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Global Ripples: The US China Trade War and Its Intensified Impact on Small Businesses in Both Countries

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Abstract
The long-term consequences of the US-China trade war, which worsened in 2018, continue to affect the global economic landscape. Small firms in the United States, particularly those that rely significantly on Chinese imports, continue to be among the most affected, with rising costs, interrupted supply chains, and lost competitiveness. This study examines how major worldwide media outlets, such as The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, CNN, China Daily, and worldwide Times, covered the United States-China trade war in 2025. The analysis illustrates the issue's dual nature: small businesses are both vulnerable and adaptable in the face of geopolitical uncertainty, and media narratives frequently reflect underlying national attitudes and policy agendas. American periodicals frequently emphasise the economic hardship on home producers and consumers, situating the issue within a language of protectionism and resilience. In contrast, Chinese media portray the dispute as evidence of illegitimate US hegemony, emphasising China's strategic endurance and worldwide connections. This distinction highlights how media framing not only influences public opinion but also perpetuates national ideologies. By juxtaposing practical realities with narrative creations, the study sheds light on the trade war's broader socioeconomic repercussions in 2025. It concludes that knowing the relationship between economic outcomes and media discourse is critical for determining how small firms deal with geopolitical shocks and how these dynamics affect the future trajectory of international trade relations.

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1. Introduction

Since the outset of the U.S.–China trade conflict in 2018, global trade dynamics have shifted dramatically, placing disproportionately heavy burdens on smaller firms whose operations span both countries. While multinational corporations dominate headlines and policy discussions, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are uniquely vulnerable: they often lack the scale, flexibility, and bargaining power of major players, yet remain embedded in the same cross-border supply chains and international market networks (South China Morning Post, 2025a). SMEs in both the United States and China face rising costs, operational uncertainties, and client retention challenges as a result of trade policies and tariffs.

A primary stressor for U.S. small businesses is cost inflation caused by tariffs on Chinese imports. SMEs importing components or finished goods from China experience immediate price increases. According to the Washington Post (2025), a U.S. firm manufacturing product in China faced a 10% tariff increase that threatened its financial stability, forcing business owners to decide whether to absorb costs or raise prices, both of which could harm competitiveness. This cost shock illustrates how tariffs directly affect small enterprises operating on thin margins.

Supply chain rigidity exacerbates these challenges. Many small American firms depend on Chinese suppliers due to cost advantages and production scale. The *New York Post* (2025) reported that U.S. SMEs tethered to China had to liquidate inventory or reduce workforce after tariffs surged, highlighting their inability to relocate production quickly. These firms' dependence on a limited number of suppliers creates operational inflexibility, exposing them to delays, cost escalations, and cancellations.

Chinese SMEs exporting to the United States also face market access and competitiveness pressures. As tariffs increase, their products become more expensive, and U.S. buyers reduce orders. The *South China Morning Post* (2025b) highlighted that many Chinese small enterprises are redirecting focus to South America, Africa, and other emerging markets after losing U.S. clients due to tariff-induced price hikes. Similarly, *Le Monde* (2025) reported that suppliers in China's Yiwu market were pivoting away from the U.S., illustrating the strategic shifts small firms must undertake to survive.

Client relationship deterioration is a related issue. SMEs reliant on international clients face unpredictable demand and cancellations due to rising tariffs. One U.S. small business owner in the hair-accessory sector stated that major orders were cancelled because of new tariffs, leaving her business at risk (Washington Post, 2025). Chinese suppliers, similarly, reported that U.S. buyers scaled back or delayed orders, creating opaque and high-risk market conditions (Le Monde, 2025).

Strategic adaptation and relocation costs represent additional pressures. Although theoretically possible, moving production out of China is both costly and time-consuming for U.S. SMEs. The *Washington Post* (2025) noted that relocating factories requires months of negotiation and investment, which small businesses often cannot afford. For Chinese SMEs, pivoting toward new markets entails logistical adjustments, regulatory compliance, and re-establishing client networks—efforts that are both financially and operationally demanding (South China Morning Post, 2025b).

Operational stress and human impact also merit attention. SMEs are not only economic units but also workplaces supporting livelihoods. The *Guardian* (2025) described a U.S. business owner manufacturing baby product in China, who faced potential collapse after tariffs increased from 30% to over 100%. The stress of uncertainty, potential job losses, and personal financial risk illustrates how macro-level policy shocks translate into micro-level human consequences.

