



E-grocery mobile apps: youth innovation on display

Mobile applications open up a new style of entrepreneurship for the local unemployed.

Professor Marcia Mkansi specialises in operations and supply chain management at UNISA.

Mkansi, M., de Leeuw, S. and Amosun, O. (2020). "Mobile Application Configured Urban-Township E-grocery Distribution Model". International Journal of Physical Distribution and Logistics Management, Vol. 50 No. 1, pp. 26-53

In South Africa, 60% of youth are struggling to find employment. Those who try to create their own businesses struggle with a lack of investment and resources, poor logistics infrastructure, a market that is digitally challenged, expensive data, insufficient stores and grocery stock, as well as a shortage of sophisticated supply chain networks.

A group of digitally savvy youth has created an innovative way of using mobile phones to create mobile e-grocery retail business models. They have formed an informal partnership with malls and grocery retail giants, from where their stock is sourced.

Researchers at UNISA collaborated with international partners to explore this trend. They investigated the convergence of mobile phone applications, unemployment, digitally challenged market segments, immature logistics, under-resourced markets and urban and rural townships (which are highly dependent on urban retail facilities) - a convergence which has created new e-grocery mobile phone application models.

"Youth with backgrounds in IT developed e-grocery mobile application order systems. They



Innovative youth overcome unemployment hurdles by being tech-savvy.

mobilised unemployed women, youth and students to pack and collect orders from stores. They then used GPS to capture the location of customers and partnered with taxis, Uber drivers and people with scooters to deliver the groceries to customers," says Professor Marcia Mkansi. "This shows the innovative ways in which negative conditions can

be used effectively to create a fertile environment for small businesses to emerge."

Investors and the Department of Trade and Industry can empower these young people in ways that sustain their businesses, as they are becoming one of the crucial sources of poverty elimination.



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