduring relationships and trust, hence fostering business expansion (Alam, 2020).

According to the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (2011), inadequate market research, the absence of a viable business concept and limited access to thriving markets are among the obstacles that hinder the growth of small retail businesses in South Africa. The inability of small businesses to reach suitable markets poses a significant risk to the sustainability of their operations. Financial institutions utilise market access as a factor for providing funding to small businesses. According to the Small Entrepreneur Development Agency (2016), small businesses who do not have access to the market are the ones who receive funding and mentoring last. The operations of small businesses in Durban Central, KwaZulu Natal, are severely hindered by a lack of capital, as they typically operate without any allocated expenditures for marketing and mostly depend on informal promotion through word of mouth.

The study conducted by Lekhanya (2015) found that small business owners/managers lack appropriate marketing competence and knowledge and there is a restricted implementation of marketing strategies. According to Webb, Ireland, Hitt, Kistruck and Tihanyi (2011), a comprehensive understanding of marketing principles, when integrated with business operations, helps enhance the performance of a small businesses, hence improving its likelihood of success and survival. Neneh and van Zyl (2012) argue that enhancing the performance of a small business through differentiation strategy is closely linked to the marketing strategies of the business. Ruhdelius (2011) observes that marketing is a method employed by firms to enhance their ability to fulfil their goals. It is a strategy adopted by small retail businesses to assist in the accomplishment of both organisational and managerial objectives, hence ensuring success and survival. In a study conducted by Maboja (2011), it was discovered that most managers in small and medium-sized enterprises lack marketing knowledge and are unable to identify potential consumers for their products and services. Consequently, these small businesses fail.

According to Van Scheers (2011), it is crucial for managers of small retail businesses to comprehend and develop marketing strategies for their products and services. This is

because the success of these businesses relies on their ability to meet the needs of their customers. Marketing mix strategies play a crucial role in improving the performance of small businesses and contribute to their overall success (Hassan, Qureshi, Sharif & Mukhtar, 2013). To date, no studies have been conducted to ascertain the key marketing mix elements that impact the success of small retail businesses in Durban Central. To address this gap, the current study aims to determine the significant marketing mix elements influencing small retail businesses in Durban Central.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Small retail businesses significantly contribute to the economic growth and development of all countries through factors such as employment, taxation and income distribution (Hossain, 2020). Small retail businesses encourage individuals to apply their creativity in addressing social challenges, fostering job creation, reducing inequality and promoting economic growth (Tuffour, Amoako & Amartey, 2022). Although small retail businesses play a crucial role in driving economic progress, they are faced with numerous challenges that hinder their success and survival in Durban Central as noted by Bushe (2019) above. According to the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) Reports of 2018–2021, small retail businesses in South Africa face a number of challenges, including a lack of knowledge and experience in management and marketing as well as a lack of capital and access to capital, both of which contribute to the high failure rate.

Ibrahim (2018) revealed that the primary challenge faced by small businesses in Africa is their inability to ascertain the most successful mix of marketing strategies. Marketing variables, such as poor location, inadequate marketing initiatives, inability to perform market research, misinterpretation of market conditions, substandard products or services and inability to understand the consumer trends, needs and wants, all have a significant impact on the success and longevity of small retail businesses. The survival and success of small retail firms are negatively impacted by the absence of such marketing mix strategies, suggesting that marketing expertise should be regarded as a requirement for long-term success (Ejiogu et al., 2022). As mentioned in the section 1.1 above, no research of this kind has been done to determine the significant marketing mix

elements influencing small retail businesses' success in Durban Central. Therefore, it is imperative to undertake an investigation to fill this gap in knowledge.

1.3 AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to determine the significant marketing mix elements influencing small retail businesses' success in Durban Central, KwaZulu Natal.

The research objectives of this study are as follows:

- Explore the factors that influence the level of importance placed on each marketing mix strategy by small retail businesses.
- Determine the dimensions used to measure the success of small retail businesses.
- Ascertain the relationship between the marketing mix elements and success of small retail businesses; and
- Design a conceptual framework that examines the influence of marketing mix elements on the success of small retail businesses.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research questions of this study were as follows:

- What are the factors that influence the level of importance placed on each marketing mix strategy by small retail businesses?
- What are the dimensions used to measure the success of small retail businesses?
- What is the relationship between the marketing mix elements and success of small retail businesses? and
- To what extent do the marketing mix elements influence the success of small retail businesses?

1.5 RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

Based on the objective of ascertaining the relationships between the marketing mix elements and success of small retail businesses, the following hypotheses were

developed:

- **H1:** The product element significantly influences the success of small retail businesses in Durban Central.
- **H2:** The pricing element significantly impacts the success of small retail businesses in Durban Central.
- **H3:** The place element of small retail businesses significantly affects their success in Durban Central.
- **H4:** Promotion element significantly impact to the success of small retail businesses in Durban Central.
- **H5:** The people element significantly influences the success of small retail businesses in Durban Central.
- **H6:** The process element significantly impacts the success of small retail businesses in Durban Central.
- **H7:** Physical evidence significantly impacts the success of small retail businesses in Durban Central.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study of small retail businesses and the application of marketing mix strategies is of interest to academia, the community at large, small business owners and government.

This study holds substantial significance for the academic community. The research aims to contribute to the existing body of knowledge within the field of marketing, specifically focusing on small retail businesses in the unique context of Durban Central, KwaZulu-Natal. Academia can benefit from the study's findings by gaining insights into the practical implications of marketing mix elements on the success of small businesses. The research may offer a nuanced understanding of how theoretical marketing concepts apply in real-world scenarios, providing valuable information for future academic research, discussions and curriculum development. Furthermore, scholars may find avenues for exploring new theories or refining existing ones, based on the empirical evidence generated by this study.

For governmental entities, the study has considerable relevance in shaping policies and support mechanisms for small businesses in Durban Central. By understanding the significant marketing mix elements influencing small retail businesses, policymakers can tailor interventions and assistance programmes to address the specific needs of these businesses. This could include targeted training programmes, financial support, or the development of a conducive regulatory environment that fosters the effective implementation of marketing strategies. Ultimately, the study may inform policies aimed at promoting the growth and sustainability of small businesses, contributing to the overall economic development and prosperity of the region.

Small business owners in Durban Central stand to gain practical and actionable insights from the findings of this study. The research aims to uncover the key marketing mix elements that significantly impact the success of small retail businesses. Armed with this knowledge, business owners can make informed decisions about their marketing strategies, resource allocation and overall business operations. The study may provide a roadmap for optimizing marketing efforts, enhancing customer engagement and ultimately improving business outcomes. Small business owners can use these insights to adapt their marketing mix strategies to the unique characteristics and demands of the local market, thereby increasing their competitiveness and sustainability.

The broader community in Durban Central will benefit from this study through the potential economic and social impacts on the local business landscape. A thriving small business sector contributes to job creation, economic growth and community development. As small retail businesses succeed, they are likely to generate more employment opportunities, thereby improving the socio-economic conditions of the community. This is in line with Seow et al. (2020) who reiterate that small businesses play a pivotal role in job creation, promoting innovation and improvement of the gross domestic product. Additionally, successful businesses contribute to the vibrancy and diversity of local shopping areas, enhancing the overall quality of life for residents. The study's findings may also shed light on how small businesses can contribute to community engagement and development, fostering a sense of pride and ownership among local residents.

It can be noted that this study on the significant marketing mix elements influencing small retail businesses in Durban Central, KwaZulu Natal, has far-reaching implications for academia, the government, small business owners and the community at large. Through the insights it provides, the study has the potential to shape academic discourse, inform government policies, guide small business strategies and contribute to the overall well-being and prosperity of the local community.

1.7 DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

1.7.1 Small retail businesses

A small retail business (a subset of small businesses) specifically refers to a type of small business engaged in the sale of goods or services directly to consumers. The primary function of a small retail business is to provide products or services for end consumers and its operations are centered around the retail sector.

1.7.2 Marketing mix

Marketing mix is an amalgamation of diverse marketing decision variables, approaches and tactics used by the management of an enterprise to market its goods and services. As Thabit and Raewf (2018) state, a marketing mix is defined as a controllable collection of variables that enterprises can use to influence the buyer's response to products and or services. Product, price, place, promotion, people, process and physical evidence are the key elements that make up an enterprise's marketing mix concept (Al Badi, 2018).

1.7.3 Strategy

A strategy is a well-defined blueprint for an organisation. It expresses the overall mission, vision and direction an organisation is taking to advance its desired objectives. According to Mckeown (2019), a strategy is a headway and the shortest route to reach desirable ends with the available resources.

1.8 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology refers to the systematic approach employed by researchers to answer a research problem. Rinjit (2020) provided a concise definition of research methodology as a structured approach to addressing a research problem. This involves collecting data through various ways, analysing and interpreting the acquired data and drawing conclusions that may be applied to the wider population. A research technique is essentially an outline of the research investigation, according to the definition provided by Rinjit (2020). Mishra and Alok (2022) stated that research methodology provides the solution to the practical question of how a research study is conducted. The research technique pertains to the meticulous design of the study by the researcher to effectively address the research aim, objectives and questions in a valid and trustworthy manner. The research methodology addressed the following aspects in this study:

- Research design.
- Research population, sampling frame, sampling technique and sample size.
- Data collection techniques – how the data was collected.
- Data analysis and presentation – how the data was analysed and presented.
- Ethical issues of the study – how to protect the participants of the research study.

1.9 RESEARCH DESIGN

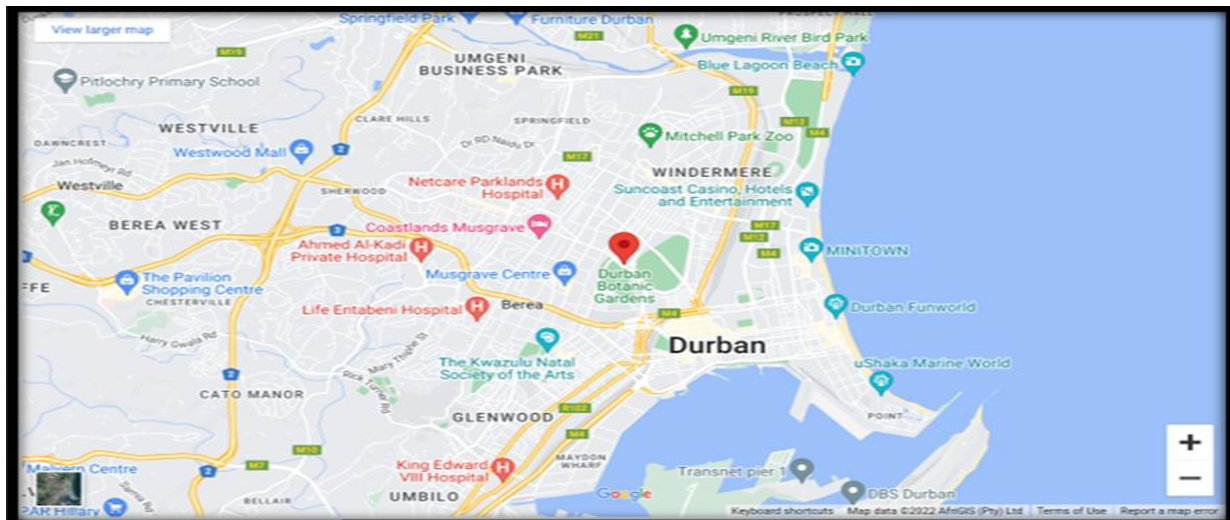
The research design is the blueprint that guides a researcher through the process of obtaining, evaluating and drawing conclusions from data and information in order to define and resolve a research topic. This was corroborated by Kumar (2017), who proposed that a research design is an approach, framework and method of investigation that is designed to provide solutions to problems or research questions. It is crucial to remember that a research design's primary goal is to support the researcher in organising an appropriate research procedure that maximises the validity of the results. The two most common research design techniques are quantitative and qualitative research approaches (Rahi, 2017). Data from small retail businesses in Durban Central were gathered for this research study using quantitative techniques. A quantitative research

design requires a variety of interpretive techniques that summarise, translate and decode concepts into a more comprehensible meaning, according to Alsharari & Al-Shboul (2019). A quantitative research technique's main goal is to draw conclusions about generalisations from the sample study's findings by utilising numerical methods to assess the results and create a comprehensive representation of the data (Creswell, 2014). Since quantitative approaches collect research data using standardised methods that are statistical in nature, it is generally accepted that the data they collect provide more objective and true information.

1.10 STUDY SITE

Situated in the municipality of eThekweni and the province of KwaZulu Natal, Durban is a city on South Africa's east coast. Durban Central is located close to South Beach and Greyville. Durban Central is a commercial centre that is divided among parks, nature reserves, urban areas, industrial areas and commercial business areas (eThekweni Municipality, 2013). Agriculture, manufacturing, construction, retailing, the motor trade and repair services, wholesale commercial agents and related services, catering and accommodation, transportation, storage and communication, finance and business services, community and personal services and others are among the small businesses in Durban Central, according to the Durban Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI). Durban Central extends to Morningside, Springfield, Westville, Roseburg, Umbilo and South Beach in addition to the seashore. Overport, Sydenham, Westville, Glenwood, Bay Head, Berea, Musgrave, Bulwer, Central, Clairwood, Umbilo, Durban Beachfront, Greyville, Jacobs, Marine Parade, Mayville, Morningside, North Beach, South Beach, van Riebeeck Park and Windermere comprise the study area of Durban Central, which is the focus of this research. A map of Durban Central is shown below.

Figure 1.1: A Map showing Durban Central, eThekweni Municipality, KwaZulu-Natal Province



Source: eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality (2013)

1.11 RESEARCH POPULATION

According to Flick (2015), a population is any group or collection of people, items, events, or elements that have similar traits or qualities. The population encompasses everything the researcher is interested in examining (Welman et al., 2013), yet due to practical constraints such as time, resources and practicality, it is frequently impossible to study every single component inside the population. All small businesses in the Durban Central region were the population of this study and the small retail businesses in Durban Central were the target population.

1.12 SAMPLING FRAME

A sampling frame, according to Pandey and Pandey (2021), is a list of every component of a population from which a sample can be taken. Phokwane (2020) states that a sampling frame is employed when the researcher does not know the exact target population. Wiid and Diggins (2013) provided support for Phokwane's (2020) claim by defining a sampling frame as the trustworthy list that will be used to select the study sample. This study's sampling frame consisted of the five hundred (500) small retail businesses in Durban Central, as indicated by the membership list from the DCCI Directory for the period 2021/2022.

1.13 SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

Probability and non-probability sampling are the two types of sampling techniques. Non-probability sampling involves an unknown probability of a subject or element being selected from the sample, whereas probability sampling involves knowing the chance of a subject or element being selected from the sample. A major drawback of non-probability sampling methods is that the results cannot be extrapolated to the full study population (Etikan & Bala, 2017). With a probability sampling strategy, this is not the case. The researcher chose a probability sampling strategy, known as simple random sampling, because it was convenient and representative of the entire population. It was simple to apply simple random selection because the DCCI provided information about the intended group. Pandey and Pandey (2021) corroborated this, stating that under probability sampling, individuals belonging to the known population (small business owner-managers) have an equal chance of being selected for the study sample.

1.14 THE RESEARCH SAMPLE

A sample size is a group that is representative of the research population (Wegner, 2016). According to Sekaran and Bougie's (2016) sample size table, at the 95% confidence level, a sample size of 217 is adequate for a population of 500 units/elements. By analysing a sample of 217 small business owner-managers, the researcher was able to draw conclusions regarding the target population of small retail businesses in Durban Central. Wegner (2016) supports the use of a sample in research because it is often impossible to record every data value in the population, owing to costs, time and potentially item destruction.

1.15 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT

Allen (2017) described data collection as a systematic method of obtaining, monitoring, quantifying and analysing exact information to assist research conducted by individuals and/or authorities, regardless of field. The primary data for this study was acquired using questionnaires. A questionnaire is a structured set of questions meant to elicit information from respondents (Boparai et al., 2015). It should be emphasized that in this study, a

questionnaire was utilised as a means of communication between the researcher and various small business owner-managers to address specific challenges identified in the problem statement. The questionnaire questions were informed by the literature review as well as previously published research questionnaires used in similar investigations. The researcher delivered the questionnaires to the small retail business owners/managers via email, along with a letter of information, letter of consent and cover letter outlining the method of data collection.

1.16 DATA ANALYSIS

A structured research questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data, which was then analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 29. The researcher also performed computations like Pearson's correlation matrix and Pearson's Chi-Square to measure the strength of association between marketing mix elements and the success of small retail businesses. The Pearson correlation matrix, according to Wegner (2016), is a table that shows how strongly two or more variables relate to one another in a study. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used in the data analysis for this study. According to Cooksey and McDonald (2019), descriptive statistics are a type of data analysis that is used to convert unprocessed data into more easily understood, relevant and usable information. In the research study, descriptive statistics were also employed to provide summaries of the data pertaining to small retail businesses. Using a representative sample from a larger population study, a researcher can infer trends and patterns regarding the study, according to Buelens et al. (2018). Inferential statistics are more complex mathematical computations. To draw conclusions and/or forecasts regarding the links between the variables in the owner-manager sample and the broader population of small retail businesses in Durban Central, inferential statistics were employed to analyse the relationships between the variables within the sample.

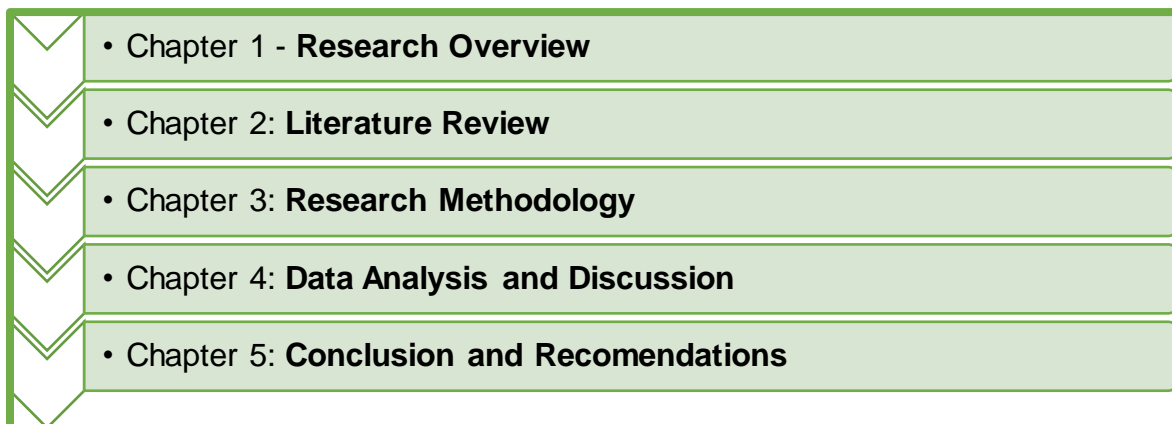
1.17 ETHICAL ISSUES

According to Prabhu (2016), social research is an ongoing process which necessitates some disruption in people's lives. The outcome of social research relies solely on a truthful and successful relationship between the researcher and the participants.

According to the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human study, ethical consent is a prerequisite for doing any form of human study. Anabo et al. (2019) corroborate this aforementioned claim by asserting that a researcher must diligently consider three factors during the course of doing research: informed consent, risk of harm and confidentiality. This study adhered to these three ethical principles. The norms and principles that are outlined in the research ethics policy and guidelines of the Durban University of Technology (DUT) were utilised to guide this study. Prior to their involvement in the research study, all participants and stakeholders were given a letter of information and consent.

1.18 OUTLINE OF THE STUDY

Figure 1.2: The outline of the study (Chapter flow chart)



Source: Author's construct

1.18.1 Chapter 1: Research Overview

While Chapter One (Introduction) provided a brief overview of the study, its aims and objectives, rationale and the structure of the entire dissertation, Chapter Two presents the literature review.

1.18.2 Chapter 2: Literature Review

The literature review provides a critical literature overview aiming to examine literature from different sources, regarding integrated marketing mix and the success and survival

of small retail business. The overview examines the available literature according to the research objectives, as the main themes of the study.

1.18.3 Chapter 3: Research Methodology

The research methodology is discussed in Chapter Three. A research methodology is a detailed description of each step that is taken to conduct a research study. In this chapter, the following aspects are discussed: the research methodology and design adopted; the sampling technique used; the questionnaire design and the data analysis techniques used for the empirical study.

1.18.4 Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Discussion

Chapter Four discusses the results of the study. The results reflect the outcomes of the study and are presented as pie charts, graphs, tables and written information. A discussion of the results in Chapter Four includes a detailed, critical discussion of the results obtained from the study in relation to the available literature. A variety of appropriate statistical tests have been used to analyse and interpret the data collected from the completed questionnaires.

1.18.5 Chapter 5: Conclusion and Recommendations

The conclusion and recommendations are presented in Chapter Five. The chapter includes a summary of the study and recommendations to improve or further the study. This chapter also incorporates conclusions on the findings of the study. Recommendations to improve the success and survival of small retail businesses are discussed in this chapter. Limitations of the study are also highlighted.

1.19 CONCLUSION

This chapter presented an overview of the study. The chapter discussed the background to the study, the problem statement and the aim and objectives of the study. This chapter focused on discussing the background related to the objectives of the study. The problem statement driving the study contended that most studies offer no solution to improve the success and survival of small retail businesses in Durban Central, KZN. Marketing

challenges, as discussed by various authors, were discussed in the problem statement. In addition to the above, the significance and scope of the study, as well as the outline, were briefly described. The importance of this study of small retail businesses for government policy makers, business authorities, financial institutions, upcoming entrepreneurs and owners/managers was highlighted.

In the next chapter, the literature regarding small retail businesses and marketing mix strategies is analysed and discussed.

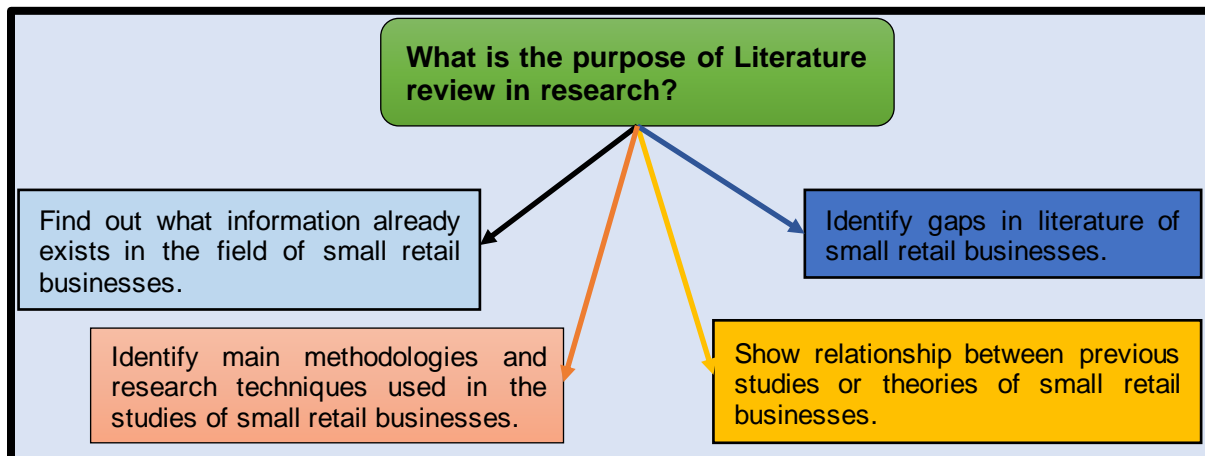
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the relevant literature concerning small retail businesses and marketing mix is discussed. The definition of small businesses; marketing mix and its seven elements; the significance of small retail businesses in the economy of South Africa; the characteristics of small retail businesses; and the challenges faced by small retail businesses are discussed. The relationship between marketing mix as a business strategy and the success of small businesses are also investigated. Figure 2.1, below, illustrates the role of literature in research, as articulated by Leite et al. (2019)

Figure 2.1: The purpose of literature in the current research study.



Source: Adopted from Leite *et al.* (2019)

2.2 DEFINITION OF A SMALL BUSINESS

A controversial issue in literature is the definition of small businesses. According to Lucca and Lee (2016), there are different definitions for small businesses. There is no universal definition of “small businesses” because the concept varies from country-to-country and from sector-to-sector. Below is the description and definition of small businesses in the South African context:

The National Small Enterprise Act of South Africa, 1996 (Act No. 102 of 1996), together with the National Enterprise Amendment Act, 2003 (Act No. 26 of 2003) and the National Small Businesses Act, 2004 (Act No. 29 of 2004) defined a small business as:

An enterprise that meets the following criteria is considered a micro, small or medium enterprise: It is a separate and distinct business entity; its branches or subsidiaries, if any, include co-operative enterprises and it is managed by one owner or more predominantly carried on in any sector or subsector of the economy mentioned in column 1 of the Schedule. Table 2.1, below, illustrates the revised schedule that outlines the broader definition of SMEs.

Table 2.1: A Revised Schedule 1 of the National Definition of SME in South Africa

Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4
Sectors or sub-sectors in accordance with the standard Industrial Classification	Size or class of enterprise	Total full-time equivalent of paid employees	Total annual turnover
Agriculture	Medium	51 -250	≤ 35.0 million
	Small	11 - 50	≤ 17.0 million
	Micro	0-10	≤ 7.0 million
Mining and Quarrying	Medium	51 -250	≤ 210.0 million
	Small	11 - 50	≤ 50.0 million
	Micro	0-10	≤ 15.0 million
Manufacturing	Medium	51 -250	≤ 170.0 million
	Small	11 - 50	≤ 50.0 million
	Micro	0-10	≤ 10.0 million
Electricity, Gas and Water	Medium	51 -250	≤ 180.0 million
	Small	11 - 50	≤ 60.0 million
	Micro	0-10	≤ 60.0 million
Construction	Medium	51 -250	≤ 170.0 million
	Small	11 - 50	≤ 75.0 million

	Micro	0-10	≤ 10.0 million
Retail, Motor Trade and Repair Services	Medium	51 -250	≤ 80.0 million
	Small	11 - 50	≤ 25.0 million
	Micro	0-10	≤ 7.5 million
Wholesale	Medium	51 -250	≤ 220 million
	Small	11 - 50	≤ 80.0 million
	Micro	0-10	≤ 20.0 million
Catering, Accommodation and other Trade	Medium	51 -250	≤ 40.0 million
	Small	11 - 50	≤ 15.0 million
	Micro	0-10	≤ 5.0 million
Transport, Storage and Communications	Medium	51 -250	≤ 140.0 million
	Small	11 - 50	≤ 45.0 million
	Micro	0-10	≤ 7.5 million
Finance and Business Services	Medium	51 -250	≤ 85.0 million
	Small	11 - 50	≤ 35.0 million
	Micro	0-10	≤ 7.5 million
Community, Social and Personal Services	Medium	51 -250	≤ 70.0 million
	Small	11 - 50	≤ 22.0 million
	Micro	0-10	≤ 5.0 million

Source: Government Gazette, 15 March 2019.

The Small Business Act No 102 of 1996, as amended in 2019 by the Minister of Small Business Department in South Africa, defines a small business as an enterprise employing between 11 and 50 full-time employees. The criterion of total annual turnover differs from class to class of enterprises. From the revised schedule, three issues have been identified by the researcher. It can be argued that a small business at the upper limit of its category might differ significantly from one at the lower limit. Furthermore, the revised schedule uses annual turnover as the primary size criterion, which might not accurately reflect profitability or economic contribution. A small business with a high turnover, but low profit, may be misclassified as larger than it is. The turnover thresholds vary significantly across sectors, making direct comparisons between different types of businesses difficult. For example, a small manufacturer needs a much lower turnover to

qualify, compared to a small mining enterprise. Because of this, it would be more convenient and less complicated to use the number of full-time employees.

In this research study, the researcher defines a small retail business (subset of small businesses) as an independently owned and operated enterprise employing typically 1-50 full-time employees, primarily engaged in the direct sale of goods or services to consumers within a local community.

2.3 DISTINCT CHARACTERISTICS OF SMALL RETAIL BUSINESSES

The high unemployment rate and rising number of graduates without suitable employment opportunities in South Africa are driving the rise of small retail businesses (Plagerson et al., 2019). The features of small businesses are not reflected in the definition of small businesses in South Africa. Differentiating, identifying and characterising small businesses is made easier by a few key features. Additionally, small businesses and large enterprises can be distinguished by these traits. According to Ogujiuba et al. (2020), small businesses in South Africa have several challenges, including a confined market, limited funding possibilities, insufficient technical and business skills, high costs, scarcity of raw materials and insufficient transportation and communication services. Below is an explanation of the characteristics that set small businesses apart from larger ones.

2.3.1 Systems, processes and procedures

The fact that small retail businesses have less red tape and more straightforward procedures is one of their most distinctive and defining characteristics. Compared with large enterprises, the operations (systems, processes and procedures) are smaller and less complex. Small retail businesses typically have systems that are dominated by people and their procedures are frequently more adaptive to changes in their environment (Mandviwalla & Flanagan, 2021). This makes small businesses less likely to be "locked in" to their current systems and processes, which makes them more flexible than large enterprises when it comes to introducing new projects. Large enterprises frequently deal with complex systems and processes, which makes them more adamant and sluggish to adapt.

2.3.2 Labour intensive feature

A process or industry that uses a lot of labour to create its goods or services is referred to as labour intensive, according to Adelaja and George (2019). It has been determined that small retail businesses are labour intensive. The main reason for this is because of small businesses owners' inability to raise sufficient capital for their business operations. The small businesses' limited cash reserves contribute to the Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMME) sector by being more labour intensive than capital intensive. Because they are more labour intensive, small retail businesses tend to hire more unskilled and low-skilled workers than larger enterprises. According to Chege and Wang (2020), small businesses encourage a more equal distribution of income than larger enterprises because they are labour intensive.

2.3.3 The Ownership and management of small businesses

Owner-managers are responsible for all areas of small retail businesses. Since owner-managers hold the final say in matters of policy, decision-making is centralised under them. Small businesses typically have a shorter decision-making chain since there are fewer levels of management and decision makers (Weaven et al., 2021). This therefore makes it possible for the owner-managers to adamantly declare any need for change within the organisation. This implies that if owner-managers understand the value of the opportunity for change, they can act as the catalyst for organisational transformation.

Small retail businesses also have lower levels of bureaucracy and less hierarchy. As a result, small businesses' senior management is closer to their operational activities. As a result, owner-managers frequently reside near the delivery point and have a high level of visibility within the enterprise (Ciloci, 2022).

Furthermore, since most owner-managers of small businesses typically have no formal management training, most of them lack management abilities and competences (Teka, 2022). Although many of them appear to have a solid understanding of the goods and services they provide, they typically lack the abilities needed for efficient business management. The absence of skills and competencies among owner-managers may impede their ability to comprehend the necessary measures to address the ever-changing

macroenvironment, hence jeopardising the success of their business. Some managers may limit growth efforts due to insufficient competencies (Amankwah-Amoah, 2022).

2.3.4 Management structure

According to Weaven et al. (2021), small businesses do not have a permanent middle management that reports to anybody other than the owner/manager, unlike larger enterprises. The owner of a small retail business is a member of the management team and is frequently in charge of a variety of duties. For example, due to a shortage of resources, these functions may also be done by the Small Medium Enterprises (SME) owner/manager, in contrast to large enterprises where work allocation is based on an employee's functional area and experience. This means that in small retail businesses, the ability of the owner/manager to fulfil multiple functions concurrently plays a major influence in decision-making. Owner-managers can quickly share their intentions with the organisation since the communication line is frequently more direct and shorter, which facilitates a quicker discussion on change initiative challenges. On the other hand, the bureaucratic structure of large enterprises results in a lack of flexibility and agility, which causes them to adopt new initiatives more slowly. According to Silva et al. (2019), small businesses have an advantage over large enterprises in this regard because they are not confronted with hierarchical systems that promote secrecy instead of transparency.

2.3.5 Customer relationship management

Cant and van Heerden (2017) claim that by emphasizing relationship building with every consumer through the efficient use of individual account information, customer relationship management (CRM) enables the business to provide customer service in real time. Small retail businesses can build close ties with their business partners since they narrowly focus on a limited number of product mix and service offerings. Furthermore, it should be highlighted that small retail businesses sometimes only operate in one city or region, where they have a strong presence and more direct interactions with local customers (Haq et al., 2020). Small retail businesses frequently draw a number of loyal customers who choose to support local businesses rather than national and international

enterprises since they are rooted in the community, employ locals and pay taxes in local markets.

2.3.6 Simplicity and flexibility of small retail businesses.

According to Rofiq and Pramono (2019) assert that small businesses are more adaptable to shifting market conditions. As previously mentioned in section 2.3.3, small retail businesses typically have a simple organisational structure that calls on employees to be flexible in applying their competences and skills to a variety of activities in their daily job. Employees in larger enterprises typically have detailed job descriptions, but in small retail businesses, due to the tighter budget for salaries and wages, employees are more frequently required to assist with a range of responsibilities. Therefore, it is expected of fewer workers to perform everything. Owner-managers of small retail businesses are more likely to set up training programmes for their staff members and provide flexible work hours so that employees can better manage their time. Small businesses are able to respond to external challenges in a more timely manner; yet this does not necessarily lead to excessive economies of scale or discourage specialisation (Okoumba, Mafini, & Bhadury, 2020).

2.3.7 Lower levels of revenue

Edmiston (2017) states that although small businesses typically generate less income compared to large enterprises, this does not necessarily mean that their profitability is worse. Small retail businesses that have been established typically possess full ownership of their facilities and equipment. This, along with other variables, contributes to the maintenance of cheaper expenses compared to businesses with higher levels of debt. Numerous small retail businesses depend on the personal assets of owners and management to fund their operations. According to Cant, Erdis and Sephapo (2017), in order to maintain competitiveness, small businesses must reduce their fixed and variable expenses and operate with utmost efficiency.

