

Motorcycle (boda-boda) as emerging business for the poor in transport industry and sustainable development in modern Kenya

By

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Abstract

Motorcycle business known as “Boda-boda” eased transportation problem of connecting urban and rural areas in Kenya. “Boda-boda” originated early 1990s from Uganda through Busia town in western Kenya and spread to adjacent towns, subsequently other towns and all towns currently are crowded with Boda boda in Kenya. Initially bicycles were used as means of transportation in plains but as the introduction of motorcycle had afforded prices, businessmen shifted and used them and are easy to maintain. It is booming, since it is readily available in urban and rural areas and people always transport goods to and fro and uses paths instead of roads given that feeder roads in Kenya are impassible during rainy seasons. The problems of Boda boda riders cause accidents in Kenya highways and traffic jams in towns, yet it is a source of livelihood for the unemployed graduates and sustainable development. The objective is to investigate whether motorcycle riders acquire license through training before transporting goods and people, and study the strategy to be used to minimize frequency of accidents without affecting the business. Interview method will be used to collect data from riders in five towns in Kenya through purposive random sample to represent the forty seven towns in the counties. Analyzed data will be presented through graphs and tables. The key finding is although Boda boda cause accidents, it is a key source of employment today, leading to socio- economic, structural and human resource sustainability, as a consequence of national development in Kenya. It is recommended traffic laws be enforced to enable it flourish.

Key words: Employment; Sustainable; Development.



Introduction and origin of “boda boda” [motorcycle business]

Motorcycle business known as “Boda-boda” eased transportation problem of connecting urban and rural areas in Kenya. “Boda-boda” originated early 1990s from Uganda through Busia town in western Kenya and spread to adjacent towns, subsequently other towns and all towns currently are crowded with Boda boda in Kenya. The “boda-boda” is term which originated from its usage along board of Kenya and Uganda. It is derived from the English word “boarder” which means a boundary of two countries. In this aspect, the businessmen transported passengers and goods within the border town from the side of either Kenya or Uganda across the boundary of the two countries. The pronunciation of the term “border” changed to boda as it was pronounced by the peddlers in Busia and Malaba border towns. Initially bicycles were used as means of transportation in plains which were flat and peddlers could transport goods and people with no difficulties but as the introduction of motorcycle had afforded prices, businessmen shifted and used them as means of transport to the highland regions because they used fuel and not human energy as in case of bicycles.

The motorcycle apart from being cheaper to purchase, they are easy to maintain as compared to vehicle or ‘Matatu’ business in transport industry. This business is done by the common man in the urban or towns or rural or villages. It is really a business of the people, by the people and for the people. This means a person can purchase a motorcycle use it by him, transport goods and passengers himself and at the end gets his profits or losses for himself, and becomes booming to everybody in towns and villages. It is booming, since it is readily available in urban and rural areas and people always transport goods to and fro and uses paths instead of roads given that feeder roads in Kenya are impassible during rainy seasons.

Theories of transport

According to Oucho [1996], there are two theories by geographers specifically relating to spatial interaction, which facilitate movement of people [passengers] and goods which compels transport systems. And this links from one point to the other. The first theory is Ullman’s (1956), theory of transportation in which all “flow” phenomena-goods, ideas and people are determined by three conditions as follows:

(a) **Complimentarity**: This denotes interaction between two places, with a demand in one place and supply (to satisfy the demand) in another place.

(b)**Transferability**-which denotes the ‘friction of distance’ measured in real time and money costs-after found to be inversely related with migration;

(c)The concept of intervening opportunities surmises that both **Complimentarity and transferability** are possible only in absence of intervening opportunities at a place (to distract movement) other than the two complimentary places(Abler et aal.,1971).This theory is very significant in the African data and influence the movement of people, goods and ideas, which compels the units of carriage. In this the units of carriage are devices or vessels used by people in to carry people and goods. Therefore, motorcycle business in transport industry is rendered workable through the geomorphology of Kenya.

The second theory is Zelinsky’s (1971) hypothesis of mobility transition. Accordingly, he proposed the hypothesis of mobility transition which paired the relationship between population dynamics (fertility, mortality and migration) and social, economic development in which the process of modernization is involved.

Types of motorcycles in transport

In transport industry, the following types of motorcycles are used classified on their nature of carrying capacity:

1. Open motorcycle (normal state).
2. Covered motorcycle with an umbrella, (modified state).
3. Trailer motorcycle with three wheels.
4. Passenger motorcycle with three wheels and popularly known as “Tuku-Tuku”.

Development of Transport model

The boda boda (bicycle) business in transport industry is significant in overall transport industry. The importance of motor cycle business is discussed in major four links in the two components setups of rural and urban communities. The two components therefore are linked together through transport system for example boda boda, and form coordinates four links to each other as follows;

- (i) Rural-Urban link
- (ii) Urban-Rural link
- (iii) Rural-Rural link
- (iv) Urban-Urban link.

