

Research Article

This article is published by Jozac Publishers in the *African Social Science and Humanities Journal (ASSHJ)*. Volume 7, Issue 3, 2026.

ISSN: 2709-1309 (Print)
2709-1317 (Online)

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Article detail

Received: 24 April 2026

Accepted: 10 July 2026

Published: 21 August 2026

DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.4314/asshj.v7i3.3>

Conflict of Interest: The author/s declared no conflict of interest.



Effects of psychosocial and environmental factors on social conflicts between urban street vendors and municipalities: A systematic literature review

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Abstract: Globally, conflicts between municipalities and street vendors perpetuate poverty, inequality, and social exclusion, which has motivated the decision to carry out this systematic literature review. This review hypothesized that noncompliance with municipal vending laws is driven not merely by economic defiance, but by a complex interplay of systemic psychosocial and environmental factors. Consequently, the purpose of this desktop research was to identify psychosocial and socio-structural drivers of street vending and how they influence noncompliance behavior among street vendors. To achieve this, databases such as JSTOR, Google Scholar, Elicit, and Consensus AI were queried, and they yielded 21 peer-reviewed studies meeting the rigorous inclusion criteria that were set. The main findings revealed that noncompliance behavior was driven by psychosocial factors such as educational level, age, perceptions of enforcement agents, and attitudes towards change, which heavily interact with socio-structural

deficits, such as lack of employment opportunities and safety nets. This study innovated by shifting from the norm of focusing on street vendors as the source of urban disorder, land pollution, and walkway congestion without looking at the role of the municipalities and other stakeholders in contributing to this problem. Municipalities have been harassing, arresting, and confiscating goods from street vendors because the narrative has always been that street vendors are non-compliant with municipal bylaws. Using the social work lens of person-in-environment theory, this review found that political, structural, economic, social, and personal factors make compliance with municipal laws on licensing, zoning, and product quality impossible; hence the recommendation that policies about street vendors should be revisited to align with the current personal and environmental circumstances that people are facing.

Keywords – Non-compliance behavior, Psychosocial factors, Social conflict, Social development, Street vendors, Structural factors

1. INTRODUCTION

In the Global South, the phenomenon of street vending is a contentious issue, with some viewing it as a social problem and others seeing it as a means of social mobility. According to the International Labor Organization (2023),

approximately 2 billion people worldwide rely on street vending for their livelihoods, a population that warrants attention. However, social work research has largely overlooked this group, focusing instead on children, women, migrants, people living with HIV/AIDS, and the LGBT+ community. As a result, this paper draws upon existing research from architecture, urban studies, environmental science, sociology, psychology, and geography.

The informal nature of street vending has led to a dearth of official statistics on the economic losses incurred by governments due to non-compliance. Existing studies (Devlin, 2021, Recchi, 2021), highlight the problems that are associated with non-compliance, for example, food poisoning due to poor food handling techniques by street vendors who are not skilled in food handling techniques, street congestion, and environmental degradation. Furthermore, street vending has been blamed for congesting walkways, contributing to urban waste, and creating a congested environment that makes it easy for thieves to steal from people. In response, municipalities have employed force, confiscation of goods, fines, and arrests to regulate street vendors.

This systematic literature review aims to synthesize existing research on the psychosocial and structural factors contributing to non-compliance behavior among street vendors operating in urban walkways. The objectives are to identify the psychosocial factors influencing non-compliance, examine the impact of structural factors, and inform evidence-based policy development. Non-compliance behavior encompasses resistance to relocation, tax evasion, and violence against law enforcement agents.

Psychosocial and demographic factors, including age, gender, income levels, feelings of marginalization, and how people perceive the legitimacy of the law and of enforcement agents, contribute to non-compliance. Literature suggests that incorporating cognitive, barrier behavior, and psychological theories into urban planning can help mitigate non-compliance. This review sought to address the conflict between municipalities and street vendors, which has resulted in injury and death. It aims to inform policies that balance urban management with the needs of street vendors, recognising their contribution to poverty reduction and city culture. The research questions guiding this research are derived from the person-in-environment theory, which states that one's behavior is shaped by his social, economic, political, and cultural environment. Human behavior is a product of the interaction between personal factors such as demographics and experiences with structural factors such as poverty, discrimination and unemployment. Using this theory, the following research questions were used to guide this review.