2.3.8 Strong competition

Small retail businesses typically operate within a local area due to their limited funding and limited marketing resources, which restricts their ability to grow their activities extensively. Moreover, due to the presence of numerous small businesses vying for business prospects within the same market, competition typically leads to the emergence of novel and distinctive products or services (Liem et al., 2019). Thriving small retail businesses prioritise their consumers and clients, catering to their individual needs and wants. This entails embracing a market-oriented strategy, where the owner-managers actively seek solutions to their customers' issues and enhance their products to align with their customers' needs (Okoumba, Mafini & Bhadury, 2020). The proximity of small retail businesses to their customers is linked to their capacity to promptly respond to any alterations in customer needs and preferences.

2.3.9 Higher levels of input costs

Unlike larger enterprises, most small retail businesses provide a limited and specialised selection of products or services. Beltrami and Orzes (2021) found that small businesses, because of their limited product/service variety, purchase fewer inputs in procurement marketplaces. Consequently, this leads to higher per unit costs as there are no advantages or efficiencies gained from economies of scale. Moreover, small businesses, by virtue of their limited size, lack the advantage of dominance over their suppliers, hence resulting in diminished bargaining power relative to larger enterprises. Below is a summary of the distinct features of small businesses as explained by Jordaan and Coetzee (2021); Diabate et al., (2019) and Zelalem and Wubante (2019).

Table 2.2: Distinct characteristics of small businesses

Characteristic	Description
Ownership and management	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mostly started, owned, managed and dominated by entrepreneurs/owners.• Centrality of decision making• Directive and paternal management style more prevalent• Top management highly visible and close to the point of delivery and other business operations.
Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Simple and less complex structure• Flat structure with few layers of management and hierarchy• Flexible structure and information flows• Low degree of specialization - more generalist
Culture and behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Unified culture• Organic and fluid culture• Operations and behavior of employees influenced by owner-managers' ethos and outlook.• Results oriented
Systems, processes and procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Simple planning and control system• Flexible and adaptable processes• Focus on operational and strategic processes.• Activities and operations are less governed by formal rules and procedures.

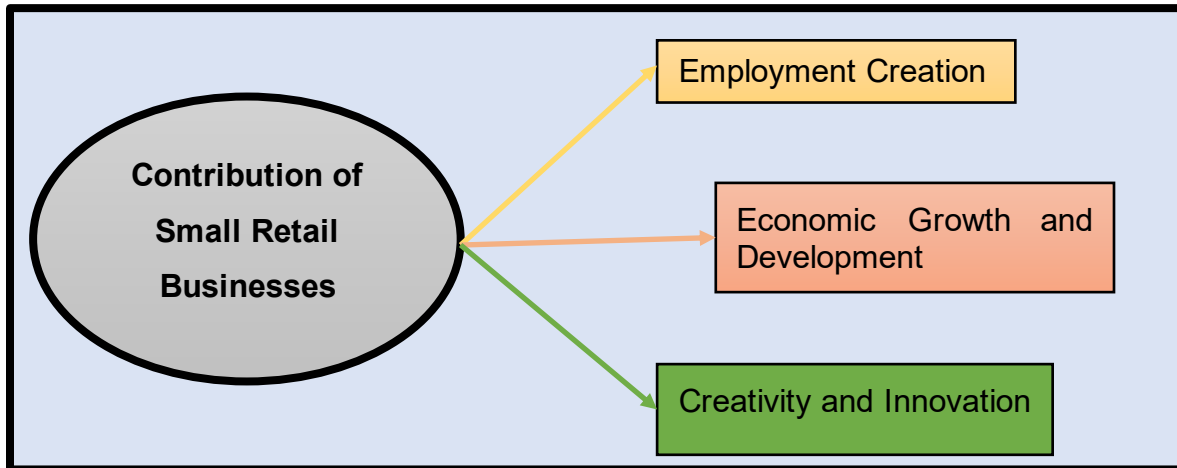
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low degree of standardization and formalization • Mostly people dominated
Human resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modest human resources • Modest know-how with fewer experts/professionals • Employees are more versatile. • Training and staff development is likely to be ad hoc and small scale. • Low degree of resistance to change
Customers and market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Normally dependent on a small customer base • Mostly local and regional market • More frequent and closer contact with customers • Many know customers personally and socially

Source: Adopted from Jordaan and Coetzee (2021); Diabate et al., (2019) and Zelalem and Wubante (2019).

2.4 THE CONTRIBUTION OF SMALL RETAIL BUSINESSES IN THE ECONOMY OF SOUTH AFRICA.

The small retail businesses in South Africa are acknowledged as playing a significant role (as demonstrated in Figure 2.2, below) in the achievement of social objectives, such as poverty alleviation and improved standards of living; economic objectives, such as employment creation, increased incomes, creativity, innovation and economic growth; and political objectives, like black economic empowerment (Mhaka & Jeke, 2018; Mosala et al., 2017). The significance of the small businesses sector in South Africa is discussed below.

Figure 2.2: Contribution of Small Retail Businesses to the South African Economy.



Source: Adopted from Mhaka and Jeke (2018)

2.4.1 Small businesses' contribution to South African economy through employment creation

The significance of small retail businesses in the South African economy is centred on their role of generating employment, fostering economic growth and addressing social inequalities. In economies that are in the early stages of development, such as South Africa, where there is a significant problem of people being without jobs, small businesses are acknowledged as crucial in addressing the issue of unemployment (Statistics South Africa, 2019). This is warranted because small retail businesses require a greater amount of labour compared to large enterprises. As per the eThekweni Municipality (2019), fostering the creation and expansion of small businesses is a significant measure in reducing poverty, extending job opportunities to disadvantaged regions, promoting the empowerment and freedom of women and enhancing domestic capital investment in the economy. Owing to the scarcity of job prospects in South Africa, policymakers and stakeholders have redirected their attention towards fostering the growth of the Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMME) sector. This sector, characterised by its high labour requirements, plays a significant and considerable role in generating possibilities for employment. According to Seda (2016), small businesses generate around 80% of all newly created job opportunities and employ over 70% of the workforce in South Africa. Based on the Quarterly Labour Force Survey (2023), South Africa's primary social issue

is the significant unemployment rate, which stands at roughly 31.9%. Regarding this matter, the SME sector is not only perceived as a generator of employment, but also as a sector that takes people who have been laid off from both private and public sectors (Musumali & Qutieshat, 2022). Rofiq and Pramono (2019) found that in the majority of developing economies, small businesses demonstrate more adaptability and agility in response to fluctuations in the economic environment. Due to their lower capital requirements, these businesses have the potential to create substantial levels of sustained employment for both skilled and semi-skilled workers. Malefane (2013) argues that the significance of small businesses is exaggerated as their contribution to employment generation is often short-lived. This is due to the fact that many new businesses fail within their first five years, hence exacerbating the issue of unemployment.

2.4.2 Small businesses' contribution to South African economy through creativity and innovation

According to the South African Reserve Bank (2016), an economy of knowledge is one that incorporates innovative ideas, technologies and services into its economic framework. A knowledge economy follows this definition. Innovation and the fresh breakthroughs that lead to entrepreneurial ventures are the two factors that result in the development of new jobs. Small retail businesses play a crucial role in this process by coming up with new products, coming up with new solutions and coming up with ways to improve upon existing ideas. Small retail businesses are in a unique position to invest more time and attention into the implementation of new solutions, which will ultimately increase their competitiveness in the global marketplace. The ability to make decisions quickly is promoted, their research programmes are often concentrated and their incentive structures typically reward those who perform very well. According to Björkdahl (2020), small businesses are largely thought to be more innovative than larger firms for three reasons:

- a lack of entrenched bureaucracy,
- more competitive markets and

- stronger incentives (such as personal rewards).

Small retail businesses play a crucial role in driving innovation within the South African economy. Small businesses are regarded as pioneers in technology in various sectors and serve as the basis for sustained growth and progress towards larger enterprises. Small businesses have a significant impact on competitiveness in the market by enhancing product quality, lowering prices and offering innovative goods and services through advancements in technology, as stated by Akpan, Soopramanien and Kwak (2021) and Ritz et al. (2019).

2.4.3 The small business sector's contribution to the South African economy through economic growth and development

Mago and Modiba (2022) suggest that the establishment of prosperous small businesses can lead to economic progress. These enterprises generate employment prospects, leading to individuals acquiring income. Consequently, there is a surge in the demand for goods and services, thereby bolstering economic expansion. According to Bushe (2019), small businesses in South Africa have a significant impact on improving the quality of life for rural populations by creating employment opportunities for individuals who would otherwise be without work. Small businesses, characterised by their variety and competitive spirit, have emerged as catalysts for economic growth and development. Small retail businesses are considered intermediaries between small businesses and large enterprises as they offer subcontracted services. The collapse of a single enterprise has a tendency to impact other sectors of the economy that are marked by subcontracting and contracting. Gyimah et al. (2020) argue that small businesses have a significant impact on the functioning of large enterprises. They establish connections with micro-enterprises in the supply chain and collaborate with larger enterprises, so serving as a crucial catalyst for economic growth. According to Herrington and Coduras (2019), among the potential benefits of the small business sector are the following:

- mobilising and stimulating the vast potential for entrepreneurship;
- facilitating a wide economic base and the creation of wealth;

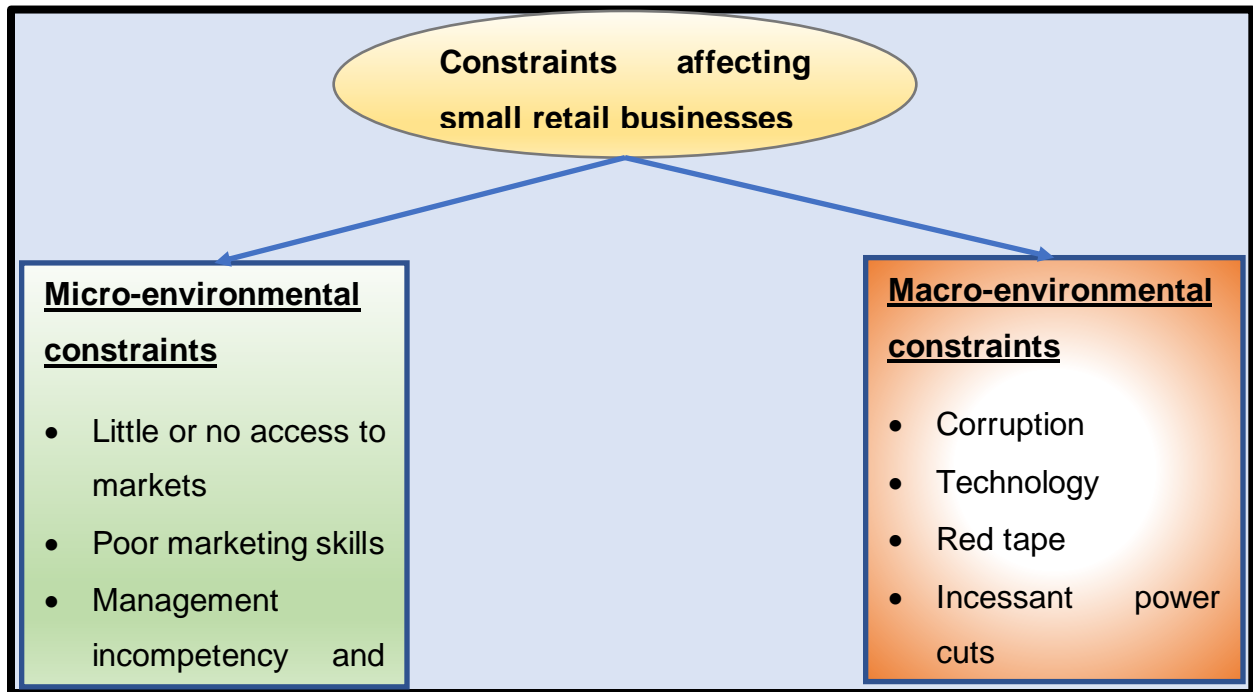
- increasing the nation's wealth through full utilisation of all the country's human resource capabilities;
- developing an economic structure that is self-sustaining, with a high degree of sector linkages and
- increasing indigenous ownership of investment in the economy.

Chege and Wang (2020) found that successful small businesses in South Africa not only employ a substantial portion of the jobless workforce, but also contribute to a decrease in crime rates and government spending on protection and legal services. Zide and Jokonya (2022) contend that the small-business sector plays a crucial role in stimulating the economy, enabling impoverished households to uplift themselves from poverty. Due to their limited skills and training, these individuals lack the ability to compete for positions in the formal sector. As a result, they seek economic prospects in the small business sector either as owners or employees. The constraints that hinder small retail business growth and success are discussed below.

2.5 CONSTRAINTS HINDERING THE SUCCESS OF SMALL RETAIL BUSINESSES

Small retail businesses operate in an environment that includes both internal (micro) and external (macro) variables that impact their success. The management of small retail businesses must constantly monitor the environment. In this study, the constraints of small retail businesses were divided into two distinct categories: micro-environment and macro-environment constraints, as shown in Figure 2.3. The constraints are explained below.

Figure 2.3: Constraints faced by Small Retail Businesses



Source: Author's construct

2.5.1 Micro-environmental constraints

The micro-environment constraints refer to the internal variables that can be controlled by the management of small retail businesses. Constraints in the internal environment are the major cause of small retail business failure and revolve around management skills; financial knowledge; lack of expertise in functional areas such as marketing; and human resource management (Kotabe & Helsen, 2022). Some of the problems emanating from these factors include specific management issues, such as a lack of business management training and skills, as well as a limited family business culture in South Africa. Other reasons for failure include the inability to act as an entrepreneur to control business growth and an overemphasis on financial rewards. Management actions and behaviour which are lacking are the ability to set strategic goals and to plan forward; as well as a reluctance to seek advice, a lack of management commitment and an unwillingness to adapt to change (van Niewenhuizen, 2019). The constraints in the micro-environment of small retail businesses are discussed below.

2.5.1.1 Management incompetency and incapability

One significant obstacle that many small retail businesses encounter in their internal environment is their deficiency in managerial competencies. Managerial competency encompasses the business owner/managers' expertise, abilities and practical know-how. Competence is cultivated through the managerial aptitude to effectively merge both tangible and intangible resources in order to foster capabilities that ultimately lead to competence (Muriithi, 2017). According to Stewart and Brown (2019), human resource competencies play a crucial role in the field of human resources. Small retail businesses that possess the necessary expertise and employ knowledgeable personnel operate with optimal efficiency. Nieman and Nieuwenhuizen (2019) found that enterprises with strong human resource capabilities tend to be the most successful, leading to favourable growth driven by competent and motivated staff. Regrettably, multiple studies have identified insufficient human resource capacities as a significant obstacle for small businesses in many developing nations, including South Africa (Bouazza, Ardjouman & Abada, 2018). The issue is particularly severe at the upper echelons of management, where small businesses in Africa and other regions face a significant challenge due to a deficiency in essential abilities and expertise (Ayentimi & Burgess, 2019).

2.5.1.2 Lack of managerial expertise

A further internal environmental obstacle that small retail businesses encounter is inadequate management. This limitation stems from the fact that operators or managers of small retail businesses lack the necessary managerial experience. Due to insufficient training and experience, numerous business owner/managers rely on a trial-and-error approach to manage their enterprises. Their management style is primarily focused on performance and short-term gains, with no emphasis on strategic planning (Oduro, 2020). Several entrepreneurs may exhibit expertise and aptitude in their respective domains, although they may lack the managerial acumen or expertise required to effectively operate a business. The outcome has resulted in inadequate administration and subpar performance of small businesses. Omiunu (2019), Ogujiuba et al. (2020) and Ayandibu et al. (2019) conducted studies that identified various management factors as the causes

of failures. These factors encompass the limited capacity of small retail businesses to effectively handle financial matters due to a deficiency in accounting expertise, credit control, inventory control, cash flow management, marketing management and human resource management. Ngibe, Musawenkosi and Lekhanya (2019) argue that quality education and training are essential for small business owner-managers to achieve success in their business operations. Proficiency in information technology management is crucial for effective corporate operations. Effective management encompasses the essential activities of planning, organising, leading and controlling, which are vital for the proper functioning, survival, sustainability and growth of small businesses. The process of management will not be considered complete unless competent and qualified personnel are employed. Dinka (2019) noted that the lack of skilled managers continues to be a significant obstacle to the growth of small businesses. This issue needs specific focus for these businesses to survive.

2.5.1.3 Poor marketing skills

The study conducted by Sanu and Anjum (2021) revealed that insufficient marketing skills among small business owner/managers lead to marketing challenges in the sector, resulting in a lack of awareness among potential customers regarding the products or services offered by small businesses. Faal (2020) highlights that the limited demand for products may stem from small retail businesses employing ineffective promotional techniques as a result of their insufficient or deficient understanding of their target market. Maheshkar and Soni (2021) argue that various issues, including competition, limited product demand, challenges in satisfying customer demands, inappropriate pricing tactics, insufficient knowledge and unfavourable location, all exert a detrimental influence on small businesses. Consequently, small businesses face a challenge in dealing with established competitors who have widely recognised brands. Furthermore, it is imperative to acknowledge the potential challenge posed by competition from other small businesses, as they may encounter difficulties in establishing a distinctive brand identity that sets them apart from their rivals (Gongxeka, 2020).

2.5.1.4 Little or no access to markets

Despite the fact that the government and other stakeholders have made efforts to support small businesses, it is crucial to remember that failure is inevitable for a small business with limited or no access to markets because the sale of a product or service is what drives a business's success (Rankhumise & Letsoalo, 2019). Among the primary issues endangering small businesses' sustainability is their inability to reach markets. One of the primary prerequisites (as forth by finance providers - banks) for obtaining funding and mentorship during the initial phases is access to markets. However, when it comes to their metropolitan counterparts, small businesses in rural locations are at a disadvantage (Faal, 2020). Faal (2020) discovered that their rural location and small size prevent them from organising into collectives to strengthen their bargaining power. As a result, they struggle to influence government agencies to better meet their demands. Shiposha (2020) advocates for the formation of spatial clusters as a practice. For small businesses that have beyond their startup stage, however, forming clusters is mostly recommended.

2.5.2 Macro-environmental constraints

The macro-environmental constraints refer to the external forces or variables which small retail businesses cannot influence, but which directly or indirectly influence their operations. Management can exert no control over exogenous problems that manifest themselves in the economic, socio-demographic, political, technological and international spheres. The most prominent problems impacting small retail business's success in this environment are access to financing; compliance with legislation; crime and corruption; rapidly changing technology and electricity supply and cost, among other factors. These constraints are further explained below.

2.5.2.1 Corruption

Corruption is a significant problem for small businesses in South Africa. According to Corruption Watch, corruption is the misuse of authority for one's own benefit. Small retail businesses are forced to redirect their well-meaning funds to non-financial activities because of this unfair behaviour. One of the main obstacles small and medium-sized firms

(SMEs) encounter in their commercial contexts is regarded to be corruption. According to Hewa Wellalage, Locke and Samujh (2020), small businesses are usually the ones that suffer the most in a corrupt marketplace because they have less ability to prevent corruption. As a result, as corruption spreads, their survival and profit margins are at risk. Small businesses find it difficult to afford the significant time and financial costs associated with corruption. The ramifications of corruption can be disastrous because small businesses are often seen as the main drivers of economic growth and are therefore essential to the development of communities that are susceptible to poverty. In South Africa, corruption has become the standard. This is particularly true for government employees who demand payment in advance of providing services such as operating licenses, permits, taxes, court cases and public procurement. For owner/managers of small retail businesses, this entails going over or under budget to cover unnecessary expenses, which lowers income and has an adverse effect on the operation of the enterprise (Amin & Motta, 2021). Compared to their larger counterparts, Transparency International (2019) claimed that small businesses appear helpless in the face of bribery requests and lack the resources and personnel to fight corruption.

2.5.2.2 Government support

The government's involvement in enabling and supporting small businesses is crucial not only in South Africa but also globally (Muriithi, 2017). The South African government plays a crucial role in establishing either a conducive or unfavourable environment for the growth of all enterprises. Insufficient government attention and assistance towards the small business sector often result in the cessation of operations for many small businesses. A government that fails to provide support to small retail businesses not only undermines the industry, but also hampers economic growth and development. The government's establishment of a framework for wages, taxation, licencing, opportunities, technological assistance and infrastructure significantly influences the potential success or failure of small businesses. The government's regulatory frameworks have the power to either stifle or foster the small business industry (Muriithi, 2017). An unfavourable tax structure, intense and unjust competition, complex regulatory rules and regulations and

a punitive environment significantly hinder the growth, success and survival of small businesses (Anim et al., 2020).

2.5.2.3 Red tape in the small business regulatory set-up.

The term 'red tape' denotes the necessity to adhere to an abundance of laws and has been used to characterise the onerous regulatory obligations that businesses encounter to comply with the law. The SBP's SME Growth Index (2019) has consistently highlighted the regulatory load in South Africa as a significant obstacle for small businesses since its inception in 2011. Registering a business in South Africa can be time-consuming, resulting in significant direct and indirect expenses (Neneh & Smit 2013). The high failure rate among small businesses can be attributed to overlapping and conflicting regulatory requirements, inadequate communication and information access and administrative inefficiencies in government departments, as stated by the SBP (2018). Although South African economic policy emphasises the importance of entrepreneurship, excessive bureaucratic restrictions hinder private investment and contribute to a decrease in the overall economic activity. Mazzarol et al. (2020) contended that a morally and ethically responsible government should give priority to appointing people to positions who actively promote and cultivate the growth of entrepreneurship and innovation. To anticipate substantial economic growth from investing in SMEs, certain strategic components are required. These include the establishment of sustainable physical infrastructure, the elimination of superfluous bureaucratic obstacles that impede business registration and financial sourcing and the provision of business education opportunities.

2.5.2.4 Incessant power cuts/load shedding

South Africa has implemented load shedding, a practice of scheduled power outages, since 2008, although the present blackouts are the most severe on record. The power supply is crucial for the operations and cost-effectiveness of small retail businesses. Insufficient electricity or a lack of appropriate power supply hinders enterprises from operating at maximum efficiency and incurs high operational costs (Blimpo & Cosgrove-Davies, 2019). Load shedding in South Africa compelled small retail businesses to reduce their operations precisely as the country was recuperating from the Covid-19 health crisis.

Consequently, there was a surge in job redundancies and a subsequent rise in social issues due to the high levels of unemployment. According to the World Bank Enterprise Survey (2010), the primary obstacle faced by several African small businesses is the issue of energy availability. As per the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (2021), the price of power in South Africa has experienced a significant and rapid rise in recent years, resulting in severe consequences for businesses, particularly small businesses. The National Energy Regulator of South Africa (NERSA) has just granted approval for an increase in tariffs for Eskom. The authorised rate hike is 18.65% for the 2022/23 financial year and 12.74% for the 2023/2024 financial year (Business Maverick, 2023). Sole reliance on power for daily operations would have a detrimental effect on small retail businesses. The scarcity of affordable primary energy sources and the rising expenses associated with constructing new power plants are intensifying the strain on electricity rates. According to a study conducted by Fatoki (2018) on small businesses, the most significant hindrance to the growth, success and survival of these businesses was the expense associated with electricity.

2.5.2.5 Lack of financial assistance from banks

For small retail businesses in South Africa to thrive, it is essential to have a sufficient amount of financial resources. However, lack of finance has been identified as an impediment to growth, success and survival (Isaga, 2019). The lack of financial access or financing is a widely acknowledged issue that small businesses universally encounter. Researchers in South Africa concur that the lack of financial access is a significant obstacle to the growth, success and survival of small businesses (Bushe, 2019). According to a study conducted by Asah, Louw and Williams (2020), the primary obstacle impeding the operations and expansion of small businesses, in contrast to other regions of the world where the issue is less severe, is the lack of access to financial resources. The study by Asah, Louw and Williams (2020) revealed that financial systems exhibit characteristics of being diminutive, shallow and expensive. Furthermore, they demonstrate a restricted scope, catering to only a fraction of the whole population. Consequently, several small retail businesses are compelled to rely on self-financing or seek financial support from acquaintances and peers. Small business owner-managers

encounter significant challenges in obtaining financial assistance from financial institutions due to the relatively elevated interest rates, as well as the requirement for collateral and loan guarantees (Refiloe et al., 2020). South African banks have also reported challenges in disbursing funds to small businesses. The banking sector contends that the expenses associated with managing small loans for small businesses merely diminishes their revenues. Insufficient financial access hinders small businesses, as well as other sectors, from fully capitalising on opportunities and making effective investments.

2.5.2.6 Technology adoption and usage in small retail businesses

Although, as a result of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), the world has become globalised, small retail businesses in South Africa still manage their businesses using traditional approaches. This has resulted in low productivity and poor-quality products and services for local and international markets (Pandya & Kumar, 2022). Generally, it has been noted that small businesses have low productivity because of lacking modern, sophisticated technology that could improve their operational activities. This is due to the lack of access to financial assistance.

2.6 THE DIMENSIONS USED TO MEASURE THE SUCCESS OF SMALL BUSINESSES

Success in small retail businesses can take several different forms, just as success in personal pursuits, claim Omran, Zaid and Dwekat (2021). Success can be defined very differently by various enterprises. Does the success of a small retail business, for example, always mean that it is growing and earning money? Or does success in small retail businesses correlate with happy, inspired and dedicated employees? On the other hand, does success mean recognition and glory for owner/managers of small businesses? Or does a small business's success suggest that it has a reliable source of long-term income? What precise indicators are therefore suitable for evaluating the performance and viability of small retail businesses? Prior research conducted by Stam and van de Ven (2021) solely focused on financial criteria; however, more recent research

has emphasised the importance of non-financial success measurements as discussed below.

The term 'success' is defined by intrinsic criteria, which include the freedom and independence to control one's own future and being one's own boss; and extrinsic outcomes, such as increased financial returns, personal income and wealth, among others. The definition of business success, according to research by Stam and van de Ven (2021), can be expressed in terms of financial characteristics, such as employees, earnings, sales, costs of capital and rates of survival. Some academics, such as Whitson et al. (2018), Taouab and Issor (2019) and Tuffour, Amoako and Amartey (2022), asserted that not all small businesses want to grow and that for some business owner/managers, success just entails surviving or keeping the enterprise they have established. This group maintains that an enterprise must be financially viable to survive in the business world, even when growth is not seen as being crucial.

Researchers using this approach might have been swayed by the notion that "businesses are only successful if they are financially solvent" to ignore the non-financial success criteria. Beaver (2015) argues that the success of small businesses can be assessed using non-financial metrics including customer satisfaction, personal growth and achievement. The rationale behind this is provided by Reed (2020), who pointed out that, in contrast to popular belief and economic theory, the pursuit of one's own financial success and fortune is less significant than the aspiration of many small business owner/managers for an independent quality of life, personalised involvement and responsibility. Thus, according to the entrepreneur/owner-manager, meeting these objectives is among the most crucial conditions for success. According to Wach, Stephan and Gorgievski (2016), this shows that, for small retail businesses, achieving personal goals like autonomy, personal involvement and work-life balance is a more essential measure of success than financial accomplishments. Other researchers have also called attention to workplace relationships, a positive enterprise image, employee satisfaction, supplier partnerships and preserving work-life balance as important non-financial performance criteria (Mishchuk et al., 2022).

It has been proposed that true success can be better understood by combining financial and non-financial measures. The financial and non-financial aspects of evaluating a small retail business's performance are somewhat dependent on one another. For example, it has been demonstrated that customer retention, or loyalty, increases market share and profitability, making it another essential non-financial performance metric (Olurunlambe, 2021). Even while concentrating only on financial performance might not be sufficient, disregarding this success indicator could inject bias into the evaluation of thriving businesses. The use of both non-financial and financial success metrics makes the current study unique. This is to prevent missing out on important performance indicators that are frequently applied to SMEs on a national and international level. Financial metrics include profitability, revenue turnover, revenue growth, return on investment and market share; non-financial indicators include employee satisfaction, owner self-satisfaction, customer satisfaction and retention, firm image and reputation and positive working relationships (Balasbas, 2021).

2.7 THE RESOURCE BASED VIEW THEORY AND ITS APPLICATION TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF MARKETING MIX ELEMENTS IN SMALL RETAIL BUSINESSES

The Resource-Based View (RBV) theory, introduced by Jay Barney in 1991, posits that a firm's sustainable competitive advantage is primarily derived from its internal resources and capabilities rather than its external market positioning. According to RBV, resources must be valuable, rare, inimitable and non-substitutable (VRIN) to contribute to a firm's long-term success. The RBV theory emphasizes that it is the distinctiveness and strategic utilization of these resources that drive a firm's competitive advantage and performance. In the context of small retail businesses, the marketing mix elements can be viewed as critical resources that, when leveraged effectively, can contribute to the firm's success.

The RBV theory suggests that a firm's products can be a source of competitive advantage if they are valuable, rare, inimitable and non-substitutable (VRIN) (Barney, 1991). For small retail businesses, offering unique, high-quality products that meet customer needs can differentiate them from competitors and contribute to their success (Terziovski, 2010).

Niche products, exclusive brands, or locally sourced items can be valuable resources that are difficult for competitors to imitate (Kraus et al., 2012).

Pricing strategies can be a key organisational resource for small retail businesses. A firm's pricing capabilities, such as the ability to set competitive prices or engage in value-based pricing, as suggested by the RBV, can be a source of competitive advantage (Dutta et al., 2003). Small retail businesses that can effectively price their products based on customer perceived value and market conditions can achieve better financial performance (Kraus et al., 2012).

Physical capital resources, such as retail locations and distribution channels, are of high importance in achieving competitive advantage as suggested by Barney (1991). For small retail businesses, a strategic location or an effective distribution network can be a valuable and rare resource that contributes to their success (Runyan et al., 2007). A well-positioned store or a strong online presence can provide a competitive edge and improve customer accessibility (Grimmer et al., 2017).

Promotional activities can be viewed as an organisational capital resource under the RBV theory. The ability to effectively communicate with customers, build brand reputation and create strong customer relationships can be a valuable and inimitable resource for small retail businesses (Merrilees et al., 2011). Targeted advertising, personal selling and customer loyalty programs can help small retailers differentiate themselves and achieve better performance (Grimmer et al., 2017).

The RBV model emphasizes the importance of human capital resources in achieving competitive advantage (Barney, 1991). For small retail businesses, the skills, knowledge and experience (intangible resources) of their employees can be a valuable and rare resource (Kraus et al., 2012). Well-trained and customer-oriented staff can provide superior service, build strong customer relationships and contribute to the firm's success (Grimmer et al., 2017).

The RBV premise posits that a firm's processes and routines can be a source of competitive advantage if they are efficient, effective and difficult to imitate (Ray et al., 2004). For small retail businesses, streamlined operations, effective inventory

management and customer-centric processes can be valuable organisational resources that contribute to their success (Grimmer et al., 2017).

As per the RBV perspective, the importance of physical capital resources in achieving competitive advantage (Barney, 1991). For small retail businesses, the store atmosphere, layout and visual merchandising can be valuable resources that differentiate them from competitors and enhance the customer experience (Bitner, 1992). A well-designed store environment can be a rare and inimitable resource that contributes to the firm's success (Grimmer et al., 2017).

The RBV theory provides a robust framework for understanding how the marketing mix elements can serve as valuable, rare, inimitable and non-substitutable resources that contribute to the success of small retail businesses. Despite its widespread application, the RBV theory has some limitations when applied to small businesses. Critics argue that the VRIN framework may not fully capture the reality of small firms, as they often lack the scale and scope of resources available to larger organisations (Kraus et al., 2012). Additionally, the RBV theory's focus on internal resources may underemphasize the importance of external factors, such as network relationships and market dynamics, which can be crucial for small business success (Street & Cameron, 2007). Furthermore, the RBV theory's assumption of resource heterogeneity may not always hold true for small businesses operating in highly competitive or resource-scarce environments (Grimmer et al., 2017).

2.8 THE MARKETING MIX IN SMALL RETAIL BUSINESSES

According to Thabit and Raewf (2018), a marketing mix is a set of controllable characteristics that enterprises can employ to affect how a customer perceives towards a product or service. A marketing mix, according to Deepak and Jeyakumar (2019), is the set of strategies a business uses to effectively market its products and services to a certain target market to achieve its objectives. The management of the enterprise uses a variety of marketing decision variables, strategies and techniques to sell its products and services. These are referred to as the marketing mix. The business controls the idea of a marketing mix, which consists of seven elements: people, process, product, pricing,

place, promotion and physical evidence (Al Badi, 2018). Below is an illustration of the marketing mix in Figure 2.4.

Figure 2.4: The marketing mix strategies



Source: Adopted from Kotler (2016)

Thwala and Slabbert (2018) state that the primary goal of a marketing mix is to fulfil the demands and desires of the specific market being targeted. The development of a marketing mix is contingent upon the characteristics of the business activities and the characteristics of the market being targeted. A marketing mix is strategically formulated to effectively fulfil the demands and desires of the business's customers. The 7Ps are regarded as the fundamental elements in developing a marketing framework within enterprises, ensuring the provision of high-quality products at a reasonable price and in the appropriate location (Wu & Li, 2018). Presented below is a concise discussion of the components comprising the marketing mix.