The four links cause effective links on two ends in transportation system where there is point of production and the other point of consumption which facilitate the Boda Boda business in transport industry. This links forms the social life perspectives which as a consequence affect the cultural life and styles of the people linked in the two ends leading to a new born link called **socio-cultural link**. It is important to reckon that the socio-cultural link leads to the formation the economic link which is referred as **political-economic link**. It means the transfer of goods, peoples or resources of any kind across the borders. This occurs from urban to rural on one phase and rural to urban on the other phase or rural to rural in the other aspect and urban to urban on other part. This leads to the emergence of new model of transport system diagrammatically illustrated in figure 1 as follows:

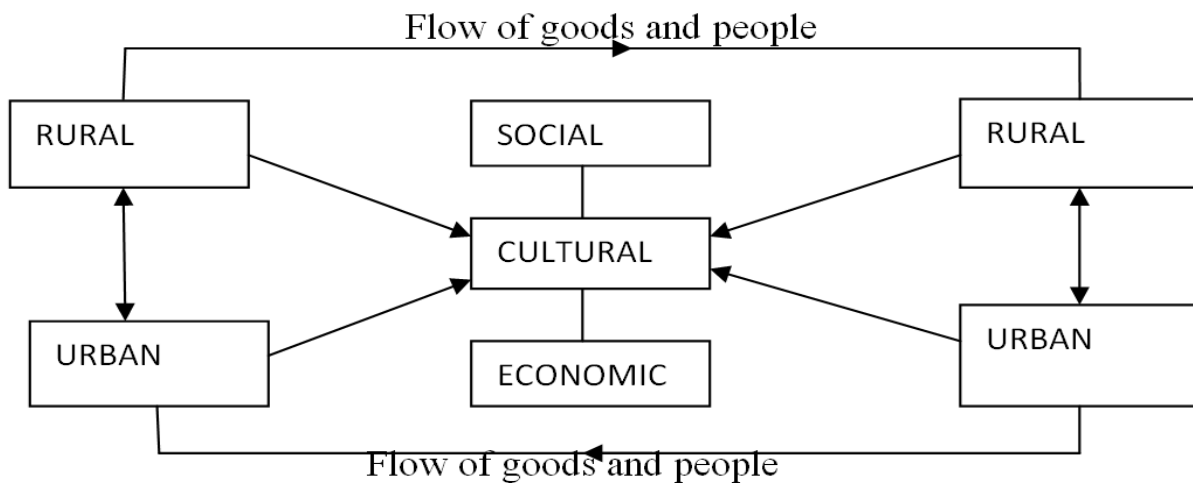


Figure 1: Transport Model, Source, researcher 2016

The transport model has four links which are referred to as points of origin and destination. **The points of origin** or (the start/beginning) refers to the place where a person or goods/services are and need to be transported to a given points. The **points of destination** also refer to the place where person or goods/services have been transported to (the end of the journey). In this sense, there are four points, flow of people and goods or commodities from rural to urban; urban to rural; rural to rural and urban to urban. This points link each other as illustrated in the model of transport. This points of goods or people flow systematically have a direct influence in the people and cause an intersection/interruption link between the four points ,causing **culture interaction** among the people from different cultural background. The intersection is called

socio-cultural link. Above the social-cultural there is social aspect-which changes with effects of the transport points. Below the **socio-cultural link** there is economic aspect-which is caused by transfer of resources or in business terms-transfer of factors of production. These factors of production include labour, land, capital and entrepreneurs.

The Boda- Boda business in transport is interconnected into the four factors of production. Boda boda business transports, labour (people) from the points of origin are connected to the points of destinations. And since it is a business it generates either for the owner of the motor cycle or the rider, because of the cost/fare or transport payments. This capital forms a factor of production in that sense. When the implements or farm equipments needed for land development especially during planting season in sedentary areas, Boda Boda acts indirectly in transporting fertilizers, seeds to the farm and assists land (farm) as a factor of production. The owner of the motorcycle gets money from the business and acts as an entrepreneur as a factor of production.

The statement of the study

The problems of Boda Boda riders cause accidents in Kenya highways and traffic jams in towns, yet it is a source of livelihood for the unemployed graduates and sustainable development.

The objective of the study

The objective is to investigate whether motorcycle riders acquire license through training before transporting goods and people, and study the strategy to be used to minimize frequency of accidents without affecting the business.

Findings from the literature review

According to Mwalo et al, (2003), there are general factors facilitating the mobility of factors of production which lead to Boda Boda business in transport industry. The factors include family and societal ties-where people with children were compelled to hire a tax to transport them to their residence and where the roads were impassable the forced to trek. The other factor was the expensiveness of carriage for example vehicles. Since motor cycle are affordable made people venture into the business.

Availability of capital- most of the common man can have readily available capital for purchasing the motorcycle from the savings and lead to receiving readily available capital or finance at the end of the day. Some of the factors which facilitate the mobility of factors of production are availability of amenities, modernization, and availability of capital for transport

expenses, professional freedom and levels of training among people. The factors which influence people to move have lead to the stability of Boda Boda business in transport industry.

The Boda Boda business has become significant to both the owner of the motor cycle, the rider and the customer. The paper enumerates the merits of Boda Boda businesses to the owner as follows: (1). It is cheaper to purchase and maintain (2).The motor cycle can be used were roads are impassible (iii).It is a source of income. The benefits to the rider are; creates employment opportunities for the riders (ii). The riders earn money which forms a source of livelihood (iii). It leads to improvement of livings of the riders. The significance of Boda Boda business to the customer: (a) It is readily available in all stages in towns or rural areas. (b).The charges of hiring are cheap and negotiable(c).Transport the goods and deliver them to the doorsteps of a customer. (d) They can be used in transporting goods to places where there no good roads, because the use paths. (e) Customers enjoy the beautiful scenery outside and good breeze during hot season in coast. (f) The customers use the boda-boda as ambulance in transporting patients from remote areas in Kenya.

Although Boda Boda business has the above significance has some challenges also. Some the challenges include:(I) Cause accidents and loss of lives (ii) cause congestion and traffic jams in towns (iii)The jams cause delays for people to report in places of work.(v) Boda Boda cannot carry heavy and bulky goods.(vi) In urban towns they are associated with being used theft during the night.

