

# Coverage of Small-Scale Trade Issues by Print Media in Zambia: The Case of the Daily Nation

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**ABSTRACT:** The topic of this research paper is coverage of small-scale trade issues by print media in Zambia: The Case of the Daily Nation. This study aimed at determining the coverage of small-scale trade issues in the Daily Nation Newspaper in Lusaka of Zambia. Furthermore, the study examined the amount of space given to the report on the small-scale trade issues, the importance of the issues and how stories about the small-scale trade issues were framed in the newspapers. The study used content analytical and cross-sectional study design and data was collected using questionnaires and a key informant interview guide. The researchers used random and purposive sampling of respondents. The data was analysed both qualitatively and quantitatively. Results show that most stories on small scale trade issues appeared only 3 to 5 times in the study newspapers. The newspaper did not provide more space for the small-scale traders as most reports were with large font size with about 75 percent while only a few had the least large font size stories with 25 percent. The study concluded that the small-scale trade issues were not given adequate coverage during the period of study. The paper recommends that Zambian print media should consider small scale trade issues weighty enough for prominent, positive and frequent coverage to ensure its growth and promotion in Zambia.

**Key words:** coverage, small traders issues, reports, growth and promotion, economy

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## ACRONYMS

DN.....	Daily Nation
GDP.....	Gross Domestic Product
SMEs.....	Small and Medium Scale Enterprises
SNDP.....	Seventh National Development Plan
ZDA.....	Zambia Development Agency
ZNBC .....	Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation

## I. Background of the study

Generally, economic development is the primary goal of every nation in the world and small-scale businesses are regarded as the instruments of economic growth and development. Small-scale traders play a significant role in attaining the economic prosperity goal of Zambia. This growing recognition has led to the commitment of organisations such as the World Bank Group (WBG) on the small-scale enterprise sector as a core element in its strategy to foster economic growth, employment and poverty alleviation (Ayyagari et al, 2007). Thus, small scale traders are rekindling a strong competitive business environment which has consequently introduced innovation, production, technology,

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creation of new markets. This has also led to the engagement of the media or economic journalism which help to cover the small-scale trade issues by disseminating information through telling success stories of the sector. Therefore, the media possess the power and the tools to bring up issues to the public domain through its agenda-setting power. It is one of the major tools that business organisations use to direct persuasive communication to the public and more specifically to the target buyers (Ezegwu and Abamba, 2019).

Scholars such as Owolabi (2014) have argued that developing the mass media industry is an innovative approach to facilitate the improvement of the small-scale business environment and is a part of a shift in the way poverty reduction programmes are implemented by development practitioners. However, according to Ashong and Umoh (2013), the media do not give the necessary attention to the coverage of small-scale trade in Zambia and in Africa. It is observed that the amount of coverage and degree of prominence given to small scale trade or small scale and medium enterprises and related issues are not strong enough to translate to national development or attain the economic prosperity goal of countries in Africa. It is argued that the media predetermine what issues are regarded as important at a given time in a given society. This goes to show that issues not raised by the media or brought up in the public domain rarely form part of the agenda for public discourse.

In Zambia, following liberalization in 1991, the country's attention turned to the private sector. This opened up the economy into a market economy which led to the growth in the number of small-scale trades across many sectors. There has since been an increase in the number of registered small-scale traders in the country with still a large proportion of them operating as unregistered businesses. The major areas of concentration for the Zambian small-scale trades include services, retailing, agriculture, small-scale mining, transport, education, hospitality and food, tourism, transport, technical skills and technology, among others. Despite the increase in the number of small-scale trade and its significance to the economy, the media in Zambia has not been adequate in as far as coverage of small-scale trade is concerned. It is not strong enough to translate to national development or attain the economic prosperity goal of the nation (Chewe, 2020).

