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Online Media Effects and Coping Strategies Among Newspaper Peddlers in Sumbawanga Municipality-Rukwa Region

Luhuvilo Lupondo^{1*}, Africanus Sarwatt¹, Fadhili Ngalawa²

¹Department of Rural Development and Regional Planning,

²Department of Development Finance and Management Studies

Institute of Rural Development Planning P. O. Box 138, Dodoma, Tanzania

*Corresponding author email: llupondo@irdp.ac.tz

ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p>Keywords</p> <p>Online media effects</p> <p>Newspapers</p> <p>Newspaper peddlers</p> <p>Newspaper companies</p>	<p>This study examined the effects of online media on the well-being of printed newspaper peddlers and the coping strategies they adopt to improve their livelihoods in Sumbawanga Municipality. The study addressed two specific objectives: (1) to determine the socio-economic effects of online media on the well-being of printed newspaper peddlers and (2) to identify the coping strategies adopted by peddlers in response to the rise of online media. Data were collected through interviews, observation and documentary reviews from 108 purposively selected newspaper peddlers at distribution offices. Descriptive statistical methods (thematic analysis, multiple response analysis) and inferential statistical analysis (multiple linear regression) were employed in the analysis. On effects of the online media to the wellbeing of peddlers, the results indicate that newspaper sales ($p = 0.025$), income status ($p = 0.016$), job security ($p = 0.003$), stress and anxiety ($p = 0.003$), and social isolation ($p = 0.001$) all yielded p-values less than the conventional threshold of 0.05. This indicates that there is a statistically significant relationship between each of these variables and the overall well-being of newspaper peddlers. To cope with these challenges, peddlers have adopted strategies such as home and office delivery of newspapers, community engagement, business partnerships, and diversification into other printed products like and pre-primary school books. The study concludes that the decline of printed media due to online alternatives has had a notable effect on the socio-economic well-being of newspaper peddlers. To sustain their relevance, newspaper companies are advised to focus on local stories that are less likely to be found online. Additionally, peddlers should strengthen their delivery systems and expand their product range to meet changing consumer needs and remain competitive in the digital age.</p>

1.0. Introduction

Online media refers to digital content that is accessed via the internet, including websites, social media platforms, blogs, online news outlets, and streaming services. It encompasses both the tools used to distribute content (such as websites and apps) and the content itself (like videos, articles, and podcasts). Online media is characterized by its immediacy, interactivity, and ability to reach a global audience (Lievrouw and Livingstone, 2006). Examples of online media are news websites (e.g., BBC News, The Guardian, Mwananchi Digital); Social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, Twitter/X, Instagrams), Online video platforms (e.g., YouTube, TikTok); Blogs and vlogs (e.g., WordPress blogs,

personal news channels); Online radio and podcasts; and Email newsletters and e-magazines (TCRA, 2024).

Printed media refers to traditional forms of mass communication that are published in hard copy format and distributed to the public. This includes newspapers, magazines, books, brochures, newsletters, and other publications that are physically printed on paper. Printed media is typically used for information dissemination, advertising, and educational purposes, and it has been a primary medium of communication before the rise of digital technologies (Hiebert et al., 2001).

The role of online media, as opposed to printed media, is significant in the fast and widespread dissemination of information. Online media offers several key advantages over printed media. First, it provides instant access, allowing information to be published and accessed in real time, which keeps audiences updated with current events much faster than daily or weekly print cycles. Additionally, unlike print, online platforms support videos, audio, infographics, and hyperlinks, enhancing user engagement and understanding through interactive and multimedia content. Furthermore, online content often reaches larger audiences across geographical boundaries at a lower cost. Finally, online media encourages greater customer engagement, as audiences can comment, share, and react to content instantly, making information flow more interactive and democratic (Deuze, 2008; Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010; Pavlik, 2013).

Printed media, especially printed newspapers, provide employment opportunities beyond the field of journalism. One prominent example is newspaper peddling, which has provided informal employment particularly for individuals with low levels of education. This activity offered a consistent source of daily income, typically earned through either commission based arrangements or profit margins on each newspaper sold.

The number of online publications worldwide has increased from 2 million in 2010 to 3.3 million in 2022, with China and India accounting for more than half of that increase. However, global print magazine and newspaper revenues are expected to decrease from \$127.2 billion in 2023 to \$110.6 billion by 2027 (Hassan and Khouj, 2023). However, the invasion of online media has resulted in the community shifting from printed newspapers to online media. With the rise of digital media, many newspaper and magazine dealers have struggled to adapt to the new digital landscape. The printed newspaper industry has to find ways in which to capture the current technology; however, the threat of online media to printed media in developing countries is growing faster (Kalombe and Phiri, 2019).

Tanzania's online media landscape has experienced significant growth. The country now hosts 231 online television stations and 67 online radio stations, reflecting a substantial increase from previous years. Additionally, there are 64 active blogs and online news sites, indicating a vibrant digital media environment. Internet penetration has also seen remarkable progress, reaching 72% of the population. This surge is attributed to a steady rise in active internet subscriptions, which

have grown by 8% each quarter since June 2024. The number of SIM cards used for internet services has increased by 70% over the past four years, from 29 million to over 49.3 million (TCRA, 2025).