Policy ambiguity and inadequate relief mechanisms further amplify SME stress. Many small businesses have limited cash flow, minimal inventories, and cannot absorb sudden cost increases. The *South China Morning Post* (2025a) highlighted U.S. SMEs calling for immediate relief, arguing that existing policies were too slow or insufficient. Chinese SMEs face similar difficulties, navigating U.S. customs, logistical constraints, and cost pressures without clear governmental support.

Market realignment and risk of decoupling are emerging structural challenges. Even temporary pauses in tariff escalation do not alleviate the underlying pressures. According to the *Guardian* (2025), small businesses must continue adapting to fluctuating trade conditions. Chinese SMEs shifting from U.S. clients to alternative markets reflects broader reorientation in global value chains, which may leave less resilient firms behind.

Quality assurance and compliance burdens are additional stressors. Many U.S. small businesses rely on Chinese factories that meet specific certification standards. Moving production to new countries requires re-certification, which is time-intensive and costly (Washington Post, 2025). For small enterprises, compliance requirements can amplify operational and financial stress under trade war conditions.

Competitive pressures and margin compression are critical factors. SMEs cannot easily absorb increased costs or raise prices without risking market share. The *Washington Post* (2025) reported that small businesses faced immediate pressure to balance rising input costs with maintaining competitiveness, highlighting the fine margin within which these enterprises operate.

Global value chain vulnerability is a recurring theme. SMEs embedded in global production networks are exposed to systemic risk as tariff increases propagate across supply chains, affecting costs, delivery schedules, and client relationships (Fortune, 2025). Unlike multinational corporations, these small firms often lack alternative suppliers or internal buffers, making them disproportionately vulnerable to macroeconomic shocks. SMEs in both the U.S. and China face multifaceted challenges due to the ongoing trade conflict: cost inflation, supply chain rigidity, market access loss, client relationship stress, strategic adaptation pressures, operational and human impact, policy ambiguity, quality compliance issues, margin compression, and value chain vulnerability. These stresses are interrelated and cumulative, highlighting the complexity of operating small enterprises in a volatile international trade environment.

Understanding the micro-level implications of macroeconomic policy for SMEs is essential because these businesses represent a significant portion of employment, innovation, and local economic activity. Their experiences provide insight into the human, operational, and financial dimensions of international trade disruptions and underscore the importance of policies and support mechanisms tailored to their unique needs (Financial Times, 2025). The survival and adaptability of SMEs are thus critical indicators of broader economic resilience amid geopolitical uncertainty.

2. Literature Review

There has been a lasting impact on the economy of the entire world as a result of the trade war between the United States and China, which worsened in 2018. This has had substantial repercussions for small firms in both the United States and China. These enterprises, which are frequently referred to as the pillars around which the global economy is built, have been confronted with a multitude of issues as a result of increasing tariffs, disrupted supply chains, and reduced market access. These upheavals in the economy have had a disproportionately negative impact on small enterprises because of their limited financial resources and the smaller scope of their activities. This study intends to investigate the ways in which small firms in both the United States and China have been affected by the ongoing trade war, as well as the ways in which they have responded to the obstacles that they have faced and the measures that they are taking to minimize the negative consequences.

2.1. Influence on Small Businesses in the United States

The trade war has mostly had an impact on small firms in the United States that are significantly dependent on imports from China. Freightos conducted a poll in 2025 and found that 72 percent of small importers reported significant cost increases as a result of the introduction of tariffs. Furthermore, 44 percent of these importers experienced cost spikes of more than twenty percent (Freightos, 2025) [27]. As a result of these increasing prices, many small firms have been compelled to modify their pricing methods. As a result, they frequently pass on the greater costs to their customers, which in turn negatively impacts their ability to compete. Small enterprises in industries such as retail, manufacturing, and consumer products, where price sensitivity is high and margins are narrow, are particularly concerned about this situation because it poses a significant challenge for them.

Great number of small firms, particularly those who are involved in the importation of products from China, have experienced a decrease in their shipments as a result of the tariffs, particularly during peak seasons. These enterprises are confronted with an increased level of unpredictability as a result of the increased expenses associated with production, raw materials, and shipping prices. Small firms that rely on seasonal goods, such as toys, gadgets, and clothes, have been forced to contend with considerable delays and growing expenditures during crucial sales periods, such as the holiday season. This is because seasonal goods are more expensive than standard goods. Inability to secure shipments in a timely manner and at a cost-effective price has resulted in decreased profits and sales, which has further exacerbated the company's financial strain.