ANALYSIS OF DATA AND INTERPRETATION

Table 1: Towns of data collection

		Town			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Kitale	5	9.6	9.6	9.6
	Moi's Bridge	5	9.6	9.6	19.2
	Eldoret	2	3.8	3.8	23.1
	Nakuru	4	7.7	7.7	30.8
	Kisii	4	7.7	7.7	38.5
	Nyahuhuru	6	11.5	11.5	50.0
	Busia	5	9.6	9.6	59.6
	Kisumu	5	9.6	9.6	69.2

Kericho	6	11.5	11.5	80.8
Kapenguria	3	5.8	5.8	86.5
Lodwar	7	13.5	13.5	100.0
Total	52	100.0	100.0	

Bar Graph 1: showing Towns of data collection

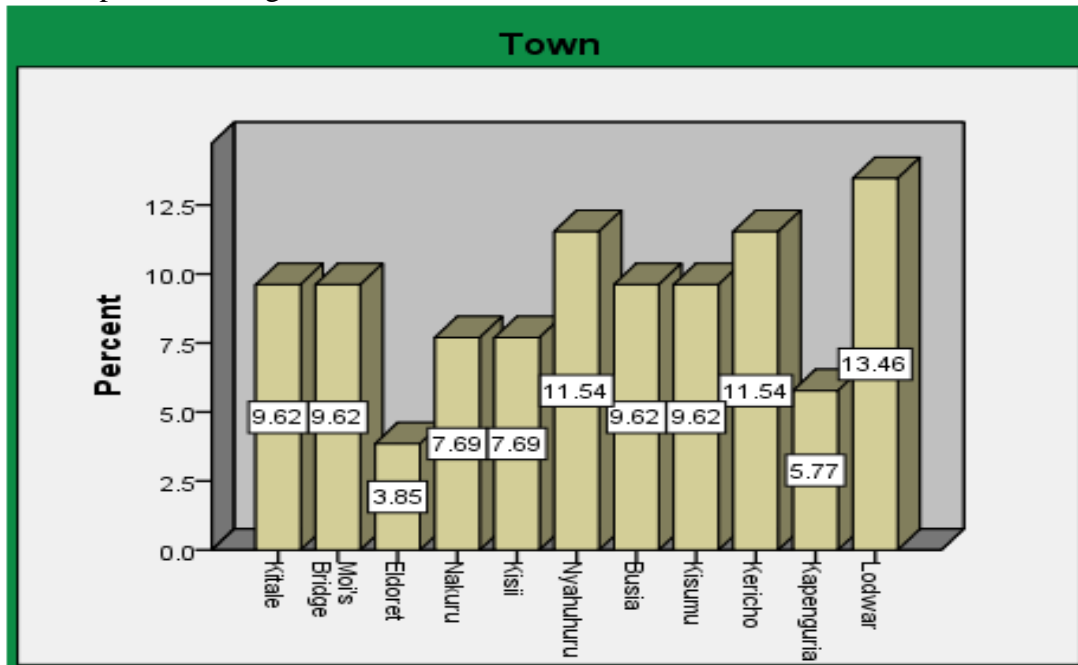


Table 2: Age of respondents

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Below 20 years	1	1.9	1.9	1.9
20-29	30	57.7	57.7	59.6
30-39	21	40.4	40.4	100.0
Total	52	100.0	100.0	

Table 2, Shows the age of the respondents and 57.7% are between 20-29 years, 40.4% between 30-39 years and 1.9% below 20 years. This indicates that most of the youths are engaged in the boda boda business because of unemployment after graduation from colleges and low percentage of youths below 20 years are in either in primary or secondary level of education system as illustrated in bar graph 2.

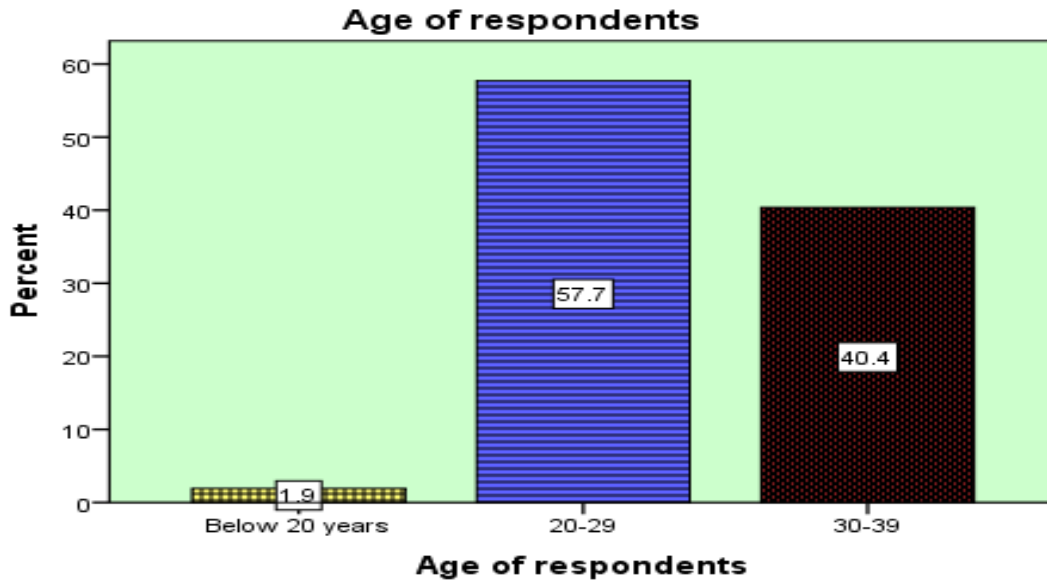


Table 3, shows the religion of the respondents and 48.1 % were protestant, 46.1% catholic, and 5.8% Muslim and illustrated in Pie chart 3.