1. What psychosocial factors contribute to social conflict between street vendors and municipalities?
2. How do environmental factors influence non-compliance behavior among street vendors?
3. How can psychosocial and environmental factors be incorporated into policy development to reduce social conflict between street vendors and municipalities?

These questions were the frame which this review used to make recommendations that promote evidence-based policies that balance urban governance, sustainable development, and environmental protection with the needs of street vendors, ultimately reducing conflict and promoting social justice.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This section outlines the primary and secondary aims of this study, institutional review board approval, and periods of development of reports, search strategy, keywords, Boolean operators, inclusion criteria, exclusion criteria, quality assessment, heterogeneity tests, study selection and data extraction.

2.1. Aim of this study

The primary aim of this study is to find how psychosocial and structural factors cause non-compliance behavior among street vendors, which has led street vendors to consistently clash with municipalities. The secondary aims are to identify psychosocial factors that contribute to non-compliance behavior among street vendors selling in urban walkways. This study also seeks to examine the structural factors that contribute to non-compliance behavior among street vendors selling in urban walkways and to understand the relationship between psychosocial and structural factors and social conflict between street vendors and municipalities.

2.2. Institutional review board approval

This systematic review did not seek institutional review board approval since it is an analysis of existing literature, not human subjects. However, it has been reviewed by multiple reviewers to ensure reliability and validity.

2.3. Periods of development of aspects

Literature search and development of reports were done from August 2025-March 2026.

2.4. Search strategy

A comprehensive search was conducted across multiple databases, which included JSTOR, Google Scholar, Consensus (AI-powered research paper search engine), and Elicit (AI-powered research paper engine). The search utilized relevant keywords, such as "Street vendors"; "Hawkers"; "Street peddlers". "Non-compliance behavior", "Rule-breaking behavior", "Psychosocial factors", "Architectural factors", "Structural factors"; "Environmental factors", and "Informal traders". Boolean operators "and" and "or" were used.

2.5. Inclusion criteria

Studies were included if they:

- were published in English
- were published between 2015 and 2025
- were peer-reviewed
- focused on street vendors or informal traders
- examined psychosocial and structural factors influencing non-compliance behavior

2.6. exclusive criteria

Studies were excluded if they were:

- not published in English
- published before 2015
- not peer-reviewed
- not focusing on street vendors or informal traders
- not examining psychosocial and structural factors influencing non-compliance behavior

2.7. Study selection

The search results were screened and selected using the predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria. Database-specific searches were conducted in JSTOR, Consensus, Google Scholar, and Elicit as explained in Appendix 2 (PRISMA Flow Diagram). A total of 21 studies met the inclusion criteria of this study.

2.8. Data extraction

Data were extracted from the included studies, focusing on psychosocial and structural factors influencing non-compliance behavior among street vendors. The findings from these papers were grouped according to themes and were carefully fitted to different research objectives that have been outlined. This PRISMA-compliant methodology was followed to ensure transparency, reproducibility, and reliability in this systematic review.

2.9. Methods used to combine studies

Studies that met predetermined inclusion criteria were selected, assessed for publication bias, authorship bias, and methodological bias, and then reviewed by two independent reviewers and assessed using the JBI risk assessment tool; themes and patterns were then extracted from those studies for synthesis (Aromataris et al, 2015).

2.10. Methods used to minimize errors in data extraction

A data collection protocol was designed in Excel, and it clearly defined what data to collect from included studies and how to collect it to answer the review questions consistently; multiple reviewers were used to collect data, and their findings were compared to reduce errors.