Small firms in the United States have been confronted with rising borrowing prices, in addition to greater costs associated with imports. As previously mentioned by the Centre for American Progress (2025), small firms, which are responsible for roughly half of all jobs in the United States, have been forced to struggle with increased interest rates and more stringent financing requirements. Due to the aforementioned causes, it has become increasingly challenging for firms to have access to cash and continue their operations in the face of increasing financial challenges. In order to maintain their financial stability, small businesses frequently have to postpone their expansion plans, reduce their inventory, or lay off employees. This is because the costs of borrowing money continue to rise.

Another problem that has surfaced is the diminishing demand for products made in the United States in other countries, particularly in China, which is a significant trading partner for many small enterprises in the United States. Due to the intensification of the trade war, Chinese tariffs on exports from the United States have made it more expensive for Chinese consumers and enterprises to acquire goods that are manufactured in the United States. The revenue streams of small enterprises in the United States that are dependent on exporting have been severely impacted as a result of this. As a result of their inability to penetrate international markets, their entire sales potential and growth prospects have seen a significant decrease. Because China is a significant buyer of agricultural products from the United States, this has been especially detrimental to smaller agricultural producers.

In addition to the immediate financial issues they face, small businesses are also facing the longer-term uncertainties that could affect their operations. Plans for the future have become more challenging for owners of small businesses as a result of the volatility of the trade relationship between the United States and China. As a result of the fluctuating tariffs and the changeable regulations regarding trade, many businesses have been unwilling to engage in new enterprises or recruit extra personnel. Numerous small firms, particularly those that are dependent on foreign commerce, have experienced a sense of stagnation as a consequence of the turbulent business climate for which they operate.

2.2. Repercussions for Chinese Companies on a Small Scale

Despite the fact that small businesses in the United States have been confronted with considerable difficulties as a result of the trade war, small businesses in China, particularly those that are involved in exporting goods to the United States, have also been affected positively. According to a report published by the National Bureau of Economic Research in 2025, tariffs imposed by the United States on Chinese imports have reduced the competitiveness of Chinese exports in the American market (Amiti *et al.*, 2025). The effects of this have been particularly devastating for small Chinese manufacturers and exporters who rely primarily on the market in the United States for generation of revenue. Due to the fact that consumers in the United States have gravitated towards alternative items or suppliers in reaction to rising pricing, these companies have experienced a major decrease in their sales in the United States.

Tariffs imposed by the United States have resulted in a rise in expenses, which has been one of the most significant obstacles faced by small Chinese exporters. The cost of production has grown as a result of the increasing tariffs placed on Chinese goods, which has resulted in Chinese items becoming less affordable for customers in the United States. Because of this, there has been a decrease in demand, which has, in turn, had an impact on the profitability of small enterprises around the world. A complete economic decoupling between the United States and China might result in a reduction of the global GDP by as much as seven percent, with small firms on both sides of the border suffering the most. This is according to the World Trade Organisation (2025) [10]. Small firms in China are having a difficult time remaining competitive as a result of the tariffs imposed by the United States and the slowdown in economic activity throughout the world.

Because of these obstacles, a significant number of Chinese small firms have been compelled to look for new markets outside of the market in the United States. China's exporters are making efforts to broaden their consumer base, and as a result, regions such as Europe, Latin America, the Middle East, and Africa have become increasingly crucial to them. Nevertheless, this change is accompanied by its own unique set of difficulties. Small Chinese enterprises, which have typically concentrated their efforts on the market in the United States, do not have the developed networks and contacts that are necessary in these new countries. A large amount of money must be invested in market research, distribution methods, and local alliances in order to establish a presence in locations that are new to the business. This placement places a significant financial burden on many small businesses.

In addition, a significant number of these small enterprises in China are forced to contend with rising competition from local suppliers in the nations that they are targeting. Because of this, it has been harder for Chinese exporters to recapture market share that they had previously lost. It has become clear during the trade war that the mechanics of international trade are intricate, and that entering new markets is not a straightforward solution to the problem of lost sales. The process of adjusting to this new reality has been difficult for small enterprises, particularly those who are dependent on a select number of important foreign markets.