The Internet has become the catalyst for using ICT tools for spreading information worldwide. Plainly, it poses many strategic and searching questions for information users, information professionals and the information industry alike. However, there is little detailed knowledge on how it has affected other businesses especially printed newspaper businesses and their peddlers. The media industry, which includes both electronic formats has experienced rapid growth within the last two decades, leading to increased competition (Hassan and Khouj, 2023).

In Tanzania, social media has a great potential to empower ordinary citizens in decision making on matters relating to their lives (Mfaume, 2019). Internet penetration in Tanzania stood at 29.1% with 6.75 million active social media users (19% of the population) (TCRA, 2024). Out of all social media platforms in Tanzania, Facebook holds the largest market share (57.32%), followed by YouTube (12.37%), Pinterest (10.90%), Instagram (9.79%), and Twitter/X (7.11%) (StatCounter, 2025).

Other popular social media platforms in Tanzania include Jamii Forums, Milard Ayo blog, and other sites with added social media features include newspaper sites such as The Citizen, Mwananchi, Azam and Global Publishers (Masele and Magova, 2017). TCRA (2025) revealed that the internet and social media platforms in the country are used for various purposes, including chatting, data search, events locating, information exchanging, skills development and entertainment through photographs, audio, video, texts and other formats. The most used social media platforms for chatting in Tanzania include WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, Skype, Snapchat, We Chat, Telegram, and Viber (Staticounter, 2025).

The above statistics reveal that the transition from traditional newspapers to digital has also been reported in Tanzania. The transition minimizes the risk of corruption among journalists, particularly brown envelope journalism. Designed to copy and share digital content, be that code, email, or files, it was only a matter of time before, as we see today, everything online is fairly free, easily copied, immediately shared, and available even if/when governments or companies want it taken down.

Printed newspapers have long provided essential societal benefits such as education, entertainment, information, enlightenment, awareness creation,

and public warning. These functions not only enriched the general public but also generated employment opportunities across various segments of the traditional media value chain. Jobs such as newspaper peddlers, vendors, delivery personnel, print technicians, editors, and journalists were integral to the daily operations and distribution of print media. In particular, newspaper peddlers played a crucial role in last-mile distribution, ensuring that information reached even remote communities. These jobs contributed significantly to the well-being of workers by providing regular income, daily social interactions, and a sense of purpose and identity (TCRA, 2024).

For many peddlers, the occupation served as both a livelihood and a gateway to informal entrepreneurship. However, the advent and rapid growth of online media have posed a serious threat to the sustainability of these roles. As readership shifts to digital platforms, the decline in print circulation jeopardizes the economic and social stability that these traditional media jobs once offered (Ester, 2024). The long process of gathering, processing, printing and distributing newspapers threatens the survival of most printed newspapers (Arakaza and Mcfarlane, 2023).

Today in Tanzania, few people read printed newspapers. There is a decrease in use day to day user penetration is anticipated to be 5.9% in 2024 and is projected to decrease to 4.6% by 2029 (SMI, 2024). Therefore, the trend indicates that the printed newspaper readers are decreasing; also, this has resulted in a decrease of printed newspaper business for most peddlers. Therefore, this study assessed the effects of online media on wellbeing of printed newspaper peddlers in Sumbawanga Municipality and coping strategies adopted by peddlers as an alternative to printed newspaper.

In conducting the study on the effects of online media on printed newspapers and peddlers' well-being, the Economic Model of Media was adopted. This model examines the financial implications of shifting consumer behaviour from print to online media, highlighting how advertising revenue has migrated to digital platforms, thereby impacting the sustainability of printed newspapers (Picard, 2002).

Additionally, the study reviewed the Diffusion of Innovations Theory, proposed by Everett Rogers, which explains how new ideas and technologies

spread across a population. In the context of newspapers, this theory helps to understand how digital platforms have transformed news consumption patterns, leading to the decline of print circulation as audiences increasingly adopt online news formats (Rogers, 2003).

Tanzania information and broadcasting policy was also reviewed, indicating that online media has an impact on digital transition: The rise of digital media has shifted some readership away from printed publications, leading to economic pressures on traditional media outlets. This automatically changes customers' demand from printed media to online media (URT, 2003).

The study conducted by Johnand Kokwijuka (2020) on the impact of social media on traditional media in Tanzania found that the invasion of online media has reduced sales for peddlers due to the decrease in newspaper circulation and advertising space. Another study conducted by Lindgren (2017) revealed that internet users are freely connected to various genres that can arouse curiosity through the millions of narratives offered online. According to "Publishing and the Media Industries in the Digital Age," print media is unlikely to exist for a prolonged period because consumers are starting to switch to digital media instead of buying newspapers, books, or magazines, given that digital media uniquely attracts readers in terms of how news is presented.

A similar study by Pinem (2023) on the spillover effects of online media on printed media by alternative media in Germany revealed that many printed media peddlers have shifted to alternative media, such as brochures. The first case deals with the outrage surrounding a brochure published in September 2018 by the Amadeu Antonio Stiftung (AAS). The brochure served as advice for day-care centers on how to deal with children from far-right parents (Jungherr et al., 2019).