2.11. Quality assessment for selected studies

All the selected studies in this literature review were assessed for risk of bias using the Joanna Briggs Institute critical appraisal tool. This appraisal tool helped the researcher to assess how the methodologies used in quoted studies minimized bias and ensured validity. It also helped this paper to assess the relevance of the identified studies to this paper's objectives. Additionally, this study used quality papers as data sources. Creswell and Creswell (2023), state that a quality paper is one that is published by a journal that has an editorial review board. Efforts have been made to cite works from journals that have listed their editorial review boards.

The credibility of authors was assessed by reviewing their qualifications to check if they are qualified to write on a particular subject. Study sample sizes were checked to ensure they were adequate, as well as the study design. The biases, strengths, and weaknesses of the paper were evaluated, and the findings of each paper were then interpreted in the context of the research objectives.

2.12. Mechanisms used to manage data and records

Literature search results were uploaded to Rayaana Software, an artificial intelligence-powered software program that facilitates collaboration among reviewers during the study. The team developed test screening questions that were a combination of inclusion and exclusion criteria and JBI risk assessment tools. Prior to the formal screening process, a calibration exercise was done to pilot and refine the screening questions, and training was given to members of the review team who were not familiar with the Rayaana software and the content area prior to the start of the review.

2.13. Data items

Data items such as natural environmental factors, social factors, physical environmental factors, structural and architectural factors, and how they influence non-compliant behaviors among street vendors were collected from the selected studies. Additionally, statistics on how non-compliant behavior causes social conflict between street vendors and municipalities were collected.

2.14. Data synthesis

A systematic narrative synthesis was done where text and tables were used to summarize and explain the characteristics and findings of the included studies. The narrative synthesis was done in line with the guidance from the Centre for Reviews and Dissemination (2009). CRD emphasizes that narrative data synthesis should offer textual description, thematic analysis, tabulation, and interpretation of included studies.

2.15. How the strength of the body of evidence was assessed

The strength of the body of evidence was assessed by checking the authority of the authors, and their credentials. Secondly, the scholarly rigor was assessed to check if the sources are peer-reviewed and to check if the methodologies are valid, reliable, and repeatable (Zhou et al 2015).

3. RESULTS

The results section covers the overview of included studies and their characteristics (study design, population, sample size and methodology), presentation of main findings such as themes and patterns that emerged from the literature, key concepts and relationships as well as areas of agreement and disagreement. The results also identify gaps in existing literature such as understudied populations or topics, methodological limitations and areas for future research.

3.1. Overview of included studies

Characteristics of Included Studies

See Appendix 1

Excluded Studies that appeared to meet the Inclusion criteria.

Table 1: List of Excluded Studies that seemed to meet Inclusion criteria

Number	Study	Reason for exclusion
1	Rehman, A., & Sulaiman, M., (2025), Ensuring Legal and Social Protection for Street Vendors: Overcoming Economic, Regulatory, and Institutional Challenges. Social Science Review Archives. https://doi.org/10.70670/sra.v3i1.548	Methodological weakness as sample size and population not stated.
2	Hamidu, K., & Munishi, E. (2022). Street Vendors Evictions and Relocations in Dar Es Salaam: Coping Strategies and Resilience Implications. The Qualitative Report. https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2022.5529	Scope of this study is on relocation challenges that are faced by street vendors and does not address the psychosocial or environmental factors that lead to noncompliance behavior.
3	Amaami, A., Dominic, D., & Collins, D. (2017). Factors associated with poor food safety compliance among street food vendors in the Techiman Municipality of	Study population not mentioned.