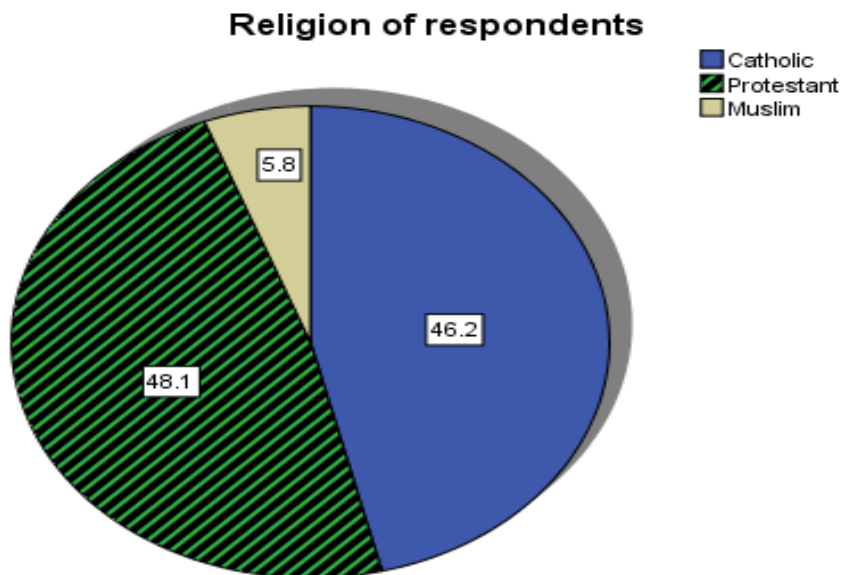


Table 3: Religion of respondents

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Catholic	24	46.2	46.2	46.2

Protestant	25	48.1	48.1	94.2
Muslim	3	5.8	5.8	100.0
Total	52	100.0	100.0	

Table 4:Level of education

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Certificate	14	26.9	26.9	26.9
Diploma	16	30.8	30.8	57.7
Bachelors degree	22	42.3	42.3	100.0
Total	52	100.0	100.0	

Table 4 shows the level of education of the respondents and 42.3% are holders of bachelor's degree, 30.8% diploma and 29.9% certificate. There is high percentage of graduates from universities and colleges, due to unemployment syndrome. They have embarked in boda boda business to earn a livelihood through self employment, leading to sustainable human development as illustrated in bar graph 4.

Bar graph 4.

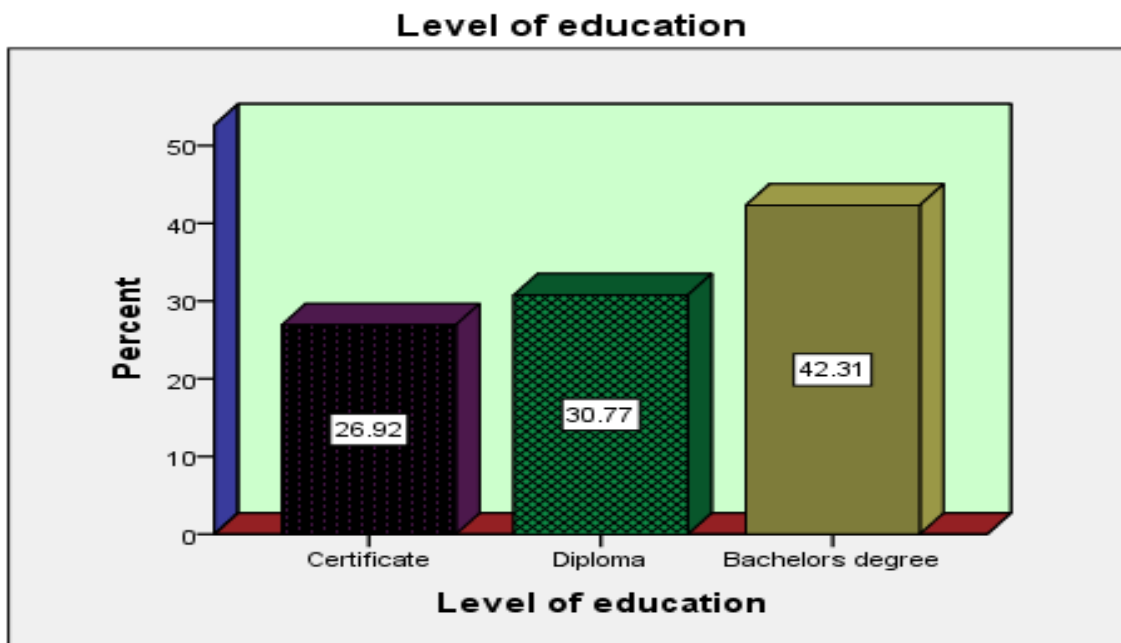


Table 5:Motorcycle belongs to me because I own it(self-employed)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly agree	27	51.9	51.9	51.9
Agree	3	5.8	5.8	57.7
Strongly disagree	15	28.8	28.8	86.5
Disagree	7	13.5	13.5	100.0
Total	52	100.0	100.0	

Table 5, shows the ownership of motorcycle as personal or self employed and 51.9% strongly agree that they own it, 28.8% strongly disagree that they do not own it, 13% disagree and 5.8% agree as illustrated in bar graph 5.

Bar graph 5.