Another study by Tonui (2020) in Kenya revealed that online media has led to a decline in print newspapers. The decline in printed media particularly affects rural areas and communities, resulting in a loss in community conversation, social capital, and governance improvements. As new media platforms like online news sources and social media gain prominence due to their speed, accessibility, and cost-effectiveness, traditional print media struggles to keep up with the evolving information landscape, ultimately limiting the reach and effectiveness of information dissemination. Generally, in many countries, printed newspaper revenues are dropping steadily

as advertising spending shifts online. (Furman, 2024).

Borishade (2022), in his study "The Graceful Decline of Print Media: Opportunities and Challenges," revealed that "when one rises, one falls; when one falls, another rises." While this quote may not be true in every situation, it applies to print media. The rise of the internet has brought many benefits to the world, and there is no debate about that. However, in journalism, those involved with print media are negatively affected (falling), as their income has also suffered due to the inability of traditional media to compete with online platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram, where readers can leave likes and comments on news content. One pertinent issue that digital media has introduced is the increased dissemination of misinformation or "fake news," as noted by USA President Donald Trump; however, there is less need for firms to print as many newspapers because there is a higher demand for online news updates. (Borishade, 2022).

Mubofu (2022) on his study on the effects of online media on printed media in Dar es Salaam ; online media has resulted in unemployment for some peddlers. Some printed media organizations in Tanzania are facing financial constraints due to declining sales, leading to layoffs. For example, The Guardian staff members were asked to reduce their personal allowances and perks to sustain the organization, and the situation is even worse for community radios (AMB, 2015; MCT, 2017; MCT, 2019b). Up to 80 percent of the country's journalists work as freelancers, earning very little for their media work. Many only write reports about organizations or events if they are paid to do so by their sources. Even journalists in full-time employment are susceptible to this issue due to low remuneration (AMB, 2015). Moreover, New Habari, publishers of Mtanzania, Bingwa, and Rai newspapers, retrenched some of their workers (Mubofu, 2022).

The study conducted in Nigeria on common strategies adopted by newspaper peddlers due to the invasion of online media found that peddlers diversified their revenue streams by also adding selling other printed materials like religion books (Das and Sengupta, 2012). Another study was done by John and John (2020) reported the coping strategies of peddlers due to online media was that many newspaper peddlers shifted to selling magazines and storybooks. In addition, the findings show that newspaper readers had shifted from analogue to a digital society as a whole.

Another study was conducted by Mubofu (2022) and revealed that due to the emergence of online media, some peddlers started to use digital media platforms such as news websites, blogs and social media channels as an alternative way of using printed newspapers. The invasion of online media has not affected only printed newspaper peddlers but also in higher learning institutions, government offices and other organizations. Only a small proportion of printed research reports, newspapers and books are accessible (Masele and Rwehikiza 2021). This situation changed consumers' needs, and then also printed media peddlers shifted and put much effort into other businesses.

Another study was conducted in Mwanza by Nyaga (2014) that revealed that, due to the emergence of online media, most of printed newspaper peddlers established small shops and dealt with digital mobile transactions (World Bank, 2019).

The study done by Mwidina and Nyoni (2019) that sought to determine the contribution of social media to the spread of printed newspaper stories in Tanzania. The study purposely selected the three newspapers: Mwananchi, Daily News, and the Citizen. The findings revealed that printed newspaper peddlers adopted social media as a means of marketing their printed media and made a significant contribution to increase sales of printed newspapers and contributed to revenue generation from the printed newspapers. Therefore, many peddlers adopted social media to attract customers to printed newspapers.

While previous studies have extensively documented the contribution of online media to information accessibility, user engagement, and the transformation of media consumption patterns (e.g., Mubofu, 2022; John, 2020 and Borishade, 2022), there remains a notable gap in the literature concerning this transition, particularly for individuals operating in the informal media distribution sector, such as newspaper peddlers. Existing research tends to emphasize the benefits of digital media for consumers and media houses, often overlooking how the digital shift disrupts traditional livelihoods. Specifically, limited scholarly attention has been given to the well-being of printed newspaper vendors, who face declining sales, reduced job security, and social marginalization as a result of the shift to digital platforms. This study addresses that gap by examining how variables such as income insecurity, job instability, stress, and social isolation—linked

to the decline of print media affect the overall well-being of newspaper peddlers.

2.0. Material and Methods

2.1. Description of Study Area

Sumbawanga Municipality is located in the southern highland of Tanzania. It is the capital of Rukwa Region and the municipal seat of Sumbawanga Urban District with postcode number 55100. The municipal council occupies a total area of 1329 km². The total area for town is 39.6 km², and the rural area present 1292.44km². The council lies between latitude 07048' to 08031' south of the equator and longitude 30029' to 31049' east. The district had a population of approximately 303,986 based on the 2022 census. The name of the town "Sumbawanga" literally translates as "throw away your witchcraft". The area was selected for the study due to several key factors. Firstly, it provides reliable data on the transition from printed to online media, making it suitable for analyzing trends in media consumption. Secondly, the municipality hosts a significant number of newspaper vendors and established newspaper shops, which facilitates direct access to participants involved in the distribution of printed media. Additionally, familiarity with the area offered logistical advantages in terms of access, communication, and contextual understanding. While larger towns were considered, this municipality was preferred due to its unique combination of accessibility, relevant data availability, and a well-defined network of newspaper peddlers essential for this study.