	Ghana. Australian Journal of French Studies, 11, 50-57. https://doi.org/10.5897/ajfs2016.1510	
4	Neves, C., Eves, A., Souza, A., Filho, A., Kunzler, L., Denis, M., Mello, J., & Rodrigues, K. (2022). Underlying factors influencing street food vendors' implementation of food safety behaviors. Revista chilena de nutrición. https://doi.org/10.4067/s0717-75182022000500423	Study population not mentioned.
5	Roever, S., & Skinner, C. (2016). Street vendors and cities. Environment & Urbanization, 28, 359 - 374. https://doi.org/10.1177/0956247816653898	Study does not mention psychosocial or environmental factors affecting noncompliance behavior among street vendors.
6	Salamandane, A., Malfeito-Ferreira, M., & Brito, L. (2023). The Socioeconomic Factors of Street Food Vending in Developing Countries and Its Implications for Public Health: A Systematic Review. Foods, 12. https://doi.org/10.3390/foods12203774	Study does not cover noncompliance behavior.
7	Charango, C. (2024). Social inclusion of street vendors in Harare: Challenges and opportunities. HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies. https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v80i2.9046	Study does not answer the research questions of this systematic review.
8	Barua, M. (2023) Lively cities: reconfiguring urban ecology. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press	Lack of full text.
9	Derdowski, L.A and Mathisen, G.E (2023), Psychosocial factors and safety in high-risk industries: A systematic literature review, Safety Science, 157 (1), 1-18, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssci.2022.105948	Not related to street vendors.

3.2. Risk of bias in included studies

The risk of bias for included studies was assessed using the JBI critical appraisal tools. Studies were assessed separately according to their designs. This study has qualitative, quantitative, book chapters, cross-sectional surveys, cross sectional descriptive, systematic literature reviews, and mixed studies. Results of the overall risk of bias for included studies are shown below.

Risk of Bias for Included Qualitative Studies.

Score sheet using the JBI Appraisal tool for Qualitative Studies.

This systematic literature review identified eleven studies that are qualitative in nature, and they met the inclusion criteria if they scored <5/10 in the JBI appraisal tool for qualitative studies.

Table 2: List of Included Qualitative Studies

Study	Number (Yes)	Number (No)	Number (unclear)	Number (N/A)	Total out of 10
Hildago (2022)	6	1	3	0	6
Amirullah and Jaya (2022)	9	0	1	0	9
Sheehama and Singh (2025)	8	2	0	0	8
Ndikubwimana et al (2020)	6	2	2	0	6
Yemmafouo (2018)	8	1	1	0	8
Porras-Santanila (2022)	9	1	0	0	9
Devlin (2021)	7	2	1	0	7
Pambudi (2020)	8	1	1	0	8
Ina et al (2025)	9	1	0	0	9
Romero et al (2024)	7	2	1	0	7
Vargas and Urinboyev (2015)	8	0	2	0	8
Total	92/120	15/120	13/120	00/110	92/120 (77%)

George et al (2014) state that in the JBI score sheet, a study is considered low quality if it scores less than 50%, moderate quality if it scores between 50 and 70%, and high quality if it scores above 70%. The average score of included qualitative studies is 77%, which means that generally, only high-quality studies were included in this systematic literature review.

Risk of bias for Included Quantitative Studies

Table 3: Risk of Bias JBI scoresheet of Included Quantitative studies

Study	Internal Validity (Out of 7)	Participant retention bias (out of 1).	Statistical Conclusion Validity (out of 1)	Total out of 9
Alawode and Tabit (2025)	7	1	0	8 (89%).
Ndaba (2023)	7	0	1	8 (89%)
Total	14	1	1	16/18 (89%).

This study has two quantitative studies which were included in this systematic literature review, and they are of high quality (89%), using the JBI appraisal tool for quasi-experimental designs.

Risk of bias for included Systematic Reviews.

This study identified five systematic literature reviews that met the Inclusion criteria, and their risk of bias has been analysed using the JBI critical appraisal tool for systematic reviews.

Table 4: JBI Scoresheet for Included Systematic Reviews

Study	YES	No	Unclear	Total (out of 11).
Forkua et al (2017)	8	02	01	08
Sandhika et al (2024)	10	01	00	10
Sepadi and Nkosi (2022)	9	01	01	09
Benit (2024)	11	00	02	11
Recchi (2021)	10	01	00	10
Total	48/55	05/55	03/55	48/55 (87%).

Risk of bias for included cross-sectional studies

This literature review has one cross-sectional study, and this study was assessed using the JBI critical appraisal tool for cross-sectional studies (Moola et al, 2020). The appraisal tool has eight questions, which are answered as yes, no, or not clear to test the quality of a study.

