



Chapter 14

Inclusive Innovation and the Role of Informal Reclaimers in South Africa's Waste Management System: Insights From South Africa

Siddharthiya Pillay

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4152-0128>
University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

Thea Van der Westhuizen

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8795-4023>
University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

Geoffrey Banda

University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

ABSTRACT

This study examines the design and execution of cross-cultural qualitative research on South African reclaimers by a cultural outsider, aiming to lay the groundwork for a larger study on integrating reclaimers into recycling innovations in Gauteng, Free State, and KwaZulu-Natal. Semi-structured interviews and observations were conducted, with a translator and community liaison to address cultural and language barriers. The study found that while the approach provided valuable insights, some questions and language needed refinement. The liaison helped build trust and encouraged richer responses. However, managing cross-cultural challenges, such

DOI: 10.4018/979-8-3373-0862-3.ch014

as language barriers and translator bias, remains critical. Future research would benefit from more extensive preparation, iterative reflexivity, and decolonisation of research structures.

INTRODUCTION

Pilot studies are critical for testing the viability and credibility of research, and help uncover methodological, ethical, and logistical challenges that could compromise the main study (Shakir & ur Rahman, 2022). Pilot studies are especially valuable in research with marginalised communities, where unfamiliarity with participants' cultures, languages, and lived realities can create barriers for researchers or participants' unfamiliarity with the research process can hinder the fieldwork (Au, 2019; Dawadi, 2022).

In South Africa, cultural and socioeconomic complexity presents unique challenges for research. With 12 official languages, multiple ethnic groups, and varying levels of economic stability, the country requires researchers to ethically and effectively navigate complex dynamics. However, despite their importance, pilot studies are often unpublished, creating a gap in methodological guidance, particularly who are outsiders to specific socioeconomic or cultural groups (Joseph et al., 2021; Malmqvist et al., 2019). This omission reinforces patterns of exclusion in knowledge production, leaving certain communities overlooked or misunderstood.

Using this study, it is argued that pilot studies may demystify research with people whose cultural and socioeconomic realities are distinct from the researcher's lived experience. Specifically, marginalised groups have been excluded from research either because scholars are unsure of how to engage with them or because their voices are overlooked in dominant research agendas (Pratt, 2019). By developing structured methodologies for engaging marginalised groups in research, their inclusion is advanced not only in innovation but in the broader process of knowledge creation. If research itself is seen as an innovation process, then including marginalised groups within it shifts traditional power dynamics and contributes to their recognition as knowledge holders. In this way, this pilot study aligns with broader discussions of inclusive innovation, power structures, and decolonised methodologies in research.

Research Problem and Questions

Aligned with the above, this pilot study focuses on informal reclaimers, a marginalised group that is culturally and socioeconomically distinct to the researcher (Ambati, 2019; Rosaldo, 2022). Reclaimers form an integral part of the recycling system in many developing countries due to the lack of adequate infrastructure and

26 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage: www.igi-global.com/chapter/inclusive-innovation-and-the-role-of-informal-reclaimers-in-south-africas-waste-management-system/402772

Related Content

How to Make a Mosque Sustainable: A Study on the Hajj Musa Mosque in Turkiye

Iman Salah Al Khalaf, Seyda Emekciand Cemile Feyzan imek (2024). *Building Climate Neutral Economies Through Digital Business and Green Skills* (pp. 365-384). www.irma-international.org/chapter/how-to-make-a-mosque-sustainable/355390

Sustainability in Supply Chain Management

Farzad Dehghanian (2014). *Sustainable Practices: Concepts, Methodologies, Tools, and Applications* (pp. 944-957). www.irma-international.org/chapter/sustainability-in-supply-chain-management/94975

Artificial Intelligence Based Green Technology Retrofit for Misfire Detection in Old Engines

S. Babu Devasenapatiand K. I. Ramachandran (2012). *International Journal of Green Computing* (pp. 43-55). www.irma-international.org/article/artificial-intelligence-based-green-technology/64359

Business Model Innovation in the Agri-food Sector

Joakim Tell, Maya Hoveskog, Pia Ulvenblad, Per-Ola Ulvenblad, Henrik Barthand Jenny Ståhl (2016). *International Journal of Social Ecology and Sustainable Development* (pp. 1-13). www.irma-international.org/article/business-model-innovation-in-the-agri-food-sector/152217

Applying the Fuzzy Inference Model in Maintenance Centered to Safety: Case Study – Bucket Wheel Excavator

Predrag D. Jovani, Miloš Tanasijevi, Vladimir Milisavljevi, Aleksandar Cvjeti, Dejan Ivezianđ Uglješa Srbislav Bugari (2020). *Applications and Challenges of Maintenance and Safety Engineering in Industry 4.0* (pp. 142-165). www.irma-international.org/chapter/applying-the-fuzzy-inference-model-in-maintenance-centered-to-safety/255364