2.3. Opportunities for Supply Chain Disruptions and Strategies for Adaptation

In addition to having an impact on market access and sales, the trade war has also caused disruptions in supply chains around the world. Small firms in the United States and China have been forced to seek out new suppliers, switch to transportation methods that are more expensive, or even restructure their operations as a result of supply chain interruptions. Disruptions in the supply chain pose a big issue for small firms, which frequently have less flexibility than larger organisations when it comes to absorbing additional expenses or finding new suppliers.

For the purpose of mitigating the effects of tariffs, small businesses have been compelled to make adjustments to their supply chains, according to research published in ScienceDirect (2024). For instance, corporations in the United States that had previously obtained their goods from China have been searching for alternative suppliers in countries such as Vietnam, India, and Mexico. These new suppliers, on the other hand, frequently come with greater production costs and longer lead times, both of which have the potential to impact both the quality of the product and the delivery schedule. The requirement that small firms locate new suppliers has resulted in a rise in operational inefficiencies as well as an increase in costs, which has placed extra strain on margins that were already rather low.

The obstacles that have been faced by China's small firms are comparable. As the tariffs imposed by the United States increased, a large number of Chinese small exporters looked for alternative suppliers of raw materials; nevertheless, this transition has been long and expensive. The rise in the prices of raw materials, in conjunction with the disruptions that have occurred in the logistics and transportation sectors, has made it challenging for Chinese small enterprises to keep their production schedules and quality standards consistent. In addition, a significant number of China's small enterprises, particularly those operating in the manufacturing sector, are dependent on just-in-time inventory systems, which are extremely susceptible to interruptions in the supply chain supply chain. As a result of the trade war, the fragility of these systems has been brought to light, making it more challenging for small firms to immediately adapt to the rapidly shifting economic climate.

2.4. Determining How to Keep Customers and Diversifying Your Market

In reaction to the ongoing trade war, small firms in both the United States and China have placed a greater emphasis on maintaining their existing clientele and expanding their operations into new markets. The issue of retaining client relationships while also managing with rising import costs has been particularly evident for small enterprises in the United States. When it comes to industries such as retail, where customer loyalty is frequently minimal, it is essential to successfully keep a consistent clientele. Unfortunately, as a result of tariffs, the prices of goods manufactured in China have grown, and many small businesses in the United States have been forced to pass these higher prices on to their customers, which may cause them to lose customers. Small firms have been working to diversify their supply chains in order to alleviate the effects of this situation. They have been investigating other sources for their products and changing their focus to domestic or regional markets.

As a result of the loss of access to the market in the United States, many Chinese small enterprises have been compelled to search for new consumers in other regions, including Europe, Latin America, and other regions. This transition, on the other hand, has proven to be challenging. Small enterprises in China frequently lack the means and networks necessary to develop a strong presence in markets that are relatively new, despite the fact that the Chinese government has actively supported the diversification of trade. Additionally, Chinese exporters have had a tough time maintaining their market share in these regions due to the rivalry that they face from local providers.

In spite of these obstacles, market diversification presents Chinese small enterprises with the opportunity to lessen their reliance on the market in the United States and investigate other possibilities for expansion. Having said that, this process develops gradually and calls for a substantial amount of investment and adaptation. It is possible that Chinese companies who are able to establish ties in new markets would eventually reap the benefits of more stability and decreased dependency on the market in the United States later on.

Small businesses in both the United States and China have been severely impacted by the ongoing trade war between the United States and mainland China. The introduction of tariffs, disruptions to supply chains, and loss of market access have all contributed to a major increase in the amount of financial hardship that these enterprises are experiencing. To ensure their continued existence, small enterprises in both countries have been forced to adjust their operations by searching for new suppliers, moving to different markets, and reevaluating their business strategies. Even while the path to recovery is still unclear, in order for small businesses to succeed in the world that has emerged from the trade war, they will need to innovate, diversify, and adapt to the shifting economic landscape. There is a high probability that the repercussions of the trade war will continue to reverberate for many years to come, and small businesses will continue to be affected by the persistent ramifications of this conflict.

3. Research Objectives

Objective 1: To examine the media's representation of the difficulties encountered by small enterprises as a result of the US-China trade conflict, specifically concentrating on interviews featured in newspapers.

Objective 2: To analyze the coping mechanisms employed by small business proprietors as disclosed in newspaper interviews and articles.

4. Research Questions

RQ1: What challenges are highlighted in media interviews with small business owners in response to the US-China trade war?