Further, Zambia is endowed with an array of both public and private, print as well as electronic. With the Zambia Daily Mail, Times of Zambia, Daily Nation and the Mast featuring in both print and electronic domains. The newspaper industry in Zambia has been struggling with low circulation in numbers and this could be influenced by many factors one of them being political parallelism which may determine the design of the newspaper and the agenda in the newspaper. This state is crucial in covering trade issues be it at a global regional or domestic level (Ilunga, 2013). In addition, the Zambian government still attaches importance to trade at different levels in the chain as stipulated in the newly launched Seventh National Development Plan 2017-2021 (7NDP) that; To facilitate import and export trade, efforts will be directed towards ensuring that all trade activities take place in an efficient, transparent and predictable manner. Particularly, attention is to be paid to realigning and integrating the roles and procedures of border agencies, simplifying small-scale trading, providing supportive systems and infrastructure and developing trade corridors (Ministry of National Planning and Development, 2017).

Furthermore, the performance and effectiveness of small-scale traders as an instrument of economic growth and development in Zambia has long been under scrutiny. This intense scrutiny has been against the backdrop of the low media coverage of small-scale traders. Thus, the promotion of such enterprises in developing economies like Zambia is of paramount importance since it brings about a great distribution of income and wealth, economic self-dependence among other things. Although the media have played important roles in the various phases of Zambia socio-economic planning, it is not clear whether Zambian print media or newspapers, in their reports, have given adequate attention and prominence to the coverage of small-scale trade. The print media should be seen to assist business organisations like makeshift businesses (Ntemba) with access to information for them to be in a competitive position and even to enter new business areas other than only communicating trade issues of big businesses (Chewe, 2020). It was against this backdrop that this research gained impetus to review the commitment of the print media to communicating trade issues of small-scale trade in Zambia.

### **1.2 Aim of the paper**

This paper aims to determine coverage of small-scale trade issues in the Daily Nation in Zambia.

### **Specific Objectives of the paper**

The specific objectives of this paper are to:

- ❖ examine the amount of space given by Daily Nation to report on the small-scale trade issues in Zambia.
- ❖ examine the importance of small-scale trade issues to the Daily Nation in Zambia.
- ❖ assess how stories on issues of small-scale trade are framed in the Daily Nation Newspaper in Zambia.

## **II. Interim Literature Review**

### **2.1.1 Small Scale Trade**

The major determinants are the number of employees; capital size and turnover. Any discussion on micro and small businesses should start with an understanding of what is meant by small and medium enterprises. There is no standard, universal definition of micro, small and medium enterprises. Different agencies have defined different parameters like sales, some employees working, investment in plants and machinery. The Group Small and Medium Enterprise Department of the World Bank considers “number of employees” as the criterion for identification of small-scale trade or business enterprise. Zambia Development Agency (2017) defines small scale trade in developing countries based on the number of employees in an enterprise. A small enterprise has between 5 and 19 workers and takes the example of the ubiquitous small shops in the cities such as hairdressing salons and chop bars. Irrespective of the level of development of an economy, a significant proportion of small-scale traders are found in the informal sector or the shadow economy (Kulemeka et al., 2015).

### **2.1.2 Media Coverage**

The term media coverage is used to refer to any reporting, recording, broadcasting, narrowcasting or any type of digital content reporting. Gaining media coverage for small scale trade is important to provide the enterprise and its activities with credibility that has a lot to do with the thoughts processes of the public which monitor and consume the media each day (Baran, 2009).

### **2.1.3 Printing Media**

Print media is the type of media communication in which news and information are made on disseminated through the printed public. It comprises magazines, newspapers, books, journals and it is very important in marketing. It has the advantage of making a longer impact on the minds of the reader with more in-depth reporting and analysis. Magazine and newspaper are the dominant traditional print media used in adverts. According to Olago Sam (1997), Newspaper provides the following advantages to small scale business enterprise advertisers in selected geographical coverage.

## **2.2 Theoretical Framework**

This subsection outlines some of the theoretical underpinnings related to the study of media coverage and small-scale trade. There are two aspects of theory related to the study which is reviewed: The agenda-setting theory and framing theory.