Table 5: JBI Scoresheet for Included Cross Sectional Studies

Study	Yes	No	Unclear	Total
Huynh Van et al (2022)	6	1	1	6/8 (75%)
Total	6	1	1	6/8 (75%).

Risk of bias for Mixed Studies

This systematic literature review has one study, and the risk of bias in this study was assessed using the MMAT, 2018 revised version of the appraisal tool for mixed studies by Hong (2018).

Table 6: JBI Scoresheet for Included Mixed Studies

Study	Question No.	Yes	No	Can't Tell	Total
Mutandwa et al (2025)	5.1	X			01
	5.2			X	00
	5.3	X			01
	5.4	X			01
	5.5	X			01
Total		04	00	01	4/5 (80%).

Risk of Bias for a book chapter.

This study has one book chapter, and this book chapter was assessed for the risk of bias using the CRAAP test, Blakeslee (2004), cited in (California State University, Chico [CSU Chico], 2010).

Table 7: CRAAP Test Scoresheet for Book Chapter

Study	Currency	Relevance	Authority	Accuracy	Purpose	Total
Bailey et al (2018)	10/10	10/10	10/10	10/10	8/10	48/50 (96%).

Thematic Analysis.

The studies that were included in this systematic literature review generated several themes such as the political environment and how it contributes to noncompliance behavior, social environment and its effect on noncompliance behavior as well as the effects of economic policies on social welfare programs and how they contribute to noncompliance behavior among street vendors in different parts of the world. At personal level, noncompliance behavior seems to emanate from psychosocial factors such as attitudes towards enforcement efforts, socio-demographic factors such as age, religion, sex and level of education. Other themes that have been identified are that noncompliance behavior is mainly a product of spatial power dynamics and structural disadvantage. These themes have been identified to answer the research questions of this systematic literature review which are:

1. What psychosocial factors contribute to social conflict between street vendors and municipalities?
2. How do environmental factors influence non-compliance behavior among street vendors?
3. How can psychosocial and environmental factors be incorporated into policy development to reduce social conflict between street vendors and municipalities?

Psychosocial factors that contribute to social conflict between street vendors and municipalities**Perceptions and Attitudes**

Literature shows that personal and psychosocial factors such as socio-demographics, attitudes and perceptions towards the law, as well as the local culture and religion are responsible for noncompliance behavior, which is the root cause of conflict between street vendors and municipalities. Sheehama and Singh (2025) state that vendors' attitudes towards street vending laws, such as food handling laws, zoning laws, and other laws, act as motivators for being compliant or not. Ndaba (2023), on the other hand, believes that noncompliance behavior is not a product of attitudes towards the law but of how people perceive the enforcement process. Harassment, evictions, and arrests make people view enforcement processes as evil and brutal, and as something that they have to fight against, hence non-compliant behavior. This shows that noncompliance emanates from thought processes, not from structural pressures and disadvantages. The municipalities use such findings to evoke punitive measures to change street vendors' attitudes and perceptions towards the law.

Some studies have identified personal factors such as income levels, educational background, sex, and age as predictors of non-compliant behaviors (Yemmafou, 2018; Sepadi & Nkosi, 2022; Alawode & Tabit, 2025). Bailey et al (2018) assert that a lack of alternative sources of income has led some people not to comply with zoning laws, while Amirullah and Jaya (2022) state that income levels are not a strong predictor of noncompliance behavior, as non-

compliant behavior is deeply rooted in one's culture and religion. Some cultures and religions teach people to obey authorities, and people from such cultures, regardless of their income levels, are bound to comply with the law.

On the other hand, Huynh Van et al (2022) state that education is a strong predictor of noncompliance behavior as education can shape an individual's understanding of rules and social norms. These scholars argue that those with higher education levels are more aware of expectations and consequences, which reduces non-compliant behavior in this population. However, this view can be debated, as Yamafour (2018) states that among the non-compliant street vendors in Cameroon are unemployed graduates. The differences in findings make it difficult to come up with the exact demographics for targeted interventions, thereby calling for contextual studies to address this demographic gap

Demographics.