2.8.1 Product

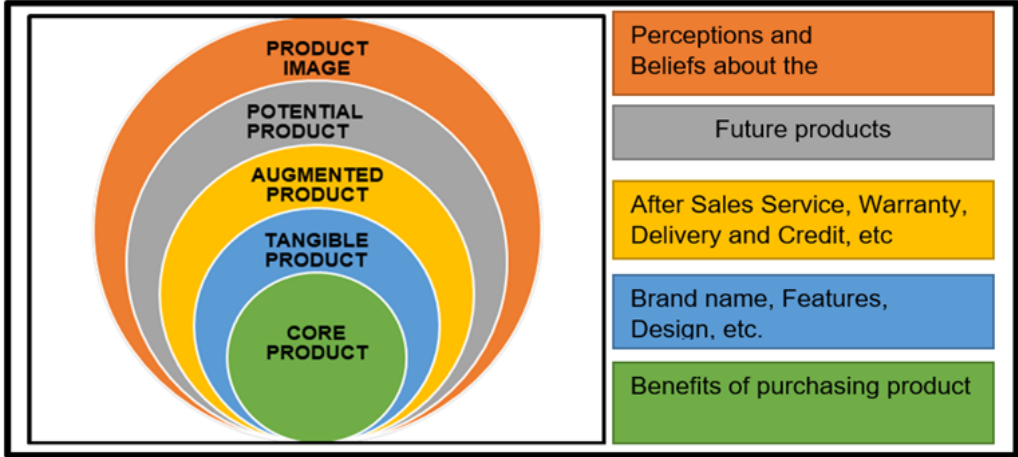
In their study, Sudari et al. (2019) provided a definition of a product as any item that can be presented to a market with the intention of attracting interest, being purchased, used, or consumed and perhaps satisfying a need or want. A product offers a suitable combination of benefits that fulfil consumers' needs (Bhargav, 2017). Consumers

purchase products, often with meticulous diligence and by evaluating brands based on factors such as price, quality and style. Mohammad (2015) asserts that a product includes the tangible aspects of its physical appearance, packaging and labelling. Information can also impact consumers' awareness, assessment and purchase of a product at a physical store. The influence of products has a substantial effect on the operation of a business (Kenu, 2019). Within the realm of small retail businesses, the amalgamation of characteristics and qualities of a product or service serves as the foundation for consumer satisfaction and loyalty. In order to establish a beneficial association with customers, small retail businesses must offer products that are of superior quality and demonstrate exceptional performance. These products should align closely with the needs and wants of the customers, resulting in their satisfaction and ultimately giving the business a competitive edge.

2.8.1.1 Layers of the Product Concept

A product is more than what meets the eye. A product includes everything that a customer receives in an exchange. There are basically five distinct layers of a product, as illustrated in Figure 2.5, below. The layers include the core product; the tangible(actual) product; the augmented product; the potential product and the product image (Park, 2020). A detailed explanation of these five follows.

Figure 2.5: Layers of the product concept



Source: Author's construct

2.8.1.1.1 The core product

The word "core product" refers to the main advantage that a consumer anticipates receiving when they buy a good or service. According to Hutt and Speh (2021) the core product is the primary reason for the product's existence and constitutes the initial layer of the product. The most common error made by marketers is to believe that they are product producers and sellers. The truth is that marketers create and market the advantages of the product. Benefits from products include the ability to use, own and experience them. According to Pride and Ferrell (2019), small businesses should specify the advantages that their main product will offer to customers when developing new products. This would direct marketers in differentiating products through the addition of supplementary services to tailor the advantages.

2.8.1.1.2 The tangible product

According to Deepak and Jeyakumar (2019), this is the product's second layer, which describes the actual, physical, or formal product. Features like design, quality, branding and product features make up the actual product. Teichert, Rezaei and Correa (2020) contend that a core product is transformed into something tangible for the user, with the product brand and packaging being the two most crucial elements of the tangible product. From the perspective of a marketer, the brand name is extremely valuable and offers many benefits that improve a product's sales.

2.8.1.1.3 The augmented product

The third layer of a product is the augmented product. This is when a product exceeds the customer's expectations for what they purchased (Kotler, 2018). This involves enhancing the product with additional features for a small retail business. Such objectives tend to be expensive, but the benefits are worthwhile and one of them is praise from customers. According to Pride and Ferrell's (2019) theory, the augmented product greatly enhances the enterprise's reputation and, occasionally, fosters consumer loyalty. Additionally, it can be advantageous in the market since it makes it easier to differentiate products and gain a competitive edge. It may occasionally result in higher sales (Teichert,

Rezaei & Correa, 2020). Consumers will be delighted and satisfied when successful small retail businesses provide value to their products.

2.8.1.1.4 The potential product

All components that could be added to the product to modify and produce a new product are included in the fourth layer, which is called the potential product. According to Park (2020), the potential product mostly represents future improvements that could be made to the product to give small businesses a strategic focus and long-term success. Most businesses take this step in an effort to maintain their leadership and market domination. Product differentiation is regarded as a means of achieving market dominance. Product differentiation is the process by which a business tries to set its goods apart from similar rival products, either physically or psychologically, so that customers view the products as completely unique (Fahy & Jobber, 2019). Among the important characteristics that can be employed to distinguish products are shape, colour, quality, packaging, brand name and image. An enterprise needs to have a competitive or differential edge over rivals to be competitive, to survive and to grow in the market (Paley, 2021). This advantage also needs to be sustainable over an extended period of time.

2.8.1.1.5 The product image

The product image is the final layer of the product concept. This layer, which is made up of all the layers before it, describes how consumers view the product on the market. Brand image and product image are quite similar. The product image refers to the thoughts and perceptions connected to the product. It's a system of ideas about a particular product. It represents the current values of the product. It could allude to an endless array of historical facts, occasions, advertising and objectives that come together to leave a lasting impression on the public. The key to success is to project an appropriate image that appeals to the intended target group. A product's image presents to the buyer a unique quality that sets it apart from the competition (Tuten, 2022). Small retail businesses need to place their products correctly to create a suitable product image that will stick in the minds of their target customers. This will result in appropriate product awareness. Images of the goods that are being sold can also be referred to as product images. According to

Deepak and Jeyakumar (2019), small businesses utilise product photos to market their products through posters, advertising, e-commerce websites and other channels. This draws customers and gives them a positive first impression of the goods.

Every small business needs to consider the product layers when evaluating its offerings. A small business can differentiate itself from the competition through the ingenuity and inventiveness of small retail business owner/managers and its product layers. According to Ferrel et al. (2021), the idea of product layers offers a great foundation for analysing an existing product to identify areas where opportunities might have been lost, features that could be added or modified and ways that features or enhancements could be better communicated in marketing campaigns. Lilien, Petersen and Wuyts (2022) point out that by organising products according to this product layers model, small businesses' sales processes can be aligned to their customer needs and help focus other operational processes around their customers.

2.8.1.2 The product mix

A product mix in the context of a small retail business setup is a range of linked products that generate higher sales revenue when advertised as a group than when marketed individually. Product mix is a theoretical addition to the business's production of well-known products for the market (Deepak & Jeyakumar, 2019). The product mix is made up of all the product lines and goods that an enterprise sells and each product within the mix needs a unique marketing plan. Product line extensions, product items and product modifications are the main ways in which an enterprise can improve its offerings.

- **Product line extension:** Small businesses operationalise a product line expansion once the owner-managers choose to add products to their current product line in response to fierce competition. According to Pride and Ferrell (2019), these products are manufactured primarily in the same way as the ones that are currently on the market, but they are specifically made to meet somewhat different customer needs. To compete broadly in the industry, a small retail business might simply add another product to its list of products.

- **Product modification:** This is the process of changing one or more of the product's features or attributes; it is not the same as extending the product line because the initial product is no longer part of the line (Pride & Ferrell, 2017).
- **Product items:** This is a particular product kind that is available for selection apart from the enterprise's other offerings. A product item is the only item that a particular customer may purchase from an enterprise and it can be any model, brand, or size (Pallant, Sands & Karpen, 2020). Each product item must therefore be packed in an eye-catching manner.

2.8.1.3 Product attributes

The distinguishing characteristics that customers seek for in a product are known as product attributes. According to Trudel (2019), a product's attributes are all the qualities it might or might not have. In line with Trudel (2019), Houseman and Mandel (2015) define product attributes as all of the physical qualities of a product that remain the same after it is first sold by the manufacturer, regardless of how it may be resold to the final consumer. In developing an offering (product or service), small businesses must define the benefits offered to the end-user and those benefits are conveyed by attributes, such as features, quality, product style and design.

- **Product features** – These are the most important competitive differentiators that set the products and services of the business apart from those of its rivals. Being the first to develop or deliver the most desired and necessary product features allows a business to compete successfully (Trudel, 2019). Thus, understanding why customers select a specific product aids marketers in identifying the brands and goods that consumers value, such as product adaptability.
- **Product quality** – The primary product positioning factor is thought to be product quality. Marketers are interested in all aspects of quality since keeping consumers happy and attracting new ones requires not just offering products of the desired calibre but also bolstering those qualities through technical assistance, quality control and post-purchase care. Because quality has a direct impact on a product

or service's performance, it is always important to evaluate quality from the perspective of the customer. Hence, it is associated with customer value and satisfaction (Kotabe & Helsen, 2022).

- **Product style and design** – This is an extra technique for improving customer preferences. Particular businesses possess a flare for distinctive design and style (Pride & Ferrell, 2019). Unique designs have the potential to draw attention and create a beautiful, aesthetically pleasing product that works much better. Customer satisfaction is a result of product attributes and it can be increased by the enterprise's range of related but distinct goods and services. Product qualities aid in figuring out a product's profitable and fair price.

2.8.1.4 Branding

According to Keller and Brexendorf (2019), a business's or product offering's success mostly rests on the target customer's capacity to distinguish amongst different offerings. Branding aids in recognising and distinguishing an enterprise's goods and services from those of rival firms' products. Small retail businesses and their customers both benefit from branding since it streamlines the shopping process, provides information to consumers based on their preferences and ensures that the customer made the appropriate purchase. According to Harris, Kotler and Armstrong (2020), many customers view the brand as an integral component of the product, sometimes even elevating the actual offering. As a result, it is advised that small retail businesses create and maintain a strong brand. Customers gain from branding in several ways. It aids customers in identifying potentially valuable products.

According to Carson, O'Connor and Simmons (2020), some owner-managers of small businesses oversee branding, drive all marketing initiatives and make decisions based on their own expertise, personal networks, business styles and competencies — all of which have the potential to favourably impact the enterprise. The research on branding indicates that small businesses can have both non-financial performance benefits and financial ones (such as increased profit margins and sales returns) by creating and implementing a strong brand (Iyer et al., 2019).

2.8.1.5 Packaging

Packaging encompasses the entire process of conceptualising and manufacturing the container for a product. The product packaging is the initial visual encounter for consumers, making it crucial to design it in a manner that captivates their attention and motivates them to select and purchase the product (Kotler et al., 2019). Kotler et al. (2019) assert that high-quality packaging plays a crucial role in the overall appearance of a brand. The primary purposes of product packaging include safeguarding, simplifying product usage, enhancing product promotion and conveying relevant information about the product and its application (Lamb, Hair & McDaniel, 2017). Packaging serves to enhance the visibility and appeal of the product during the process of buying. Ardianto and Hardjana (2016) found that small businesses have low expertise and technology in packaging, resulting in the use of basic wrapping or packaging methods for their products. According to Chukwuma, Ezenyilimba and Agbara (2018), efficient implementation of packaging in small businesses has a significant impact on their success and results in a rise in sales volume. Adnan, Nafi and Mohamed (2016) argue that small businesses must prioritise appropriate packaging. This is because the information displayed on the packaging, including facts about the product and manufacturer, plays a crucial role in helping consumers make informed purchasing choices. Chukwuma et al. (2018) suggest that small businesses should enlist the assistance of professionals to understand responses from customers to their product packaging, especially if they lack expertise in this area.

2.8.2 Price

Price is the amount of money that consumers and service businesses trade for goods and services that meet their needs (Ampountolas, Shaw & James, 2020). According to Ampountolas et al. (2020), price indicates a product's value and generates revenue for small businesses (Abrate, Nicolau & Viglia, 2019). When making selections about what to buy, consumers place greater emphasis on price (Vives & Jacob, 2021) since they view it as a crucial quality indication (Xu, Xiao & Gursoy, 2017). The price of raw materials, market demand, a customer's estimation of the product's value and competition are

important factors that affect prices (Jiang & Taylor, 2020). According to Moro et al. (2018), the four main approaches to pricing are demand-driven, cost-based, competition-based and price discrimination. For small businesses, price plays a major role in determining demand and profitability (Jacob & Payeras, 2018). Price has a significant impact on the allocation of production factors as well as the prices paid for each of these factors, as well as the regulation of the economic system.

2.8.2.1 Price skimming strategy

Price skimming is a pricing strategy in which an enterprise sets a high price for a new product in relation to similar commodities or brands (Abid, 2022). According to Abid (2022), enterprises frequently employ this strategy for new products when they believe the target market will find the product to have distinct benefits and innovative attributes in comparison to competitors. The enterprise steadily lowers the price of the product as it moves through its life cycle to cater to a wider market segment. This helps the small businesses maximise sales income and quickly recover its costs.

2.8.2.2 Penetration pricing strategy

In addition to being a pricing strategy for new products, penetration pricing involves an approach where a small retail business sets the product's price relatively lower than comparable goods in the hopes of expanding its market and subsequently raising the product's price (Ampountolas et al., 2020). According to AlJazzazen (2019), if the marketing manager has decided that the enterprise's pricing goals should be to acquire a sizable market share, then using a penetration pricing strategy is the best course of action. However, this is regarded as a risky short-term strategy that requires backing from a strong assortment of product lines to use as leverage (Abid, 2021).

2.8.2.3 Psychological pricing strategy

According to Ali and Anwar (2021), psychological pricing is a commonly used price adjustment strategy where marketers believe some prices appear better or are more enticing. Small retail businesses who do not round up to the closest rand when pricing their products or services utilise this psychological pricing strategy, setting prices like

R9.99. Kotler et al. (2016) contend that this pricing strategy even further, pointing out that it considers price psychology as well as economics; the price is used to convey information about the product. Psychological pricing also frequently involves reference pricing, or prices that buyers mentally establish and consult while evaluating a particular product offered by the enterprise (Kotler et al., 2016).

2.8.2.4 Cost-plus pricing strategy

Small businesses might attempt to optimise their profits by adding a standard percentage of profit (mark-up) above the cost of producing a product through the use of cost-plus pricing, a cost-based pricing strategy. According to Kotler et al. (2016), the mark-up is only the percentage of the selling price or cost that represents the difference between the selling and cost prices. According to Jacob and Payeras (2018), the cost-plus pricing strategy includes all costs incurred in bringing the product to market, such as those for manufacturing, shipping, distribution and marketing.

2.8.3 Promotion

Promotion focuses on the strategies employed by small retail businesses to inform, persuade and remind consumers about the products, services and brands they offer directly or indirectly. Promotion serves as the means by which small businesses can establish profitable relationships with customers, acting as the voice of the brand (Hossain et al., 2020). Promotion exerts a significant impact on the purchasing habits of customers (Prihatin & Syahnur, 2020). Promotion is achieved through a combination of advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, public relations, exhibitions, sponsorships, merchandising, social networks, marketing materials and direct mail options (Belete, 2021). This diverse promotion mix is utilised to enhance the business performance of small businesses (Nonthapot & Thomya, 2020). Employing digital marketing tools, such as websites and Facebook, effectively promotes small businesses (Chamboko-Mpotaringa & Tichaawa, 2021). The primary goal of the promotion procedure is to distinguish the small retail business brands and their products or services that are intended for the target market, with the aim of augmenting the rate of purchases.

2.8.3.1 Elements of the marketing communication strategy (promotion)

2.8.3.1.1 Public relations

According to Ale (2016), public relations is the process of controlling the dissemination of information between an enterprise and the public. Public relations assist small businesses in effectively networking, communicating and managing connections with the public. It is a planned, ongoing effort to establish and maintain mutual understanding between a business and its communities (Grunig, 2020). Many small businesses lack the knowledge necessary to develop and carry out a public relations strategy that will produce steady publicity (Kallier, 2017).

2.8.3.1.2 Personal selling

According to Pride and Ferrell (2019), personal selling is a technique in which sales consultants communicate with potential customers face-to-face, sharing their experiences and needs. The salesperson then attempts to match those needs with a specific product offering that is currently available for purchase. Personal selling, according to Kotler, Armstrong and Opresnik (2021), is the process of persuading a potential customer to buy a product or service. It entails face-to-face communication and tangible evidence of the product.

Personal selling is expensive and takes too much time, thus small retail businesses rarely use it. However, this is appropriate to enterprises that are already well-established (Pride & Ferrell, 2019). Concerns over the applicability of personal selling have been voiced. Personal selling is still a crucial promotional strategy that is used to promote products and boost business sales, despite the fact that many sophisticated and expensive products still require a salesman (Adesoga, 2016). Unlike other elements, personal selling gives an enterprise more control over its customers, the ability to customise messages to their needs and insights into the behaviour of customers and market trends.

2.8.3.1.3 Sales promotion

Promoting sales is essential for bringing in new business and keeping hold of current customers. Product promotion, as defined by Jobber et al. (2019), is a broad range of appealing strategies, usually with a brief duration, aimed at encouraging more and faster customer purchases of the products and services offered by the business. In support of Jobber et al. (2019), Deepak and Jeyakumar (2019) imply that it includes all those actions (apart from publicity, advertising and personal selling) that stimulate the market demand for the products over a few short-term, transient, non-recurring stimuli as well as through recommendations from satisfied customers.

It is the responsibility of marketers to determine which sales promotion strategies are best for a certain market group or, occasionally, to maximise the expected outcomes for consumer purchasing behaviour (Belete, 2021). While increasing business sales through purchasing is the primary goal of all sales promotion strategies, each strategy is unique and designed to achieve specific goals, such as promoting brand loyalty, encouraging customers to switch from other brands and encouraging continuous buying (Tairova, Giyazova & Dustova, 2020). Small businesses most commonly employ rebates, competitions, quantity discounts, packaged premiums, discounts, gifts and samples as a means of promoting sales.

Increasing sales volume is the primary goal of sales marketing for small retail businesses. According to Yusuf and Sunarsi (2020), sales promotion in small businesses entails promoting the business, its products and services while providing incentives for customers to buy. Sales promotions are one of the best ways to sway consumers' decisions and convince them to purchase a certain brand or product. This raises awareness in markets with strong brand domination and competition and eventually results in customer retention (Belete, 2021).

2.8.3.1.4 Advertising

Advertising is defined as a paid, facilitated communication channel that a businesses use to influence the target audience (consumers) to act now or in the future in response to a product or service advertisement. Juska (2021) asserts that advertising is thought to be

the most prevalent type of communication and that it arguably has the greatest influence on day-to-day activities. The goal of advertising is to raise consumer awareness by providing details about a product's availability, price and availability (Lee & Cho, 2020). Most firms use advertising to promote their products and services, but it also helps to develop a long-term business strategy. According to De Mooij (2021), there is a chance that a lot of advertisements have left an impression on consumers, influencing and shaping their perceptions. It is believed that the most obvious type of marketing communication is advertising. Advertising is done to increase consumer demand for the product, make the enterprise's products and services known and persuade consumers to make a favourable purchasing decision in favour of the business.

As more people and enterprises utilise advertising to promote their products and services to consumers, advertising has gradually become more widespread. Pop-up advertisements can be used in a variety of unusual locations and on a variety of websites (Hsieh, 2021). This is a low-cost means of reaching out to potential clients with a sales message; it can help salespeople by encouraging audiences to find brands that are selling the products and ask for more information (Lee & Cho, 2020). Businesses may be forced to purchase products to satisfy consumer demands if manufacturers use advertising. Small businesses utilise creative and intriguing advertisements to entice consumers to stay loyal or switch from competing brands by grabbing consumers' attention (Hidayat, 2021).

2.8.3.1.5 Direct marketing

Direct marketing uses several communication channels that assist small retail businesses to communicate directly with consumers. It gives marketers the opportunity to gain direct access to buyers using telemarketing, digital marketing, electronic shopping, SMSs and others (Kitchen, 2020).

- ***Digital marketing***

In order to help small businesses select efficient market strategies, it is necessary to comprehend the dynamics and features of digital marketing, a new marketing technique driven by digital elements (Kalegova, 2022). Digital marketing, according to Sawicki

(2016), is the intensive use of digital technologies to meet customer needs and accomplish business goals. Business entities establish channels to influence potential customers. Advanced digital technologies have made it possible for brands to reach consumers with their products. Using one or more additional digital formats, digital marketing involves the promotion of corporate products and brands.

According to Deiss and Henneberry (2016), small businesses can more effectively reach out to existing consumers and attract new ones using digital marketing. Small businesses have several significant opportunities attributed to digital marketing, including reaching a new target market, increasing product performance and productivity and improving growth (Kalegova, 2022). Small businesses face different market realities than large enterprises. Due to a shortage of resources, including capital, digitisation is still a major issue. According to Kitchen (2020), most small businesses appear not to be focused on making the most of digital channels. It should be clear that business brands use digital platforms extensively; small businesses should follow suit if they hope to expand, stay relevant and compete. According to Chen et al. (2021), the emergence of the digital era has given small businesses greater chances of survival as well as opportunities like enhanced performance, increased competitive advantages, increased efficiency and expanded target markets.

- ***Social media***

A digital and internet tool that is less related to traditional media, social media provides a platform for small businesses to interact, communicate and build networks. Oparaugo (2021) argued that the internet-based apps that operate under the conceptual and scientific framework of Web 2.0 and give rise to user-generated content are referred to as social media or social networks. In order to improve brand recognition, raise awareness and efficiently contact customers, social media is a communication mechanism. Social media seems to be a useful tool for establishing exclusive relationships with customers, engaging customers and growing brands as noted by Mukherjee (2020). Using social media to promote sales can have a positive impact; customers who are brand or product loyal on social media are more profitable than those who are not.

Due to their negative perceptions of social media's efficacy, small businesses require more time to adjust to it (Kalegova, 2022). To attract prospective clients and avoid abusing social media, it is crucial to select social media or networking platforms that are easily connected with organisational goals. The business or marketing strategy must fully participate for social media to be used successfully. According to Prihatin & Syahnur (2020), social media ought to be a part of the marketing mix when creating and putting into practice a communication strategy. Small retail businesses are progressively adopting social media platforms to market their products and services and run social media marketing campaigns.

Ramakrishna et al. (2020) asserts that small businesses operating in African markets have a plethora of options to capitalise on the business transformational powers of communication technology to lower costs, increase output and make adequate funds. Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp and other communication platforms have greatly benefited small businesses by lowering transaction costs, improving worker productivity, cutting communication expenses, gaining industry expertise, growing markets and strengthening supplier relationships (Quesenberry, 2020).

2.8.4 Place

The purpose of the place or location, also known as the distribution channel, is to ensure that consumers have the most expedient access to the products or services (Thwala & Slabbert, 2018). The term "location" refers to a system or conduit by which products and services are transported from the supplier or producer to the end-user. Location; warehousing facilities; modalities of transportation; distribution channels; warehousing facilities; convergence; logistics; and inventory control management are all components of place (Al Badi, 2018). All activities that contribute to the delivery of a product or service to the consumer are included in distribution channels. Small businesses can promote, sell and distribute their products to end consumers through a variety of channels, including financial intermediaries, physical distribution enterprises, market services agencies and resellers (Berthold, 2019). A successful distribution process is linked to the implementation of marketing strategies, enabling small businesses to achieve their

availability objectives and deliver products at the appropriate time and location (Dolasinski, 2019).

2.8.4.1 The distribution channel

A distribution channel is defined by Batzer (2019) as the participation of one or more businesses in the process of distributing its products and services to consumers. Small retail businesses have to make a critical decision regarding their distribution strategy to guarantee that their products reach customers. When developing and delivering products or services, it is prudent for small businesses to establish positive relationships with their clients, suppliers and intermediaries, according to Sharma et al. (2021). The number of participants in the distribution channel, which constitutes an additional level, dictates the channel's duration. In recent years, the process and significance of distribution channels have grown, according to Attaran (2020). Thus, the possession of an effective distribution channel confers a competitive edge upon small manufacturing businesses, as it ensures the successful delivery of their products to their intended consumers. According to Palmatier et al. (2019), as small businesses expand, they must identify new market opportunities and enhance their distribution channels to provide the necessary products and services to their target markets. Marketers exhibit, sell, or provide the finished products to consumers through distribution channels. These channels might be classified into direct or indirect distribution channels.

2.8.4.1.1 Direct distribution

Batzer (2019) provides a definition of direct distribution as the strategic decision made by an enterprise or its marketer to bypass intermediaries and direct their marketing communication efforts towards the intended customers. Without the use of intermediaries, an enterprise can distribute a product directly from the manufacturer to its customers. This holds greater relevance within the service industry (Hatten, 2016). Since customers receive services directly from the producer, the hairstylist, for instance, employs direct distribution. Direct channels of distribution are not limited to mail, the Internet and the telephone (Kotler & Keller, 2014).

2.8.4.1.2 Indirect distribution channels

The producer's products pass through a sequence of intermediaries in the indirect distribution channel prior to reaching the end consumers. The distribution process encompasses the movement of products from the producer to wholesalers and businesses that sell via channel members (Al Badi, 2018). As a result, the price for the end-user or consumer increases proportionally with the quantity of intermediaries within the distribution channel (Hatten, 2016).

2.8.5 People

People in the marketing mix refer to anyone directly or indirectly involved in the business side of the enterprise. The people component of the service marketing mix is made up of the customers and employees of small businesses. Customers, firm personnel and other consumers within the service environment comprise the people (Minh Ngo et al., 2018). Consequently, the success or failure of small businesses can be influenced by the conduct, demeanour and physical presentation that people exhibit (Hilal, 2019). According to Ravangard, Khodadad and Bastani (2020), the quality of services rendered is significantly impacted by service providers in the context of marketing services. To establish profitable, long-lasting relationships with customers, small retail businesses must ensure that customer interactions facilitated by their staff are positive and consistent with service standards.

People provide their services in a variety of contexts. It is a critical component of the marketing formula for services. People provide the service and collect payment, or receive payment on behalf of an enterprise, for the service (Sadiku-Dushi et al., 2019). People are the transactional interface between the enterprise and its customers. The customer relationship between a business and a customer is supported by people. People make purchases from other people and the rapport between the service provider and the customer acquiring the product or service significantly enhances the value of the exchange.

To ensure that their attitudes and behaviours are conducive to the delivery of service quality, Sharma and Sangal (2019) argued that small businesses in the service sector

must find ways to effectively manage the contact employees have. This aspect holds particular significance within the services sector due to the variability in employee performance, which may result in inconsistent quality or heterogeneity in service delivery. There are several variables that can influence the variation in quality between service providers and customers (e.g., a medical check-up at a private clinic, dining at a restaurant, accountancy and consulting services). The absence of uniformity in services presents challenges for the service providers. As delivery of services occurs during interaction between contact employees and customers, Hilal (2019) argues that customers' perceptions of the service can be substantially influenced by the attitudes and behaviours of service providers. This is significant because customer satisfaction and, consequently, purchase intentions can be impacted by how customers perceive the value and quality of the service. In small retail businesses, personnel contribute value to the customer experience through the following means (training and customer service) as components of the marketing mix.

2.8.5.1 Training

All customer-facing personnel in small businesses must be trained and developed to maintain a high level of personalised service, according to McKenzie (2021). Training should commence during the induction process for new employees of small retail businesses. A new employee can expect to be introduced to the organisation's culture and provided with an overview of routine policies and procedures during the induction. The training needs of the individual are identified at this nascent stage. An individualised training and development plan is formulated, outlining specific objectives that may be integrated into subsequent evaluations. Most of the training is conducted either on-the-job or off-the-job. Continuous Professional Development (CPD) needs to be prioritised, in which employees perceive their professional learning as a lifelong process of training and development to improve the quality of service provided to customers (Baporikar, 2021).

2.8.5.2 Customer service

Customer service teams support a variety of goods, services and experiences. Customer services give advice on activities like choosing investment opportunities, help with

technology like IT and software and manage the customer contact by doing activities like managing service engineers or talking to a salesman. The way these kinds of people act and behave is very important to small retail businesses. How an enterprise handles a complaint can make or break its image and determine whether it keeps a customer or loses one (Kandampully & Solnet, 2019). Dealing with customers can happen in person, over the phone, or on the internet. Effective customer service is essential because people tend to buy from small, local retailers they like. By providing customers with technical help, knowledge and advice, customer services can add value.

2.8.6 Physical evidence

Physical evidence includes any tangible element that facilitates service performance or communication, as well as the environment in which a service is provided and in which enterprises and customers engage. Physical evidence of services includes all tangible representations of services such as brochures, letterheads, business cards, reports, signage and equipment. It can sometimes include the buildings where services are provided (Siripipatthanakul & Chana, 2021). Customers look for concrete signs to help them understand the nature of the service experience because services are intangible. It is more important to make a service tangible if it is mostly intangible. Visa and Mastercard are two examples of tangible evidence that credit card companies and banks use to make it easier for people to get (intangible) credit. It is almost like the environment is part of the product. In short, physical evidence helps customers and workers do their jobs and is a visual representation of what the small retail business stands for. The brand image and identity of a small retail business are established and strengthened with the help of physical evidence. Customers can learn about a brand's values and positioning from the design, layout and appearance of the physical area.

2.8.6.1 Ambience

The ambient conditions include temperature, colour, smell and sound, music and noise. The ambience is a package of these elements which consciously or subconsciously helps customers and employees to experience the service (Baker, Bentley & Lamb, 2020). Ambience can be diverse. The ambience of a health spa is relaxing and calm and the

music and smells underpin this experience. The ambience of a nightclub will be loud noise and bright lights, which enhance customer experience, obviously in a different way. Small retail businesses need to match the ambience to the service that is being delivered.

2.8.6.2 Spatial layout

The spatial layout and functionality are the way in which furniture is set up or machinery spaced out. Functionality is more about how well-suited the environment is to accomplish the needs of small businesses.

2.8.6.3 Corporate branding (signs, symbols and artefacts).

Finally, corporate image and identity are backed by signs, symbols and artefacts of the firm itself. A good illustration of this would be the signage that is found in small businesses, which serves to comfort customers through the use of branding. This is all-important to the physical proof as a vital ingredient of the services marketing mix.

2.8.7 Process

A process is a combination of all activities that produce and deliver services to customers. These activities typically include work schedules, mechanisms and other standard operating procedures. Prihatin and Syahnur (2020) define service processes as the activities that assist in providing a service. Facilitating systems that streamline the purchasing process and improve the customer service experience include automated pay points and bar code scanners. Process affects consumer satisfaction and small businesses' business performance (Prihatin & Syahnur, 2020), which is why process management is so important. Processes within the small businesses sector have changed due to innovation in technology (Čirjevskis, 2020). The capacity to integrate technology-driven operations into small retail businesses is therefore crucial for business success. In order to attain improved business performance, small retail businesses should implement the appropriate standard operating procedures.

In service situation customers are likely to have to queue before they can be served and the service delivery itself is likely to take a certain length of waiting time (Yang, Wang &

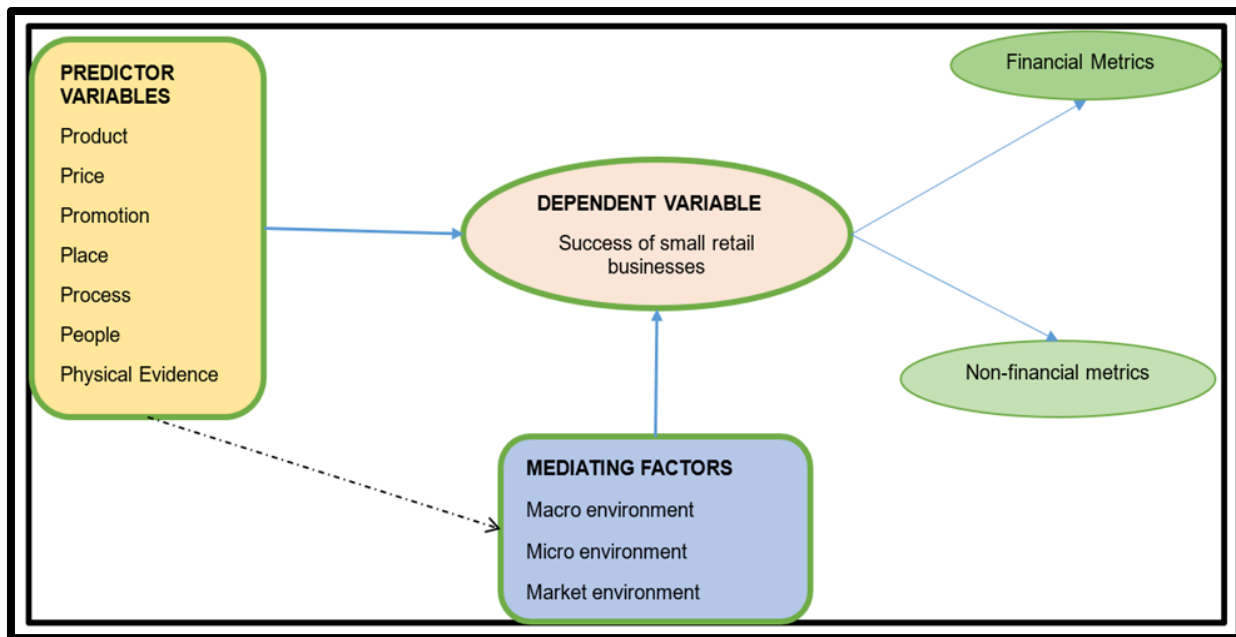
Cui, 2021). Waiting times help marketers ensure that customers understand the process of acquiring a service and the acceptable delivery times. For small retail businesses in the service industry, developing and overseeing efficient service processes is crucial. Since services are perishable and cannot be inventoried, kept for later use, or refunded, process management is crucial. Unused hotel rooms and unsold plane tickets are not refundable. It can be difficult for service enterprises to handle over or under-demand conditions because services are performances that cannot be preserved. Based on the needs and expectations of customers, the standardised or customised approach is another unique feature of the service process that offers proof to the consumer. According to Fahy and Jobber (2019), there are more options for services to be customised to match the demands of the customer because they are developed as they are consumed and because the customer is frequently involved in the process.