### **2.2.1 Framing Theory**

The foundation of the framing theory is often traced to the classic work of Erving Goffman in 1974 called “framing analysis: An essay on the organisation of experience.” He explained framing to be the method through which the mass media promote a particular definition of an issue through selection, emphasis, exclusion and elaboration. From another point of view, Hallahan (1999) says that in news media, news frames serve as journalistic tools through which journalists recount a story in a limited amount of space and place an event within its broader context. “Framing theory is focusing on how media cover various issues, what is included and what is excluded, what is the kind of language, tones, details which are used and also what are the effects of all these decisions on the readers or the audience (Gomaa, 2008). Although, previous research has provided sufficient evidence that mass media have the power to select and pack the events, to influence the way the audience perceives the surrounding reality.

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Framing is one of the media effects theories, largely used to analyse how the mass media filter information and influence the public's reactions to a whole range of external stimuli. Moreover, frames in media are key components in the study of selection and interpretation of the news. The fact that certain issues are covered by the media gives credibility and credence to such issues and further moves such issues from media agenda to public agenda (Ncube and Okoro, 2014). Framing affects how a story is told and influences public perception. One reason for this is that the public's lack of awareness; along with reliance on media for information and decision-making make them more probably to be influenced by framing. When the media place stories in specific frames, they lend a different meaning to the news (Papacharissi and Oliveria, 2008).

Azlan (2012) has analysed how the public's attitudes are shaped as a result of media framing of a subject. He states further those two factors facilitate the adoption of frames "the accessibility of an issue, and the correlation between a subject and the audience's pre-existing opinions. In other words, framing effects are not independent. In Entman's (1993) explanation of the media frame, he conceives the concept as "schemas for interpreting events" employed by the media when reporting issues (Entman, 1993). Therefore, Newspapers in Zambia through framing can promote small-scale trade issues through selection, emphasis and elaboration.

### **2.2.2 Agenda Setting Theory**

The beginning of agenda-setting theory can be traced as far as 1922 when Walter Lippmann expresses his concern on the vital role that mass media can do in influencing the setting of a certain image on the public's mind (Lippmann, 1922). The agenda-setting theory is a theory that discusses how the mass media influences making a certain issue as a public agenda. The public agenda is the main focus or prime issue which the members of the society or public are concerned about. The term agenda-setting theory is first used by McCombs and Shaw (1972). This theory elaborates the connection in terms of relationships between the emphasis that the mass media put as an issue and the media audiences or the public's reaction or attributes to such issue (Littlejohn and Foss, 2009). Therefore, the mass media can be considered responsible for influencing and shaping public opinion and agenda. Such influence of mass media on the public agenda or opinion can happen intentionally or unintentionally.

According to Omego and Ochonogor (2013), the media determine issues and their importance to the public through the prominent treatment of those issues in their agenda over some time, in order to make the audience believe that the issues are, indeed, important. In other words, the media determine for the people what issues are considered important through the emphasis they place on those issues. Invariably, this theory was relevant to this investigation because it is determining whether the small-scale trade issues are important to be in the media (Newspaper) to make the people see the initiative as important in their informal discussion setting. Therefore, through agenda-setting theory, small-scale trade could be promoted and developed in the market business in Zambia.

## **III. Research Methodology**

### **Research Design**

This study adopted a combined content analytical and cross-sectional survey method to investigate the media coverage of small-scale trade issues by the Daily Nation Newspaper in Zambia. The content analysis was considered because the method is used to identify patterns in recorded communication. It was used to examine the amount of space given by Daily Nation Newspaper to report on the small-scale trade issues and how stories on issues of small-scale trade are framed.

### **Population of Study and sampling**

For this paper therefore, the target population included the journalists at Daily Nation Newspaper and the small-scale traders in Lusaka District. The Daily Nation Newspapers were reviewed for two months (61/62 days) beginning with October 2017. Purposive sampling was used to select key informants (journalists) for the in-depth interviews. Thus, a total of 5 key informants were selected from Daily Nation concerning their role and or speciality in the area of editing, marketing, communicating or reporting and or advertising trade-related stories. The 5 key informants included an editor, 2 business reporters and 2 marketing personnel. Systematic random sampling was used to select the small scale traders. The researchers selected two sampling techniques depending on the characteristics of the population and also

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aimed at having representation of all the different target populations. From a total of 15, 000 small scale traders, the researchers sampled two percent of the population which is 300 participants.