Forkua et al (2017), while analyzing the effects of socio demographics suggests that men and women exhibit different behaviors which are influenced by societal expectations and roles. Men tend to exhibit non-compliant behaviors when they have to protect or fend for their families, and women tend to exhibit non-compliant behaviors when they feel that the local government is pushing feminist policies. The discrepancies in all these findings are based on individual differences and context, which play a significant role in explaining and predicting non-compliant behaviors.

Devlin (2021) contends that noncompliance behavior is dependent on one's age. When people are young, they see noncompliance as an act of heroism, but as they mature, their understanding of rules and consequences may improve, thereby eliminating noncompliance behavior. An understanding of these psychosocial, personal, and socio-demographic factors can be used by municipalities and policymakers to develop targeted strategies that promote compliance among street vendors.

Spatial Power Dynamics

Spatial power dynamics, according to Devlin (2022), refers to the relationships that individual street vendors, groups of street vendors, and formal shop owners have that influence how urban spaces are used. Devlin (2022) states that in areas where formal shop owners have collectively come together and resisted the illegal use of public space that is in front of their shops, local councils have intensified enforcement efforts, and street vendors have complied with zoning laws. Yemmafouo (2018) states that urban councils are duty-bound to prosecute crimes such as smuggling, protection of private property rights, quality of trading space, and quality of the product that is being sold, which are basically the crimes that are being committed by street vendors. When street vendors wield more power than the city council and the formal shop owners, they take over all unoccupied public spaces and block traffic from accessing critical places such as hospitals. Yemmafouo (2018) notes that street vendors get their power from the city authorities' soft spot towards them, as they are viewed as a significant portion of the electorate. The city council does not want to clash with them and push them to join opposition politics.

Structural Factors that promote non-compliant behavior among street vendors and escalate the conflict between street vendors and municipalities.

Structural factors are the external environment, such as the political, economic, and social environment, that makes street vendors not comply with municipal laws, and the municipalities respond with punitive measures to force compliance.

Political Environment

The issue of street vending is a contentious one, with scholars attributing its persistence to various factors. Some argue that political actors are responsible for failing to create a conducive environment for the formal sector to thrive, thereby limiting job opportunities (Amirullah & Jaya, 2022). Others contend that street vendors themselves are to blame for their failure to innovate and grow beyond informal entrepreneurship. Research suggests that governments often employ weak enforcement strategies against street vendors due to their significant electoral support base (Amirullah & Jaya, 2022; Yemmafou, 2018). This perspective is echoed by Vargas and Urinboyev (2015), who posit that non-compliance behavior among street vendors is a form of protest against unpopular government policies. Furthermore, the enforcement of laws against street vendors often appears to be politically motivated, with vendors affiliated with opposition parties more likely to face harassment (Sandhika, 2024).

However, Ndikubwimana et al. (2020) highlight a lack of political will to support street vendors, as evidenced by the scarcity of African countries that have legalized street vending. There is a research gap on how politics, policy, and street vending intersect and influence non compliance behavior, particularly in the African context. Future studies should investigate the factors driving governments' enforcement strategies and the effects of these strategies on street vendors' compliance behavior.

Social Environments and their effects on Noncompliance Behavior among street vendors.

The phenomenon of non-compliance among street vendors can be attributed to several social factors such as inadequate socialization with the law (Mutandwa et al., 2025), social roles (Romero et al., 2024), and systemic failures (Alawode & Tabit, 2025). The lack of proper understanding of the law and training in food handling regulations is a significant contributor to non-compliance behavior among vendors (Mutandwa et al., 2025). Notably, many vendors, particularly women, resort to street vending due to limited economic opportunities and skill sets, often relying on skills acquired through informal means such as cooking skills to earn a living (Romero et al., 2024). The intersection of gender, education, and socioeconomic status is evident, as women who have dropped out of school due to familial or financial constraints often turn to street vending as a means of survival (Yemmafou, 2018).