2.2. Study Design and Data Collection

The study involved a sampling size of 108 respondents who were obtained through purposive sampling technique. These major respondents were Newspaper peddlers from 5 newspapers centers shops), additionally there were key informants such as newspaper shop sellers. The cross sectional design was used to in the study.

The study adopted semi structured interviews; this approach provided a balance between having a consistent set of questions and allowing flexibility to probe further based on the peddlers' responses. An interview guide with open-ended questions was used to ensure that all key themes were covered while allowing participants to express themselves freely on how the transition from printed to online media has affected the economic, social, and psychological wellbeing of newspaper peddlers.

In this study, also observation was used as a complementary method to interviews to gain real-time insights into how the shift from printed to online media has affected the wellbeing of newspaper peddlers. The researcher employed non-participant observation, occasionally supported by participant observation, to study peddlers in their natural working environments such as bus stands, street corners, newspaper stalls, and marketplaces. observation checklist and were used to guide to observe, customer flow, the age group of clients, waiting times, peddlers' body language, signs of stress, and the adoption of alternative activities like selling airtime or offering digital news updates. Observation helped to validate verbal accounts, enrich the understanding of peddlers' daily experiences, and offer a deeper view into their economic and psychological challenges in the digital age.

In this study, documentary review was used as an important method of data collection to supplement primary sources and provide a broader understanding of how the rise of online media has impacted the wellbeing of newspaper peddlers. Relevant documents were reviewed such as, reports, and records from media organizations, municipal offices, libraries, academic publications, and newspaper distribution agencies. These documents included circulation reports, sales records, policy papers, and online readership statistics, government publications on employment and informal sectors, and previous studies on media trends. The purpose of the documentary review was to trace changes in newspaper sales volumes, monitor policy responses, and understand the historical and economic context within which peddlers operate. It also helped to identify trends in media consumption, especially the shift from print to digital platforms, and how this has influenced job stability and income generation for peddlers. Documents were selected using relevance and credibility criteria, ensuring that they were current, reliable, and aligned with the study objectives. The reviewed materials were critically analyzed to extract quantitative and qualitative information, which was then compared with findings from interviews and observations.

The documentary review played a significant role in triangulating data, validating insights from fieldwork, and filling in gaps not captured through direct interaction with respondents. This method enhanced the depth and credibility of the research by providing historical evidence, statistical support, and institutional perspectives on the

challenges faced by newspaper peddlers in the digital era.

2.3 Data Analysis

The study employed a multiple linear regression model to analyse the relationship between the dependent variable: wellbeing of newspaper peddlers (Y), and several independent variables (X1 to X7) that reflect the socio-economic effects of the shift to online media. This model controls for the influence of potential confounding variables and estimates the individual and collective effects of each factor as shown in equations 1 and 2.

General Functional Form (Equation 1):

$$Y=f(X_1, X_2, X_3,...,X_n,\varepsilon)$$

Estimated Regression Model (Equation 2):

$$Y=\beta_0+\beta_1X_1+\beta_2X_2+\beta_3X_3+\beta_4X_4+\beta_5X_5+\beta_6X_6+\beta_7X_7+\varepsilon$$

Where:

Y = Peddlers' Wellbeing
(Dependent variable)

X₁ to X₇ = Independent variables

β₀ = Intercept (constant)

β₁ = Beta coefficients (measuring the influence of each independent variable)

ε = Error term (random disturbances)

Table 3: Description and Measurement of Variables

Variable	Name	Description	Measurement Scale	Expected Effect
Y	Wellbeing	Overall wellbeing of peddlers	Composite score or level (Low, Medium, High)	+ / -
X1	NWSALEs	Newspaper sales after online media	Amount in Tanzanian Shillings	+ / -
X2	INCOME	Monthly income level	Amount in Tanzanian Shillings	+ / -
X3	JOBSECT	Job security	Ordinal scale (High = 1, Low = 0)	+ / -
X4	ACCESBAS	Access to basic needs	Dummy variable (1 = accessible, 0 = not accessible)	+ / -
X5	STREANCIET	Level of stress and anxiety	Ordinal (High = 1, Low = 0)	-
X6	ISOLATION	Social isolation level	Ordinal (Low = 0, High = 1)	-
X7	ASSETOWN	Ownership of assets	Dummy (1 = owns assets, 0 = otherwise)	+

To determine the coping strategies adopted by newspaper peddlers in response to the emergence of online media, descriptive statistical analysis, specifically the use of multiple responses was employed. This method allowed for the calculation of frequencies and percentages to capture the extent to which respondents adopted various survival strategies. The analysis provided valuable insights into the diversity and prevalence of adaptive behaviours among peddlers, offering a comprehensive understanding of how they navigate the challenges posed by digital media transformation.