Motorcycle belongs to me because I own it(self-employed)

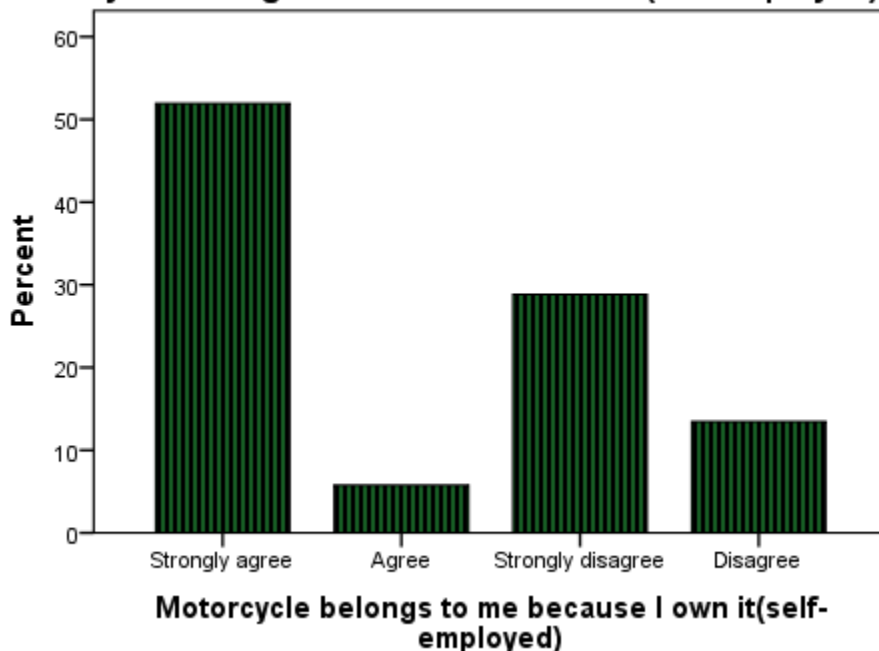


Table 6,shows the motorcycle belong to the owner and rider is employed and 46.2% strongly disagree,25% strongly agree and 19.2% agree and 9.2% disagree, as illustrated in bar graph 6.

Table6:Motorcycle belongs to the owner(employed)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly agree	13	25.0	25.0	25.0
Agree	10	19.2	19.2	44.2
Strongly disagree	24	46.2	46.2	90.4
Disagree	5	9.6	9.6	100.0
Total	52	100.0	100.0	

Bar graph 6.

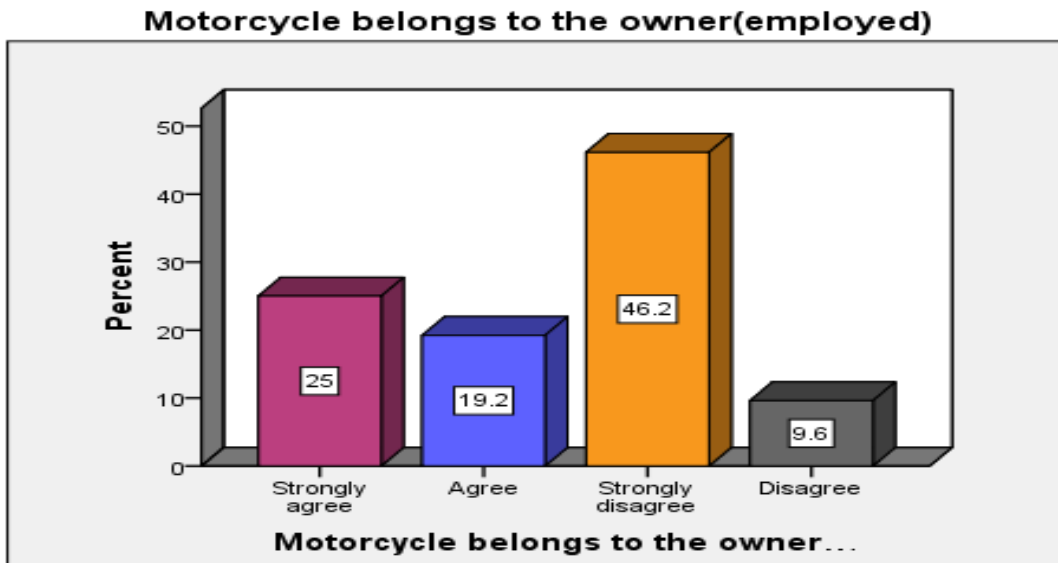
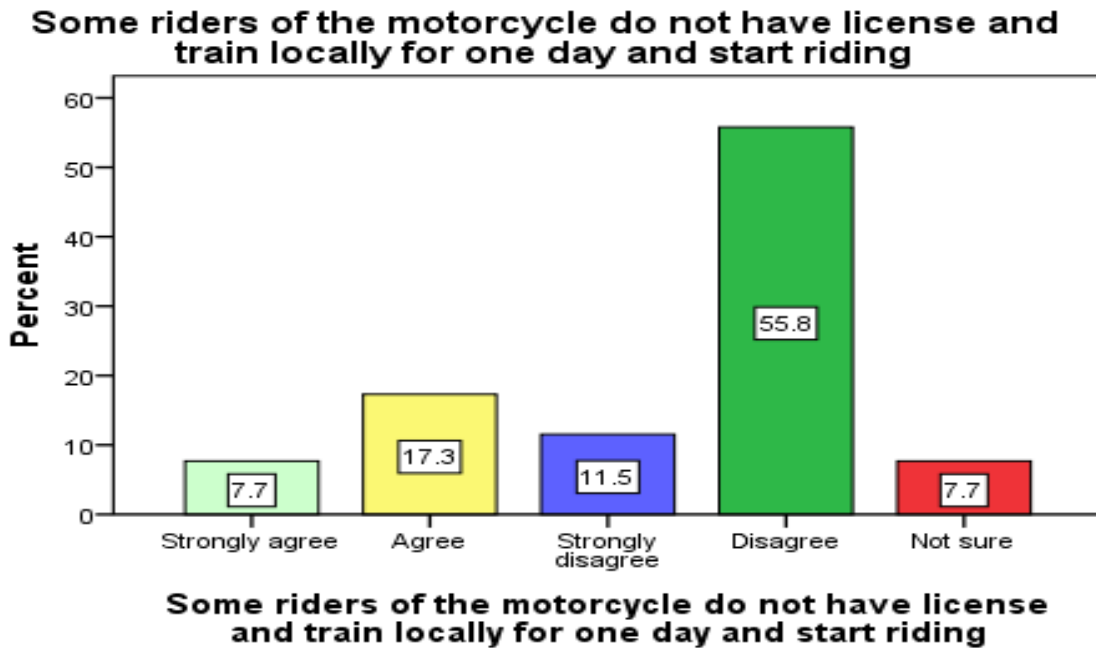