2.9 THE LINK BETWEEN MARKETING MIX AND THE SUCCESS OF SMALL RETAIL BUSINESSES

An efficient marketing mix strategy is essential to the survival and success of small businesses (Lindqvist, 2017). Ritz, Wolf and McQuitty (2019) noted that owner/managers who are knowledgeable of marketing mix techniques have a positive effect on the success of small businesses. Promotion, price, distribution and product standardisation and adaption have an impact on sales, customers and the financial performance of businesses, according to research by Daniel (2018) on the effects of marketing strategies on organisational performance in Nigeria. Gituma's (2017) study at Unga Feeds Limited in Kenya found that product quality improves business performance and has a positive effect on sales performance and brand awareness. Store design and the usage of appealing stimuli, such as music, also have a favourable impact. Small businesses rely heavily on experiential expertise and intimate relationships with their target market to advance the marketing of their products and services, which means they employ more networking and word-of-mouth communication as essential promotion tools (Peter & Dalla Vecchia, 2021). According to Hurley (2018), accounting metrics like sales growth, market share and profitability can be used to determine the success and survival of small businesses. Onugu and Uzundu (2015), however, claimed that both financial and non-

financial metrics must be considered when evaluating the success and survival of small businesses. The number of employees, employee satisfaction and the firm's reputation are all related to non-financial performance metrics (Pillai & Sivathanu—2021). The relationship between marketing mix and the success of small businesses is illustrated in Figure 2.6, below.

Figure 2.6: A Framework of the relationship between marketing mix strategies and success of small retail businesses



Source: Author's construct

Paul and Mas (2020) believe that navigating the intricate world of small retail business requires a keen understanding of the complex interplay between predictor variables (7Ps); internal, market and external forces (mediating factors); market dynamics; and strategic decisions. To gain this vital perspective, a comprehensive framework becomes the navigator, charting the course towards business success. According to Wirtz and Lovelock (2021), the success of small retail businesses hinges on their 7Ps of marketing (product, price, place, promotion, people, process, physical evidence) decisions, but these levers operate within a complex ecosystem shaped by three key environments: the macro (demographics, economy, etc.) the micro (management, finance, etc.); and the market (target audience, competitors, etc.). These environments mediate the impact of

the 7Ps, influencing aspects like product diversification in response to demographic shifts, cost savings through efficient operations, or customer satisfaction boosted by skilled employees (Dess & Davis, 2018). Mastering these 7Ps allows a firm to differentiate itself, deliver value and build customer loyalty. However, measuring success requires a more holistic approach than just financial metrics. While revenue, market share, profitability and return on investment remain crucial, non-financial metrics like customer satisfaction, brand awareness, employee engagement and social impact, paint a more complete picture of a firm's health and sustainability (Omran, Zaid & Dwekat; 2021). Only by analysing both financial and non-financial metrics can a firm make informed decisions for long-term growth, success and survival.

2.9.1 The impact of promotional strategy on the success of small retail businesses

Promotions refer to enticing incentives that small retail businesses offer to customers, but only for a limited duration. Baines et al. (2021) argue that the primary role of promotion is to differentiate a business from its competitors. Promotion is an essential element of the product marketing mix and small businesses can utilise it to effectively achieve their marketing objectives and advertising goals (Ferrell, Hartline & Hochstein, 2021). Erlangga's (2021) research in Banten Province, Indonesia, establishes that social media marketing exerts a substantial impact on the purchasing decisions of SMEs' products. Additionally, Erlangga (2021) found a direct correlation between social media marketing factors and the purchase decisions of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). In Kenya, Sapuro's (2016) study findings revealed a noteworthy correlation between promotional marketing methods and the performance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Based on the preceding discussion, it is evident that promotional strategies have a substantial impact on the success of small businesses.

2.9.2 The significance of pricing strategy on the success of small retail businesses

A model or process that is used to determine the most appropriate price for a product or service is referred to as a pricing strategy. It helps small retail businesses in determining prices to maximise earnings and shareholder value while taking into consideration the customer and market demand. The penetration pricing strategy is among the most

effective marketing techniques that are available to small retail businesses. According to Namko and Kaliuzhna (2019), this pricing strategy entails establishing a low entry price for a new product or brand to obtain recognition in a market that is extremely competitive. According to Wirtz and Lovelock (2021), the strategy can also be utilised when introducing a totally new product to the market or when developing a product that is already on the market and expanding it into a new market sector. The purpose of the research study that Kawira (2021) conducted was to investigate the impact of pricing strategy on the performance of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) operating in Kenya. According to the findings of the regression analysis done by Kawira (2021), pricing strategy has a considerable and favourable impact on the performance of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs). According to Kawira's (2021) study, MSME owner/managers should use a pricing strategy to attain higher performance. In order to derive full benefits from the pricing strategy, it is recommended that pricing decisions should be made with cognisance of other firm-wide factors that, in return, affect the expected outcomes of such decisions. The impact of strategic pricing methods on the marketing performances of beverage companies in south-southern Nigeria was the subject of an investigation that was conducted by Korubo and Onuoha (2020). In the research conducted by Korubo and Onuoha (2020), the researchers utilised many aspects of pricing strategy, including price skimming, penetration pricing and price discrimination, as well as measurements such as customer satisfaction. An examination of correlation was carried out and the results showed that there was a correlation that was both statistically significant and positive between pricing strategies and marketing performance. Based on these findings, it can be inferred that economic pricing has a beneficial impact on the marketing performance associated with beverage companies. A study on strategic pricing and firm performance: Findings from Thai cosmetics SMEs by Phornlaphatrachakorn, Ngamsutti and Ketchompu (2020) revealed that competitive advantage, market reaction and firm performance are all positively impacted by strategic pricing.

2.9.3 The influence of distribution (place) strategy on the success of small retail businesses

As customers frequently purchase products that are easy for them to acquire, place, which is also referred to as distribution in the marketing mix, plays a significant role in marketing and the success of small businesses (Fahy & Jobber, 2019). Making a product available to consumers and making it accessible to them in the correct location may enhance the likelihood that consumers would purchase that product. According to Deepak and Jeyakumar (2019), distribution strategies contribute to the enhancement of the manner in which customers interact with small business operations, which ultimately results in increased levels of customer satisfaction and repeat business. Distribution strategies assist small retail businesses in helping to streamline their business operations to achieve more efficiency. This technique has the potential to result in higher profits by increasing business productivity and enhancing customer satisfaction. The use of marketing strategies had a positive influence on the performance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Abuja, according to the findings of a research study conducted by Amin (2021), which discovered a positive relationship between the study variables (promotion, pricing, place and product strategies). As part of the marketing mix, distribution channels had a positive and significant impact on sales volume, market share and profitability, according to the findings of a study that was conducted by Wolok, Mandey and Kojo (2015) and published in Pt. Varia Indah Paramitha Manado.

2.9.4 The impact of product strategy on the success of small retail businesses

It was pointed out by Paley (2021) that an effective product mix strategy helps a small business to concentrate its efforts and resources on the products and product lines that are included in its offers and that have the most potential for growth, market share and revenue. The findings of a research study conducted by Ebitu (2016) demonstrated that the product quality strategy and relationship marketing strategy had a significant impact on the profitability of small businesses in the state of Akwa Ibom, as well as on the increase in their market share. The impact of product innovation on business performance in Bali and Central Kalimantan was the subject of a research study by Christa and

Kristinae (2021). The findings indicated that there is a favourable connection between innovation and the performance of the firm. Additionally, Christa and Kristinae (2021) stated that when innovative new products are first presented to the market, they are met with less direct competition. As a result, businesses can enjoy comparatively large earnings. According to Omotayo and Adegbuyi (2015), the implementation of appropriate product development strategies by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) resulted in an increase in the recognition and awareness of the brand in the market, which in turn created a more pronounced positive influence on the sales performance in Nigeria. Ramadani et al. (2019) conducted research on the adoption of product-only innovation as a means of determining the influence that innovation has on the performance of businesses. According to the findings by Ramadani et al. (2019), product innovation improves the performance of the business.

2.9.5 The influence of people on the success of small businesses

The presence of competent people who are able to provide assistance for the products and/or services offered by the firm is an extremely crucial aspect of any small retail business. According to Baron, Harris and Hilton (2018), the key to maintaining a high level of customer satisfaction is to have excellent customer service staff who can provide help with clearly established expectations. These expectations include factors like the hours of operation and the average response time. The way an employee conducts themselves and the attitude that they exhibit are the factors that contribute to the customer's perception of the service that they receive. Either a positive or a negative perception could be held regarding this. Due to the fact that it has the potential to affect customer satisfaction and, consequently, the customer's intention to make a purchase, it is even more crucial. Dedicated front-line personnel and leadership were found to be the key, fundamental antecedents of service innovation, knowledge management and fostering creativity throughout the enterprise, according to the findings of a study conducted by Tajeddini, Martin and Altinay (2020) on Japanese tourism-related businesses. Additionally, the findings indicated that businesses have the potential to capitalise on the advantages that are linked with human-related aspects in order to improve their service innovation practices and boost their overall business performance.

According to Halpern and Graham (2021), small businesses operating in the service sector are well aware of the fact that they are required to successfully manage their employees who interact with customers to monitor the quality of the service in terms of attitudes and behaviours.

2.9.6 The importance of process on the success of small retail businesses

According to Pride and Ferrell (2019), a marketing strategy that includes well-established procedures and policies that are applicable to the products and/or services offered by the business is an exceptionally valuable element. Since a service is comprised of a series of activities, it is essential to take into consideration the potential waiting time that may exist between the activities sequentially. The development and management of efficient service processes are absolutely necessary for the continued survival of small businesses in the service sector. According to the findings of a study conducted by Selase et al. (2019) on the influence of technology adoption and its utilisation on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Ghana, there was a good correlation between the utilisation of internet technology and market performance. The fact that services are perishable, which implies that they cannot be inventoried, saved for reuse, or returned, is the primary reason why it is necessary to manage the process factor, as stated by Halpern and Graham (2021). The successful management of the process leads to the supply of services in a shorter amount of time, which in turn results in satisfied consumers and an improvement in profit margins.

2.9.7 The significance of physical evidence on the success of small businesses

It was suggested by Wirtz and Lovelock (2021) that because services are intangible, customers frequently rely on tangible cues, also known as physical evidence, to evaluate the service before purchasing it, as well as to evaluate their level of satisfaction with the service while they are consuming it and after they have consumed it. Small businesses operating in the service sector that offer competing service products may resort to the utilisation of physical evidence in order to differentiate their service products in the market and provide their service products with an advantage over their competitors. Nana et al. (2019) conducted a study in India to investigate the impact of corporate rebranding on

brand equity and firm performance. The findings of this study demonstrated that brand equity does have a positive impact on the performance of the firm. It was discovered by Muhonen, Hirvonen and Laukkanen (2017) that the positioning of a brand and the vision of the brand have a direct and positive impact on the performance of the brand, which in turn has a favourable impact on the financial performance of business enterprises. The physical evidence serves as a visual metaphor for what the firm represents, what services it provides and the interactions between customers and staff, as can be seen from the two studies that were mentioned above, which were conducted by Nana et al. (2019) and Muhonen, Hirvonen and Laukkanen (2017).

2.10 Conclusion

In this chapter (the literature review), it has been established that small retail businesses address economic objectives (employment creation, innovation and economic growth); social objectives (poverty alleviation and improved standards of living); and political objectives (black economic empowerment). Despite the significant contribution of small retail businesses, their success is put to the test because they are faced with constraints in their operating environments. From this literature review, it is evident that marketing mix strategies and the seven Ps influence the operations and performance of small retail businesses. Several studies were used to establish that marketing mix is key to the success of small businesses. Financial and non-financial metrics were discussed as measurements of the success of small businesses.

The research methodology in this study is discussed in the next chapter.

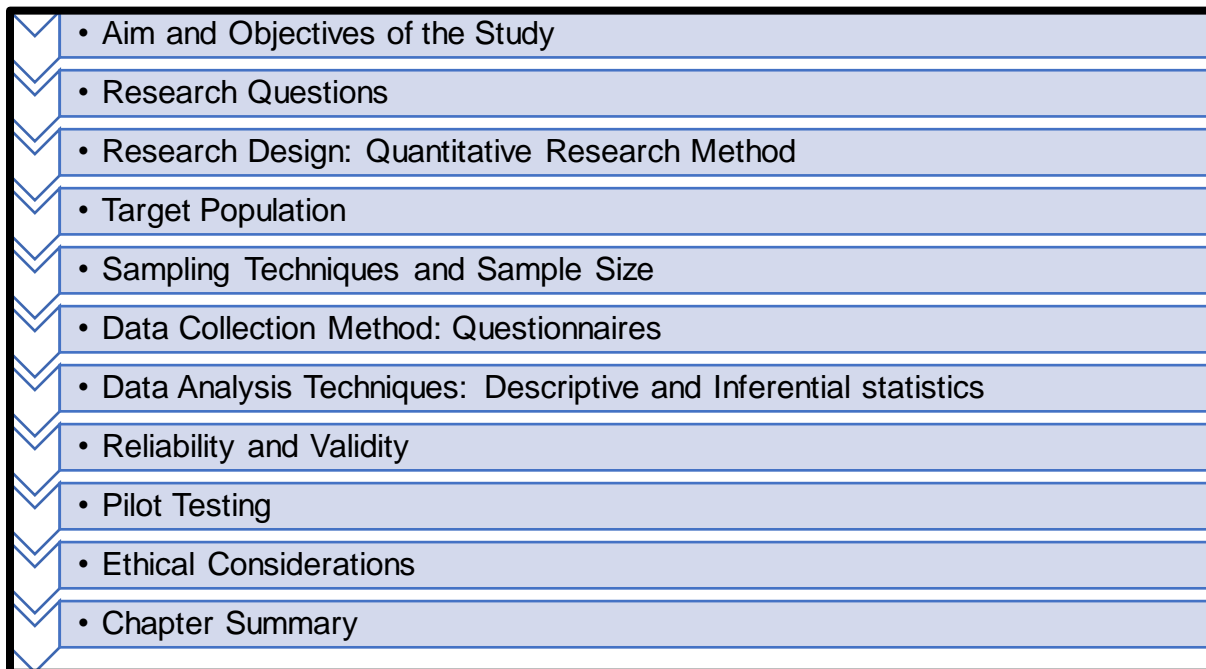
CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to explain the research methodology framework and design employed in this study. The focus is also on the discussion of and justification for, the research methodology; research approach; target population; sample selection; sample size; quantitative research; the data collection instrument and design; ethical issues and how they were addressed; the letter of information and consent; data coding; data processing; and tests to guarantee the validity and reliability of the data. The aim and objectives of the study, as well as the research questions, were key in designing the research questionnaire. Figure 3.1, below, illustrates the flow chart of Chapter 3.

Figure 3.1: The flow chart of Chapter 3



Source: Author's construct

3.2 AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to determine the significant marketing mix elements influencing small retail businesses' success in Durban Central. The research objectives of this study were as follows:

- Explore the factors that influence the level of importance placed on each marketing mix strategy by small retail businesses.
- Determine the dimensions used to measure the success of small retail businesses.
- Ascertain the relationship between the marketing mix elements and success of small retail businesses.
- Design a conceptual framework that integrates a marketing mix and small retail businesses' success.

3.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research questions of this study were as follows:

- What are the factors that influence the level of importance placed on each marketing mix strategy by small retail businesses?
- What are the dimensions used to measure the success of small retail businesses?
- What is the relationship between the marketing mix elements and success of small retail businesses? and
- What is the conceptual framework that can be designed to integrate marketing mix, business strategy and small retail businesses' success?

3.4 RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The following hypotheses were developed:

- **H1:** The product element significantly influences the success of small retail businesses in Durban Central.
- **H2:** The pricing element significantly impacts the success of small retail businesses in Durban Central.

- **H3:** The place element of small retail businesses significantly affects their success in Durban Central.
- **H4:** Promotion element significantly impact to the success of small retail businesses in Durban Central.
- **H5:** The people element significantly influences the success of small retail businesses in Durban Central.
- **H6:** The process element significantly impacts the success of small retail businesses in Durban Central.
- **H7:** Physical evidence significantly impacts the success of small retail businesses in Durban Central.

3.5 RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design is a plan that the researcher creates outlining all the procedures and methods to be followed when collecting and evaluating data for the aim of the study. Kumar (2017) provides support for this claim, stating that a research design is an approach, framework and method of investigation that is intended to provide solutions to research problems or questions. It is crucial to remember that a research design's primary goal is to give the researcher the ability to organise an appropriate research procedure that maximises the validity of the final findings. Moreover, the research design provides solutions to several research concerns, such as which methods to use for data collection, which sampling technique(s) to utilise and how to deal with limited resources in terms of time and money.

Therefore, cross-sectional and descriptive study approaches were employed for this study. A descriptive study method was used to analyse the research situation as it stands. It was not designed to ascertain cause-and-effect links, nor did it include altering the circumstances under investigation. The descriptive tool is appropriate for this study since it highlights the facts of a scenario or any particular area of interest in a systematic and thorough way (Pandey & Pandey, 2021). The descriptive study yielded insights or perspectives not previously available in other research, which caused the study to take an inferential turn (Siedlecki, 2020). The cross-sectional aspect was included because

the investigation was carried out in a set amount of time. Cross-sectional studies are more accurately described as those that occur at a particular point in time and are thought to be typical of the population as a whole, according to O'Laughlin et al. (2018).

3.5.1 QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH METHOD

A quantitative research technique employs statistical and mathematical analysis to examine ideas and hypotheses. According to Ambekar (2020), a quantitative research approach is primarily evident when a researcher works with data in the form of tables, graphs and statistics. However, there needs to be a minimum number of participants. A quantitative research technique is employed to gather, test, or validate hypotheses and assumptions. Utilising surveys, experimental research and content analysis, quantitative research is a deductive method that can be used to establish facts about the research issue. A quantitative research design requires a variety of interpretive techniques that summarise, translate and decode concepts into a more comprehensible form, according to Alsharari & Al-Shboul (2019). Cant (2010) defined a quantitative research process as descriptive, used to express an organised, quantified research investigation in a numerical manner. A quantitative research design, according to Nimehchisalem (2018), entails gathering quantitative data, such as variables, utilising structured data-collection tools and figuring out statistical correlations between variables. A quantitative research technique's main goal is to draw generalisations from sample study findings and it exposes those findings to numerical operations to create a comprehensive data representation (Creswell, 2014). Given that quantitative approaches employ standardised, statistically based methodologies for data collection, it is commonly accepted that the research data they get provides more unbiased and accurate information.

Prior research on small businesses was conducted using quantitative approaches by Gaweseb and van Scheers (2015), Lekhanya (2016) and Seukindo (2017). Data from small retail businesses in Durban Central were gathered for this research study using quantitative methods. Owner/managers of small retail businesses provided information via a structured closed-ended questionnaire. The rationale behind selecting a quantitative research design was its utility in ascertaining correlations among distinct variables,

characterising the variables and extracting the relationships among the variables under investigation. Additionally, Johnson and Christensen (2014) provided support for the decision to do a quantitative research study, pointing out that this type of research generates predictions about variables and indicates cause-and-effect linkages. Further to that, Johnson and Christensen (2014) note that:

- Quantitative research points to cause-and-effect relationships and makes predictions of variables. In this study the independent variable is marketing mix elements and the dependent variable is success of the small retail businesses in Durban Central.
- A quantitative research technique is grounded on the accuracy of measurements by using structured and validated data collection instruments. In this case, the research questionnaire was designed, based on research objectives and questions.
- Quantitative research makes use of a larger and randomly selected sample used for extracting the information from owner/managers and could be used to make generalisations on the entire population.

3.6 POPULATION

Flick (2015) defines a population as a complete group or collection of individuals, objects, events, or items that share similar characteristics or attributes. This definition applies to populations of all kinds. According to Welman et al. (2013), the population is the entirety of what the researcher is interested in studying; but, due to practical constraints such as time, money and feasibility, it is frequently not possible to study each individual element that is contained within the population. For the purposes of this study, the population consisted of all the small businesses located in the central region of Durban. According DCCI (2021), small businesses in the Durban Central region are engaged in a variety of activities, including agriculture, manufacturing, construction, retailing, the motor trade and repair services, acting as commercial agents and providing allied services, catering and accommodation, transportation, storage and communication, finance and business services, community and personal services and other activities.

3.7 TARGET POPULATION

Wegner (2016) suggests that the target population is the aggregate of all elements from which a sample is selected. Graziano and Raulin (2013) supported the definition by Wegner (2016) by echoing that a target population is the population from which the information is wanted and on which the study findings will be based. For this study, the target population was small retail businesses in Durban Central. Although there is a lack of recent data regarding the exact count of small retail businesses in Durban Central the researcher relied on the membership list extracted from the DCCI Directory for the period of 2021/2022. A membership list refers to a comprehensive roster or database containing the names, contact information and possibly other pertinent details of all SMES that are registered members of the DCCI. The membership list serves as a vital resource for the Chamber and its members, facilitating communication, networking, collaboration and various support services tailored to the needs of SMES in the Durban area.

3.8 SAMPLING FRAME

A sampling frame is described by Pandey and Pandey (2021) as a list of every component of a population from which a sample can be taken. Phokwane's (2020) research indicates that a sampling frame should be utilised when the researcher is unsure of the target population. Wiid and Diggins (2013) provided support for Phokwane's (2020) claim by defining a sampling frame as the trustworthy list that will be used to select the research sample. To ensure that the sample is representative of the population and that the study's findings can be applied to the entire population, a sampling frame is an essential component of any quantitative research project. A sampling frame guarantees that each person in the population has an equal chance of being chosen for the sample, ensuring that the sample is representative of the population (Wegner, 2020). By doing this, bias is lessened and the study's findings are guaranteed to be applicable to the whole population. As per the DCCI Directory membership list for the year 2021/2022, the five hundred (500) small retail businesses in Durban Central comprised the sampling frame for this study.

3.9 SAMPLING TECHNIQUES AND SAMPLE SIZE

Probability and non-probability sampling are the two types of sampling techniques. It is suggested by these two sampling techniques that some population components be chosen at random (Jha, 2014). The researcher used probability sampling, known as simple random sampling, as it is convenient and its findings are representative of the population. It was simple to apply simple random sampling because the Durban Chamber of Commerce provided the sampling frame. Pandey and Pandey (2021) corroborated this, stating that under probability sampling, selected individuals of the known population (small business owner-managers) have the same chance of being included in the sample for research purposes.

A subset of the research population is referred to as a sample size (Wegner, 2016). According to Hopwood et al. (2022), a research sample should not be greater than necessary when choosing a sample size because doing so will waste time and resources. A sample should not be small, though, that it yields false results. In order to improve the study's suggestions, Funder and Ozer (2019) contend that higher sample sizes can yield more reliable and superior research findings. Given a population size, a desired confidence interval and a specified margin of error, the sample size table created by Sekaran and Bougie (2016) recommends the ideal sample size. A sample size of 217 units must be utilised at the 95% confidence level for a population of 500 units/elements, according to the sample size table created by Sekaran and Bougie (2016). Wegner (2016) supports the idea of using a sample when conducting research because it is often not possible to record each data value of the population, mainly because of cost, time and possibly item destruction. The researcher was able to draw conclusions that permit generalisations about the target population of small businesses in Durban Central, by studying the sample of 217 small business owner-managers drawn from the 500 small retail businesses from the sampling frame of 500. The calculation of the sample size of 217 is depicted in Figure 3.2 below.

Figure 3.2: Sample Size Calculation

$$S = \frac{\chi^2 * NP(1-P)}{d^2(N-1) + \chi^2 P(1-P)}$$

s = required sample size.

χ^2 = the table value of chi – square for 1 degree of freedom at the desired confidence level = 1.96 * 1.96 = 3.84.

N = the population size of 500.

P = the population proportion (assumed to be 0.50 since this would provide the maximum sample size).

d = the degree of accuracy expressed as a proportion (0.05).

$$s = \frac{3.84^2 * 500 * 0.5(1-0.5)}{0.05^2(500-1) + 3.84^2 * 0.5(1-0.5)} = 217 \text{ (rounded off to integer value)}$$

Source: Author's construct

3.10 INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION CRITERIA

Inclusion and exclusion criteria describe who can be included in, or excluded from, the study (Garg, 2016). Inclusion criteria are described as the basic characteristics of the target population that the researcher included in the study to answer the research questions (Patino & Ferreira, 2018). The sample participants included in this study were the owner-managers of any race operating small retail businesses and employing between one and fifty employees in Durban Central. The study focused on owner-managers because they actively participate in the decision-making and operational aspects of the business. The choice of small retail businesses employing one to fifty employees was guided by the balance between operational scale, labour intensity in retail and economic impact. This range acknowledged the diversity within retail, considering both sole proprietorships and micro-businesses with minimal staffing. This approach

encompassed a wide array of retail enterprises, preserving their unique traits even as they expand modestly in workforce size. The study included various types of retail businesses, such as boutiques, convenience stores, specialty shops and more, operating within Durban Central. Their inclusion in the research study served to capture a diverse representation of the retail landscape within Durban Central. Any other employees who were not owner-managers of small retail businesses and small businesses outside Durban Central were excluded from this study. Non-retail businesses, such as manufacturers and wholesalers were also excluded since the study specifically targeted small retail businesses.

3.11 Recruitment Process

The recruitment process involves identifying, targeting and enlisting potential respondents, followed by the provision of information to potential respondents and establishing their interest in the proposed study (Darko et al., 2022). To ensure appropriate recruitment in a quantitative research project, it is important to identify respondents that closely represent the target population (owner-managers of small retail businesses in Durban Central) and meet the sample size and power requirements of the study (Hulley et al., 2013).

With the help of simple random sampling, the participants in the target population were randomly sampled using a random number table. The sampling frame, consisting of five hundred small retail businesses, was numbered in sequential order from one to five hundred and the random number table consisted of ten columns of five-digit non-repeatable numbers, which were listed in random order; and the researcher used the last three digits to select the sample. Simple random sampling offered all small retail business owners an equal chance of being selected. Small retail businesses were identified, the researcher emailed the cover letter and letter of information that explained the purpose of the study, its significance and the potential benefits for participants. Emphasis was placed on confidentiality and ethical considerations. Subsequently, small retail business owner-managers expressing an interest were provided with detailed consent forms outlining the study's nature, their voluntary participation and assurances of anonymity and confidentiality. Follow-up communication was integral to the recruitment process.

Through follow-up emails, the researcher addressed questions and/or concerns raised by potential participants, reiterating the voluntary nature of participation. After small retail business owner-managers confirmed their interest in participating, a questionnaire was emailed to them. After completing the questionnaires, respondents sent back the questionnaires to the researcher.

3.12 DATA COLLECTION METHOD

In this study, questionnaires were used to collect the primary data. A collection of well-structured questions designed to elicit reliable responses from the research participants that make up the study sample is what Morgan (2019) refers to as a research questionnaire. According to Boparai et al. (2015), a questionnaire is thought of as a structured set of questions created to make it easier to get data from respondents. The questionnaire in this study was the way of communication between the researcher and various small business owner-managers to address specific issues raised by the problem statement. Data was gathered using a standardised questionnaire composed of closed-ended questions. The study's research objectives formed the core of the research questionnaire. The owner-managers of small retail businesses received research questionnaires over email. The participants had enough time to read, comprehend, review and assess the content to provide thoughtful comments. The questionnaires' questions were derived from the literature review and already developed research questionnaires that were employed in related studies that had already been carried out. The researcher emailed the questionnaires with a covering letter (letter of consent) to the small retail business owner/ managers indicating the method of collecting data.

The researcher chose a questionnaire as a data collection technique for this study because of the reasons shown in Table 3.2, below, as supported by Cooper and Schindler (2010).

Table 3.2: Reasons why the questionnaire was necessary for this study.

Reason	Explanation
Comparability	A questionnaire ensures that information from various small business owner-managers (participants from the sample) is comparable.
Economical	A questionnaire is very economical in terms of time and money when administering it to the intended participants from small businesses.
Anonymity	A questionnaire enables the owner-managers of small businesses to remain anonymous. Names or addresses of the respondents were not requested.
Honest responses and high response rate.	By ensuring anonymity and privacy of the owner-manager respondents, more honest responses can be expected. Also, a higher response rate is encouraged.
Enhances faster data processing	Questionnaires increase the speed and accuracy of recording responses as responses from owner-managers are processed based on each question answered by the respondents.

Source: Author's construct

3.13 QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN

Questionnaire design and layout are two essential components that must pique the interest of research participants. When creating a research instrument, in this case a questionnaire, important factors to consider are the questions themselves, their phrasing, introduction and total number of questions included (Suárez et al., 2018). In order to acquire primary data from small business owner-managers for the research study, a questionnaire was selected as the data collection method. It is simple to administer and distribute a questionnaire to the intended research participants. It also guarantees the consistency of the questions asked to all respondents by ensuring that the same questions are sent to the entire sample of small business owner-managers. Both closed-

ended and Likert scale questions were employed in this study. According to Sung and Wu (2018), Likert scale questions capture respondents' assessments and measurements in relation to various concepts, subjects, or circumstances. The questionnaire used in this study was modified from those used in research studies by Turyakira (2018), Phokwane (2020) and Amin (2021). The questionnaire used in this study was divided into the following four sections in line with the objectives of this study, as shown in the table below.

Table 3.1: The categorisation of the research questionnaire

Section	Components discussed
A	Demographics of the owner-managers of small retail businesses.
B	Factors that influence the level of importance placed on each marketing mix strategy by small retail businesses.
C	The marketing mix elements of small retail businesses
D	The dimensions used to measure the success of small retail businesses.

Source: Author's construct

3.14 DATA ANALYSIS TECHNIQUES

In this research study of small retail businesses, data analysis was done in accordance with research ethics and information storage policies. This means that original owner-manager information was gathered, documented, secured, used and disposed of after the research period and it was used for the final reports of the findings, as suggested by Vlahou et al. (2021). A structured research questionnaire was used to collect the quantitative data, which was then analysed using SPSS Version 29.

Descriptive and inferential statistics were used in this study's data analysis. Descriptive statistics are used in data analysis, according to Cooksey and McDonald (2019), to turn raw data into more useful and meaningful information that is simple to understand, evaluate and draw conclusions from. Information regarding the small retail businesses in the research study was also summarised using descriptive statistics. Pie charts, bar graphs and frequency distribution tables were the primary descriptive statistical methods employed in this study.

According to Verma (2019), inferential statistics are statistical techniques used to foresee and examine facts of the research population, as well as to draw conclusions and judgements based on sample data. The researcher used Pearson chi-square tests, Factor Analysis as well as Pearson correlation matrix. A table that shows the strength of the relationship between two or more variables in a research study is called a Pearson correlation matrix, according to Wegner (2016). As per Buelens et al. (2018), inferential statistics employ complex mathematical computations to enable researchers to deduce patterns and trends about a larger population from a representative sample that was drawn from it. Generalisations or predictions about how those variables relate to the larger population of small retail businesses in Durban Central were made using inferential statistics to explore the correlations between variables within the sample of owner-managers. Using data gathered from owner-managers, the researcher was able to examine hypotheses, questions and assumptions using inferential statistics and draw empirical conclusions with a significance level of 5%.

3.15 RELIABILITY

Reliability was defined by Heale and Twycross (2017) as measurement consistency. Every time a property or element is measured, the findings have to be consistent. A structured questionnaire was the measuring tool utilised to gather data. The test-retest method was used in this study to guarantee the measurement instrument's dependability. Validity and reliability are required for data gathered using one or more survey modes (in this case, a questionnaire) in order for it to: provide answers to the researcher's research questions; accurately define the sample or population under investigation; and, if appropriate, be expanded to include individuals outside the study participants. A measuring device is said to have high reliability if it consistently yields the same findings when the same property is measured in the same manner. The standard method for testing reliability is to use the same tool multiple times to see if the same outcomes are obtained. But as this is impractical, the reliability of the questionnaire was assessed in this study using Cronbach's alpha. For the measuring tool, which is the research questionnaire used in this study, to be considered reliable, an alpha score of at least 0.70 must be obtained (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Reliability coefficients of less than 0.50 are

generally regarded as undesirable, those of 0.50 to 0.60 as significant and those of 0.70 and higher as good. The study's questionnaire had a Cronbach's alpha of greater than 0.7, which suggested an acceptable level of internal consistency.

3.16 VALIDITY

According to Mohajan (2017), validity in quantitative research refers to how well a measuring tool evaluates the variables it is intended to measure. The validity of the measuring instrument was undertaken to measure the degree to which the measuring instrument succeeded in describing or quantifying what it was designed to measure, which in this case was determining the significant marketing mix elements influencing small retail businesses' success in Durban Central. Through the use of content and face validity, the researcher was able to determine whether the measuring items accurately reflected the questions that were posed. According to Boparai et al. (2018), a valid questionnaire should comply with relevance, completeness and accuracy as shown in Table 3.3, below.

Table 3.3: Key aspects of a valid questionnaire

Aspect	Explanation
Relevance	Does the questionnaire obtain the information it was designed to seek?
Completeness	Is all desired relevant information obtained?
Accuracy	Can reliance be placed upon the responses to the questions?