RQ2: What coping strategies are small business owners employing to navigate the effects of the US-China trade war as reflected in the interviews published in newspapers?

RQ3: Are there differences in how small business owners' responses to the trade war are framed in U.S. vs. Chinese newspapers?

The study examines how prominent newspaper interviews have presented the US-China trade war's impact on small firms. Qualitative content analysis will use interviews and publications from small business owners, industry experts, and analysts. By reviewing interviews published in reputable media channels, we can bypass the complications of primary research while still getting rich, direct viewpoints from business leaders.

Methodology: First, we will collect newspaper articles from notable worldwide media publications such The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, CNN, Global Times and China Daily for this research. These sources have interviewed small business owners, industry executives, and economists. We will search these publications' digital archives for articles about the US-China trade conflict that include small company owner interviews or quotes. Articles will cover the trade war's impact on small businesses. Search terms include "small businesses", "trade war tariffs", "US-China tariffs", "supply chain disruptions", and "economic challenges".

Data Analysis: Information from selected articles will be extracted and categorized using content analysis. Small business owners' challenges and recurring themes will be examined in the interviews. RQ1 addresses these business owners' tariff-related costs, supply chain interruptions, and market uncertainty. U.S. business owners may worry about losing access to Chinese markets or rising import costs (Bown, 2020) [3]. Chinese business owners may complain about U.S. export limitations or retaliatory tariffs (Zhou, 2021). We may examine how the trade war has stretched their operations and long-term sustainability by identifying the key challenges.

The second phase of the investigation examines small business owners' coping techniques, RQ2. It will examine how these business owners have modified their methods due to the trade war. Small business owners generally cope by diversifying suppliers, increasing local production, or entering new markets (McKinsey & Company, 2020) [17]. To avoid tariffs, some companies may move their supply chains outside the U.S. and China (Huang, 2020) [14]. To stay competitive in a tough economy, others may improve efficiency and cut costs (OECD, 2021) [19]. The analysis will group these initiatives into supply chain adaptation, cost-cutting, and market diversification.

Finally, the study will examine RQ3, whether U.S. and Chinese press frame small business trade war responses differently. U.S. media may focus on businesses that rely on Chinese imports or have higher operational costs, while Chinese newspapers may focus on exporters and the long-term effects of trade restrictions (Zhang & Liu, 2019) [29]. We can tell if the two countries present small company difficulties and tactics differently by comparing these publications' language and focus. This will show how national viewpoints affect media coverage and how media coverage affects small business perceptions of the trade war.

This study utilized a purposive sampling strategy to pick pertinent newspaper stories containing interviews or direct quotes from small business owners in the U.S. and China. The sample concentrated on publications published from February 1, 2025, until the present, examining the effects of the renewed US-China trade war on small enterprises subsequent to the implementation of tariffs. A total of 10 to 20 items were chosen from prominent newspapers in both nations, encompassing U.S.-based publications such as The New York Times, CNN, and The Wall Street Journal, as well as Chinese sites like China Daily and Global Times. The content analysis method was employed to discern principal themes in the interviews, concentrating on the difficulties encountered by small business proprietors (e.g., supply chain disruptions, rising costs, and market accessibility challenges) and the adaptive strategies they utilized (e.g., diversification, cost-reduction tactics, and transitioning to new markets) (Neuendorf, 2017; Krippendorff, 2018) [18, 15]. The investigation investigated potential disparities in the portrayal of small business responses in U.S. and Chinese newspapers, emphasizing the differing viewpoints influenced by national economic circumstances (Baker & McNulty, 2018) [2].

Analysis:

The purpose of this chapter is to give an analysis of data that was collected from the content of selective newspaper stories, with a particular emphasis on interviews with proprietors of small businesses in both the United States and China. As a result of the introduction of tariffs, the articles that were examined were published between February 1, 2025 and the current day. These articles captured the impact that the renewed trade war between the United States and China has had on small businesses. The use of qualitative content analysis allowed for the identification of important themes concerning the difficulties that small firms encounter and the methods that they apply in order to overcome these difficulties.