Table 7:Some riders of the motorcycle do not have license and train locally for one day and start riding

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly agree	4	7.7	7.7	7.7
Agree	9	17.3	17.3	25.0
Strongly disagree	6	11.5	11.5	36.5
Disagree	29	55.8	55.8	92.3
Not sure	4	7.7	7.7	100.0
Total	52	100.0	100.0	

Table 7, shows some riders of the motorcycle do not have license and train locally for one day and start riding and 55.8% disagree, 17.3% agree, 11.5% strongly disagree and 7.7% strongly agree and not sure respectively as illustrated in bar graph 7.

Bar graph 7.



Pie chart 8, illustrates length of time taken to train in the driving school and 65.4% trained for 2-3 weeks and 34.6% trained for 1-3 months. This indicates that those who train for long period become experienced motorcycle riding and those who train for short period do not attain proper train to enable them ride carefully, and it can be ascertained to cause accidents in highways.

Length of time taken to train in the driving school

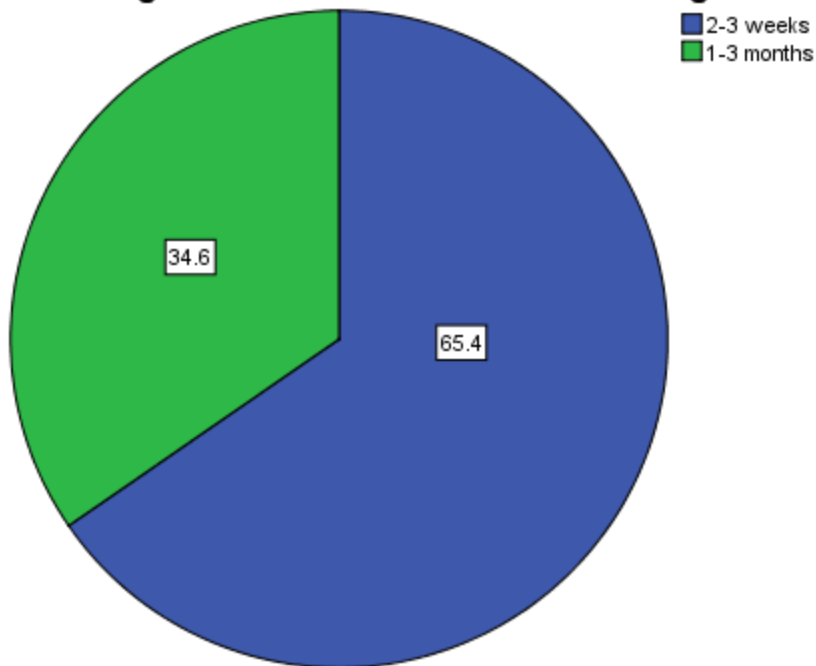


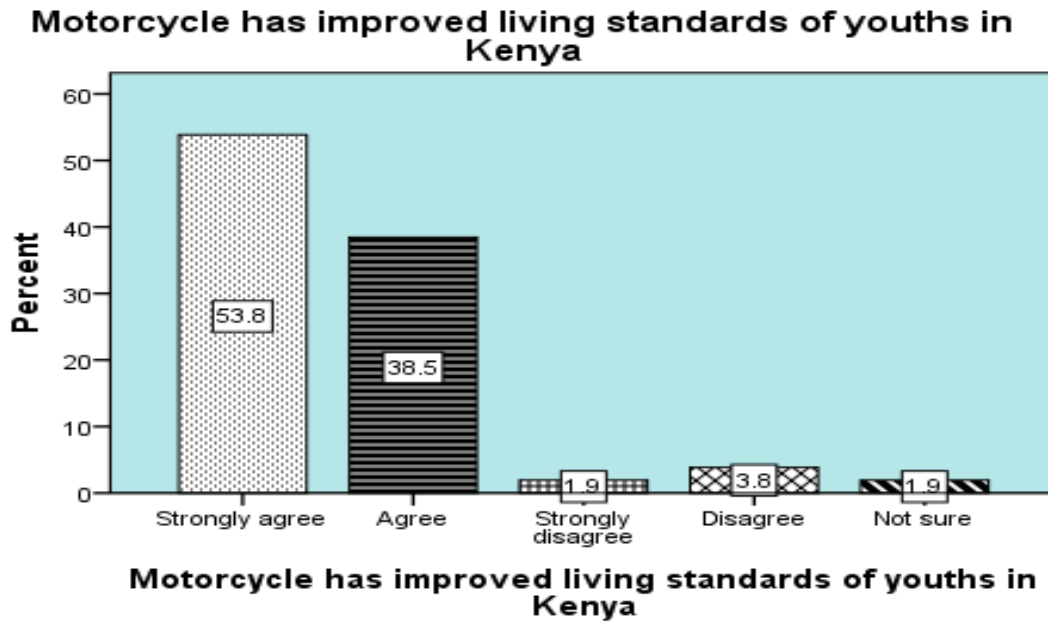
Table 8: Motorcycle causes accidents in the highways/towns/villages

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly agree	4	7.7	7.7	7.7
Agree	25	48.1	48.1	55.8
Strongly disagree	2	3.8	3.8	59.6
Disagree	8	15.4	15.4	75.0
Not sure	13	25.0	25.0	100.0
Total	52	100.0	100.0	

Table 8, shows motorcycle causes accidents in highways/towns/villages and 48.1% agree,25% not sure,15.4% disagree,7.7% strongly agree and 3.8 % strongly disagree.