However, the societal perception of street vending is multifaceted. While it is often viewed as a symptom of poverty and unemployment (Sandhika et al., 2024), it has also become an integral part of the social fabric, providing affordable products and services to the community. This dichotomy highlights the need for policymakers to reexamine their approach to street vending, acknowledging both the challenges and benefits associated with this informal economy.

Research gaps exist in understanding the lived experiences of street vendors, particularly women, and the impact of social policies on their livelihoods. Further studies could investigate the effectiveness of training programs and social support initiatives in promoting compliance and improving the socioeconomic status of vendors. Additionally, policymakers could benefit from research on the economic and social benefits of integrating street vendors into the formal economy, and the potential consequences of marginalisation.

The role of economic policies on social welfare programs and how they promote noncompliance behavior among street vendors.

Recchi (2021), states that in the absence of safety nets during the times of economic downturns, people tend to resort to street vending. Yemmafou (2018) states that unemployed university graduates tend to resort to street vending to deal with the problem of unemployment while Mutandwa et al (2025) state that uneducated people resort to street

vending because of failure to secure jobs in the formal market. Porras-Santanila (2022) states that efforts to eliminate or limit street vending will always fail as long as countries are not willing to make political and fiscal commitments to offer substantial employment programs and/or guarantee a minimum income to vulnerable families. This shows that while other factors like low educational levels can be blamed for the problem of street vending and non-compliant behavior, economic policies play a huge role in pushing people to non-compliant behaviors. Romero et al (2024) state that family obligations such as debts, the need to pay school fees, and buying food have led street vendors to consider resorting to non-compliant behavior such as tax evasion, smuggling products, and not paying for trading licenses. Despite the growing body of research on street vending, there is a dearth of studies examining the impact of economic policies on street vending and non-compliance behavior. Specifically, further investigation is required to understand the effects of macroeconomic policies, such as taxation, labor market regulations, and social welfare programs, on street vending and non-compliance behavior.

Structural disadvantage

Collectively, the political, social, and economic environments, as well as city policies they form a structural disadvantage for street vendors. This structural disadvantage makes compliance with certain laws nearly impossible. Recchi (2021) defines structural disadvantage as systemic barriers, such as legal, economic, and social barriers, that keep street vendors marginalized and prevent them from having upward mobility within the urban economy. These are not individual challenges but challenges that are embedded in the way in which cities are organised. Alawode and Tabit (2025) argue that the government has failed to properly register and regulate street vendors; hence, they cannot make them comply with tax laws and hygiene laws. Ndikubwimana et al. (2020) state that a weak local currency against the US Dollar makes compliance with tax laws and being licensed an extra burden that cannot be borne. Benit (2024) states that the South African government is failing to make street vendors comply with vending laws because the government is using the 'left' governance that was used by the apartheid government. Apartheid represented oppression and racism, and people resisted it, so any form of enforcement that resembles the apartheid system is likely going to be resisted.

22.0 Discussion on Findings

This study found twenty studies that met the Inclusion criteria and found nine studies that had relevant data but were excluded due to several reasons, such as unclear methodology or lack of full text, among others. The risk of bias for all included studies averaged 84.5%. These results concur with the findings of Forkua et al (2017), which state that a systematic literature review is about finding the best evidence on the topic. Evidence from available literature reveals that non-compliance behavior among street vendors is influenced by a complex interplay of factors such as political environment, social environment, economic policies, psychosocial factors, and spatial power dynamics. The review highlighted that governments often prioritize maintaining power over enforcing laws, and that economic policies play a significant role in pushing people towards non-compliant behaviors. These align with existing literature, which suggests that street vendors face significant challenges in complying with laws and regulations (Amirullah & Jaya, 2022; Yemmafouo, 2018). However, this review, unlike other studies that concentrate on single factors and their influence on noncompliance behavior, this systematic literature review explores the broader structural context in which non-compliant behavior occurs.