Source: Author's construct

3.16.1 Content Validity

Content validity refers to the degree to which the questionnaire covers all the relevant aspects of the research topic (Jordan et al., 2015). In this study, the questionnaire covered all seven marketing mix elements: price, product, place, promotion, people, process and physical evidence. It also covered the different ways in which these elements can influence the success of a small retail business. Content validity was achieved through reviewing the literature on marketing mix elements and small retail business success to identify all the relevant aspects of the research topic. Furthermore, the researcher

consulted with experts in the marketing field and small retail businesses for their feedback on the questionnaire to ensure that it covered all the relevant aspects of the research topic.

3.16.2 Face Validity

According to Machin et al. (2018), face validity refers to the degree to which the questionnaire appears to be valid to the participants. Ha (2022) states that the questionnaire should be written in clear and concise language that is easy for participants to understand, while questions should also be relevant to the participants' experience and expertise. For this study, face validity was achieved through writing the questionnaire in clear and concise language which was easy for participants to understand. The researcher avoided using jargon or technical terms that participants might not have been familiar with. Further to that, pilot testing of the questionnaire was carried out on a small group of participants to get their feedback and make any necessary changes.

3.17 PILOT TESTING

In order to fine-tune the research questionnaire for data collection, pilot testing is carried out to clarify questions and make sure there are no biases or inconsistencies in it (Jordan, Werner & Venter, 2015). When choosing the right number of participants for a pilot study, there are several principles to follow. Cooper et al. (2018), for example, suggested a sample size of ten to one hundred respondents. Memon et al. (2020), however, suggested that the number of participants in a pilot test should range from 10 to 30. According to Whitehead et al. (2016), a pilot test of a large-scale survey should have a minimum sample size of 10% of the total sample size that will be used in the study. While Wegner (2016) claimed that a pilot study is carried out on a relatively small sample, or as a trial, to ensure the success of the bigger investigation, Machin et al. (2018) conjectured that it is frequently not essential to sample a large fraction of the target population.

Twenty individuals (10% of the research sample) were chosen at random to take part in the pilot testing of this research project based on the above-mentioned principles. Participants in the pilot study were limited to taking part in it exclusively. They were given

research questionnaires so they could respond to the questions. After reading the introduction to the questionnaire, the respondents gained an understanding of the research context. They then carefully read the questions and carefully considered their responses, choosing appropriate response options, providing thoughtful responses based on their experiences, offering clarification for any questions that were unclear, filling out the questionnaire and submitting it, noting how long it took to complete, sharing their thoughts and guaranteeing the confidentiality of their answers. By following these guidelines, participants helped to improve the research instrument, guarantee correct data gathering and strengthen the calibre and reliability of the study results. Their input was crucial in helping to improve the questionnaire for the intended participants, which is small business owner/managers.

3.18 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Prabhu (2016) states that social research is an on-going process that necessitates a disruption in people's lives. A truthful rapport between the researcher and the respondents is the only factor that matters. Human research can only be carried out with ethical agreement, according to the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research. This claim is supported by Anabo et al. (2019), who assert that when conducting research, a researcher must consider three factors: informed consent; risk of harm and confidentiality. In carrying out this study, all three ethical requirements were met. This study was confined by the regulations and principles of the Durban University of Technology's research ethics policy and guidelines. Prior to their participation in the research study, all participants and stakeholders in this study were given information and a consent statement. The information letter included a thorough description of each participant's rights. An attempt was made to safeguard respondents' confidentiality and anonymity. After the study, the research information will be discarded. To further ensure the anonymity of their responses, the respondents were not obliged to write down their names, addresses, or business mobile numbers. According to Mittelstadt (2019), formality can play a significant role in guaranteeing that ethical concerns are addressed. Voluntary participation, participant safety, anonymity and confidentiality were all important components of ethics in this study. No one was coerced into participating. In light of these

circumstances, the decision was made not to provide the project participants with any form of compensation.

3.19 LETTER OF INFORMATION AND CONSENT

The questionnaire was accompanied by a letter of information (Annexure A) and consent form (Annexure B), as well as a description of the objectives of the study. The potential respondents were provided with the opportunity to ask questions regarding the study and to make a decision regarding whether or not they would participate in the study through the letter.

3.20 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter, the research design, the target population of small retail businesses and the sample drawn from the target population were all presented and discussed. In addition, the chapter provided an explanation of the questionnaire development, questionnaire administration and data analysis that was carried out on the information that was received from the owner-managers of small retail businesses. The research design served as the foundation upon which the research questions were formulated, whilst the research methodology was centred on the selection of the particular research methodologies that were available to the researcher for the purpose of data collecting and analysis. For the purpose of this study, the instruments of measurement that were utilised were structured close-ended questionnaire. All of the questions that were going to be asked in the study were derived in a straightforward and direct manner from each of the research objectives. As part of the process of ensuring the validity and reliability of the results, a pilot study was conducted and the results of that study provided some recommendations for improving the reliability.

The next chapter will focus on data analysis, presentation and discussion.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This results and discussion chapter is based on the detailed presentation of the data; the analysis of the findings; and the interpretation of the study results. It is important to note that the discussion of the results was centered around the research questions, with four main sections: demographic factors; factors influencing marketing mix importance; marketing mix elements of small retail businesses; and dimensions of success. The robust statistical toolkit, SPSS Version 29, was employed to unlock the details and patterns within the data. To illustrate the findings, results were presented as colourful frequency tables, bar charts and pie charts. These visual aids served as windows into the participants' responses, making complex patterns instantly discernible. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to assess the reliability and validity of the closed-ended questionnaire.

The following discussion sheds light on the interconnected web of factors shaping the success of small retail businesses. Through a synthesis of the findings, the aim was to offer a nuanced understanding that not only adds to the existing body of knowledge, but also provides actionable insights for practitioners, policymakers and academics invested in the prosperity of small retail businesses.

4.2 RESPONSE RATE OF THE RESPONDENTS

The response rate of a questionnaire is a crucial metric that indicates the proportion of respondents who participated in the survey, compared to the total number of questionnaires distributed. It provides insights into the effectiveness of the survey method and the willingness of respondents to engage with the research. For this study, with 217 questionnaires distributed and 190 responses received, a response rate of 87.56% was achieved. This is a very good response rate and it compared well with other studies that were conducted on small businesses. A study by Holdt et al. (2017) on small businesses and firm performance in South Africa, a micro-level analysis, scored a response rate of

78.5%; Bloom et al. (2017) had a response rate of 80.2% on the role of human capital in the performance of small businesses in developed economies; while ERIA (2020) scored a response rate of 89.4% on the study of the impact of covid-19 on micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in south-east Asia. The above response rates were good enough to assume representative findings and draw conclusions. Therefore, the response rate (87.56%) for this study was high enough to carry out data analysis and provide findings and conclusions.

4.3 RELIABILITY OF RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

The values of Cronbach's alpha range from 0 to 1, with higher values indicating greater internal consistency. As Creswell and Creswell (2017) explained, validity goes beyond consistency: It ensures that the scores meaningfully represent the targeted concept, allowing researchers to confidently draw conclusions about the studied group. For this study, validity was achieved through a pilot study and a reliability test was done using Cronbach's alpha as shown in Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1: Cronbach's alpha score of the questionnaire

Construct	Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Promotion	C1.1; C1.2; C1.3; C1.4; C1.5; C1.6; C1.7; C1.8; C1.9	0.718
Product	C2.1; C2.2; C2.3; C2.4; C2.5	0.882
Price	C3.1; C3.2; C3.3; C3.4; 3.5; C3.6	0.826
Place	C4.1; C4.2; C4.3; C4.4; 4.5; C4.6	0.85
Physical evidence	C5.1; C5.2; C5.3; C5.4	0.707
Process	C6.1; C6.2; C6.3; C6.4	0.740
People	C7.1; C7.2; C7.3; C7.4; 7.5	0.724
Success		0.863
Overall	85 items	0.928

Source: Author's construct

The findings presented in the Table 4.1 demonstrate the reliability of the constructs used in the study, as measured by Cronbach's Alpha. The overall Cronbach's Alpha for the 85 items is 0.928, indicating a high level of internal consistency (Taber, 2018). The individual constructs, including Promotion (0.718), Product (0.882), Price (0.826), Place (0.85), Physical evidence (0.707), Process (0.740), People (0.724), and Success (0.863), also show acceptable to excellent reliability scores. All constructs have Cronbach's Alpha values above the generally accepted threshold of 0.7, suggesting that the items within each construct are measuring the same underlying concept (Ursachi et al., 2015). These findings support the reliability and validity of the measurement scales used in the study. DeVellis (2017) suggested that for questionnaires with over 50 items, an alpha above 0.9 can be considered excellent.

4.4 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Descriptive statistics are the cornerstone of data analysis, providing a concise and informative summary of the dataset, offering valuable insights that inform further analysis and guiding the research journey (Jamieson, 2019). Field (2020) pointed out that descriptive statistics lay the groundwork for more complex statistical tests. Understanding the central tendency, variability and relationships between variables guided the researcher on the choice of appropriate inferential methods and helped to interpret results in the context of data's specific characteristics. In this section, the researcher used graphs, tables and pie charts to present the collected data.

4.4.1 DEMOGRAPHIC ATTRIBUTES

Demographic attributes provide a picture of who makes up a population group, offering insights into their unique experiences and potential differences. This section offers a broad outline of the sample statistics, providing the demographic and background details of the survey participants.

4.4.1.1 Industry in which small businesses operate in Durban Central

In order to characterise the industrial landscape of the sampled small retail businesses, the study questioned the respondents on the sector in which their businesses operate.

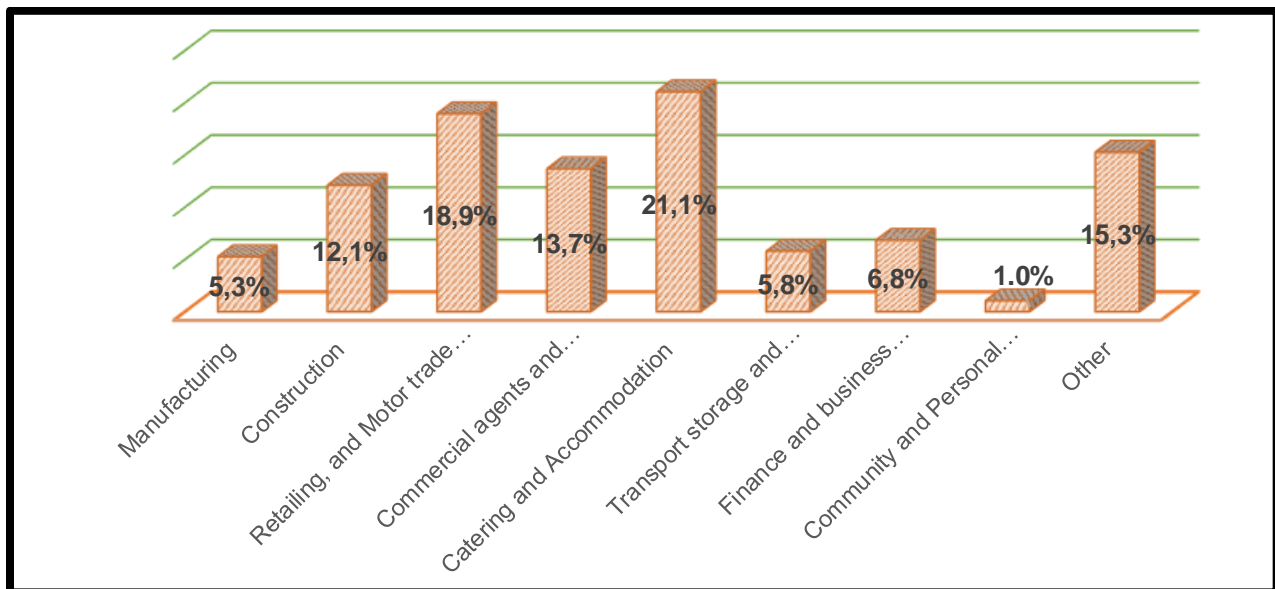
Figure 4.1 shows the distribution of small businesses across different sectors in Durban Central.

Figure 4.1, below, shows catering and accommodation constitute 21.1% and it stands out as the dominant industry, indicating a substantial presence of small businesses in the hospitality and food service sector. This diverse category includes restaurants, cafes, hotels and related businesses, contributing to the vibrancy of the local service economy.

The retailing, motor trade and repairs sectors comprise 18.9% of the respondents. This aligns with the consumer-driven nature of retail and repair services, where entrepreneurs may find opportunities to cater to diverse consumer needs. Research by Bellou et al. (2016) suggests that retail sectors often attract a significant share of entrepreneurs due to the potential for direct consumer interaction and market responsiveness.

The 'other' sector consisted of 15.3% of the respondents, suggesting a diverse array of small businesses operating in various niche industries or unconventional sectors. This diverse category underscores the adaptability and creativity of entrepreneurs in identifying unique business opportunities.

Figure 4.1: Industry in which small businesses operate



Source: Author's construct

Furthermore, the results in Figure 4.1 illustrate that the construction industry represents 12.1% of small businesses in Durban Central. The construction sector's inclusion is consistent with the entrepreneurial opportunities available in this field, driven by demand for infrastructure development and property-related services. Studies by Kitching et al. (2015) emphasised the prevalence of construction-related businesses in the small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) landscape.

Of the respondents in Figure 4.1, 13.7% indicated that they belonged to the commercial agents and allied services sector, representing a notable presence in facilitating business transactions and services. This sector's significance aligns with the intermediary role played by commercial agents in connecting businesses and streamlining various processes.

As shown in Figure 4.1, other notable sectors include finance and business services (6.8%); catering and accommodation (5.8%); and transport, storage and communication (5.8%). Each of these sectors reflects the diverse opportunities entrepreneurs pursue, ranging from service-oriented industries to those involved in logistics and communication. The findings resonate with the dynamic nature of the services sector, where entrepreneurs identify niches and cater to specific needs (Audretsch et al., 2019).

The manufacturing industry accounts for 5.3% of the respondents, reflecting a presence in the production and creation of goods. While manufacturing may not dominate in terms of percentage, its inclusion highlights the continued significance of production-based activities in the entrepreneurial landscape (Parker, 2018).

Figure 4.1 shows that 1.1% (the smallest percentage) of the respondents were in the community and personal services sector, indicating a relatively lower presence of this category. This sector may include businesses providing services directly to individuals or communities.

4.4.1.2 The number of full-time employees employed

Analysing the data on the number of employees in small retail businesses provides valuable insights into the dynamics of this crucial sector and can inform decision-making

at various levels. Table 4.2 below reveals the distribution of full-time employees across small businesses in Durban Central, which has been categorised by the number of employees employed.

Table 4.2 shows that nearly half (47.4%) of the respondents were employing between 1 and 10 full-time employees. This represents the most common size category, indicating a prevalence of micro-businesses and small startups. Another significant portion of respondents (44.7%) fall within the 11-to-20 employee range. This category still represents smaller businesses but suggests the presence of companies with slightly larger workforces.

Table 4.2: The number of full-time employees employed.

<i>Number of full-time employees</i>	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Frequency
<i>1 - 10 employees</i>	90	47.4	47.4
<i>11 - 20 employees</i>	85	44.7	92.1
<i>21 - 30 employees</i>	11	5.8	97.9
<i>31 - 40 employees</i>	3	1.6	99.5
<i>41 - 50 employees</i>	1	0.5	100.0

Source: Author's construct.

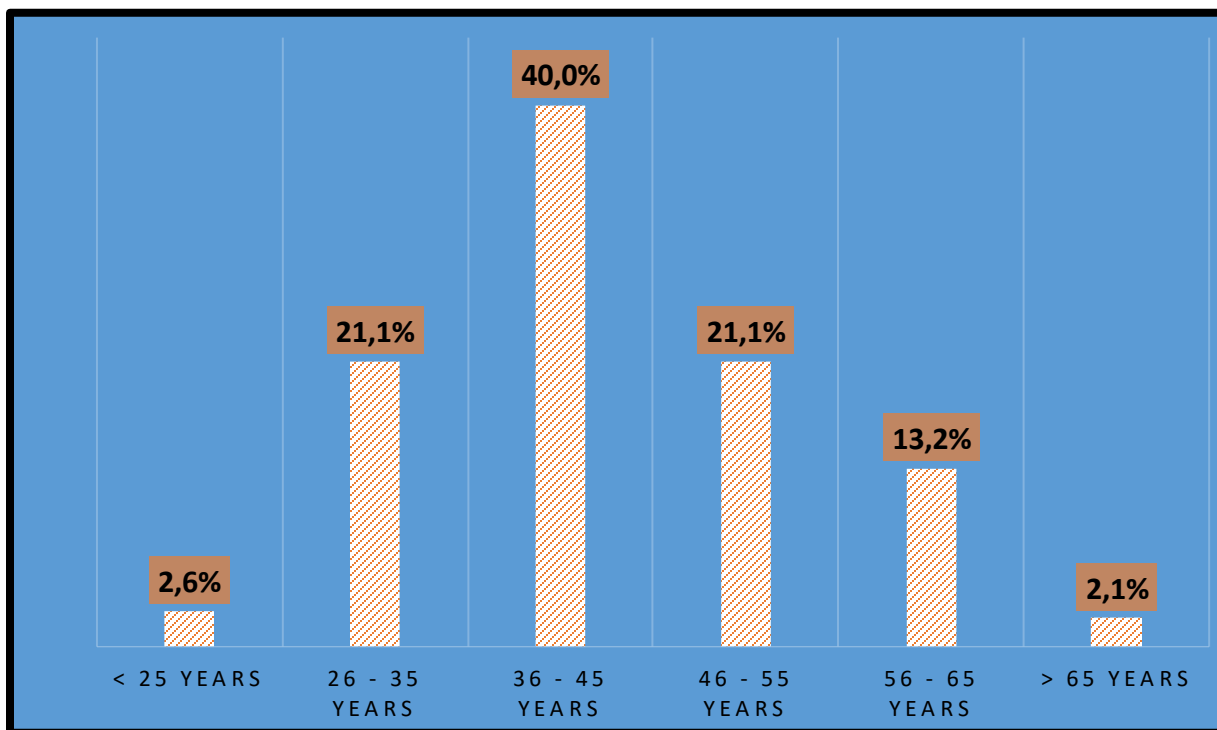
The remaining categories (21-30, 31-40 and 41-50 employees) account for a much smaller share (5.8%, 1.6% and 0.5% respectively) of the respondents. This suggests that smaller businesses with over 20 employees are less common among the small businesses in Durban Central. These findings resonate with studies conducted in other contexts, suggesting a global trend towards micro-enterprise growth. A 2020 World Bank report revealed that micro and small businesses (MSEs) constitute most businesses globally and this trend is particularly pronounced in developing economies like South Africa (World Bank, 2020). Similarly, a study by the Small Business Administration (2021) in the United States found that micro-businesses with less than five employees represent the largest proportion of all businesses in the country (SBA, 2021).

4.4.1.3 The age distribution of small businesses owners in Durban Central

Understanding the age distribution of owner/managers in small businesses has significant research value in revealing the entrepreneurial landscape. It helps to reveal trends in who is starting and running small businesses, providing insights into the entrepreneurial ecosystem and potential shifts in future generations.

It was discovered (as shown in Figure 4.2 below) that 40% of the respondents were in the age range of 36-45. The age range of 26-35 comprised of 21.1% of the respondents, while 21.1% of the small business owners were aged between 46-55.

Figure 4.2: Age Group Distribution of the owner/managers of small businesses



Source: Author's construct

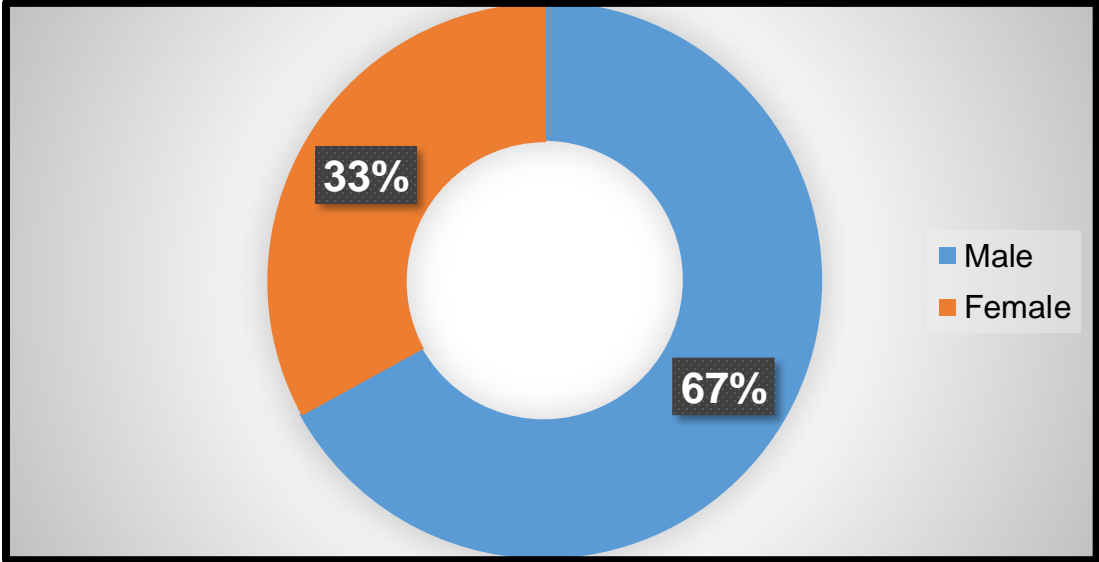
The age distribution of small business owners/managers in Durban Central skews towards mid-career individuals. This mid-career age group signifies a stage where individuals may have accumulated substantial industry experience and managerial skills, aligning with findings from studies accentuating the role of experience in entrepreneurial success (Wiklund et al., 2019).

Respondents in their late 50s and early 60s (56-65) represent a smaller portion (13.2%) and very young (under 25) or older (over 65) entrepreneurs are less common (2.6% and 2.1%, respectively). This suggests a dynamic and growing small business ecosystem with a significant presence of mid-career founders, but also with room for younger and older entrepreneurs to contribute their unique perspectives and experiences. Younger entrepreneurs may be navigating the challenges of establishing themselves in the business world, while older entrepreneurs may be engaging in entrepreneurial activities as part of a phased retirement or in pursuit of personal interests (Worts et al., 2018).

4.4.1.4 Gender distribution of small business owner/managers

The main purpose of using gender as a demographic variable was to determine the gender of the owner-managers of small businesses within the research study area. Figure 4.2, below, shows the gender distribution.

Figure 4.3: Gender distribution of small business owner/managers



Source: Author’s construct.

Figure 4.3 above indicates the dominant presence of male ownership/management as compared to females. Men represent a substantial majority of respondents (67%) of small business owners/managers in Durban Central. This highlights a notable gender gap in ownership and leadership positions within the local small business landscape. This dominance aligns with broader patterns observed in entrepreneurship, where men have

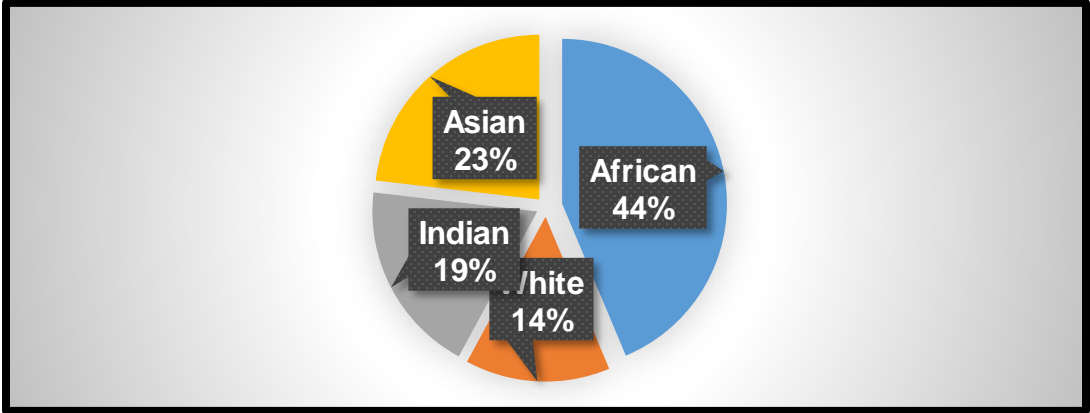
historically held a larger share of leadership positions in various industries (Brush et al., 2019). The reasons behind this gender disparity are complex and may involve socio-cultural factors, access to resources and gender-specific challenges in entrepreneurial ecosystems.

Women respondents make up only 33% of small business owners/managers. This underrepresentation, compared to men, poses potential challenges for gender equality and inclusivity in the local business ecosystem. Research by Marlow and McAdam (2013) emphasizes the importance of understanding the unique challenges faced by female entrepreneurs, including issues related to access to funding, networking opportunities and societal expectations. Initiatives promoting gender diversity and inclusivity in entrepreneurship have gained attention in recent years to address these disparities (Eddleston et al., 2016). While the overall gender distribution leans toward male representation, the presence of female entrepreneurs highlights the ongoing efforts to encourage and support women in entrepreneurship.

4.4.1.5 The race distribution

Determining the race distribution of owner/managers in small businesses aimed to shed light on potential inequalities and disparities in access to entrepreneurship and business ownership. Figure 4.4, below, reflects the racial distribution of small businesses in Durban Central.

Figure 4.4: The Race Distribution of small retail business owners



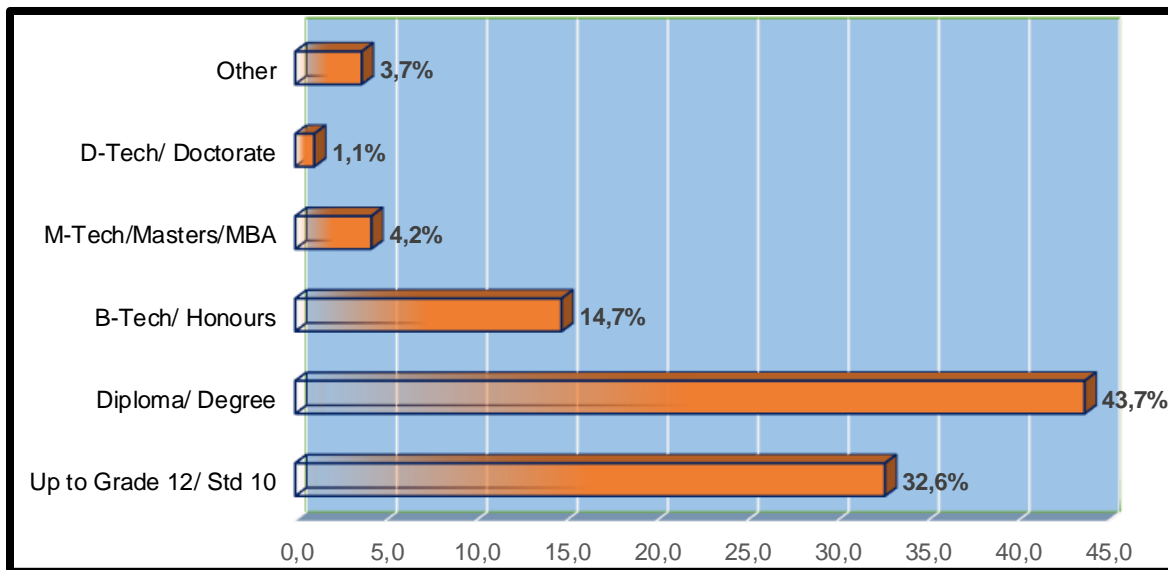
Source: Author's construct

The pie chart (Figure 4.4) reveals a diverse racial landscape among small business owners/managers in Durban Central, with no single group holding a dominant majority. Figure 4.4 reveals that 44% of the respondents were Africans, followed by Asian (23%) and Indian (19%) entrepreneurs; while White individuals (14%) represent a smaller portion. This is in line with a study by Nkomo (2020), who found that the substantial representation of individuals of African descent in entrepreneurship contributes to the economic vibrancy and diversity of the small business sector. The race diversity showcases the multicultural fabric of the local small business community and highlights the significant contributions of various racial groups to the economic landscape of Durban Central.

4.4.1.6 Highest level of formal education of small business owners

The highest level of formal education of small business owners was determined to uncover potential relationships between academic background and entrepreneurial success. Analysing educational trends among owners can reveal potential skill gaps or areas where targeted training and resources could be beneficial for business success. Figure 4.5 shows the highest level of formal education amongst the 190 respondents.

Figure 4.5: Highest level of formal education of small business owners



Source: Author's construct

Of the 190 respondents, the largest percentage (43.7%) of small business owner/managers possess a Diploma or Degree, as shown in Figure 4.5. This suggests that a substantial number of owner/managers in Durban Central have completed higher education, equipping them with theoretical knowledge and skills that can contribute to their business acumen.

Figure 4.5 also shows that the category 'Up to Grade 12/ Std 10' includes 32.6% of small business owner/managers, indicating that a considerable number of respondents have completed secondary education. This group may rely on practical experience, industry-specific skills and hands-on learning to navigate the entrepreneurial landscape. B-Tech/ Honours accounts for 14.7% of the respondents, reflecting a notable presence of entrepreneurs with specialised technical or honours-level qualifications. This group may leverage their technical expertise and advanced knowledge in specific fields to enhance their business operations (Galloway et al., 2020).

M-Tech/Masters/MBA comprises 4.2%, indicating a smaller, yet significant, percentage of entrepreneurs with postgraduate qualifications. Owner/managers in this category may bring advanced managerial and strategic skills to their businesses, contributing to innovation and growth. D-Tech/Doctorate represents 1.1%, signifying a smaller but highly educated segment of small business owner/managers. Entrepreneurs with doctoral qualifications may contribute to research, innovation and industry knowledge, bringing a unique perspective to their entrepreneurial ventures.

The category 'other' represents 3.7%, suggesting a range of alternative educational backgrounds or qualifications among small business owner/managers. This diverse category may include individuals with specialised certifications, vocational training, or unique educational paths that contribute to their entrepreneurial success.

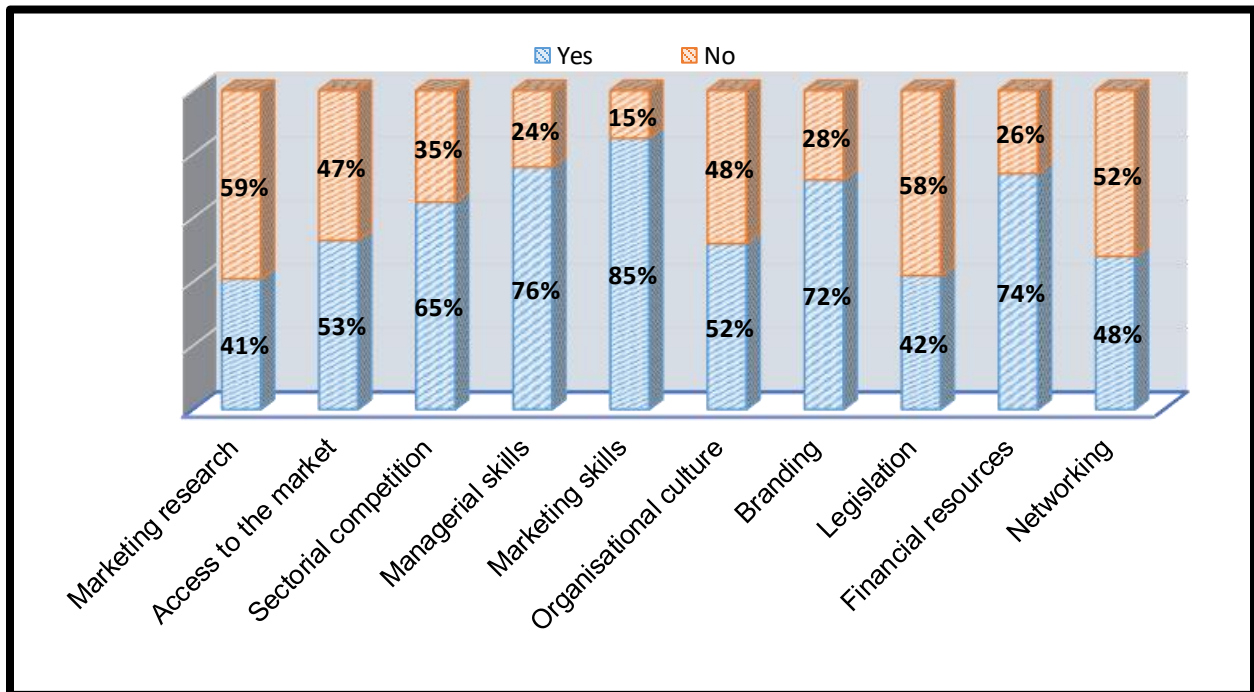
4.5 FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE THE LEVEL OF IMPORTANCE PLACED ON EACH MARKETING MIX STRATEGY BY SMALL RETAIL BUSINESSES

Exploring why small business retailers prioritise certain marketing mix strategies (product, price, place, promotion, physical evidence, people and process) unlocks valuable secrets to their success. This section considers strategic allocation, identifying factors that guide

their choices, helping consultants and policymakers tailor support programmes; optimising resources; empowering them to focus on the most impactful strategies for their unique contexts; improving their competitive edge; revealing vulnerabilities and opportunities to stand out in local markets; and market dynamics – understanding how factors like the target market and industry trends influence their adaptation to a changing retail landscape. Understanding these influences can guide marketing consultants and policymakers in tailoring recommendations and support programmes to better meet the needs of small businesses (Chauhan & Kaur, 2022). By identifying the key factors shaping small retailers' marketing priorities, it can help them optimise their limited resources by focusing on the most impactful strategies for their specific context (Wang & Li, 2021).

Figure 4.6 shows how different factors: access to the market; sectorial competition; managerial skills; marketing skills; organisational culture; branding; legislation; financial resources; and networking are viewed in the context of small retail businesses in Durban Central. This will determine whether internal capabilities are relied upon more than external capabilities.