### Data Collection Instruments

The researchers used interviews with key informants and questionnaires with other stakeholders like council officers' officials of small to medium enterprises and focus group discussion with small scale traders get information from respondents

## IV. Presentation of findings

### 4.1 Demographic Information of the Respondents

This section of the paper deals with the main characteristics of the respondents. The background information of respondents was necessary and important because the ability of the respondents to give satisfactory information on the study variables greatly depended on their age, gender and length of stay. The background information of respondents solicited data on the samples and this has been presented below categorized into gender, age and length of operation in Lusaka.

#### 4.1.1 Response Rate

Table 1: Response Rate

Category	Sample size	Respondents	percent
Daily Nation staff (journalists)	5	5	100
Small Scale traders	300	300	100
Grand Total	305	305	100

The response rate was high as the researcher managed to reach 100 percent of the targeted sample. Table 1 shows the response rate which translates to 100 percent of the total population size.

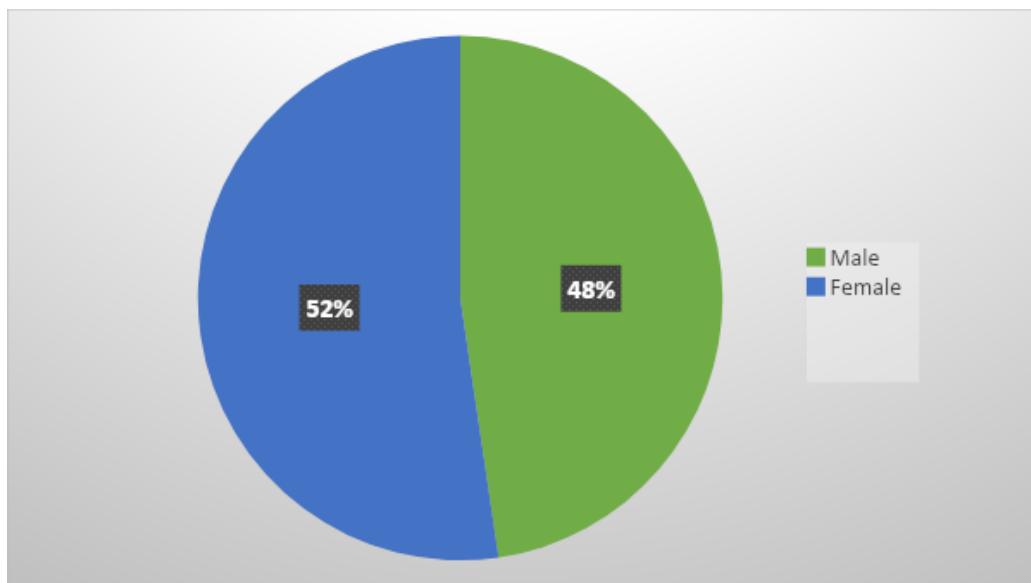


Figure 1: Gender of the Respondents.

The figure shows that the majority of the respondents were females representing 52 percent (157 respondents) while 48 percent (143 respondents) were males. This, therefore, means most of the small-scale traders interviewed were females. It therefore entails that most of the small scale traders are predominantly female.

**Table 2: Age characteristics of the respondents.**

Age Range		Frequency	Percent
	18-25	49	16.33
	26-35	98	32.67
	36-45	81	27.00
	46-55	35	11.67
	56 and above	37	12.33
	<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>

The figure shows the age of the respondents. According to the table, 32.7 percent of the total respondents were aged between 26 and 35 years, 27 percent were aged between 36 and 45 years, 16.3 were aged between 18 and 25 years, 12.3 percent were aged between 56 and above years and only 11.7 percent of the were aged between 46 and 55. This indicates that the majority of the respondents were in the age group between 26 and 35 years. It can therefore be concluded that the majority of small scale traders are within the 26 to 45 age group. Beyond the age of 46, the numbers of small scale traders seem to go down. The reason for this could be that the work is hectic and demanding therefore makes it harder for that age group to remain in this business.

