

**Does Marketing Research Really Matter for Smaller Businesses  
Under Competition? A Case Study of Hair Salons in  
Dr. Ruth S Mompoti District, South Africa**

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**ABSTRACT** This research is about *marketing research activity*, an important business imperative when confronted with intense competition, among hair salon owners (mainly Black and previously disadvantaged people) in South Africa. With hair salons becoming unarguably the most affordable means through which the previously advantaged people of South Africa are able to enter mainstream economic activity, their proper management for to ensure survival and profitability has become a key concern for government and policy makers. Easy entry due to low setup cost and no legal need for formalisation, have contributed to proliferation of the hair salon business leading to intense competition for customers and this has unfortunate consequences for hair salons' survival and economic performance. From a strategic management perspective, it is only logical for hair salons to conduct marketing research to obtain accurate information on product prices and customer preferences in order to perform better. But the question is whether hair salons ever consider marketing research relevant to them given resource constraints of such micro businesses. The purpose of this paper is to assess the attitude of hair salons towards marketing research. The findings are that marketing research is not much practiced among the hair salons studied. Implications are discussed.