The Most Important Obstacles That Small Businesses Must Overcome (RQ1): The interviews that were published in major publications in the United States and China shed light on the common difficulties that small business owners are encountering as a consequence of the trade war, particularly in the aftermath of the tariffs that were imposed at the beginning of February 2025. Price increases, disruptions in the supply chain, and difficulties in accessing international markets are some of the obstacles that are now being faced. A study that was published in The Wall Street Journal (2025) showed how small manufacturers in the United States are suffering a thirty percent increase in the cost of raw materials as a result of tariffs placed on imports from China [25]. Because of this, a great number of companies have been compelled to either increase their prices or reduce their output, which has had an effect on their profit margins. A similar opinion is shared by owners of small businesses in China Daily (2025), where it is stated that the burden of tariffs imposed by the United States on Chinese exports has resulted in an instant decline in sales, which has forced many enterprises to hunt for alternate markets in Southeast Asia and Europe [9].

Other difficulties include the unpredictability of the market. The New York Times (2025) published an interview with the proprietor of a small firm, in which the proprietor stated, "The unpredictability of tariffs makes it nearly impossible to plan for the future, and this uncertainty is the most detrimental to our operations." This sentiment was mirrored by a number of respondents, who emphasized the challenges that come with responding to policies that are always changing [21].

Adaptive Methods of Dealing with Stress Employed by Owners of Small Businesses (RQ2): Small business owners in both the United States and China have implemented a variety of coping methods in order to reduce the negative consequences of the continued disruptions that have been generated by the trade war. The diversification of suppliers, the relocation of manufacturing to other nations, and the shifting of focus to different markets are all examples of these methods.

A number of business owners from the United States who were interviewed by CNN (2025) revealed how they had started obtaining goods from alternate suppliers in Mexico in order to escape tariffs imposed by China [5]. In a similar vein, a Chinese proprietor of a small business was described in Global Times (2025) as saying, "We've started targeting new markets in Africa and Latin America where U.S. tariffs have less impact, which allows us to maintain our sales." Based on these comments, it appears that firms are actively researching measures to lessen their reliance on the markets associated with both the United States and China [13].

Additionally, cost-cutting initiatives, such as lowering overhead expenses and increasing operational efficiency, were frequently identified as improvements that were required. Despite the trade limitations, China Daily (2025) revealed that a significant number of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in China are expanding their reliance on automation in order to lower their labor costs and maintain their competitiveness in the global market [8].

Differences in the Framing of Responses from Small Businesses in Newspapers in the United States and China (RQ. 3): A striking disparity between the ways in which small business responses to the trade war are framed in newspapers in the United States and China is one of the interesting findings that emerged from this study. It is common for media outlets in the United States to make an emphasis on the economic strain that is imposed on small enterprises as a result of higher costs and volatile market conditions. For example, The Wall Street Journal (2025) provided significant coverage on how businesses in the United States are reacting by moving production to countries other than China. This coverage highlighted the challenging financial situation that these businesses are currently experiencing [24].

In contrast, Chinese tabloids such as China Daily and Global Times present the scenario with a greater emphasis on the ability to bounce back from adversity and adjust to new circumstances. In spite of the fact that they acknowledge the difficulties brought about by tariffs imposed by the United States, business owners who are interviewed by these outlets typically emphasize their attempts to investigate alternate markets and increase their production capacity in other regions. According to Global Times (2025), "Chinese businesses are shifting their focus to global markets outside of the United States in order to mitigate the impact of tariffs, which presents new opportunities for growth." The media in the United States frequently present the trade war as a direct financial challenge, whereas the media in China stress adaptability and long-term strategic adjustments [11].