Figure 4.6: Factors that influence the level of importance placed on each marketing mix strategy



Source: Author's construct

Figure 4.6 above shows that marketing skills emerge as a critical factor, with 85% of respondents considering them very important. This high importance attributed to marketing skills underscores the recognition of the pivotal role of expertise in effectively promoting products and services in the competitive retail landscape (Kotler et al., 2017).

Managerial skills also play a significant role, with 76% of respondents acknowledging their importance, as illustrated in Figure 4.6. This finding highlights the multifaceted nature of marketing in retail, where effective management is crucial for coordinating marketing efforts, aligning strategies with organisational goals and ensuring operational efficiency (Baker et al., 2016).

Figure 4.6 further indicates that financial resources are deemed important by 74% of respondents, emphasizing the practical aspect of marketing implementation. Adequate financial backing enables small retail businesses to invest in promotional activities, advertising and other marketing initiatives, contributing to market visibility and competitiveness.

Of the 190 respondents, 72% consider branding very important, indicating an awareness of the value of strong brand identity in influencing consumer perceptions and building customer loyalty. Successful branding can differentiate a small retail business in a crowded market. As shown in Figure 4.6, sectorial competition is recognised as important by 65% of respondents, underscoring the significance of understanding and navigating the competitive landscape. This awareness suggests that small retail businesses value insights into competitors' strategies and market dynamics. Access to the market is viewed as important by 53% of respondents, as shown in Figure 4.6, reflecting an understanding of the importance of market reach and penetration. Effective access to the target market is crucial for generating sales and establishing a foothold in the retail sector, as researched by Jobber and Ellis-Chadwick (2019).

Organisational culture, networking (48%), legislation (42%) and marketing research (41%) also factor into the considerations of small retail businesses, though with varying levels of importance. These findings highlight the complexity of decision-making in marketing strategy formulation, where multiple factors must be weighed and balanced to achieve optimal outcomes.

Small businesses might perceive market research as expensive or irrelevant to their niche clientele. They might rely on personal relationships and local knowledge rather than formal research methods. A 2019 study by the University of Johannesburg found that many small businesses in South Africa struggle to access or utilise market research effectively, often due to a lack of resources or an understanding of its benefits (University of Johannesburg, 2019). The complexity of South African legislation can be daunting for small businesses, leading to fear of penalties and a perception that compliance outweighs benefits. A 2021 report by the National Business Forum of South Africa (NBF) highlighted the regulatory burden as a major barrier to formalisation and growth for small businesses, calling for simplified regulations and improved regulatory support (NBF, 2021).

Building effective business networks can be time-consuming and requires social skills or cultural capital that some small business owners might lack. Additionally, established business networks might not always be inclusive of, or accessible to, new entrants. A 2020 study by the University of Cape Town found that social networks and trust play a significant role in business success in South Africa, but also highlighted the challenges faced by marginalised groups in accessing these networks (University of Cape Town, 2020).

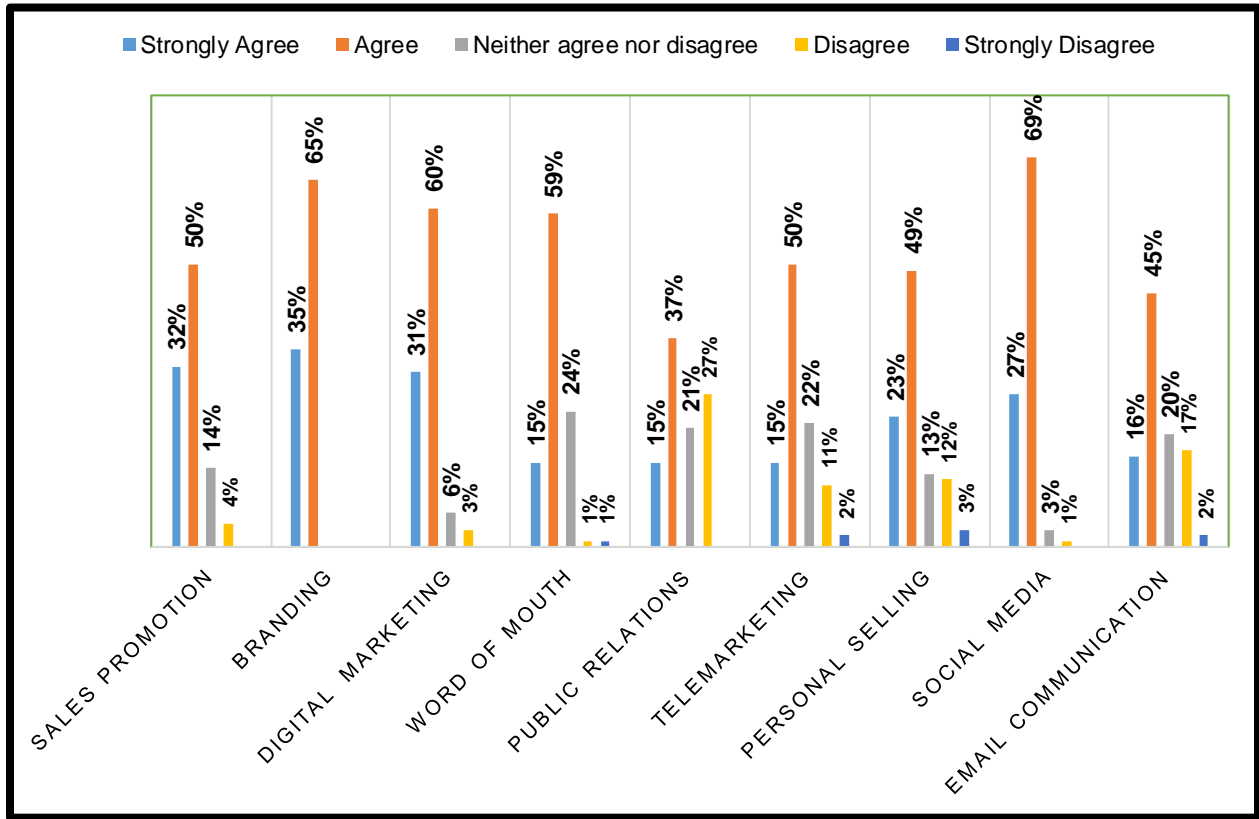
4.6 MARKETING MIX ELEMENTS OF SMALL RETAIL BUSINESSES

4.6.1 Promotion Element

Investigating the promotion practices as a marketing mix element of small retail businesses aimed to illuminate the specific strategies these businesses employ to reach and engage their target customers. Figure 4.7 presents the insights into marketing practices related to the promotion element, reflecting the perceptions of respondents.

Results in Figure 4.7 show that 32% of the respondents strongly agree and 50% agree, with sales promotion, indicating a generally positive stance on the effectiveness of promotional strategy. This aligns with studies like that of Smith and Johnson (2020), which emphasized the impact of well-executed sales promotions in driving customer engagement and sales.

Figure 4.7: Marketing Practices relating to the implementation of Promotion.



Source: Author's construct

Concerning branding, 35% of the respondents strongly agree and 65% agree, with the importance of building and maintaining a strong brand identity for small retail businesses (Keller, 2018). Digital marketing is endorsed by 31% who strongly agree and 60% who agree, as shown in Figure 4.7, aligning with the contemporary emphasis on leveraging digital channels for marketing success. Word-of-mouth receives a mixed response from the respondents, with 15% strongly agreeing, 59% agreeing and 24% neither agreeing nor disagreeing, indicating room for potential improvements in capitalising on this form of promotion. Public relations and telemarketing generate diverse responses, reflecting the varied effectiveness and acceptance of these strategies. Personal selling is endorsed by 23% of the respondents who strongly agree and 49% who agree, confirming the significance of interpersonal connections in the retail sector (Clark et al., 2021). It was discovered that social media receives strong support from the respondents, as seen in Figure 4.7, with 27% strongly agreeing and 69% agreeing, in line with the prevalent role

of social platforms in contemporary marketing. Lastly, email communication elicits a mixed response, indicating potential areas for refinement in this form of promotion.

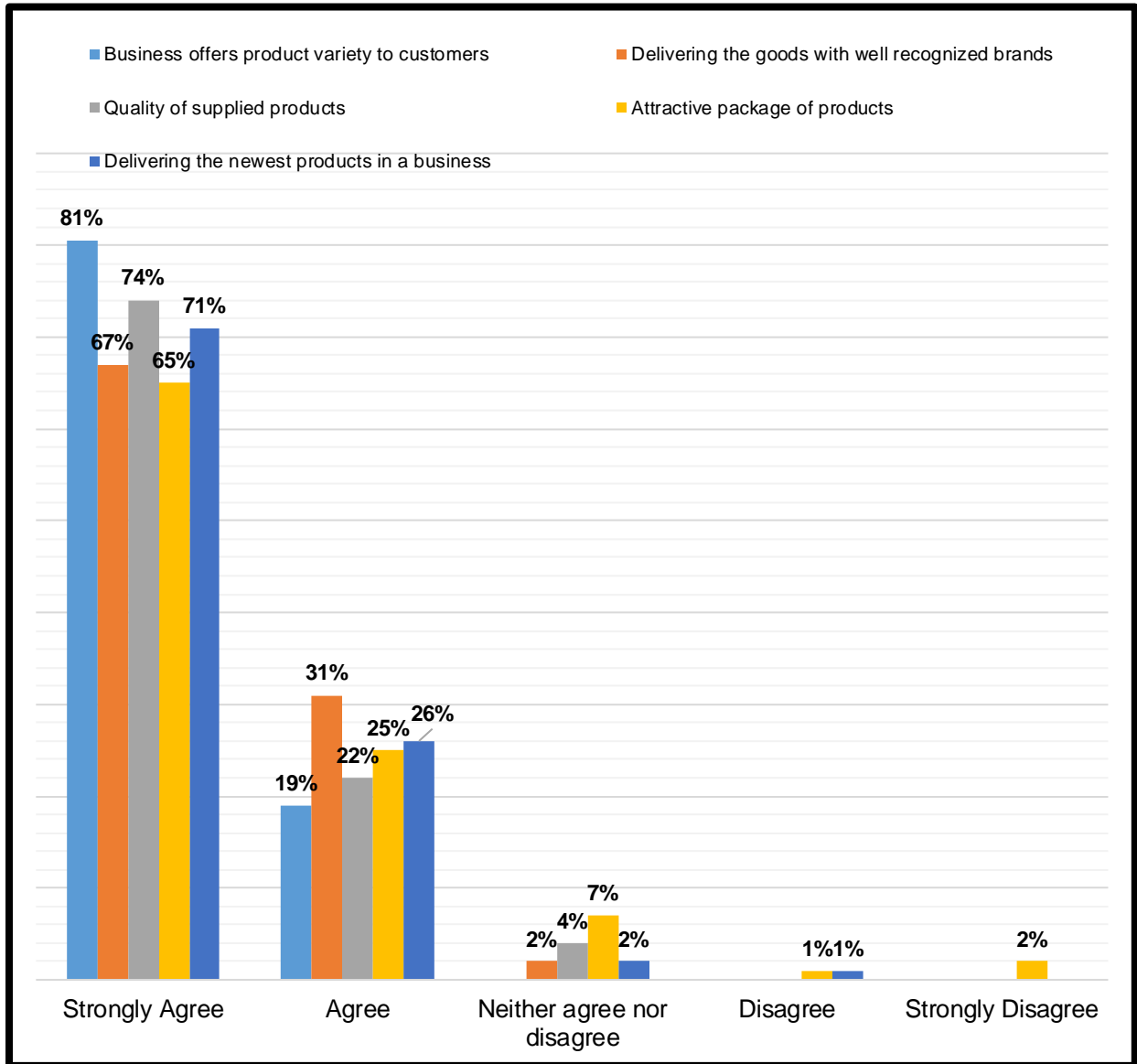
4.6.2 Product Element

Exploring product practices as a marketing mix element of small retail business aims to uncover the strategies these businesses use to curate and manage their product offerings. Ultimately, this research aims to equip small retailers with the knowledge and tools to optimize their product offerings, enhance customer satisfaction and navigate the ever-evolving retail landscape with greater success. Opinions on marketing practices relating to the implementation of the product are illustrated in Figure 4.8.

Figure 4.8, below, shows that 81% of the respondents strongly agree that the business offers product variety to customers, emphasizing the importance of diversifying product offerings to meet customer preferences. This aligns with research by Chen et al. (2018), which found that a varied product assortment positively influences customer satisfaction and loyalty in the retail sector. Furthermore, it can be seen from Figure 4.8 that delivering goods with well-recognised brands receives strong affirmation, with 67% strongly agreeing and 31% agreeing. This underscores the significance of brand recognition in influencing consumer choices and fostering loyalty. In terms of the quality of supplied products, 74% strongly agree, highlighting the pivotal role of product quality in shaping customer perceptions and loyalty. The need for an attractive package of products receives positive responses, as shown in Figure 4.8, with 65% strongly agreeing, indicating the importance of visual appeal in product presentation.

Figure 4.8 also illustrates that delivering the newest products is endorsed by 71% of the respondents who strongly agree, with 26% agreeing, reinforcing the emphasis on staying abreast of market trends and meeting consumer demands for innovation (Li et al., 2019). As shown in Figure 4.8, the analysis underscores the importance of product variety, brand recognition, quality, aesthetics and innovation in small retail businesses, aligning with established principles in retail literature.

Figure 4.8: Marketing Practices relating to the implementation of product.



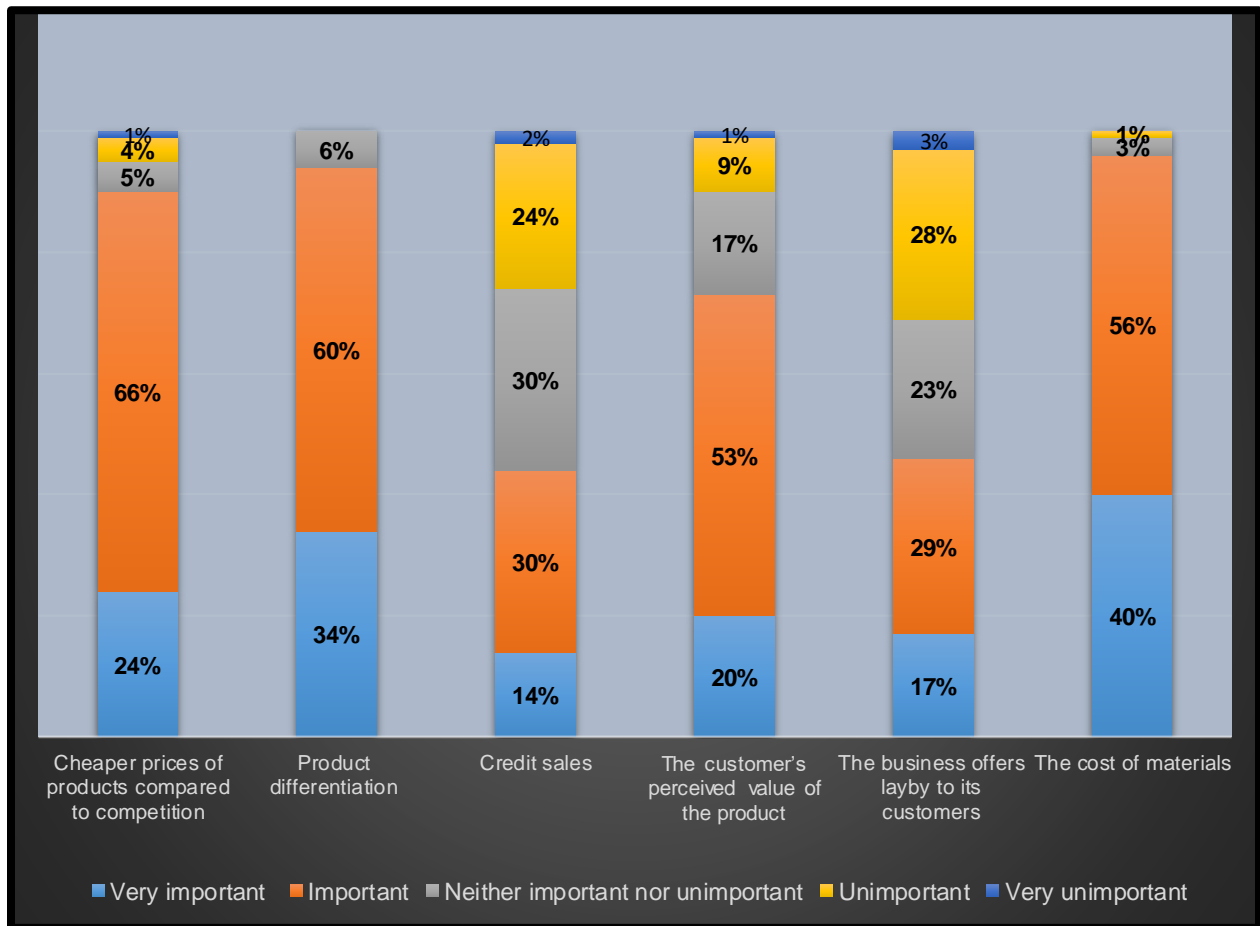
Source: Author's construct

4.6.3 Price Element

Investigating price practices as a marketing mix element of small retail business aims to uncover the strategic decisions small retailers make regarding product pricing. Ultimately, this research seeks to empower small retailers to optimize their pricing strategies, maximize profitability and navigate the complex interplay of cost, customer value and

competition in the retail environment. Figure 4.9 shows the marketing practices relating to the implementation of price.

Figure 4.9: Marketing Practices relating to the implementation of price.



Source: Author's construct

The results in Figure 4.9 above show that 66% of respondents consider that cheaper prices of their products, compared to the competition, is important, indicating an emphasis on competitive pricing. This aligns with findings from a study by Homburg et al. (2019), emphasizing the significance of competitive pricing in attracting price-sensitive consumers and gaining a competitive edge in the market.

Product differentiation is considered very important by 34% and important by 60%, of respondents as illustrated in Figure 4.9 above. This suggests that a substantial proportion recognizes the value of offering unique features or attributes in products to distinguish

them from their competitors. Product differentiation has been identified as a crucial strategy for small businesses to create a competitive advantage (Chandra et al., 2018).

Figure 4.9 shows that credit sales were perceived as important by 30% of respondents, with 30% indicating it as neither important nor unimportant. This indicates a mixed response regarding the importance of credit sales. Studies such as that by Smith and Martinez (2020) have shown that credit sales can impact customer loyalty and satisfaction, particularly in certain industries where credit flexibility is valued.

Analysing the responses to the statement 'The customer's perceived value of the product', 53% of respondents regard it as important, while 20% see it as very important. This highlights the recognition that customers' perceptions of value, beyond just the monetary cost, significantly influence their purchasing decisions (Vargo & Lusch, 2017).

'Layby' as a business offering to customers is considered very important by 17%, important by 29% and 23% perceive it as neither important nor unimportant, as shown in Figure 4.9. Layby options can enhance affordability for customers, as found in research by Johnson and Wang (2019), emphasizing its relevance in attracting and retaining customers.

The issue of the cost of materials is deemed very important by 40% and important by 56% of the respondents, signifying the awareness of the impact of material costs on pricing strategies. This aligns with supply chain management literature, where the cost of materials is a crucial factor affecting overall business costs and pricing decisions (Chopra & Meindl, 2019).

4.6.4 Place Element

Investigating place practices in small retail aims to equip these businesses with the knowledge and tools to make informed location decisions, optimize their physical and digital spaces and leverage the power of omnichannel integration to reach more customers, build brand loyalty and thrive in the dynamic retail landscape. The views of the respondents pertaining to marketing practices relating to the implementation of place are shown in Figure 4.10.

Figure 4.10: Marketing practices relating to the implementation of place



Source: Author’s construct

It was discovered that the distribution channels emerge as paramount, with a total of 83% (very important: 29% and important: 57%) of the respondents. This is an indication of the collective recognition of the significance of effective distribution networks. This aligns with contemporary literature emphasizing the role of distribution channels in reaching and serving customers efficiently (Rosenbloom, 2019).

The results in Figure 4.10 above show that out of 190 respondents, warehousing facilities are considered either very important by 21% or important by 64%, while 14% were neutral and 1% considered this unimportant. It can be deduced that warehousing facilities play a crucial role of storage and logistics in ensuring a streamlined supply chain. A study by Coyle et al. (2017) concluded that warehousing has been identified as a critical component in enhancing overall distribution efficiency.

The mode of transportation, as shown in Figure 4.10 above was deemed very important by 25% and important by 53% of respondents. This highlights the recognition that the choice of transportation can impact the speed and cost-effectiveness of product delivery, as discussed in studies on transportation management (Balakrishnan & Geunes, 2018).

A total of 96% of the respondents perceived location as either very important (50%) or important (46%), while the remainder was neutral, as shown in Figure 4.10. This is indicative of a strong emphasis on the strategic positioning of small retail businesses. This aligns with established principles in retail management, emphasizing the pivotal role of location in attracting and serving the target market. Logistics is seen as important by 56% and very important by 41%. This finding is an indication of the critical role of logistics in ensuring the smooth flow of products from suppliers to customers and was supported by Christopher (2016). According to Christopher (2016), effective logistics management is crucial for minimising costs and maximising customer satisfaction.

Figure 4.10 also shows that inventory control management was considered important by 54% and very important by 43% of the respondents. This highlights the recognition of efficient inventory management as a key factor in meeting customer demand while minimizing holding costs. The analysis of the data in Figure 4.10 indicates a comprehensive understanding of the significance of various elements within the place component for small retail businesses. Effective distribution channels, warehousing, transportation, strategic location, logistics and inventory control management collectively contribute to a well-orchestrated supply chain and successful market presence.

4.6.5 Physical Evidence Element

Table 4.3 summarises the findings on the aspect of physical evidence, providing insights into respondents' perceptions regarding various elements that contribute to the tangible aspects of a small retail business.

Table 4.3: Marketing practices relating to the implementation of physical evidence.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Beautiful decoration of the business environment.	70%	29%	1%	0%	0%	100%
Proper amenities like refrigerator and electronic scale.	42%	47%	6%	4%	1%	100%
Physical facilities like wheeled baskets.	23%	36%	20%	20%	1%	100%
Calm and enjoyable ambience of the business environment.	46%	51%	3%	0%	0%	100%

Source: Author's construct.

Table 4.3 shows that 70% of the respondents strongly agree that the beautiful decoration of the business environment is essential, while 29% agree. This emphasizes the significant role aesthetics play in shaping the overall customer experience. Existing research supports this notion, with studies suggesting that a visually appealing environment positively influences customer satisfaction and perception of service quality (Bitner, 1992). Proper amenities such as refrigerators and electronic scales are regarded as important by 42% and very important by 47% of respondents; 6% were neutral while the remainder disagreed. Proper amenities are of importance in enhancing convenience for customers during their shopping experience. Previous research by Smith and Brown (2018) highlights the positive impact of well-provided amenities on customer satisfaction and loyalty.

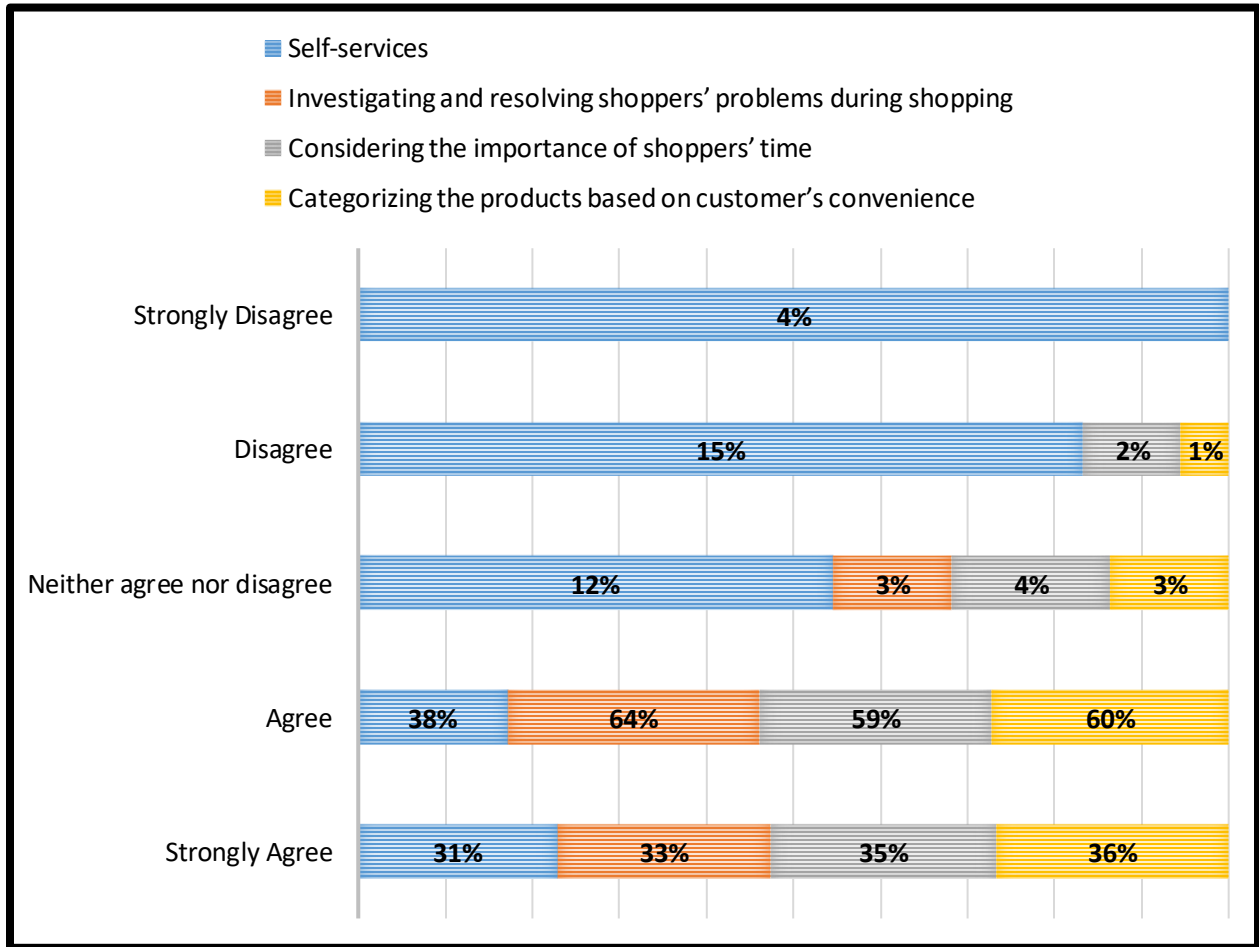
The need for physical facilities like wheeled baskets received mixed responses, with 23% strongly agreeing, 36% agreeing and 20% neither agreeing nor disagreeing, as shown in Table 4.3. However, 20% disagree and 1% strongly disagree, indicating a potential area for improvement in providing convenient physical facilities. This aligns with the findings of studies stressing the significance of convenience and ease of navigation within the retail environment (Kotler et al., 2017). A calm and enjoyable ambiance in the business environment is perceived as important by 46% and very important by 51% of respondents. The recognition of the impact of the business environment on customer emotions and overall satisfaction is very important. The analysis of the data presented in Table 4.3 emphasizes the importance of physical evidence in small retail businesses. This includes aspects of aesthetics, amenities, physical facilities and ambiance. These tangible elements collectively contribute to shaping a positive and memorable customer experience.

4.6.6 Processes Element

Figure 4.11 illustrates the respondents' perspectives on the processes component within small retail businesses, shedding light on the perceived importance of various operational aspects that influence the overall customer experience.

Results in Figure 4.11 show that self-services are recognised as significant, with 31% strongly agreeing and 38% agreeing; however, 12% were neutral., 15% disagreed and 4% strongly disagreed. The acknowledgment of the value customers place on the ability to independently access and retrieve products or services cannot be underestimated. The statement “Investigating and resolving shoppers' problems during shopping” is recognised as important by 33% and very important by 64% of respondents. This high level of agreement emphasizes the critical role of efficient problem resolution in ensuring a positive customer experience. A previous study by Smith and Johnson (2019), highlighted the impact of prompt issue resolution on customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Figure 4:11: Marketing Practices relating to the implementation of processes



Source: Author's construct

Regarding the importance of shoppers' time, of the respondents, 35% perceive it as important and 59% very important; while 3% are neutral, as illustrated in Figure 4.11. These findings underpin the recognition of time efficiency as a crucial factor in shaping customer perceptions and satisfaction (Fornell et al., 2018). Efficient processes that value customers' time contribute to overall service quality. Categorising products based on customer convenience is perceived as important by 36% and very important by 60% of respondents. This reflects an awareness of the positive impact of organised and customer-centric product categorisation on the shopping experience. Well-organised product categorisation facilitates ease of navigation and enhances the overall shopping process.

4.6.7 People Element

Table 4.4 lists the marketing practices associated with the implementation of the people element, revealing the perceptions of respondents across various statements.

Table 4.4: Marketing practices relating to the implementation of the people element

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
<i>Recruitment of skilled employees to enhance customer services by the entity.</i>	77%	22%	1%	0%	0%	100%
<i>Direct investments in training to adapt to technological changes.</i>	64%	35%	1%	0%	0%	100%
<i>Employees' enthusiasm to respond customers' questions.</i>	24%	51%	21%	4%	0%	100%
<i>Employees' courtesy.</i>	14%	58%	23%	5%	0%	100%
<i>Providing necessary advice by personnel to customers.</i>	35%	57%	7%	1%	0%	100%

Source: Author's construct

As shown in Table 4.4 above, of the 190 respondents, 77% strongly agree and 22% agree; while 1% are neutral that recruiting skilled employees enhances customer services. The finding aligns with previous studies emphasizing the pivotal role of skilled personnel in delivering high-quality customer service. In a study by Smith et al. (2019), a competent and service-oriented workforce was identified as a key factor contributing to customer satisfaction and loyalty in the retail sector.

Additionally, Table 4.4 shows that 64% strongly agree and 35% agree with the statement that direct investments in training are needed to adapt to technological changes, affirming the significance of ongoing employee development. These results mirror the findings of Jones and Brown (2020), emphasizing the positive impact of technology-oriented training programmes on employees' ability to navigate and leverage technological advances in the retail context. However, the statement regarding employees' enthusiasm to respond to customer questions yields a more varied response, with 24% strongly agreeing, 51% agreeing and 21% neither agreeing nor disagreeing. This points to a potential area for improvement in fostering a customer-centric attitude among employees. On the aspect of employees' courtesy, 14% strongly agree and 58% agree, aligning with the emphasis on politeness and courtesy in customer interactions. Lastly, Table 4.4 shows that 35% strongly agree and 57% of the respondents agree that personnel should provide the necessary advice to customers. This is in line with research by Wong et al., (2022) which emphasises the role of frontline employees in offering guidance and expertise to customers when purchasing products.

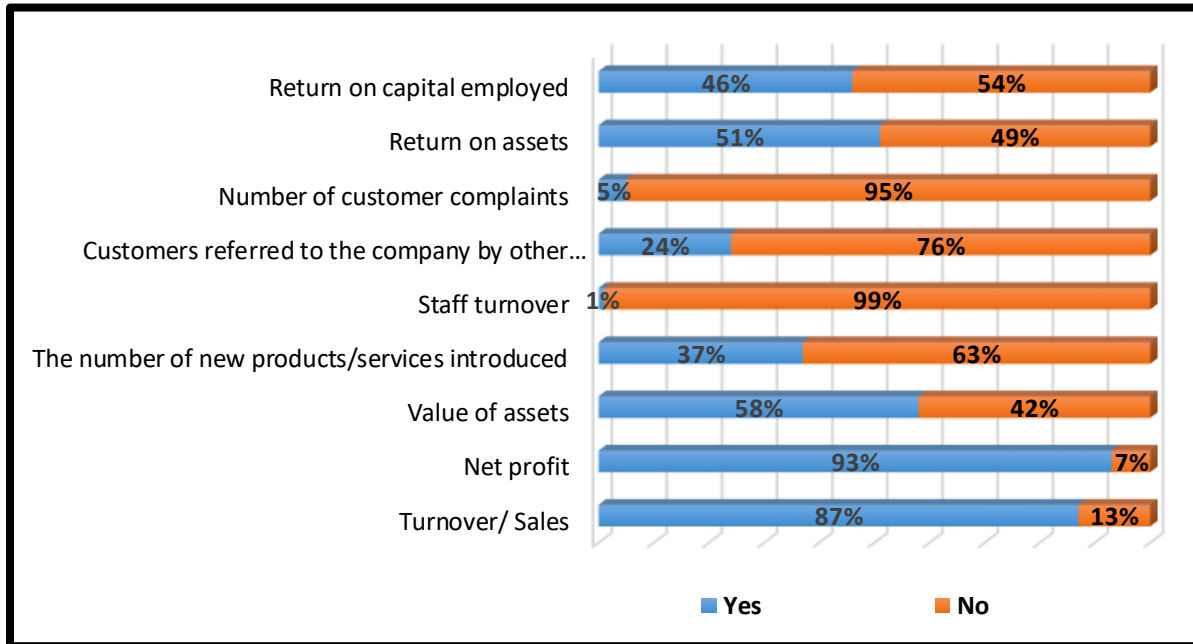
4.7 THE DIMENSIONS USED TO MEASURE THE SUCCESS OF SMALL RETAIL BUSINESSES.

Recognising the dimensions used to measure the success and survival of small retail businesses defines the very essence of their resilience and growth. This section investigates multifaceted success, moving beyond simple financial metrics, this section seeks to define and measure success through a wider lens, encompassing factors like customer satisfaction, employee engagement and brand image. By identifying the key dimensions that contribute to a small retailer's ability to weather challenges and thrive, this research can inform support programmes and best practices for long-term sustainability.