3.0. Results and Discussion

3.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

3.1.1 Gender

On the aspect of gender, the table indicates that out of the total respondents, approximately 75% are males, while about 25% are females, demonstrating that newspaper peddling is predominantly a male dominated activity in the study area. This gender imbalance likely reflects broader social and economic factors. Men are often

more involved in informal, mobile, and physically demanding jobs such as newspaper vending, which require flexibility and the ability to navigate public spaces for long hours. In contrast, women may be less represented due to cultural norms, safety concerns, or their greater involvement in more flexible or home-based income-generating activities that better accommodate household responsibilities. These findings align with the observations by Chen (2012), who reported that men disproportionately dominate street vending and informal trade sectors in many developing countries, as women's participation is often constrained by societal roles and safety considerations. Thus, gender significantly influences engagement in newspaper peddling, with men forming the majority of this workforce due to a combination of social expectations and economic opportunities.

"Many females afford to deal with immobile activities, but selling newspapers requires several movements, searching for customers. In addition, the activity can be done even during the night hours." (25 September, 2024).

3.1.2. Age

The results of the study regarding the age of respondents indicate that most newspaper peddlers, around 51% are between the ages of 21 and 40. This suggests that many of them have completed secondary education and are at a stage in life where some are financially independent, while others still rely on parental support. This age group is generally active and physically capable of engaging in mobile and informal economic activities such as newspaper peddling, which often requires flexibility and stamina.

Regarding marital status, the study revealed that approximately 78% of respondents are single, suggesting that newspaper peddling is more commonly preferred by single individuals. This could be because the activity involves mobility, irregular income, and long hours, which may be less compatible with the responsibilities and stability typically required by married individuals, who may prefer work closer to home or with more predictable schedules. This observation is supported by Benería and Floro (2005), who noted that single individuals are more likely to engage in informal or mobile forms of work due to fewer household constraints.

3.1.3. Education Level

In terms of education level, the findings show that around 54% of the respondents had attained secondary education, indicating that a majority of peddlers can read and write and are therefore capable of handling newspapers in both Swahili and English. A smaller proportion had only primary education, while a few had attended college. This implies that those with secondary education have a broader ability to sell various newspaper categories, including those written in English, compared to those with limited literacy. On the other hand, individuals with higher education, such as college or university degrees, were found to be more selective in their choice of income-generating activities, often preferring opportunities with higher financial returns over short periods. As one key informant, a newspaper shop owner explained,

"Those with higher education qualifications often seek formal employment or more profitable ventures, leaving newspaper vending to those with fewer alternatives." I like to work with people who are having secondary education rather than universities because most of the people who are having higher education are too selective, they like shop work rather than mobile work." (September, 2024).

These results are consistent with findings from Kamau (2013), who observed that education levels influence the type of informal sector activities individuals engage in, with those of lower to mid-level education more likely to participate in street-based trades.

Table 4: Demographic characteristics of respondents (n=108)

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Sex		
Male	81	75
Female	27	15
Marital status		
Single	85	78
married	23	22
Age		
Below 21 years	35	32
21-30 years	55	51
31-40 years	18	17
Education level		
Primary Education	32	30
Secondary Education	58	54
Colleges and Universities	18	16

3.2. Socio-Economic Effects of Online Media to Printed Newspaper Peddlers

The proliferation of online media has brought profound socio-economic changes to the traditional print newspaper industry, particularly affecting newspaper peddlers who rely on physical newspaper sales for their livelihood. The shift in consumer preferences towards digital news platforms has led to a decline in demand for printed newspapers, resulting in reduced income and increased job insecurity for many peddlers. Beyond economic challenges, these changes have also impacted the social dynamics of peddlers' work, altering their engagement with communities and their role within local economies. Exploring the socio-economic effects of online media on printed newspaper peddlers is essential to understanding the broader implications of digital transformation on informal employment and the survival strategies these peddlers employ to adapt to a rapidly evolving media environment.

3.2.1. Newspaper Sales

The results presented in Table 5 indicate that newspaper sales had a significant effect on wellbeing, with a p-value of 0.025, which is less than the 0.05 significance level. This suggests that the invasion of online media has led to a 2.5%

decrease in the sales of printed newspapers. These findings are consistent with the study by Kalombe and Phiri (2019), which reported that most people in developing countries obtain news through online media using ICT tools such as mobile phones and computers. Therefore, the rise of digital news platforms has significantly disrupted traditional print media sales, as consumers increasingly prefer the immediacy and accessibility of online news sources. Together, these studies underscore the substantial impact of digital media on the decline of print newspaper circulation and its subsequent effects on economic wellbeing for print media stakeholders.