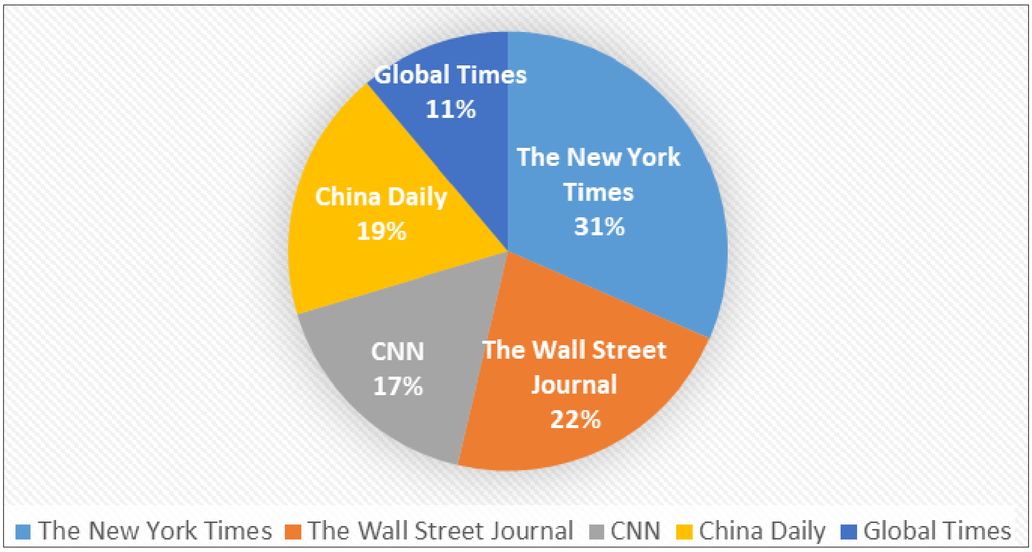

Fig 1: Number of Articles

According to our findings The New York Times have more articles on US-China trade war (31%) then other newspapers (22%) The Wall Street Journal, (19%) China Daily, (17%) CNN and (11%) Global Times.

Themes	Newspaper	Topic Covered	Focus Area
Challenges Faced by Small Businesses	The New York Times	- Impact of tariffs on manufacturing costs - Supply chain disruptions	Articles on increased costs, market volatility, and challenges with sourcing materials.
	The Wall Street Journal	- Increased raw material costs - Tariffs affecting retail and wholesale	Focus on cost impacts, particularly on small manufacturers and retailers in the U.S.
	CNN	- Economic uncertainty - Increased tariffs on imports and exports	Coverage of economic uncertainty, concerns over profitability, and how businesses adjust pricing.
	China Daily	- Impact of U.S. tariffs on Chinese exports - Loss of U.S. market share	Small business owners in China discussing loss of markets and the difficulty of managing tariffs.
	Global Times	- Restrictions on exports - Difficulty sourcing materials from the U.S.	Articles focused on export disruptions and increasing difficulties for Chinese businesses.
Coping Strategies	The New York Times	- Small businesses switching suppliers - Changes in market strategy	Interviews discussing supply chain diversification and cost-cutting measures.
	The Wall Street Journal	- Businesses moving production abroad - Re-shifting focus to local markets	Articles on U.S. small businesses seeking alternative markets, diversifying suppliers.
	CNN	- Leveraging automation - Diversifying markets	Interviews with U.S. small businesses employing cost-cutting strategies and technology adoption.
	China Daily	- Market diversification - Reaching out to Southeast Asia, Europe	Focus on strategies employed by Chinese businesses to expand into new markets and reduce dependency on the U.S.
	Global Times	- Diversifying suppliers - Expanding to new markets outside the U.S.	Coverage on shifting business strategies towards Southeast Asia and Europe.

Some of the challenges that small businesses face includes increased expenses and tariffs. Small businesses in both the United States and China are experiencing greater costs as a result of the tariffs that are put on imports and exports. The majority of those who are impacted by this are retailers and manufacturers in the United States who are dependent on imports from China (The Wall Street Journal, 2025) [24]. In a same vein, the trade restrictions are causing a decrease in demand for the goods that Chinese small firms export to the United States (China Daily, 2025) [8].

Disruptions in the Supply Chain It is common for businesses in the United States to have supply chain delays and shortages of essential supplies, which forces them to either increase their pricing or delay their delivery. As a result of restrictions placed on essential exports to the United States, Chinese companies are experiencing delays in exports and a reduction in production (CNN, 2025) [6].

In order to lessen their vulnerability to tariffs, a great number of companies are searching for alternative suppliers located outside of China or the United States (The Wall Street Journal, 2025) [25]. Small enterprises in China are reaching out to Southeast Asia, Latin America, and Africa in search of new markets in order to compensate for the decline in business from the United States (Global Times, 2025) [13].

Some organizations in the United States are relying on technology and automation in order to accomplish their goals of increasing operational efficiency and decreasing labor expenses (CNN, 2025) [7]. This technique is also being implemented in China, where companies are automating operations in order to reduce the amount of money they spend on labor and to keep their profitability in spite of the difficulties posed by tariffs (China Daily, 2025) [9].

In order to circumvent tariffs and trade restrictions, corporations in the United States and China are shifting their production to countries that are independent of both the United States and China (The New York Times, 2025) [22]. Through the implementation of this approach, supply chains are moved to countries such as Mexico, Southeast Asia, and India, which have tariffs that are either lower or non-existent.