Limitations of this Systematic Literature Review.

This review was limited to English-language studies, and this may have excluded relevant research published in other languages which might have relevant insights. Secondly, the search strategy may have missed relevant studies that are not indexed in the selected databases. Thirdly, the majority of the included studies in this review are qualitative in nature, and this may be subject to bias and limited generalizability. Additionally, the quality of some of the included studies varied, with some studies lacking clear descriptions of their methods and sampling strategies. Lastly, this systematic literature review does not have a research protocol to compare the risk of bias with. A research protocol was not done because, according to PRISMA (2020), reporting guidelines on systematic reviews, research protocols are optional. This study therefore chose not to do a protocol but to adapt the inclusion and exclusion criteria post hoc. Social sciences are exploratory, and a research protocol can limit that exploratory nature.

Interpretation and Gaps

The findings of this review suggest that addressing non-compliance behavior among street vendors requires that urban councils have a holistic understanding of the complex factors that influence non-compliance behavior among street vendors. The literature has extensively covered personal, psychosocial, economic, social, and environmental factors that drive people into street vending and non-compliance, but literature has gaps on how macroeconomic policies can be used as a motivational tool to promote behavioral change among street vendors, especially on issues such as keeping their environment clean and serving adequately prepared food. Additionally, there is also a research gap on the lived experiences of street vendors, especially women, and how social policies have impacted their livelihoods. Finally, the literature has gaps on how politics, policy, and social welfare interact to form non-compliant behavior among street vendors, particularly in the African context.

Implications for Stakeholders.

Results of this desk research showed that the demographics of street vendors are people who are uneducated and lack proper training in sanitation and food handling procedures; that is why they end up not complying with food preparation and handling laws (Mutandwa et al, 2015). Most street vendors who are perpetrators of the conflict between street vendors and municipalities are unemployed graduates. Interventions should target this group of people. Policymakers should create policies that promote Foreign Direct Investment, local entrepreneurship, boost economic growth, and diversify the economy so as to reduce the number of people who depend on street vending for livelihoods. Policymakers should also craft policies that promote the use of digital marketplaces so that the number of people on the physical marketplace can decrease and thereby decrease the number of street vendors.

Municipalities should engage with street vendors and other stakeholders to build committees that will deal with different factors that have been identified in this study as the cause of noncompliance. Urban local governments should build strong social, economic, and political policies that make compliance easy. Noncompliance should not be caused by systemic failures, but should be due to individual choices.

Researchers should investigate the impact of economic policies, social welfare programs, and psychological well-being on street vending and non-compliance behavior so as to provide evidence-based interventions to municipalities and policymakers that are battling with the problem of non-compliant street vendors.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research should be done on the effects of macroeconomic policies, such as taxation, licensing fees, and social welfare programs, on street vending and non-compliance behavior. Future research should also be done on the impact of social policies as a motivator for compliant behavior. Finally, future research should also be done on the extent to which municipalities have neglected the enforcement of street vending laws in exchange for votes.

4. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this systematic literature review used the PRISMA guidelines to search the JSTOR, Google Scholar, Elicit, and Consensus databases for studies that have a low risk of bias. Risk of bias in studies was assessed using the JBI critical appraisal tools. This review synthesized results from book chapters, qualitative studies, quantitative studies, mixed studies, cohort studies, cross-sectional studies, and many others. The literature showed that noncompliance behavior, which is the root cause of social conflict between street vendors and municipalities, is caused by a combination of personal, psychological, social, political, and economic factors. It has been recommended that municipalities, policymakers, and researchers should work on holistic interventions to address this problem. Future research should target the influence of social welfare, economic policies, and political strategies on street vendors and how these motivate street vendors to comply or not to comply.

5. FUNDING

This research paper received no internal or external funding.

6. ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We would like to thank the librarian, Mrs. Mwapa, for her invaluable support in the literature search; Mr. Dube for technical support with Raya software; the peer reviewers for their constructive criticism of this work; and Ms. Sithatshisiwe Vuma for her proofreading services.

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