3.2.2. Income Status

The results from Table 5 indicate that online media have led to a decrease in the income of printed newspaper peddlers. Specifically, the p-value of 0.016 is less than the 0.05 significance threshold, suggesting a statistically significant negative relationship between the rise of online media and peddlers' income. The findings imply that as newspaper sales decline, peddlers' income decreases proportionally by approximately 16%. This result aligns with the study by Kokwijuka (2020), who investigated the impact of social media on traditional media in Tanzania and found that online media have significantly attracted consumers; as a result, they shifted away from printed newspapers, thereby shrinking the market share and income for newspaper vendors. The economic implications of this shift may include long-term economic displacement and chronic poverty, potentially affecting not only the peddlers themselves but also their families and surrounding communities

3.2.3. Job Security

The result from Table 5 indicates that job security had a statistically significant effect on peddlers' wellbeing, with a p-value of 0.003, which is significant at the 95% confidence level ($p < 0.05$). This finding implies that a majority of newspaper peddlers were rendered jobless as printing companies scaled down their operations and failed to retain them due to declining newspaper sales and reduced company income. The shift to online media has forced many print media companies to cut costs, reduce physical distribution, and lay off informal workers such as peddlers, leading to increased financial instability and rising unemployment among this group. This result is consistent with findings by Franklin (2008), who observed that the rise of digital platforms significantly disrupted traditional newspaper

business models, the same was reported by the Associated Press (2024) that major U.S. printed media outlets including the Los Angeles Times, Washington Post, and Business Insider had announced substantial layoffs, contributing to the loss of thousands of journalism and associated roles, resulting in job losses and declining job security among print media workers globally.

3.2.4. Stress and Anxiety

The findings presented in Table 5 demonstrate that the proliferation of online media has significantly contributed to psychological distress specifically stress and anxiety among newspaper peddlers. This is supported by a p-value of 0.003, which is well below the conventional significance level of 0.05, indicating a statistically significant association between the rise of online media and the mental wellbeing of newspaper vendors. The data suggest that the increasing shift of consumers toward digital news platforms has not only reduced the demand for printed newspapers but also intensified job insecurity among peddlers, many of whom rely exclusively on newspaper sales for their livelihood. The resulting uncertainty regarding income stability and future employment prospects contributes to elevated levels of stress and anxiety. These findings corroborate the work of Dongre and Singh (2024), who observed that the digital disruption of traditional media ecosystems generates substantial emotional and financial strain for informal workers whose survival is intricately tied to the print media sector.

3.2.5. Society Isolation

The result from the study indicates that online media has led to society isolation, the variable has P-value of 0.001, which is less than 0.01, indicating that most of the printed newspaper peddlers were no longer developing movements to find customers; therefore, the behavior of meeting face to face with customers erupted. This implies that as the role of newspaper peddlers diminishes, the social dynamics within neighborhoods can change, potentially leading to a loss of community cohesion. This result is in conformity with the study conducted by Dongre and Singh (2024) on the impact of digital technology on print media which revealed that online media has created social distance between community members.

3.2.6. Access to Basic Needs and Asset Ownership

The findings from Table 5 show that asset ownership ($p = 0.853$) and access to basic needs ($p = 0.223$) were not statistically significant at the 95% confidence level, indicating that these aspects of peddlers' wellbeing were not strongly tied to their income from printed newspaper sales. This suggests that many peddlers might have maintained their assets and ability to meet basic needs through alternative income sources, prior savings, or other forms of social support. This

aligns with studies in similar contexts. For instance, Kalombe and Phiri (2019) found in Zambia that despite declining print media revenues, many vendors managed to sustain their livelihood by diversifying into other streams, such as digital sales or value-added services. Similarly, Rizvi (2020) noted that while online media disrupted traditional print revenues, some individual actors, including informal vendors were able to maintain economic stability by leveraging multiple revenue channels and existing asset bases.

Table 5: Regression results : Socio- Economic effects of on line media to peddler's wellbeing

Model	Unstandardized coefficients	Standardized coefficients	t	p-value
	B	Std. error		
Constant)	-478.90	219.18		.000
Newspaper Sales	-2.78	4.34	2.243	.025
Income status	114.01	18.32	2.452	.016
Job security	9.67	3.23	2.974	.003
Access basic needs	0.471	0.178	1.212	.228
Stress and Anxiety	0.102	0.045	2.974	.003
Society Isolation	0.779	0.198	3.342	.001
Assets ownership	0.018	0.096	0.57	.853

Signif. codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05

Fitness of the model,

The model is better because is closer to 1.0 also When R^2 is high Adjusted R decreases

Model	R Square	Adjusted R square
1	0.8732	0.85643

The results from Table 3 indicate that the most independent variables included in the model were good predictors of Newspaper peddlers wellbeing such as Newspaper sales, Income status, Job security, Stress and anxiety, and society isolation because all of them were significant at $p < 0.05$) except two variables which are asset ownership and access of basic needs.

3.3. Coping Strategies Adopted by Printed Newspaper Peddlers

The rapid growth of online media has significantly disrupted the traditional print newspaper industry, leading to declining sales and reduced demand for physical newspapers. In response to this challenge, printed newspaper peddlers have adopted various coping strategies as indicated in Table 6 and figure 1, to sustain their businesses and remain competitive in the changing media

landscape. These strategies include diversification of products, leveraging digital platforms for news distribution, engaging in community events to maintain visibility, forming partnerships for cross-promotional activities, and innovatively repurposing printed materials. Understanding these adaptive measures is crucial to appreciating how informal vendors navigate the economic pressures imposed by digital transformation and continue to serve their communities despite the decline of print media.