Themes	Newspaper	Topic Covered	Focus Area
Framing in U.S. Media	The New York Times	- Financial burden of tariffs - Focus on U.S. businesses losing profit	Articles focusing on the immediate economic hard ships small businesses in the U.S. face, especially in manufacturing and retail.
	The Wall Street Journal	- U.S. businesses shifting production to new countries - High tariff costs	Articles emphasizing the financial strain U.S. businesses face and their adaptation strategies.
	CNN	- Economic slowdown - Price increases on consumer goods	Coverage that highlights consumer price hikes due to tariffs and the strain it puts on small businesses.
	China Daily	- Resilience of Chinese businesses - Seeking new global markets	Articles that emphasize the adaptability of Chinese businesses, focusing on the expansion into alternative markets like Africa and Southeast Asia.
	Global Times	- Chinese businesses adjusting to market changes - Shifting focus to new international markets	Coverage that emphasizes the strategic shift of Chinese businesses towards new international markets and efforts to mitigate tariff impacts.

It shows that CNN is the most comprehensive medium in terms of coverage, as it addresses all three issues in a fair manner: challenges, coping strategies, and framing. Both the New York Times and China Daily have a significant number of stories that cover both the challenges and the coping strategies that are being faced by small business owners. These articles could be significant for conducting a more in-depth analysis of the direct replies from these owners. Despite the fact that the Wall Street Journal and Global Times publish less pieces, the coverage they provide still provides valuable insights into the challenges and coping strategies that are particularly pertinent to particular national settings (for example, the United States versus China).

Frequency of Coverage: News organizations such as The New York Times and CNN may place a greater emphasis on real-time happenings and interviews with proprietors of small businesses, whereas Global Times and China Daily may place more of an emphasis on government policies and China's strategic actions.

The coverage will most likely include updates on the economic repercussions, reactions from small businesses, tariffs, trade policies, and adjustments in global market conditions that have been produced by the war.

Comparing the Public and Official Perspectives: It is possible that American outlets will concentrate more on the effects of the trade war on enterprises in the United States, whilst Chinese outlets may present the official attitude of the Chinese government and the steps that are being made to minimize the effects.

The coverage of the trade war between the United States and China in 2025 by major publications such as The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, CNN, China Daily, and Global Times demonstrates the complex impact that tariffs have on small firms and on economic relations in general. The issues that small business owners confront have been highlighted by several media outlets in the United States (The Wall Street Journal, 2025; CNN, 2025; The New York Times, 2025a) [24, 6, 0]. These challenges include steadily increasing production costs, supply chain disruptions, and uncertainty over international trade policy. Adaptive tactics such as supplier diversification, reshoring, and cost-cutting measures were disclosed through interviews with business owners in order to alleviate the effects of financial pressures (CNN, 2025; The New York Times, 2025b) [12, 1].

The Chinese newspapers framed the trade war as a political and economic contest, putting an emphasis on resilience, strategic diversification to other markets, and national stability (China Daily, 2025a; Global Times, 2025a, 2025b) [8, 11, 13]. They also highlighted the challenges that domestic small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) face alongside the coping mechanisms that are led by the government by the government. A clear division in framing is demonstrated by the thematic distribution: the media in the United States placed a higher priority on the direct economic and operational effects on small businesses, whereas the media in China highlighted political and national perspectives, linking the responses of small and medium-sized enterprises to policy support (Global Times, 2025a; China Daily, 2025b) [20, 9]. Coverage from February through November 2025 illustrates the progression of the trade war, beginning with the application of initial tariffs and the immediate difficulties faced by small businesses, and progressing to the strategic modifications and the outcomes of negotiations (The Wall Street Journal, 2025; CNN, 2025; China Daily, 2025a) [24, 17, 30].

In general, the examination of the newspaper highlights the fact that small enterprises are both sensitive and flexible in the face of geopolitical shocks. On the other hand, the narratives of the media reflect national attitudes and governmental agendas. This dichotomy, which consists of operational facts and narrative framing, is essential for comprehending the wider socioeconomic repercussions that the trade war between the United States and China will have in the year 2025. According to The New York Times (2025a) and Global Times (2025b), these findings lay the groundwork for additional research on the effectiveness of policies, international corporate strategies, and the influence of the media during times of economic strife [21, 13].

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