Bar graph 9,illustrates the motorcycle has improved living standards of youths in Kenya and 53.8% strongly agree,38.5% agree,3.8% disagree,1.9 %strongly disagree and not sure respectively.

Bar graph 9



Bar graph 10

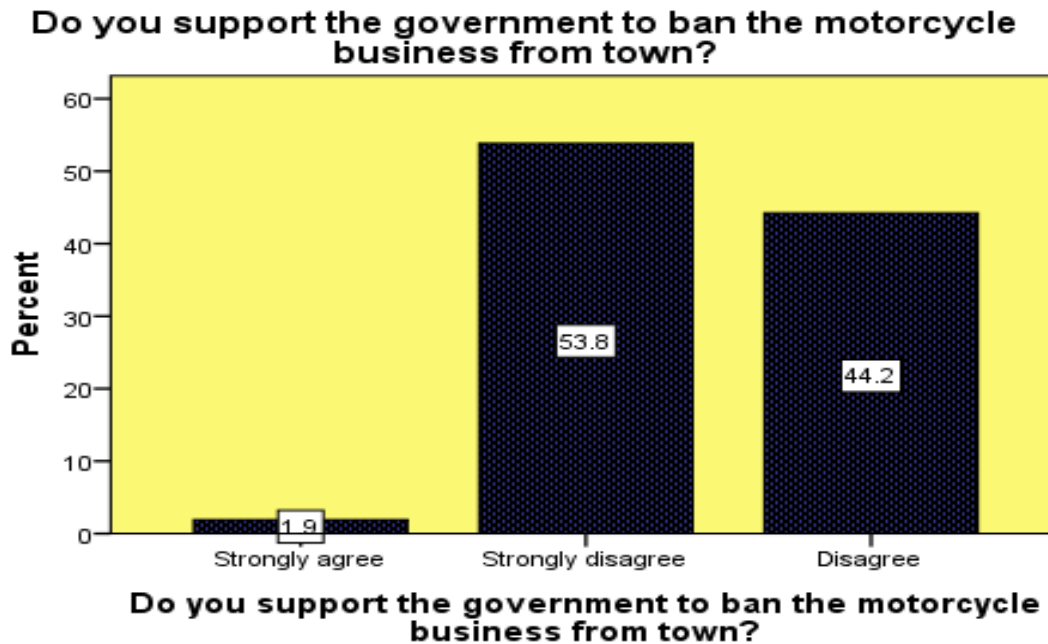
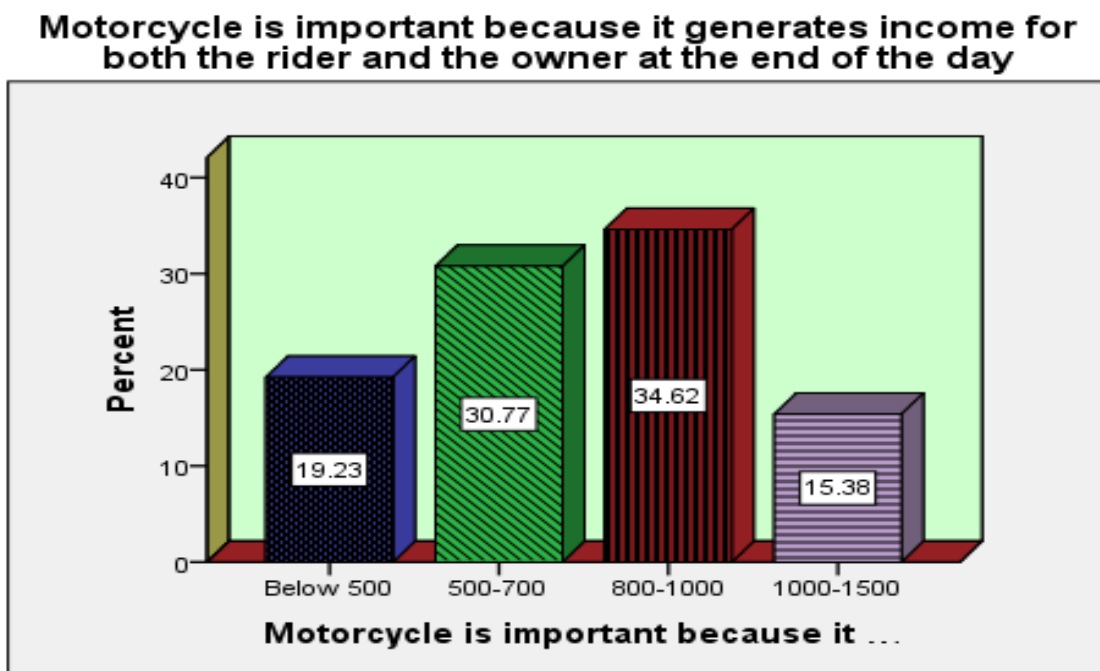


Table 9: Motorcycle has sustained my life because of the income for education, medical care, and other expenses in the family

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly agree	24	46.2	46.2	46.2
Agree	20	38.5	38.5	84.6
Strongly disagree	4	7.7	7.7	92.3
Disagree	4	7.7	7.7	100.0
Total	52	100.0	100.0	

Table 9 shows motorcycle has sustained my life because of the income for education, medical care and other expenses in the family and 46.2 %strongly agree, 38.5% agree.7.7 %strongly disagree and disagree respectively.