**Table 3: Length of operation in Lusaka**

Length of stay (years)	Number of Respondents	Percentage
<b>1 to 3</b>	51	17.00
<b>4 to 6</b>	73	24.33
<b>7 to 9</b>	62	20.67
<b>10 and more</b>	114	38.00
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>

From table 3 above, it can be deduced that the majority of small-scale traders representing 38 percent operated for 10 and more years in Lusaka, followed by 24.3 percent of those that operated for the period between 4 and 6 years, then 20.7 percent of those that operated for the period between 7 and 9 years and lastly, only 17 percent of the respondents operated for the period between 1 and 3 years. This data is important as those small-scale traders who have operated for many years could have sufficient information and are well versed with the coverage and how the media treats the issues concerning small scale traders. From the above it can be said that over 58% of the small scale traders have been in this business for between 7and more years and this implies that this kind of business pays off and these people have been able to support their families through university education by carrying out this work.

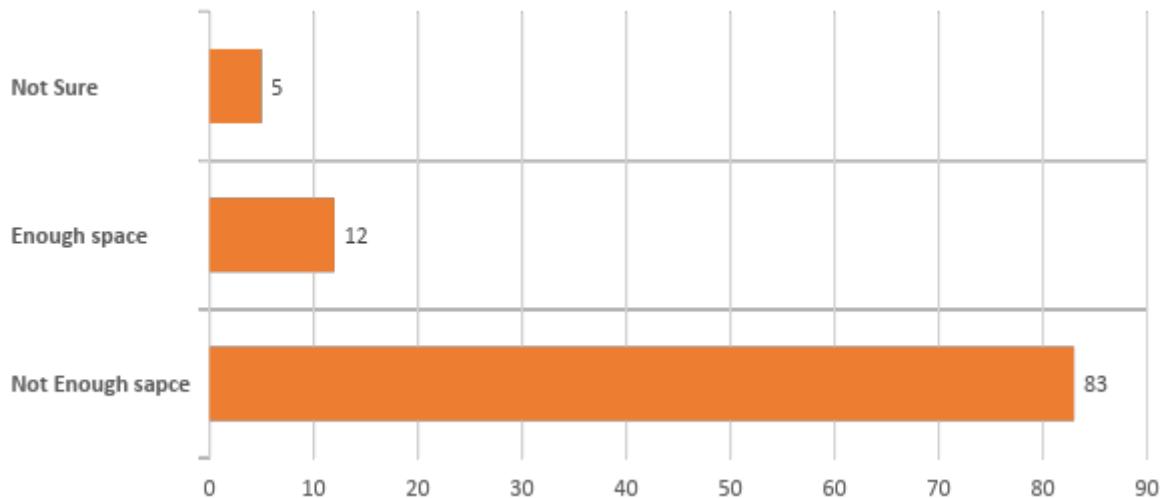
#### **4.2 The Media Coverage of Small-Scale Traders**

##### **4.2.1 The amount of space given by Daily Nation to report on the small-scale trade issues**

To confirm the object, the researchers reviewed the Daily Nation newspapers for 2 months representing 61 days. According to the criteria of determining the adequate coverage of small-scale trade issues in the print media, it was discovered that most of the small-scale trade issues in the Daily Nation newspapers were tucked inside the pages of the newspapers. Out of 61 newspapers reviewed about 45 newspapers had items that appeared on the inside pages. This, therefore, indicates that the newspapers did not give prominence to the coverage of small-scale trade issues in Zambia.

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Further, it was discovered that the amount of space given to report on small scale trade issues by Daily Nation was not adequate as information from the reviewed newspapers indicate that most stories on small scale trade issues appeared 3 to 5 times in the study newspapers. In addition, much space (depth of coverage) was not given to the small-scale traders as most of the reports covered large enterprises.