3.3.1. Diversification of Business

Results from Table 6 indicate that the majority of newspaper peddlers diversified their businesses into other print media, such as selling magazines and books, while others expanded into non-print items such as snacks, beverages, stationery, and various small commodities. This indicates that business diversification served as a simple and rapid adaptation strategy. These findings align with the study conducted by Ita et al. (2016), which examined the economics of decline and survival strategies within the Nigerian print media industry

and found that newspaper peddlers often shifted to selling religious and story books as an alternative source of income.

One of the women peddlers revealed that...

"Since the printed newspaper business decreases, now I am selling academic books for pre- primary education students and books for nutritious information on the importance of using supplementary foods." (3rd October, 2024).

3.3.2. Social Media Interaction

The results from Table 6 indicate that some newspaper peddlers have begun utilizing digital platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, and Twitter for news distribution and audience engagement. Similarly, many print media companies have transitioned from traditional methods of disseminating information to the strategic use of social media. These platforms enable newspapers to interact directly with readers, encouraging comments, discussions, and real-time feedback. This finding aligns with the study by Ita et al. (2016), which highlighted how Nigerian newspaper vendors adopted digital tools and alternative content, such as religious and storybooks, to adapt to industry decline. Moreover, a study by Tandoc and Jenkins (2017) also revealed that social media has become a critical channel for news organizations and independent distributors in adapting to the digital environment. Their research emphasized how social media fosters participatory journalism, allowing even informal vendors and small publishers to retain relevance and reach wider audiences without relying on costly print infrastructure.

One newspaper peddler reported,

"I decided to attend ITC training so as to obtain skills of integrating printed media with social media, from now on I am getting many customers; however, at the beginning, it was difficult." (3rd October, 2024).

3.3.3. Repurposing Printed Newspapers

Results from Table 6 indicate that some newspaper peddlers have repurposed printed newspapers to manufacture paper bags, which are used for packaging various products. These paper bags are now being sold to local shops and grocery stores as an alternative packaging solution. This adaptation strategy highlights how the emergence of online media, which has reduced demand for traditional newspapers, has simultaneously created opportunities for innovation and creativity among peddlers. Similar findings were reported by Errázuriz and Greene (2021), who noted that the decline of print media consumption has led to

entrepreneurial reuse of paper materials in urban economies.

3.3.4. Home or Office Delivery

The results of the study revealed that following the rise of online media, most customers of printed media shifted their demand towards digital platforms, as indicated in Table 6 and Figure 1. Consequently, some newspaper peddlers adapted by delivering newspapers directly to customers' homes or offices to retain their clientele. This strategy reflects customers' preference for timely and cost-effective service. Moreover, home or office delivery benefits customers by eliminating transportation costs and providing convenience. The findings also suggest that regular delivery schedules and discount offers play a significant role in attracting and maintaining customers (Errázuriz and Greene, 2021). Similarly, a study by Smith and Anderson (2019) found that personalized delivery services and flexible purchasing options significantly increase customer satisfaction and loyalty in print media distribution. Their research highlights the importance of convenience and cost savings as key factors influencing consumers' decisions to continue using traditional media in an increasingly digital environment. One of peddler reported...

"I always visit my customers at their offices can be private or public offices to sell my newspaper, I also visit to different shops for selling newspaper." (10th October, 2024).

3.3.5. Community Engagement

The results from the table 6 indicate that most printed newspaper peddlers decided to participate in community events, accounting for approximately 24% of cases, to ensure the visibility of printed newspapers within the community. This indicates that youth involved in distributing printed newspapers attend ceremonies and gatherings with the intention of attracting customers. Often, people purchase newspapers due to their availability and visibility at such events. Moreover, when peddlers actively participate in community activities, there is a greater chance of retaining customers and enhancing interaction between peddlers and readers. These findings are supported by the study conducted by Katunzi and Spurk (2020), which examined media visibility in East Africa and highlighted the importance of community engagement in sustaining traditional media presence.

3.3.6. Partnerships With Other Business

The results from Table 6 and Figure 1, indicate that some newspaper peddlers are partnering with other businesses to engage in cross-promotional activities. For example, individuals involved in clothing sales may carry printed newspapers alongside their products during marketing events. This strategy attracts customers not only to the primary products but also to the newspapers being sold. Such collaboration between printed newspaper sales and other business activities suggests a viable approach to increasing sales and income for peddlers (Li, 2013). Similarly, Chen and Zhang (2017) found that cross-promotional strategies combining media products with other

consumer goods enhance customer exposure and boost sales for small vendors. Their research highlights that collaborative marketing efforts can be particularly effective for informal sector entrepreneurs adapting to changing market dynamics. One of the peddlers reported.....

"When am walking to sell printed newspaper, I always carry various goods for selling such as small electronic equipment such as extension cables, radios, screen protectors and phone covers, fortunately when a customer buy a radio can also be attracted to buy newspaper." (5thOctober, 2024).