4.7.1 Dimensions Used to Evaluate the Success of Small Retail Businesses

This question seeks to find out which dimensions (financial or non-financial) are being used to evaluate the success of small retail businesses in Durban Central. Figure 4.12 shows the dimensions used by 190 respondents of the research study.

Figure 4.12: Dimensions used to evaluate the success



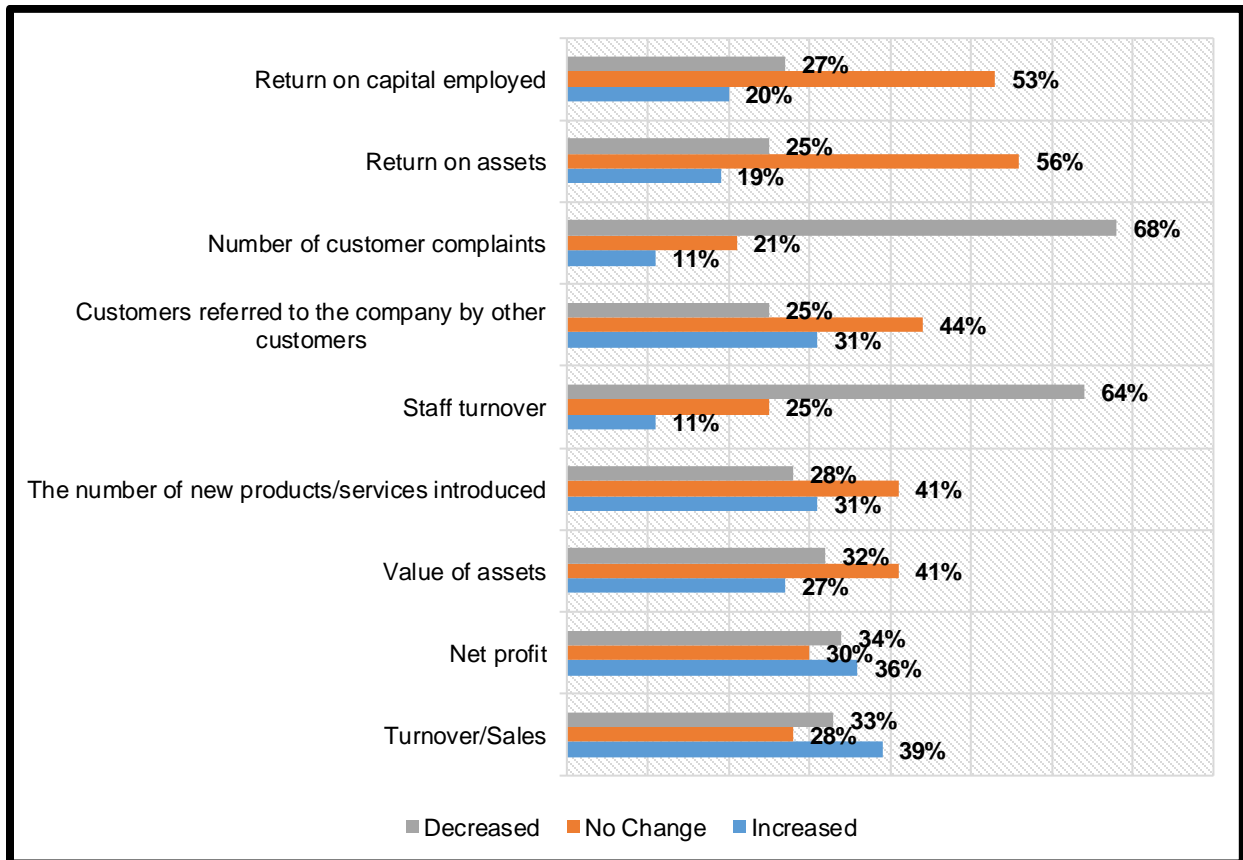
Source: Author's construct

As illustrated by Figure 4.12, it was discovered that the evaluation of small retail business success in Durban Central prioritises financial performance, with an overwhelming reliance on turnover/sales (87% of the respondents); net profit (93% of the respondents); and to a lesser extent, value of assets, which accounted for 58% of the respondents. This focus on financial metrics suggests a prioritisation of growth and profitability as key markers of success. However, some consideration of non-financial metrics is apparent. Figure 4.12 shows that 37% of the respondents consider the introduction of new products/services as one of the dimensions of success, while customer referrals account for 24%, albeit less prominently, hinting at an awareness of innovation and customer satisfaction. Notably, staff turnover (1% of the respondents) and customer complaints (5% of the respondents) are not actively used as success metrics, implying that these aspects are largely expected and not seen as contributing to exceptional performance. The evaluation system paints a picture of financial success as the primary driver, with limited recognition for other vital factors like innovation and customer loyalty, which could be further explored to create a more holistic picture of success for small businesses in Durban Central.

4.7.2 The Trend in Dimensions over a Five-Year Period

The data presented in Figure 4.13 below reveals the trends in the various dimensions over a five-year period for small retail businesses. Each dimension provides valuable insights into the dynamics and challenges faced by these businesses, offering an opportunity for a comprehensive analysis.

Figure 4.13: Trend of dimensions over a five-year period



Source: Author's construct

Figure 4.13 shows that 39% of the respondents reported an increase, 28% experienced a decrease and 33% noted no change in the dimension of turnover/sales, which reflects a mixed scenario. Studies such as those by Homburg et al. (2019) emphasized the impact of market dynamics and competitive strategies on sales performance, indicating the need for businesses to adapt to changing market conditions. The net profit dimension reveals positive trends for 36% of the respondents, a decrease for 34% and no change for 30%. This aligns with findings from Smith and Johnson (2019), emphasizing the importance of

financial management and adaptability in sustaining profitability amid evolving market landscapes. In terms of the value of assets as a metric, Figure 4.13 reveals that 27% of the respondents reported an increase, 32% observed a decrease and 41% noted no change. Asset management studies, such as those by Koller et al. (2017), have stressed the importance of strategic investments and asset optimisation to enhance overall business value.

For innovation as a non-financial metric, Figure 4.13 indicates that 31% of the respondents introduced new products/services, 41% witnessed a decrease and 28% experienced no change. These findings align with Li et al. (2019), highlighting the challenges and opportunities associated with product/service innovation in small businesses. It can also be noted from Figure 4.13 that staff turnover as a metric was stable for 25% of the respondents, increased for 11% and decreased for 64%. Studies on human resource management, such as those by Cascio (2018), emphasize the impact of organisational culture and employee engagement on staff retention, which aligns with the observed trends.

Figure 4.13, above, also shows that the dimension of customers referred by other customers shows positive trends for 31% of the respondents, a decrease for 25% and no change for 44%. The importance of word-of-mouth referrals in customer acquisition is underlined in studies by Brown et al. (2020), indicating the need for businesses to actively manage customer relationships. It can also be observed that the customer complaints dimension presents challenges, with 11% of the respondents reporting an increase, 64% observing a decrease and 21% experiencing no change. Most respondents reported a decrease of 64%, which is supported by Smith and Brown (2018), who highlighted the importance of effective complaints management in maintaining customer satisfaction and loyalty, which turn into repeat sales.

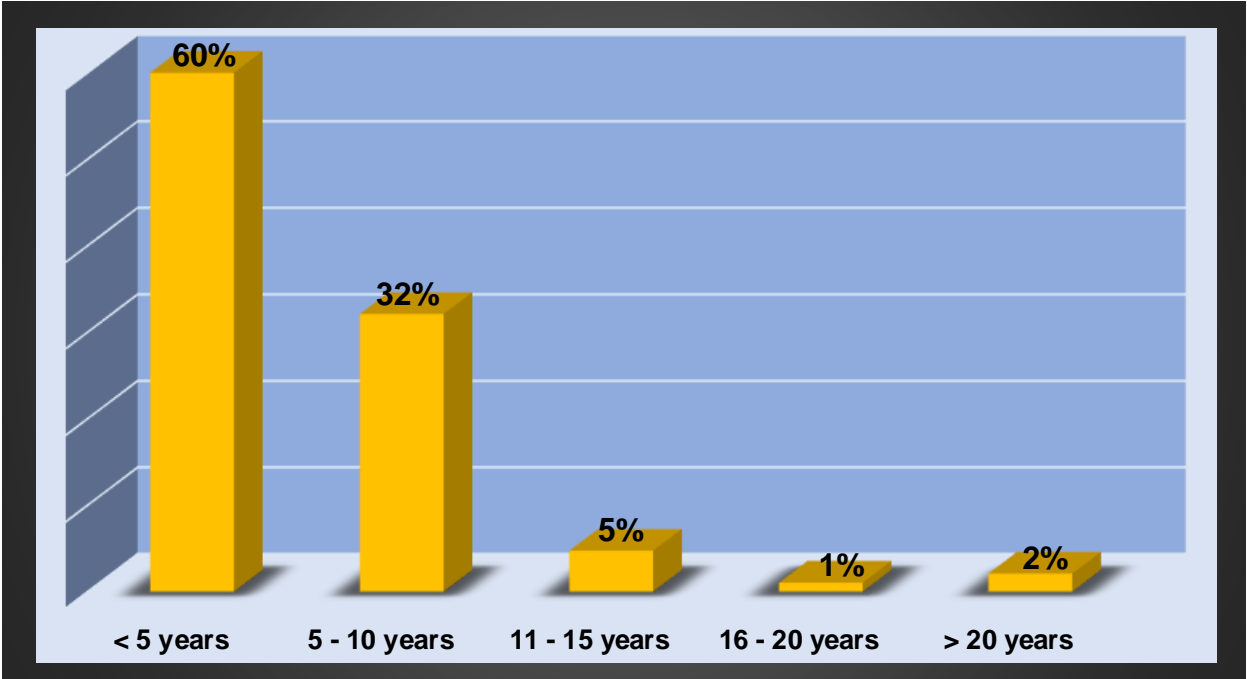
Of the respondents, 19% reported that the metric 'return on assets' increased, while 25% reported a decrease and 56% experienced no change. Furthermore, Figure 4.13 shows that the dimension 'return on capital employed' had a positive trend for 20% of the respondents, a decrease for 27% and no change for 53%. It can be noted that there is a need for small retail businesses in Durban Central to implement effective capital utilisation

and financial management. The need for effective capital utilisation and financial management is supported by studies such as that by Brigham and Houston (2017), highlighting the impact on overall business performance.

4.7.3 Number of Years Operating the Current Business

The analysis of the number of years operating the current business provides insights into the longevity and stability of small retail businesses, offering a glimpse into the distribution of businesses across different stages of maturity.

Figure 4.14: Number of years operating current business



Source: Author’s construct

It was discovered that a substantial percentage of businesses (60%) have been operating for less than five years, indicating a significant influx of new businesses into the market. This aligns with the dynamic nature of the retail sector, where new entrants constantly enter to meet evolving consumer demands and capitalize on emerging market opportunities (McGoldrick, 2015).

Figure 4.14 shows that 32% of small retail businesses have been operating for 5 - 10 years, signifying a notable portion of businesses that have established a foothold and

sustained operations for a considerable period. Studies by Keh et al. (2018) suggested that businesses within this range often navigate through the critical early stages of establishment and survival, where effective strategic decisions are crucial for long-term success.

Of the respondents, 5% indicated that they had been operating between for 11 and 15 years, as shown in Figure 4.14. This indicates a smaller, but significant, portion that has demonstrated resilience and stability over a decade. This aligns with the findings of Gnyawali and Fogel (1994), emphasizing that businesses within this range may have overcome initial challenges and established a more mature and stable operational footing.

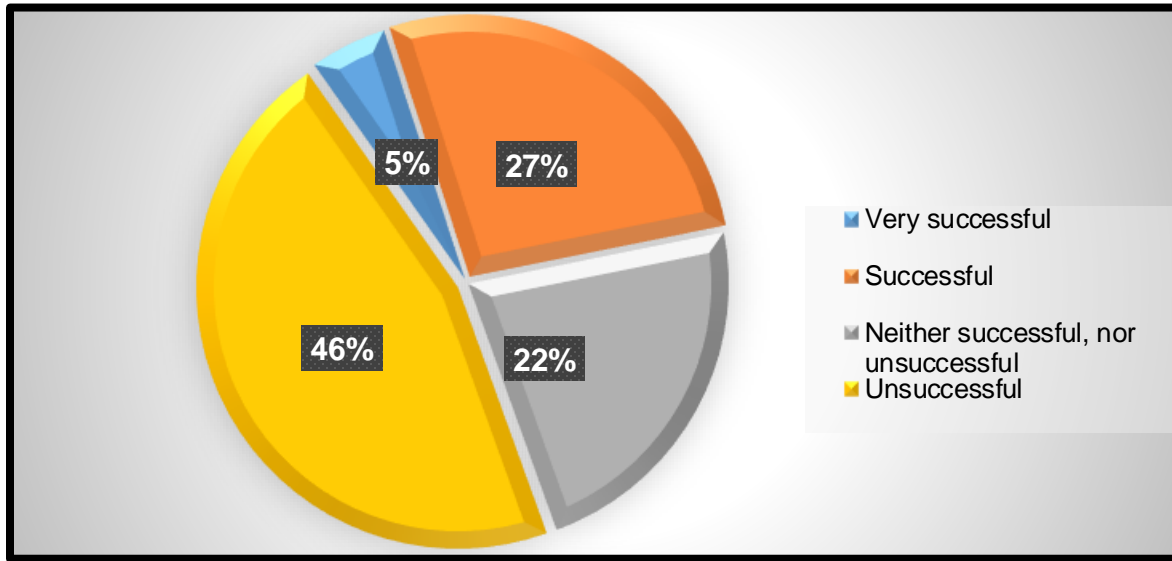
In Figure 4.14, the category of small retail businesses operating for 16 - 20 years represents 1% of the respondents, highlighting a rare but noteworthy group that has sustained operations for two decades. Research by Davidsson and Honig (2003) suggests that businesses with such longevity may have successfully adapted to market changes, indicating a capacity for resilience and strategic agility.

A small percentage, 2%, of small retail businesses have been operating for more than 20 years, as shown in Figure 4.14. This represents a select group with a long and established history. This category may include businesses that have navigated through various market cycles, have adapted to changing consumer behaviors and have demonstrated the ability to evolve and endure (Madsen et al., 2010).

4.7.4 Rating the Success of Small Businesses in Durban Central

The assessment of the success of small businesses provides valuable insights into the perceived outcomes and achievements of these enterprises, shedding light on the distribution of businesses across different levels of success.

Figure 4.15: Rating the success of small businesses.



Source: Author's construct

Of the 190 respondents, Figure 4.15 shows that the largest percentage (46%) was categorised as 'unsuccessful', indicating a substantial portion of businesses facing challenges, or not meeting their operational objectives. Studies by Wennberg et al. (2011) stressed the complexity of defining and measuring business failure, as it can be influenced by various factors, including financial difficulties, market dynamics and management issues. Of the respondents, 27% deemed their businesses to be 'successful', signifying a substantial portion that have achieved positive outcomes and met their operational goals. It can be deduced that the success of small businesses is often associated with achieving predefined objectives and sustaining profitability. It can further be noted that a modest 5% of the respondents rated their businesses as 'very successful', indicating a select group that has achieved remarkable accomplishments in their respective markets. These businesses may have excelled in various dimensions, such as financial performance, market share and customer satisfaction, aligning with the findings of studies emphasizing the multifaceted nature of business success (Wiklund et al., 2019). Lastly, a noteworthy 22% of the respondents fall into the category of 'neither successful nor unsuccessful', suggesting a segment that may be navigating through a balanced trajectory without significant highs or lows. This middle-ground position aligns with the concept of stability and adaptability, as businesses in this category may be

maintaining their operations without facing severe challenges or experiencing exponential growth.

4.8 FACTOR ANALYSIS: THE MARKETING MIX ELEMENTS THAT INFLUENCE THE SUCCESS AND SURVIVAL OF SMALL BUSINESSES IN DURBAN CENTRAL

Factor analysis is a powerful statistical technique that peels back the layers of the data to reveal underlying latent variables, also known as factors, that explain the relationships between a set of observed variables (Hair et al., 2020). To simplify the complex data, a statistical technique called Principal Component Analysis (PCA) was used in IBM's SPSS Statistics 29 software. This helped analyse how questions about marketing mix elements in small businesses were related to each other.

The Bartlett test of sphericity and the Kaiser-Meyer Olkin measure of sampling adequacy (KMO) were used to evaluate whether the sub-scales were suitable for factor analysis. The Bartlett test of sphericity observes variables that are correlated, a precondition for factor analysis. Ideally, the p-value of the test should be significant (< 0.05), indicating a statistically significant correlation (Costello & Osborne, 2020). Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin's (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy assesses the proportion of variance in the data that can be explained by common factors. Values above 0.8 are considered excellent, with 0.5 being the minimum acceptable value (Hair et al., 2020). Below is Table 4.5, showing the results of the KMO and Bartlett's tests.

Table 4.5: Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin and Bartlett's Tests

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.787
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	323.899
	df	21
	Sig.	0.000

Source: Author's construct

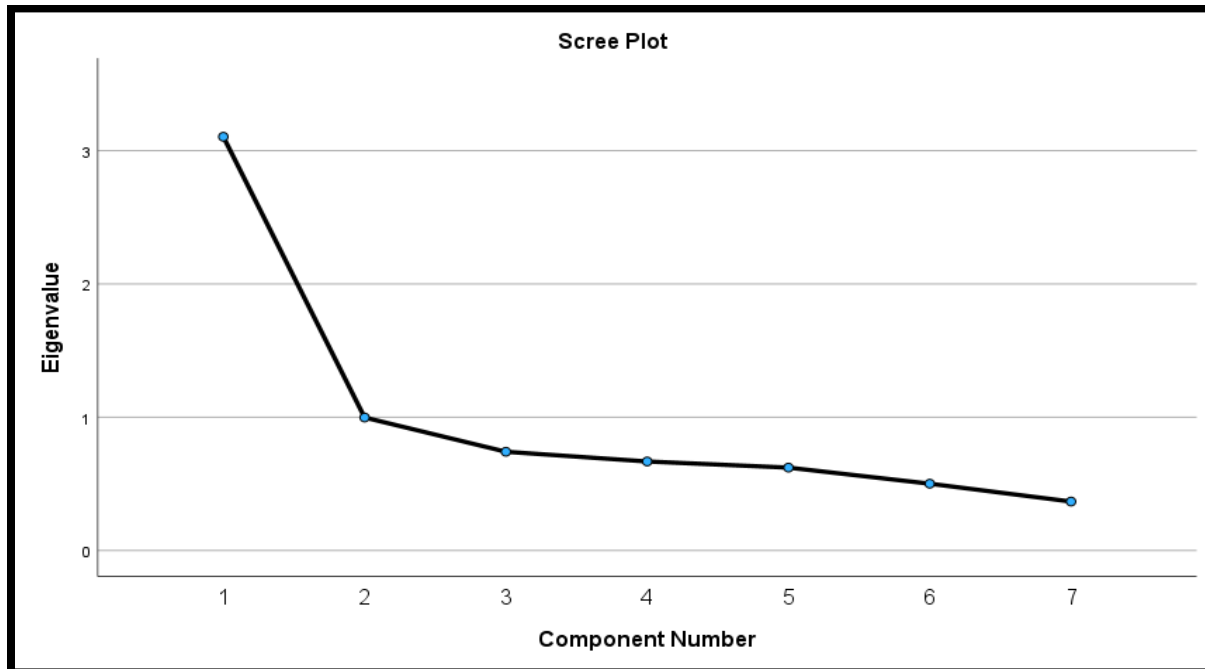
Table 4.5, above, shows that the KMO is equal to 0.787 which is approximately 0.8, which is considered to be excellent by Hair et al. (2020). Thus, the sample data was suitable for factor analysis. Bartlett's test of sphericity met the level of statistical significance, $p <$

0.001. Thus, the KMO and Bartlett's tests satisfied the statistical assumptions/conditions for factor analysis.

4.8.1 The Scree Plot

A scree plot is a visual tool used in exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and principal component analysis (PCA) to help determine the optimal number of factors or components to retain for further analysis (Costello & Osborne, 2020; Hair et al., 2020). A scree plot of the factor analysis results demonstrates the high eigenvalue of two components, as shown in Figure 4.16 below.

Figure 4.16: Scree plot portraying component number vs eigenvalue



Source: Author's construct

Figure 4.16, above, shows the unrotated factor loadings for all the factors using the principal components method of extraction. The first two factors had variances (eigenvalues) that were at least 1. The percentage of variability explained by Factor 1 was 44.350%; and for Factor 2 it was 14.252%. The scree plot further shows that the first two factors accounted for 58.602% of the total variability in the data. The remaining five factors accounted for a very small proportion of the variability and could be regarded as unimportant.

4.8.2 The Rotated Component Matrix

The rotated component matrix, also known as the factor loadings matrix, is a key output of exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and principal component analysis (PCA). It provides valuable insights into the relationships between the original variables and the extracted factors or components (Yong & Pearce, 2021). The 'rotated' in RCM refers to the potential transformation of the initial factor loadings using techniques like Varimax or Promax (Hair et al., 2022). These rotations aim to simplify the map by making factor loadings either highly correlated with one specific factor, or close to zero for others, minimizing the presence of confusing cross-loadings. As Yong and Pearce (2021) highlight, while the scree plot offers a starting point for factor selection, the rotated component matrix provides critical insights into variable-factor relationships and interpretability, making it an invaluable tool for understanding the true structure of the data. Table 4.6, below, shows the RCM with the transformed initial factor loadings.

Table 4.6: Rotated Component Rotated Component Matrix^a

Rotated Component Matrix ^a				
	Component			
	1		2	
Promotion			0.871	
Product	0.741			
Price			0.784	
Place	0.385		0.595	
Physical Evidence	0.695			
Processes	0.773			
People	0.575		0.308	
<i>Extraction</i>	<i>Method:</i>	<i>Principal</i>	<i>Component</i>	<i>Analysis.</i>
<i>Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.^a</i>				

Source: Author's construct

With reference to Table 4.6 above plus the scree plot explained earlier, Component 1 comprises product and processes, while Component 2 comprises promotion and price.

Together, product, processes, promotion and price explain 58.602% of the variation in the success of small businesses. The remaining 41.398% variation is because of other factors.

The dual loading of 'people' on both factors suggests its multifaceted nature, impacting both traditional marketing activities and customer experiences. The moderate loading of 'place' on both factors indicates its potential role as a bridge between marketing mix elements and customer experience dimensions. A study by Bansal and Gupta (2021) found that, in the South African retail environment, both traditional marketing mix elements and store atmospherics (related to place and physical evidence factors) play a significant role in influencing customer purchase intentions. Sawe et al. (2021) investigated the marketing strategies of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in South Africa and found that, while cost management and traditional marketing tactics were important, factors like customer service and building relationships (aligned with the 'people' factor) were also emphasized.

4.9 INFERENCE STATISTICS

Inferential statistics, a pivotal branch of statistical analysis, serve a critical role in deriving broader insights and conclusions from a sample to make inferences about a larger population (Wegner, 2016). This methodological approach is indispensable in various fields and is characterised by its applications in hypothesis testing, prediction, decision-making, risk assessment and resource optimisation. Field (2018) highlighted the importance of hypothesis testing in discovering statistical relationships and making informed decisions in research.

After narrowing down the seven marketing mix elements to five, based on the strong loadings on the factor analysis rotated matrix component, as shown in Table 4.6 above, further statistical analysis was carried out using Pearson's chi-square test. The test was carried out to establish the relationships between marketing mix elements and success of small retail businesses in Durban Central.

4.9.1 THE LINK BETWEEN MARKETING MIX ELEMENTS AND THE SUCCESS OF SMALL RETAIL BUSINESSES IN DURBAN CENTRAL

Pearson's chi-square test is a statistical test that assesses the relationship between categorical variables. It is primarily used to determine whether observed differences between sets of categorical data are due to chance or if there's a significant association between them. According to Wegner (2016), the chi-square test assumes that the categorical variables in the population are independent, with no relationship between them. The p-value quantifies the probability of observing a test statistic as extreme or more extreme than the one obtained from the sample data, assuming the null hypothesis holds true. In essence, a p-value below 5% (0.05) signifies that the observed association between a marketing mix element and the success of small business is unlikely to be due to chance. Conversely, a p-value exceeding 5% suggests insufficient statistical evidence to assume a relationship between the marketing mix elements and success. The specific p-values associated with individual marketing mix elements are presented in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7: Marketing mix elements versus success

	Promotion	Product	Price	Physical Evidence	Processes
Pearson Chi-Square	27.544	10.019	40.717	22.022	20.581
Degrees of freedom	9	9	6	9	9
P-value	0.001	0.349	0.000	0.009	0.015

Source: Author's construct

4.9.1.1 The link between promotion and the success of small retail businesses in Durban Central

In testing the null hypothesis that there is no association between promotion and success, against the alternative of having an association between promotion and success, Table 4.7 above shows that promotion had the highest chi-square value (27.544) and a highly significant p-value (0.001). It can be concluded that there is an association between

promotion and success. Promotion emerges as a crucial driver of success. This finding resonates with Kotler et al. (2021), who underscored the power of effective communication in attracting customers and building brand awareness. In Durban Central, where competition is fierce, targeted promotions, engaging social media campaigns and personalised customer interactions, can significantly sway foot traffic and boost sales. This aligns with studies like that of Chaniago and Ariyani (2023), which found that a well-integrated marketing communication approach significantly enhances customer loyalty and brand equity in the retail sector. Specific tactics like targeted social media campaigns, local partnerships and engaging in loyalty programmes can be highly effective in Durban Central's vibrant retail landscape.

4.9.1.2 The link between price and the success of small retail businesses in Durban Central

To establish the link between price and success, a null hypothesis that there is no association between price and success, against the alternative of there being an association between price and success, was used. As illustrated in Table 4.7, price shows a chi-square value of 40.71 and significant p-value (0.000). It can be concluded there is enough sample evidence to reject the null hypothesis at the 5% significance level in favour of the alternative hypothesis. The findings therefore show that there is an association between price and success of small retail businesses in Durban Central. This suggests that Durban Central's retail landscape is price-sensitive, with customers seeking competitive offerings. However, undercutting rivals solely on price can be a dangerous game, leading to profit erosion. Instead, small retail businesses should focus on value-based pricing strategies, emphasizing product quality, customer service, or unique experiences to justify slightly higher prices (Jutila, 2023).

4.9.1.3 The link between processes and the success of small retail businesses in Durban Central

In order to establish the relationship between processes and the success of small retail businesses, a null hypothesis that there is no association between processes and success, against an alternative of there being an association between processes and

success were used. Results in Table 4.7 show a chi-square statistic of 20.581 and a significant p-value of 0.015 between processes and success. This finding signals a moderately positive relationship between efficient business processes and the success of small retail businesses. These range from smooth checkout experiences to efficient inventory management and delivery systems. A study by Bharadiya (2023) stressed the significance of streamlining operations and providing excellent customer service to enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty.

4.9.1.4 The link between product and the success of small retail businesses in Durban Central

As shown in Table 4.7, with a p-value of 0.349 and a lower chi-square statistic of 10.019, the observed association between product and success is not statistically significant. It can be concluded that the null hypothesis (there is no association between product and the success of small retail businesses) cannot be rejected. This finding implies that the success of small retail businesses in Durban Central may not be strongly influenced by the specific attributes or features of the products they offer. While offering high-quality, relevant products is essential, other factors like competitive pricing, effective promotion and excellent customer service may play a more significant role in this context. Studies like that of Naini et al. (2022) highlighted that product assortment and service quality often have a stronger impact on customer satisfaction and loyalty than the product alone.

4.9.1.5 The link between physical evidence and the success of small retail businesses in Durban Central

Table 4.7 shows that the physical evidence element had a chi-square value of 22.022 and p-value of 0.009. This finding is statistically significant, so the null hypothesis is rejected in favour of the alternative hypothesis. It can be concluded that there is a statistically significant relationship between store ambiance and business success. This implies that creating a positive atmosphere and physical experience for customers can positively impact performance. A clean, inviting and well-organised store environment can contribute to a positive customer experience, while a cluttered and outdated store can detract from it. Lee (2020) pointed out the subtle influence of physical evidence on

customer satisfaction, particularly in relation to cleanliness, product display and overall atmosphere.

4.9.2 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE DIMENSIONS OF SUCCESS AND THE SUCCESS OF SMALL RETAIL BUSINESSES

Table 4.8 provides the Pearson correlation coefficients and associated p-values for the relationship between different dimensions of success (turnover/sales; net profit; value of assets; new products/services introduced; staff turnover; customers referred; number of customer complaints; return on assets; return on capital employed) and the overall success of small retail businesses in Durban Central.

Table 4.8: Dimensions of measuring success and associated correlation and p-values

Correlations											
Dimensions of Measuring Success		Turnover/ Sales	Net profit	Value of assets	New products/services introduced	Staff turnover	Customers referred to the company	Number of customer complaints	Return on assets	Return on capital employed	Success
Success	Pearson Correlation	.620**	.672**	.654**	.477**	-0.045	.684**	-0.042	.633**	.672**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.539	0.000	0.562	0.000	0.000	
	N	190	190	190	190	190	190	190	190	190	190

Source: Author's construct

Table 4.8 shows that there is a strong and statistically significant correlation (0.620, p-value < 0.001) between turnover/sales and success, affirming the fundamental principle that higher sales contribute to increased profitability and overall growth. This aligns with the common understanding that higher turnover is often associated with a successful business model (Wen et al., 2020). Net profit exhibits an even stronger significant correlation (0.672, p-value < 0.001), stressing the necessity of converting sales into profit for sustained success. The value of assets (0.654, p-value < 0.001) demonstrates a robust correlation, underpinning the importance of efficient asset management for

business success. Higher asset values often contribute to financial stability and business success (Valaskova, Kliestik & Gajdosikova, 2021).

The introduction of new products/services exhibits a moderate, yet statistically significant, correlation (0.477, p-value < 0.001), as illustrated in Figure 4.8. The results indicate the positive impact of innovation in attracting customers and stimulating growth. Innovation and diversification can contribute to business growth (Hernita et al., 2021). Interestingly, staff turnover (-0.045, p-value = 0.539) and the number of customer complaints (-0.042, p-value = 0.562) show weak and non-significant correlations, suggesting that, within this sample, these factors may not directly impact success, although their indirect consequences for business stability and reputation should not be overlooked.

Furthermore, Table 4.8 shows a strong and statistically significant correlation between customers referred to the enterprise (0.684, p-value < 0.001) and success, highlighting the important role of positive word-of-mouth in driving business success. Lastly, both return on assets (0.633, p-value < 0.001) and return on capital employed (0.672, p-value < 0.001) show strong correlations, emphasizing the importance of strategic financial management and prudent investment decisions for overall success in the competitive retail landscape. Maximising returns on invested capital is a strategic aspect of financial success in retail (Claro et al., 2021).

4.10 CONCLUSION

This data analysis and presentation chapter facilitates an understanding of the underlying patterns, trends and insights derived from the collected data. Through a meticulous examination of the data, the researcher was able to uncover valuable information that not only addresses the research questions, but also contributes to a deeper comprehension of small retail businesses. The process of data analysis involved the application of various statistical methods, visualisation techniques and interpretative tools. These methodologies enabled the researcher to discern meaningful correlations and make connections between different marketing mix elements. The presentation of the findings, supported by clear graphics, clearly conveys the essence of the data. It is crucial to note that the data analysis has not only confirmed certain hypotheses, but has also revealed

unexpected findings: Product, place and people were all found to have an insignificant association with the success of small retail businesses. This prompts further exploration and discussion.

The next and final chapter presents a comprehensive overview of the main findings, drawing meaningful conclusions and offering actionable recommendations.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study was to determine the significant marketing mix elements influencing small retail businesses' success in Durban Central. Chapter 4 discussed the empirical findings derived from this study. Various statistical methods, including the correlation matrix and Pearson's chi-square test were employed to assess the interrelationships among marketing mix variables and success of small retail businesses. This chapter provides the conclusions drawn from both the empirical evidence and the literature. Moreover, recommendations are proffered to benefit small retail business owner/managers and upcoming entrepreneurs, as well as governmental and other stakeholders. The chapter commences by summarising the literature review in Chapter 2 and then evaluates the attainment of the research objectives. Thereafter, conclusions are drawn by comparing the observed findings with the predefined objectives of the study. Thereafter, recommendations, study limitations and directions for future research will be provided, based on the findings.

5.2 SUMMARY OF THE LITERATURE REVIEW

Small businesses in South Africa have a substantial impact on the economy in a variety of ways, the most important of which is the significant role they play in the creation of employment opportunities. These small businesses play a vital role in a nation burdened by elevated unemployment rates by incorporating individuals laid off from both the public and private sectors, owing to their labour-intensive characteristics. Statistics South Africa (2019) underlines small businesses' significant contribution to poverty alleviation, the expansion of employment opportunities to underserved areas, the empowerment of women and the improvement of domestic capital investment. Small retail businesses are emerging as significant innovators, supporting innovation and technological advances. These enterprises not only contribute significantly to technological advances, but also to the enhancement of product quality, the lowering of prices and the introduction of new

products and services. Small businesses that are successful make important contributions to economic growth and development, in addition to providing employment and fostering innovation. They serve as connectors between small and large enterprises, encouraging entrepreneurship, generating income, using the talents of people resources and establishing an economic structure that can maintain itself. In addition, small businesses provide a contribution to the alleviation of poverty by offering persons who are unemployed in the formal sector the opportunity to pursue economic prospects.