**Figure 2: The amount of space given to the small-scale trade issues**

To further determine the amount of space given to the small-scale trade issues, respondents were asked whether the small-scale trade issues were given more space in the print media such as the Daily Nation Newspaper and give reasons. According to 83 percent of small-scale traders interviewed strongly indicated that the newspaper were failing to provide more space for the small-scale traders while 12 percent of the respondents indicated that the print media provided more space for small scale traders and only 5 percent of the respondents were not sure on the matter.

Those respondents who indicated that the newspaper did not provide more space to the small-scale trade issues strongly argued that the Daily Nation newspaper gives more space to large and more established enterprises and businesses. Furthermore, these respondents allege that maybe the established enterprises pay the journalists to write more about those enterprises than theirs. Most of the news or stories are about political issues. On the other hand, most of those respondents who indicated that the print media provided more space for small scale traders argued that The Daily Nation surpasses most of the newspapers in articulating the needs and challenges facing the small-scale traders in Zambia.

On the contrary, according to the journalists at Daily Nation:

*the newspaper broadly covers economic matters and in almost every edition of the paper, there is always an article about issues that deal with small-scale traders. There is a column, which is dedicated for small-scale traders daily and also weekly thereby giving good coverage of matters.*

Moreover, according to the Editor of the Daily Nation,

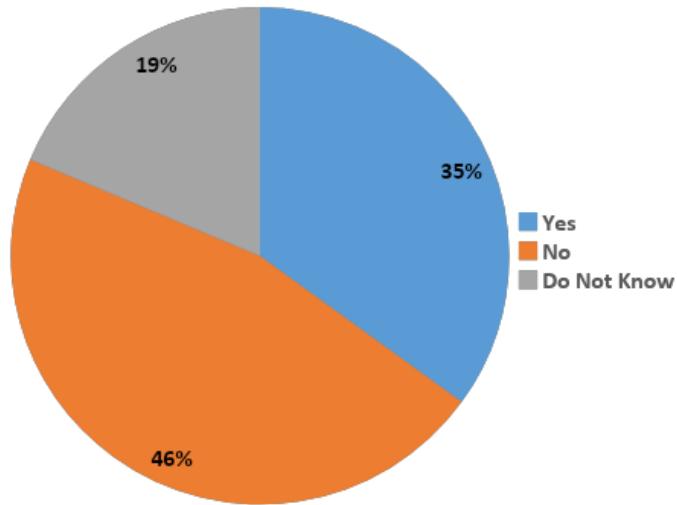
*the newspaper has been playing a significant role in promoting and projecting issues that affect the small-scale traders and this has brought matters concerning this sector to the fore so that the population becomes aware of the events and issues affecting small-scale traders and what the government of the day is doing.*

### 4.2.2 The importance of small-scale trade issues to the Daily Nation.

To determine the importance of small-scale trade issues by the Daily Nation newspaper, data was generated from the Daily Nation newspaper. From the data gathered, it was observed the newspaper studied did not consider small scale trade issues more important. This is to the fact that the newspaper had most reports with large font size with about 75

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percent while only a few has the least large font size stories with 25 percent. Therefore, it can be deduced that the newspapers attached less importance to small scale trade issues in Zambia.



**Figure 3: The amount of space given to the small-scale trade issues**

To further determine the importance of small-scale trade issues by the Daily Nation newspaper, small scale traders were asked whether the Daily Nation print media adequately covered small scale trade issues and further give a reason. According to the results in the table, 46 percent of the respondents were of the strong view that the newspaper did not cover the small scale adequately while 35 percent agreed that the newspaper covered the small-scale trade issues adequately. Further, only a small fraction representing 19 percent did not know and were not sure. The reasons for their not knowing is that they said they have no time to read nor follow what the newspapers write.

Those who disagreed were of the view that the small-scale trade issues were not considered important by the Daily Nation to be given more coverage than the soccer, politics and lifestyle stories. Whereas those who agreed strongly believed that the issues of small-scale trade were properly covered and with more accuracy and much depth. Some of them feel that Daily Nation is better unlike other newspapers, which do not give prominence to the issues and challenges facing the small-scale traders.