Table 6: Coping strategies adopted by Printed newspaper peddlers

Strategies	Responses		Percent of cases
	n	Percent	
Diversification of Products	31	35.10	40.50
Social Media Engagement	10	09.01	11.40
Product Repurposing	5	04.50	06.30
Home or Office delivery	22	19.82	22.80
Community Engagement	25	22.52	24.80
Partnerships	10	09.01	11.01
Total	106	100	116.08

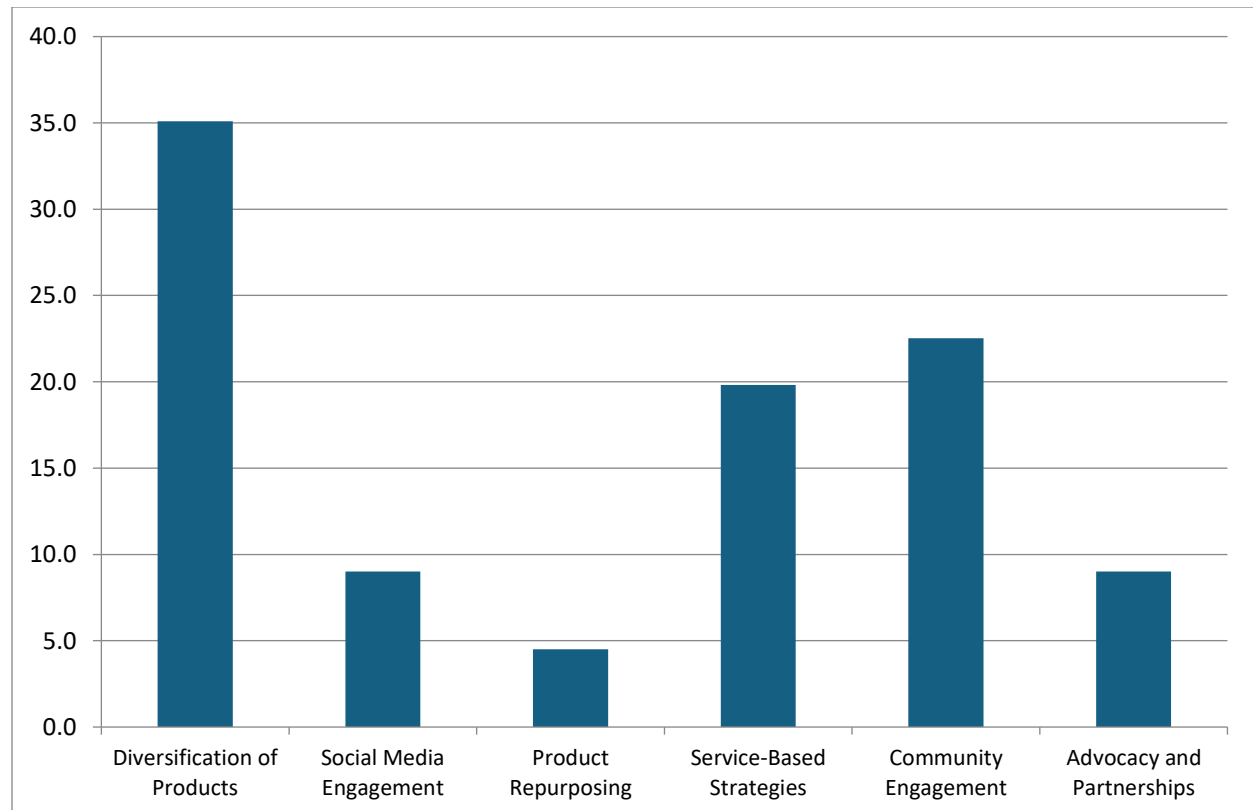


Figure 1: Coping strategies adopted by Printed newspaper peddlers

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

4.1. Conclusion

The study on the effects of online media on the wellbeing of printed newspaper peddlers in Sumbawanga Municipality revealed several significant effects. These include a decline in newspaper sales and income, increased job insecurity, heightened stress and anxiety, and social isolation among peddlers. To cope with the invasion of online media, printed newspaper peddlers have adopted various strategies such as diversifying their products (shifting from selling newspapers to other goods), engaging with social media platforms like WhatsApp, Facebook, and Twitter to promote their businesses, repurposing products, offering home or office delivery, participating in community events, and forming partnerships with other businesses. These adaptive measures reflect the resilience of peddlers in navigating a rapidly changing media environment.

4.2. Recommendations

Based on the study findings, it is recommended that printed media companies should focus on producing hyper-local stories that online media may overlook, as well as providing in-depth articles, interviews, and investigative pieces unavailable on digital platforms. Such content can create opportunities for peddlers to increase newspaper sales and improve their income. Furthermore, printed media companies should consider establishing rewards for loyal readers, such as discounts or access to exclusive content, to attract and retain readership. Engaging customers through surveys and feedback mechanisms is also advised, allowing companies to better understand reader preferences and tailor content accordingly. Finally, monitoring trends in media consumption is crucial for adapting business strategies. By doing so, printed media companies can better support peddlers in increasing their sales and enhancing their overall wellbeing.

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