Bar graph 11.



Bar graph 11 illustrates motorcycle is important because it generates income for both the rider and the owner at the end of the day and 34.6% indicates Kenya shillings 800-1000,30.77% get shillings 500-700,19.23 % get shillings below 500 and 15.38% shows get shillings 1000-1500.

Conclusion of the study

Although Boda Boda causes traffic jams and accidents in many towns, it is a source of livelihood of unemployed graduates' youths in the towns in Kenya. Therefore, it is concluded that Boda Boda business has led to social, economic, technological, environmental, structural or organized and human resource sustainability as a consequence of national development. Many scholars have defined sustainable development in different ways basing different variables. According to Allen (1980) sustainable development is development is likely to achieve lasting satisfaction of human needs and improvement of the quality of human life. It is conclusively agreed that this definition matches with the Boda Boda business in transport industry. According to Haverna (1989), has argued that 'sustainable development is the maintenance or growth of the aggregate level of economic wellbeing, defined as the level of per capita economic well-being. This also is applicable to the youths in Kenya whose the living standards is improved by engaging in Boda Boda business, given that there is unemployment experienced in Kenya. Sustainable development involves human activities and processes that are efficient, equitable and environmentally sound (Palkar,1992).Also sustainable development is any form of positive change which does not erode the ecological social or political systems upon which society is dependent (Rees,1988).Boda Boda business has been a source of sustainable development in the recent past. Sustainable development has become an article of faith, a shibboleth: often used but little explained. Does it amount to a strategy? Does it apply to renewable resources? What does the term actually mean? In broad terms the concept of sustainable development encompasses;(1)Help for the very poor because they are left with no option other than to destroy their environment;(2)The idea of self-reliant development within natural resource constraints;(3)The idea of cost effective development using differing economic criteria to the traditional approach; that is to say development should not degrade environmental quality, nor should it reduce productivity in the long run;(4)The great issues of health control, appropriate technologies, food self-reliance, clean water and shelter for all;(5)The notion that people-centered initiatives are needed; human beings, in other words, are the resources in the concept(Tolba,1987).

Boda Boda business has lead to sustainable development which involves a process of deep and profound change in the political, social, economic, institutional and technological order,

including redefinition of relations between developing and more developed countries(Strong,1992).Mulwa (2010),has given the following types of sustainable development; **Environmental sustainability**-refers to suitable use of resources and preservation of environment. People should develop the ability to generate, exploit and replenish resources in such a way to ensure adequate resource base to meet the needs of the present generation without compromising the survival of the future generations. This is the basis for a sustainable future. According to (Thatcher, 1988), the government espouses the concept of sustainable economic development. Stable prosperity can be achieved throughout the world provided the environment is nurtured and safeguarded.

Social sustainability-is the restoration of people's sense of worth, dignity and self belief. This applies to the definition given by IUCN (1991), that sustainable development means improving the quality of human life while living within the carrying capacity of supporting ecosystems.

Economic sustainability-is the ability to create, identify, procure, mobilize and employ available resources whether human or material should be strengthened without creating dependency, as it is applicable to Boda Boda business which benefits the owner, the rider and the customer. Thus according to UNSO (1992), sustainable development means that economic activities should only extended as far as the level of maintenance of manmade and natural, capital will permit. A narrower definition of sustainability excludes the substitution between natural and manmade assets and requires; maintenance of the level of natural assets as well as manmade assets like motor cycle (boda boda).

Technological sustainability-it involves an effort to develop appropriate technology and promote the use of Indigenous Technological Knowledge(ITK).People adapt new technology as they integrate it with traditional technology in such a way to achieve its control. As a consequence, it is assumed people will produce goods and services for self sufficiency and surplus for export, in exchange for goods and services that cannot be produced locally. There is also local capacity building through training and exposure. The skills gained in trainings sustain internal operations at the peoples own pace and space without having to resort to dependency on external expertise except when most necessary. According to Munro (1995), Sustainable development is a complex of activities that can be expected to improve the human condition such as manner that the improvement can be maintained, as Boda Boda business in transport industry.

Organizational or structural sustainability- is the transformation of dominant institutions in the community towards becoming more responsible and sensitive to local needs and aspirations. As a result widen the scope of transparency and accountability to the public and ensures protection of civil rights and promotion of social justice. Boda Boda business inspires sustained consistency in the quality of leadership and management in-put through the welfare associations formed in every town by Boda Boda (owners or riders).This promotes community based organizations as power instruments, so a sustainable society is one that can persist over generations, one that is far-seeing enough, flexible enough and rise enough not to undermine either its physical or its social systems of support (Meadows et al, 1992).

Recommendations of the study

- (i) The helmet should be necessary requirement for both rider and customer to be transported
- (ii) No carrying more than two people in the boda boda, unless it is a trailer boda boda or “Tuku-Tuku”
- (iii) Speed governors should be installed into the motorcycles to reduce the speed like the vehicle in the transport industry.
- (iv) License be the prerequisite for motorcycle riders
- (v) Heavy jacket and life saving jackets should worn always
- (vi) The offenders should be fined so that other riders will follow the traffic laws effectively
- (vii) Reflector jackets should be worn for identification purposes.
- (viii) Women are encouraged to venture into boda boda business.

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