Furthermore, according to the Journalists interviewed at Daily Nation, the plight of small-scale traders was also given so much prominence, as a result, the government was forced to act to improve a lot of the people in this sector. Collateral security with regards to the funding of their businesses was a major hindrance and that a bank specifically meant for small scale traders was necessary to cater for them. Further, said that the small-scale traders have been producing quality products of various types. "This evidenced by some products being displayed in various stores like Shoprite, Game stores, Pick n Pay, Cheers supermarket and many more across the country". However, some journalists said that "these traders need to adopt many marketing strategies so that they reach wider market beyond Lusaka. A major challenge they have been facing is lack of marketing strategies, as they mostly tend to sell their products to customers who come to their places".

### 4.2.3 Stories on issues of small-scale trade are framed in the Daily Nation Newspaper

To determine how issues of small-scale trade are framed in the Daily Nation newspaper, data was generated and reviewed from the Daily Nation newspaper. From the data gathered, it was observed the newspaper studied did not present small scale trade issues in Zambia within a context that accorded a positive frame to the subject matter. In other words, the framing of small-scale trade issues by the newspaper studied was not such that could elicit a positive disposition. The newspaper did not promote and encourage small scale trade issues but rather promoted the well-established or large-scale traders in Lusaka.

**Table 4: Category of Newspapers Reports on Small Scale Trade Issues in the Daily Nation Newspaper**

Variables	Frequency	Percent
Straight News	23	38
Features	15	25
Editorial	8	13
Columns	15	25
Cartoons	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>100</b>

To further determine how issues of small-scale trade are framed in the Daily Nation newspaper, data was also generated from the Daily Nation newspaper. According to the table above most categories of the reports on small scale trade was the straight news format representing 38 percent followed by those reports presented in features and columns representing 25 percent each, the editorial was 13 percent while the column was 0 percent. This therefore shows that the most predominant genre of report on small scale trade issues in the newspapers was the straight news format with higher items than editorial. This reveals that small scale trade issues reportage was largely in the category of news format with the lack of depth associated with it.

## **V. Conclusion**

The study has determined the coverage of small-scale trade issues in the Daily Nation in Lusaka of Zambia. The study examined the amount of space given to the report on the small-scale trade issues, the importance of the issues and how stories about the small-scale trade issues were framed in the Daily Nation Newspapers. Despite the economic significance of small-scale traders in Zambia, seemingly, the issues of small-scale trade do not attract much print media recognition. This is evident from the findings reported in the study. It was discovered that newspapers did not give prominence to coverage of small-scale trade issues. However, the coverage given to small scale trade issues by the print media in Zambia lacks the propensity to spur readers or potential entrepreneurs to establish small and medium scale enterprises as a means of solving the economic problems. Most reports on small scale trade issues were negatively framed; the dominant format with which the Daily Nation newspapers presented small scale trade issues was straight news report format.

## **6.2 Recommendations**

- ¶ Based on the findings of this study, the researchers would want to make the following recommendations:
- ¶ There should be an increased keenness by Zambian newspapers to deploy content in the light of framing, to uphold and encourage interest in establishing small-scale traders. This can be done if newspapers in Zambia create copious avenues through the dedication of more news holes for letters, columns, interviews, opinions and features.
- ¶ Zambian newspapers should strive to consider small scale trade issues weighty enough for prominent, positive and frequent coverage. This would facilitate its economic growth and development in Zambia.
- ¶ Government should encourage media organizations to give prominence to the informal traders by allowing weekly programs where they feature various categories of small-scale industries to be showcased.
- ¶ To give readers and other stakeholders more say, deeper involvement, the newspapers or journalists in Zambia should go beyond repeater of occurrences (straight news), but they should be able to provide additional information, interpretation and contexts to issues being covered.
- ¶ Zambian newspapers should use their editorial columns as platforms to constructively engage in advocacy geared towards promoting and repositioning the informal sector.

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