Financial metrics such as profitability and non-financial characteristics such as customer satisfaction and work-life balance are examples of the types of success that may be measured in small retail businesses. Stam and van de Ven (2021) emphasized economic and financial measurements, while others argue that survival, maintaining the enterprise and achieving personal goals are vital for success. It is possible that the idea that financial stability is the only indicator of success may cause one to neglect non-financial metrics such as customer satisfaction and personal growth, which are essential for the evaluation of small businesses. A holistic approach that considers metrics/dimensions such as customer retention, which contributes to market share and profitability, is advocated for by the research, which suggests that there is an interrelationship between financial and non-financial components. For the purpose of conducting a comprehensive evaluation of the success of small retail businesses, this study stands out since it uses both financial and non-financial dimensions.

A marketing mix strategy that is effective is a critical factor in determining the success and continued existence of small businesses. Ritz, Wolf and McQuitty (2019) made the observation that the success of small firms is favourable if the owners/managers of small businesses are aware of the marketing mix practices available to them. Promotion, price, distribution, as well as product standardisation and adaption, have an impact on sales, customers and the financial performance of SMEs, according to the findings of a study conducted by Daniel (2018) on the effects of marketing tactics on organisational performance. According to the findings of a study conducted by Gituma (2017), product quality has a positive influence on sales performance; brand awareness has an influence on the performance of an organisation; packaging is used to describe the product; brand

image and loyalty have an influence on the profitability of an enterprise; and pricing strategy has an effect on increasing sales volume. Additionally, the design of the store and the utilisation of appealing stimuli like music have a beneficial impact on the amount of sales and purchases made by customers. Furthermore, the geographic location of the store has a substantial impact on the profitability of the business, as well as on advertising and direct marketing and it also contributes to an increase in sales volume. Small businesses that rely heavily on experiential knowledge to advance the marketing of their products and services and use word-of-mouth communication and networking as important promotion tools have close relationship with their target market.

5.3 SUMMARY OF THE MAJOR FINDINGS BASED ON THE RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

To address the research problem, the study defined a set of objectives. A quantitative methodology was then employed to achieve these objectives. The following summarises the findings in relation to the study's objectives.

5.3.1 Objective 1: Explore the factors that influence the level of importance placed on each marketing mix strategy by small retail businesses

One of the objectives was to explore the factors that influence the level of importance placed on each marketing mix strategy by small retail businesses. Based on descriptive statistics, the survey revealed a nuanced understanding of the critical elements influencing marketing strategy decisions for small retail businesses in Durban Central. Marketing skills emerge as a pivotal factor, emphasizing the need for expertise in crafting and executing effective promotional campaigns and customer engagement strategies. Managerial skills followed closely, indicating the recognition of managerial acumen required to align marketing efforts with broader business objectives. Financial resources also ranked high, highlighting the pivotal role of adequate financial backing in sustaining marketing initiatives. Branding was viewed as crucial, with a recognition of its impact on consumer perceptions and loyalty. The importance of sectorial competition suggests an awareness of industry dynamics, while the emphasis on access to the market indicates the recognition of its role in driving sales and market presence. Factors like organisational

culture, networking, legislation and marketing research are also acknowledged to a lesser degree, reflecting a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted considerations shaping marketing strategies for small retail businesses. Based on the gathered data, the study infers that this objective has been achieved.

5.3.2 Objective 2: Determine the dimensions used to measure the success and survival of small retail businesses

To determine the dimensions used to measure the success of small retail businesses, descriptive statistics and a correlation matrix were employed to test the strength of the dimensions in relation to success. The primary finding indicated that small retail businesses in Durban Central predominantly rely on financial metrics such as turnover, net profit and asset value to gauge success, with a gradual increase in the incorporation of non-financial metrics like innovation and customer satisfaction. Financial success appears to be the dominant metric, overshadowing other crucial factors such as innovation and customer loyalty. Using a correlation matrix, the study revealed significant, positive associations between various business metrics and success, with higher turnover/sales, net profit and value of assets showing strong correlations. Additionally, the introduction of new products/services, customer referrals and return on assets and capital employed also exhibit positive correlations, highlighting the comprehensive nature of success metrics in the competitive retail landscape. The study's findings provide evidence for the successful attainment of this specific objective.

5.3.3 Objective 3: Ascertain the relationship between the marketing mix elements and success and survival of small retail businesses

In pursuit of this objective, factor analysis, Pearson's chi-square test and a correlation matrix were employed to ascertain the relationships and associations between marketing mix elements and success. The research findings revealed several noteworthy associations in the context of small retail businesses in Durban Central. Notably, there was a strong correlation between price and success, indicating a price-sensitive retail landscape. However, the study cautioned against relying solely on undercutting rivals, emphasizing the importance of value-based pricing strategies that highlight product

quality, customer service, or unique experiences. Additionally, the research emphasised the pivotal role of promotion in driving success, aligning with established views on effective communication to attract customers and build brand awareness. The moderately positive relationship between efficient business processes and success underlined the significance of streamlined operations (processes). Surprisingly, the study suggested that the specific attributes of products may have a less pronounced impact on success, compared to factors like competitive pricing, effective promotion and exceptional customer service. Lastly, the statistically significant relationship between store ambiance and business success stressed the importance of creating a positive physical experience for customers to positively influence performance. Based on these findings, the study provides strong support for the fulfillment of this objective.

5.3.4 Objective 4: Design a conceptual framework that examines the influence of marketing mix elements on the success of small retail businesses.

To achieve this objective, a conceptual framework (Figure 2.6) was designed, based on the 7Ps: product; price; promotion; place; people; process; and physical evidence (the independent variables). The internal, market and external environments were the mediators and the success of small retail businesses the dependent variable. By strategically managing the 7Ps within the context of the three environments, small businesses can optimise their offerings (products and services), enhance customer engagement and achieve sustainable growth. From the empirical literature and findings, it was also noted that the success of small retail businesses must be measured using both financial and non-financial metrics. This framework provides a nuanced understanding of the interconnected elements influencing small business decisions and success, offering a roadmap for navigating the complexities of the market. This objective was demonstrably met through the study's results.

5.3.5 Other notable findings from the study

- The industry distribution of small retail businesses in Durban Central revealed a diverse entrepreneurial landscape, featuring retailing, construction and commercial services as prominent sectors. This finding has shown the need for sector-specific

strategies and support mechanisms to address the varied opportunities and challenges faced by entrepreneurs across different industries.

- Based on the data findings, the overall gender distribution in small retail businesses in Durban Central leaned towards male representation; however, the presence of female entrepreneurs signifies ongoing efforts to support women in entrepreneurship.
- The age distribution of small retail business owner/managers highlighted the diversity of leadership within the entrepreneurial landscape. While mid-career individuals dominated, the presence of entrepreneurs across different age categories showcases the varied motivations, experiences and contributions in small business ownership in Durban Central.
- From the findings, it was noted that the distribution of businesses across different operating periods reflected the dynamic and diverse nature of small retail businesses. Most small retail businesses in Durban Central were relatively new, indicating a continual influx of entrepreneurial activity. However, a smaller, yet significant, proportion demonstrated stability and longevity over the years.
- A significant portion of small retail businesses in Durban Central faced challenges, while others displayed consistent growth. This calls for an in-depth exploration of the factors influencing success and the challenges within the region's small retail sector, paving the way for targeted interventions and support.

5.4 CONCLUSION

The study explored the dynamics of small retail businesses in Durban Central, focusing on factors influencing marketing strategy decisions, success dimensions and the relationship between marketing mix elements and small business success. The study was aimed at providing valuable insights into the local entrepreneurial landscape. The respondents demonstrated a nuanced understanding of the factors guiding marketing strategy decisions. Marketing skills were identified as pivotal, managerial skills closely followed and financial resources were deemed significant, emphasizing the pivotal role of adequate financial backing. Other considerations like branding, sectorial competition and access to the market showed a comprehensive understanding of the factors shaping marketing strategies.

In terms of success dimensions, the study found a predominant reliance on financial metrics, overshadowing other factors like innovation and customer loyalty. Positive associations were established between various business metrics and success, including higher turnover/sales, net profit and the value of assets. The incorporation of non-financial metrics like innovation and customer satisfaction highlighted the comprehensive nature of success metrics. Exploring the relationship between marketing mix elements and small business success revealed notable relationships. The retail landscape in Durban Central was identified as price-sensitive, emphasizing the importance of adopting value-based pricing strategies. Promotion emerged as a pivotal driver of success, aligning with established views on effective communication. The study also suggested that specific product attributes may have a less pronounced impact on success compared to factors like competitive pricing, effective promotion and exceptional customer service.

The study proposed a conceptual framework integrating marketing mix and small retail businesses' success, centered on the 7Ps and the internal, market and external environments. This framework offers an understanding of the interconnected elements influencing business decisions and success, providing a roadmap for navigating market complexities.

The study provided additional insights into the industry distribution of small businesses, revealing a diverse entrepreneurial landscape dominated by sectors such as retailing, construction and commercial services. The overall gender distribution leaned towards males, yet the presence of female entrepreneurs highlighted ongoing efforts to support gender inclusivity in entrepreneurship. The age distribution indicated the diversity of leadership within the entrepreneurial landscape, with mid-career individuals dominating. The number of years the businesses had been operating reflected their dynamic and diverse nature, with most small businesses being relatively new, signifying a continual influx of entrepreneurial activity, while a smaller yet significant proportion demonstrated stability and longevity over the years.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

Given the pivotal role of marketing skills in small retail businesses, it is recommended that entrepreneurs invest in continual training and development programmes to enhance their marketing expertise. This could involve workshops, courses, or collaborations with marketing professionals to stay abreast of evolving trends and strategies. Additionally, fostering a culture of creativity and innovation within the small businesses can contribute to the development of effective promotional campaigns and customer engagement strategies.

Small retail businesses should explore a variety of alternative sources of financial support since financial resources significantly influence marketing strategy decisions. This could involve seeking partnerships with investors, applying for grants or loans and implementing stringent financial management practices to optimise resource allocation. Establishing a robust financial foundation will enable small businesses to execute marketing initiatives more effectively, ensuring sustainability and growth.

Acknowledging the predominant reliance on financial metrics for measuring success, small retail businesses are encouraged to broaden their success metrics to include non-financial indicators. To capture the complex nature of success, entrepreneurs should regularly assess and track innovation initiatives and customer satisfaction levels. Implementing feedback mechanisms, conducting surveys and fostering a culture of innovation within the organisation can contribute to a more comprehensive evaluation of success beyond traditional financial metrics.

In light of the price-sensitive retail landscape identified in Durban Central, businesses are advised to adopt value-based pricing strategies. Rather than engaging in a price war that may erode profits, small businesses should focus on communicating and enhancing the unique value proposition of their products or services. Emphasizing quality, exceptional customer service and distinctive experiences, can justify slightly higher prices, contributing to sustained success.

Building on the proposed conceptual framework, small retail businesses should prioritise their strategic management of the 7Ps within the context of the internal, market and

external environments. This involves regularly reviewing and adapting marketing strategies based on changes in these environments. By aligning their offerings with customer needs, optimising internal processes and staying attuned to market dynamics, small businesses can enhance their resilience and navigate complexities for sustainable growth. Additionally, integrating non-financial success metrics into routine assessments will provide a more holistic view of small business performance.

Recognising the diversity in industry distribution, small businesses operating in sectors dominated by retailing, construction and commercial services should collaborate with industry-specific associations and networks. Engaging with these communities can provide opportunities for shared resources, collective problem-solving and access to sector-specific insights. Additionally, entrepreneurs should actively participate in sector-related events and forums to stay informed about industry trends and to leverage potential collaborations.

To address gender inclusivity in entrepreneurship, efforts should be intensified to support and empower female entrepreneurs. This could involve creating mentorship programmes and offering training and capacity-building initiatives tailored to the needs of women in business, while fostering a supportive environment that recognises and celebrates female entrepreneurship. Collaborations with women-focused business organisations and networks can also provide valuable support and resources.

In terms of the diverse age distribution, small businesses should implement strategies that cater to the varied motivations and experiences of individuals of different ages. This could involve designing flexible work arrangements; creating mentorship programmes that facilitate knowledge transfer between generations; and promoting a culture of inclusivity that values the contributions of individuals at various career stages.

For small businesses that have been operating across different number of years, there is need for tailored interventions to address the specific challenges and opportunities associated with both new ventures and established businesses. Entrepreneurial support programmes, networking events and knowledge-sharing platforms can be designed to accommodate the unique needs of these small businesses at different stages of their

lifecycle. This targeted approach will contribute to the overall sustainability and growth of small retail businesses in Durban Central.

5.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study focused on small retail businesses in Durban Central, KwaZulu-Natal and the findings may not be entirely representative of small retail businesses in other locations or regions. As a result, the generalisability of the study's conclusions to a broader context may be limited and caution should be exercised when applying the results to different geographical areas.

The study relies heavily on self-reported data obtained through surveys, which introduces the potential for response bias. Participants may provide socially desirable responses or inaccurately recall information, leading to skewed results. Additionally, the subjective nature of perceptions of success might vary among respondents, influencing the accuracy and reliability of the reported data.

The research primarily focused on the internal aspects of small retail businesses, such as marketing mix elements, without delving extensively into external factors that could influence success.

5.7 DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The study was focused on determining the significant marketing mix elements influencing small retail businesses' success in Durban Central, KwaZulu-Natal. Subsequent studies might explore the following areas in their research:

- Building upon this work, a similar study can be conducted on small retail businesses in particular industries within the eThekweni municipal region, such as manufacturing, tourism, engineering, agriculture and construction.
- The study's narrow focus on internal factors limits the comprehensiveness of the findings and suggests a need for future research to explore the interplay between the internal and external determinants of success.

- Further research could explore the impact of digital marketing and e-commerce on small retail businesses' success, such as a case study of Durban's retail landscape.
- It would be interesting to conduct a comparative study in regional variations on marketing mix effectiveness to understand the potential for generalizability.
- An interesting area for future investigation would be identifying the replicable best practices of thriving small retail businesses in Durban Central.
- An avenue for future research could involve exploring the role of emerging technologies in small retail businesses.
- It would be interesting to see a future study assessing the long-term impact of marketing mix elements on small retail businesses in Durban.

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ANNEXURES

ANNEXURE A: LETTER OF INFORMATION



LETTER OF INFORMATION

Title of the Research Study: Determining the significant marketing mix elements influencing small retail businesses' success in Durban central.

Principal Investigator/s/researcher: Norman Mahohoma, Bcom Honours Degree in Business Management.

Co-Investigator/s/supervisor/s: Professor A.T. Agbenyegah, PhD, MBA, PDG Tax Unisa PGD Management.

Brief Introduction and Purpose of the Study: Small businesses are recognised as the prime vehicle for economic development in both developed and developing countries. In South Africa, it is estimated that small businesses are responsible for approximately 56% of private sector employment and contribute approximately 36% to the gross domestic product of the country. Given the important socio-economic role played by small businesses, it is crucial that they succeed. However, the failure rate of small businesses in South Africa is high. Against this background, the purpose of this study is to determine the significant marketing mix elements influencing small retail businesses' success in Durban central, Kwa-Zulu Natal. However, due to time and cost constraints, the study will be confined to small businesses in the Durban Central, Kwa-Zulu Natal.

Greeting: Good day.

Introduce yourself to the participant: I am currently undertaking a Master in Management Sciences (Business Administration) in the Department of Entrepreneurial Studies and Management at Durban University of Technology. The study seeks to determine the significant marketing mix elements influencing small retail businesses' success in Durban central, KwaZulu-Natal Province.

Invitation to the potential participant: I would like to invite you to participate in the research about small business that you are currently operating. The study seeks to determine the significant marketing mix elements influencing small retail businesses' success in Durban central, KwaZulu-Natal Province. Your

assistance would be greatly appreciated. The research would help in giving entrepreneurs insights on the application of marketing mix as a business strategy towards the success and survival of small business.

What is Research?

Research is defined as a systematic search for generalized new knowledge. Research is a way of gathering of information from different sources interpreted systematically with a clear purpose of finding new information. The data should be collected systematically and interpreted/analyzed accordingly and there should be a clear purpose to the research. Thus, research can be defined as a systematized way of uncovering information to increase one's knowledge. Please make sure you understand the questions so that the results of the study will be a reflection of the small businesses. If there is anything you do not understand, feel free to contact me for clarity and answer all questions pertaining to the research to the best of your knowledge.

Outline of the Procedures: The concept of entrepreneurship is associated with small businesses development. The dynamic role of small businesses in motivating economic activity in poverty alleviation and in the raising of living standards. A poorly planned and executed marketing effort renders the business unable to provide its market with quality products, appropriate pricing, appropriate promotional efforts and lack of proper placement and location. Given this challenge, it is worth to conduct a study to determine the significant marketing mix elements influencing small retail businesses' success in Durban central, Kwa-Zulu Natal. The sample participants that will be included in this study will be owner-managers of any race who are operating small businesses who are employing between one to fifty employees in Durban Central, Kwa-Zulu Natal, South Africa. Any other employees who are not owner-managers of small businesses and the small businesses that are outside Durban Central will be excluded from this study. A total of 217 small business owner-managers will form a sample. You are kindly asked to answer the questionnaire which is the primary data collection instrument. The questionnaire will take approximately 20 minutes to complete. Participation is voluntary and all information collected will be treated as confidential.

Risks or Discomforts to the Participant: You will not be required to engage in any activities or express statements that could lead to discomfort, compromise your well-being, lower your self-esteem, or result in embarrassment or regret. Anticipated adverse reactions are not expected during the course of this research. Your comfort and well-being are of utmost importance and measures have been taken to ensure a respectful and positive research experience.

Explain to the participant the reasons he/she may be withdraw from the Study: Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You can choose to withdraw from the study at any time, for any reason. There will be no penalty for withdrawing from the study.

Benefits: The findings of the study have the potential to benefit small retail businesses in Durban Central, Kwa-Zulu Natal and South Africa at large by determining the significant marketing mix elements influencing

small retail businesses success in Durban central. It is envisaged that the research results will be presented at a local or international conference and the findings will be published in an accredited journal.

Remuneration: You will not receive any monetary or any other types of remuneration for participating in this research study. However, your participation is valuable to the researcher and will help the researcher to learn more about the research topic.

Costs of the Study: Your participation in this study will not cost you anything. You will not be charged any fees and you will not be required to purchase any materials.

Confidentiality: The data collection process will not involve access to your confidential personal data. You will be assured of anonymity and confidentiality of your responses. The researcher will keep your information confidential and will not share it with anyone without your consent/approval. To enhance privacy and anonymity, your information will be kept by using secure data storage methods, such as password-protected computers and encrypted files. The completed questionnaires, which do not contain your name or your enterprise, will be stored for a period of five years and will, thereafter, be destroyed.

Results: Prior to completing this study, upon your request, the findings of the study will be made available to you once they have been finalised. The researcher will conduct a series of workshops to discuss findings of the study with DDCI that represent small businesses in the eThekweni region.

Research-related Injury: Your participation in this study will not involve any physical activities or tasks. You will not be asked to perform any actions that could put you at risk of injury. The study involves completing a questionnaire, which will ask you questions about your experiences and opinions. You can complete the questionnaire at your own convenience and in a comfortable setting.

Storage of all electronic and hard copies including tape recordings: The collected data will only be used for educational purposes and is confidential and rest assured that third parties are not in possession of it. Efforts will be made to protect the anonymity and confidentiality of respondents. Information used in the research will be disposed after the study. Furthermore, you will not be required to write your names and addresses or cell numbers of your organisations, thereby ensuring the anonymity of your responses. To enhance privacy and anonymity, your information will be kept by using secure data storage methods, such as password-protected computers and encrypted files. The completed questionnaires, which do not contain your name or your enterprise, will be stored for a period of five years and will, thereafter, be destroyed.

Persons to contact in the Event of Any Problems or Queries: Please contact the researcher (0623908930), the supervisor (0723139423) or the DUT-Institutional Research Ethics Administrator on 031 373 2375. Complaints can be reported to the Acting Director: Research and Postgraduate Support on researchdirector@dut.ac.za

ANNEXURE B: LETTER OF INFORMED CONSENT



CONSENT

Statement of Agreement to Participate in the Research Study:

- I hereby confirm that I have been informed by the researcher, about the nature, conduct, benefits and risks of this study - Research Ethics Clearance Number:
- I have also received, read and understood the above written information (Participant Letter of Information) regarding the study.
- I am aware that the results of the study, including personal details regarding my sex, age, date of birth, initials and diagnosis will be anonymously processed into a study report.
- In view of the requirements of research, I agree that the data collected during this study can be processed in a computerised system by the researcher.
- I may, at any stage, without prejudice, withdraw my consent and participation in the study.
- I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and (of my own free will) declare myself prepared to participate in the study.
- I understand that significant new findings developed during the course of this research which may relate to my participation will be made available to me.

Full Name of Participant	Signature	Date
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Thumbprint

I, Norman Mahohoma, herewith confirm that the above participant has been fully informed about the nature, conduct and risks of the above study.

Full Name of Researcher	Date	Signature
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Full Name of Witness (If applicable)	Date	Signature
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ANNEXURE C: COVER LETTER ACENTERPRISEING QUESTIONNAIRE

Faculty of Management Sciences

Department of Entrepreneurial Studies and Management

Date: 17 November 2023

Dear Participant

I am currently undertaking a 'Masters in Management Sciences (Business Administration) in the department of Entrepreneurial Studies and Management at the Durban University of Technology. The study aims to determine the significant marketing mix elements influencing small retail businesses' success in Durban central, Kwa-Zulu Natal.

Would you be kind enough to agree to complete a questionnaire for the study? The questionnaire will take approximately 20 minutes to complete. Participation is voluntary and all information collected will be treated as confidential. Upon your request, the findings of the study will be made available to you once they have been finalised. No personal details will be made available to the public or third party.

Please return the completed questionnaire.

Thank you for your anticipated response and cooperation.

ANNEXURE D: RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

TOPIC: Determining the significant marketing mix elements influencing small retail businesses' success in Durban central.

PLEASE INDICATE YOUR ANSWERS BY PLACING A CROSS (X) IN THE APPROPRIATE COLUMN

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS

The following questions relate to your biographic profile and involve questions to do with relationship between yourself and the business.

A1. Please identify the sector to which your small business belongs.

A1.1	Agriculture		1.6	Catering and Accommodation	
A1.2	Manufacturing		1.7	Transport storage and communication	
A1.3	Construction		1.8	Finance and business services	
A1.4	Retailing and Motor trade and Repairs services		1.9	Community and Personal services	
A1.5	Commercial agents and allied services		1.10	other	

A2. Please indicate the number of full-time employees employed in your business.

A2.1	1 to 10 employees	
A2.2	11 to 20 employees	
A2.3	21 to 30 employees	
A2.4	31 to 40 employees	
A2.5	41 to 50 employees	

A3. Please indicate the age group to which you belong in.

A3.1	25 years and below	
A3.2	26 to 35 years	
A3.3	36 to 45 years	
A3.4	46 to 55 years	
A3.5	56 to 65 years	
A3.6	66 years and above	

A4. Please indicate your gender

A4.1	Male	
A4.2	Female	

A5. Please specify the race category to which you belong.

A5.1	African	
A5.2	White	
A5.3	Indian	
A5.4	Asian	
A5.5	Other	

A6. Indicate your highest level of formal education.

A6.1	Up to Grade 12/ Std 10	
A6.2	Diploma/ Degree	
A6.3	B-Tech/ Honours	
A6.4	M-Tech/Masters/MBA	
A6.5	D-Tech/ Doctorate	
A6.6	Other	

SECTION B: FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE THE LEVEL OF IMPORTANCE PLACED ON EACH MARKETING MIX STRATEGY BY SMALL RETAIL BUSINESSES.

PLEASE INDICATE YOUR ANSWER(S) BY PLACING A CROSS (X) IN THE APPROPRIATE COLUMN/CHOICE

B1. Please indicate the factor(s) that influence the level of importance placed on each marketing mix strategy by your small business.

B1.1	Marketing research	
B1.2	Access to the market	
B1.3	Sectorial competition	
B1.4	Managerial skills	
B1.5	Marketing skills	
B1.6	Organisational culture	
B1.7	Branding	
B1.8	Legislation	
B1.9	Financial resources	
B1.10	Networking	

B2. Based on the factors you have identified in B1, please indicate the level of importance of each factor.

	Statements	Very important	Important	Neither important nor unimportant	Unimportant	Very unimportant
B2.1	Marketing research	1	2	3	4	5
B2.2	Access to the market	1	2	3	4	5
B2.3	Sectorial competition	1	2	3	4	5

B2.4	Managerial skills	1	2	3	4	5
B2.5	Marketing skills	1	2	3	4	5
B2.6	Organisational culture	1	2	3	4	5
B2.7	Branding	1	2	3	4	5
B2.8	Legislation	1	2	3	4	5
B2.9	Financial resources	1	2	3	4	5

SECTION C: MARKETING MIX ELEMENTS OF SMALL RETAIL BUSINESSES.

C1	Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following practices that relate to the implementation of marketing promotion by your business:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
C1.1	Sales promotion	1	2	3	4	5
C1.2	Branding	1	2	3	4	5
C1.3	Digital marketing	1	2	3	4	5
C1.4	Word of mouth	1	2	3	4	5
C1.5	Public relations	1	2	3	4	5
C1.6	Telemarketing	1	2	3	4	5
C1.7	Personal selling	1	2	3	4	5
C1.8	Social Media	1	2	3	4	5
C1.9	Email communication	1	2	3	4	5

C2	Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following practices that relate to the implementation of product as an element of marketing mix by your business:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
C2.1	Business offers product variety to customers	1	2	3	4	5
C2.2	Delivering the goods with well recognised brands	1	2	3	4	5
C2.3	Quality of supplied products	1	2	3	4	5
C2.4	Attractive package of products	1	2	3	4	5
C2.5	Delivering the newest products in a business	1	2	3	4	5

C3. Please indicate the level of importance of each variable as it relates to price as marketing mix strategy.

	Statements	Very important	Important	Neither important nor unimportant	Unimportant	Very unimportant
C3.1	Cheaper prices of products compared to competition	1	2	3	4	5
C3.2	Product differentiation	1	2	3	4	5
C3.3	Credit sales	1	2	3	4	5

C3.4	The customer's perceived value of the product	1	2	3	4	5
C3.5	The business offers layby to its customers	1	2	3	4	5
C3.6	The cost of materials	1	2	3	4	5

C4. Please indicate the level of importance of each variable as it relates to place as marketing mix strategy.

	Statements	Very important	Important	Neither important nor unimportant	Unimportant	Very unimportant
C4.1	Distribution channels	1	2	3	4	5
C4.2	Warehousing facilities	1	2	3	4	5
C4.3	Mode of transportation	1	2	3	4	5
C4.4	Location	1	2	3	4	5
C4.5	Logistics	1	2	3	4	5
C4.6	Inventory control management	1	2	3	4	5

C5	Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following practices that relate to the implementation of physical evidence as an element of marketing mix by your business:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
C5.1	Beautiful decoration of the business environment	1	2	3	4	5
C5.2	Proper amenities like refrigerator and electronic scale	1	2	3	4	5
C5.3	Physical facilities like wheeled baskets	1	2	3	4	5
C5.4	Calm and enjoyable ambience of the business environment	1	2	3	4	5

C6	Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following practices that relate to the implementation of processes as an element of marketing mix by your business:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
C6.1	Self-services	1	2	3	4	5
C6.2	Investigating and resolving shoppers' problems during shopping	1	2	3	4	5
C6.3	Considering the importance of Shoppers' time	1	2	3	4	5
C6.4	Categorizing the products based on Customer's convenience	1	2	3	4	5

C7	Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following practices that relate to the implementation of people as an element of marketing mix by your business:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
C7.1	Recruitment of skilled employees to enhance customer services by the entity	1	2	3	4	5
C7.2	Direct investments in training to adapt to technological changes	1	2	3	4	5
C7.3	Employees' enthusiasm to respond customers' questions	1	2	3	4	5
C7.4	Employees' courtesy	1	2	3	4	5
C7.5	Providing necessary advice by personnel to customers.	1	2	3	4	5

SECTION D: THE DIMENSIONS USED TO MEASURE THE SUCCESS AND SURVIVAL OF SMALL RETAIL BUSINESSES.

D1	Which of the following dimensions do you use to evaluate the success of your business?
D1.1	Turnover/ Sales
D1.2	Net profit
D1.3	Value of assets
D1.4	The number of new products/services introduced
D1.5	Staff turnover
D1.6	Customers referred to the enterprise by other customers
D1.7	Number of customer complaints
D1.8	Return on assets
D1.9	Return on capital employed

D2. Over the past 5 years, what has been the trend in respect of the following?

	Indicators	Increased	No change	Decreased
D2.1	Turnover/ Sales			
D2.2	Net profit			
D2.3	Value of assets			
D2.4	The number of new products/services introduced			
D2.5	Staff turnover			
D2.6	Customers referred to the enterprise by other customers			
D2.7	Number of customer complaints			
D2.8	Return on assets			
D2.9	Return on capital employed			

D3. How long have you been in operation with your current business?

D3.1	Less than 5 years	
D3.2	Between 5 and 10 years	
D3.3	Between 11 and 15 years	
D3.4	Between 16 and 20 years	
D3.5	Over 20 years	

D4. How would you rate the success of your business?

D4.1	Very successful	
D4.2	Successful	
D4.3	Neither successful, nor unsuccessful	
D4.4	Unsuccessful	
D4.5	Very unsuccessful	

Thank you for taking your time to complete this questionnaire. Rest assured that all of your responses will remain strictly confidential.

If you would you like to receive a report on the main findings of this study, please state your e-mail address or postal address below: mahohoman@gmail.com

ANNEXURE E: GATEKEEPERS' LETTER



**DURBAN CHAMBER
OF COMMERCE AND
INDUSTRY NPC**

20 September 2023

Mr Norman Mahohoma
Faculty of Management Sciences
Department of Entrepreneurial Studies and Management
41 M L Sultan Rd,
Greyville, Berea
4001

Dear Mr Mahohoma

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

This letter serves to confirm that the Durban Chamber of Commerce and Industry NPC hereby acknowledges and approves the research to be conducted through the Durban Chamber of Commerce and Industry NPC for the completion of Masters Studies in Management Sciences (Business Administration), research to be performed on: **Determining the significant marketing mix elements influencing small retail businesses' success in Durban central, KwaZulu-Natal Province.**

Please note that the data collected must be treated with due confidentiality and anonymity. This information is also provided by the Durban Chamber of Commerce and Industry NPC on the condition that a copy of the final research output will be given to the Durban Chamber of Commerce and Industry NPC for information purposes.

Yours sincerely

Yolan Nagoor
Manager: Policy and Advocacy
Durban Chamber of Commerce and Industry NPC
T: 031 335 1000

A1 101 Isalsh Ntshangase Road, Durban 4001 | P.O BOX 1506, Durban 4001, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa | Reg. No: 2015/448265/08
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ANNEXURE F: RESEARCH ETHICS CERTIFICATE



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Zertifikat Certificat

Certificado Certificate

Promouvoir les plus hauts standards éthiques dans la protection des participants à la recherche biomédicale
Promoting the highest ethical standards in the protection of biomedical research participants

Certificat de formation - Training Certificate
Ce document atteste que - this document certifies that

Norman Mahohoma
a complété avec succès - has successfully completed
Introduction to Research Ethics
du programme de formation TRREE en évaluation éthique de la recherche
of the TRREE training programme in research ethics evaluation

Release Date: 2022/07/21
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(REV : 2022017)

ANNEXURE G: EDITOR'S LETTER

ETHEL ROSS

English language editing and proofreading

8 February 2024

To whomever it may concern:

This letter serves to confirm that I worked as the proofreader and language editor on Norman Mahohoma's Master's thesis:

DETERMINING THE SIGNIFICANT MARKETING-MIX ELEMENTS INFLUENCING
SMALL RETAIL BUSINESSES' SUCCESS IN DURBAN CENTRAL

In no way did I change the content.

Yours faithfully

Ethel Ross (BA Hons; H Dip Ed)

Email: clanross1@icon.co.za

Tel: 083 954 5412

ANNEXURE H: IREC APPROVAL LETTER



Institutional Research Ethics Committee
Research and Postgraduate Support Directorate
2nd Floor, Benyon Court
Gate 1, Saxe Biondo Campus
Durban University of Technology
P O Box 1334, Durban, South Africa, 4001
Tel: 031 279 2275
Email: irec@dut.ac.za
http://www.dut.ac.za/research/institutional_research_ethics
www.dut.ac.za

21 December 2023

Mr N Mahohoma
152 Spencer Road
Clare Estate
Durban

Dear Mr Mahohoma

Determining the significant marketing mix elements influencing small retail businesses' success in Durban central
Ethics Clearance Number: IREC 212/23

The DUT-Institutional Research Ethics Committee acknowledges receipt of your final data collection tool for review.

We are pleased to inform you that the data collection tool has been approved. Kindly ensure that participants used for the pilot study are not part of the main study.

Please note that **FULL APPROVAL** is granted to your research proposal. You may proceed with data collection.

Any adverse events [serious or minor] which occur in connection with this study and/or which may alter its ethical consideration must be reported to the DUT-IREC according to the DUT-IREC SOP's.

Please note that any deviations from the approved proposal require the approval of the DUT-IREC as outlined in the DUT-IREC SOP's.

It is compulsory for a student or researcher to apply for recertification on an annual basis. The failure to do so will result in withdrawal of ethics clearance. It is the responsibility of the researcher and the supervisor to apply for recertification.

Please note that you are required to submit a **Notification of Completion of Study** form together with an abstract to the DUT-IREC office on completion of your study.

Yours Sincerely

Dr K Padiyachy
Deputy Chairperson: DUT-IREC

ANNEXURE I: TURNIT PLAGIARISM REPORT

Determining significant marketing mix elements

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Student Signature:.....

Supervisor Signature:.....