



# Influence of Women's Inclusion in Bodaboda Management in Household Livelihood Sustainability in Homa Bay Town Sub-County, Kenya

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**Abstract:** Motorcycles basically known as *boda boda* in Kenya play a very important role in the transport sector. *Boda boda* enterprise is male dominated with some women showing interest in joining it, however, with challenges. Women's entrepreneurship is designated as the new engine of economic growth in developing countries. Prior research shows how men and women differ in starting a business, with women normally facing more restrictions on entrepreneurial performance. This study sought to investigate the influence of women's inclusion in *boda boda* management in household livelihood sustainability in Homa-Bay Town Sub-County, Kenya. Social Network theory guided this study. The study used a descriptive design approach. The study employed a simple random sampling procedure to select the study participants. The study sample size was 366 *boda boda* riders and spouses selected out of the 170 stages of operation in the Homabay Town Sub-County. The study employed both descriptive statistics and qualitative methods to analyse data. The study found that women offer social support, financial and managerial support when involved in *boda boda* enterprise management hence improving its management for better economic growth. The study recommends including women in *boda boda* enterprise management because it has a positive impact that enhances the growth of the enterprise and offers social, financial, and sustainable growth of the household.

**Keywords:** Women's inclusion, Boda Boda, Management, Household, Livelihood, Sustainability

## How to cite this work (APA):

Alando, B. A., Oino, P. G. & Lumayo, M. F. (2023). Influence of women's inclusion in *boda boda* management in household livelihood sustainability in Homa - bay town Sub-County, Kenya. *Journal of Research Innovation and Implications in Education*, 7(4), 226 – 233. <https://doi.org/10.59765/hayran6294>.

## 1. Introduction

Motorcycles basically known as *boda boda* play a very important role in the transport sector, particularly being a technological leap in the movement of people and goods (Pankaj, 1991). This mode of transport is common and has been given local names in specific countries where they are in operation. For example, in Kenya, it is being referred to as *boda boda*. Motorcycle use for transport and personal use is on the increase globally. *Boda boda* enterprise is male-dominated and a low-income earner from developing countries. Women's entrepreneurship is designated as the

new engine of economic growth in developing countries. Prior research shows how men and women differ in starting a business, with women normally facing more restrictions on entrepreneurial performance. This has often been explained by gender roles, yet we still lack a systematic understanding of how gender roles impact women's entrepreneurial process in developing countries. However, about all motorcycle operators are male in the rural. Regionally some studies have assessed if and how *boda boda* enterprise contributed to the livelihood of rural women and whether there is appetite among them to become operators themselves. Female entrepreneurship in developing countries is increasingly receiving attention

from scholars and policymakers (Lindvert et al., 2017) female entrepreneurs can make significant contributions to innovation and economic growth in developing countries.

However, female entrepreneurs are still an ‘untapped source of growth (Vossenber, 2013), given that they face many barriers related to their gender, and this prevents them from reaching their full potential (Lindvert et al., 2017). So, the challenge in Africa is less about trying to increase the number of women entrepreneurs and more about how to legitimize and strengthen the base of their activity so they can grow their enterprises (Kantor, 2001). Gaba (2022) and Golla et al. (2011) argued that one way of fighting poverty is to adopt a variety of ways and strategies for boosting women's economy to sustain their daily lives, for example through *boda boda*. The Boda boda industry is a major part of the Kenyan economy and a source of employment and livelihood for many, including thousands of unemployed youths.

The National Transport and Safety Authority reported that there were 1,393,390 motorcycles registered in Kenya as of February 2018. However, there are 1.2 million riders in Kenya. Nine out of ten are used for commercial purposes representing over one million jobs created. In Kenya, there are several key constraints that hold back women entrepreneurs. Prior research has identified social, cultural, infrastructural, educational, occupational, and role-related obstacles and facilitators to women's involvement in entrepreneurship (Baughn et al. 2006; Bullough et al. 2017; Jennings and Brush, 2013). Many barriers and constraints that women entrepreneurs are gender specific and stem from cultural values, norms, and customs (Baughn et al. 2006; Khandelwal and Sehgal, 2018). Gender egalitarianism, gender role expectations, and the entrepreneurial ecosystem are under-researched cultural factors in women's entrepreneurship (Bullough and Sully de Luque, 2015; Eagly and Wood, 2016; Hechavarría and Ingram, 2019; Manolova et al. 2017).

Most women-owned enterprises start at the micro-level and do not grow beyond five employees if they grow at all. This is true for the MSME sector in general but is even more evident among women-owned enterprises – the larger the firm size, the fewer women one will find (Marcucci 2001; Stevenson & St-Onge 2005b). Women have been assigned a special role not only because they stand to benefit from entrepreneurship being the poorer, but also because they are seen as a critical driver of entrepreneurship in light of their unique role in the household and the rise in female-headed households. The majority of *boda boda* rider operators are males 97.4% while female riders constitute 2.6%, and married *boda boda* operators constitute 71.0% (National Crime Research Center 2018). The *boda boda* business has been dominated by men since its inception in Kenya. Despite the industry's growth in leaps and bounds

in the last decade, only a small percentage of women have joined in. To enhance gender equality in the sector, we need to encourage more women to venture into the field.

## Study Objective

The objective of this study was to examine the influence of women's inclusion in *boda-boda* management in household livelihood sustainability in Homa - Bay Town Sub-County, Kenya.

## 2. Literature Review

Women's inclusion is a concept that transcends mere equality; it is the notion that all services, opportunities and establishments are opened to both men and women. Gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) is a concept that addresses improving access to livelihood assets and services for all, including women, the poor and the excluded. It supports more inclusive policies and mindsets and increases the voice and influence of all, including women, the poor and the excluded. Implications of gender roles in natural resources governance in Latin America and the Caribbean 18 January 2022, one of the main factors that has created a differentiated impact between men and women is the unequal access to the ownership of natural resources (ILO, 2020).

The fourteenth session of the regional conference of women in Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Santiago in January 2020 seeks to support public policies that guarantee women's autonomy and rights, by presenting recommendations to address the cause of inequality, policy Projects and perspectives in favor of gender equality, women's human rights, intersectionality, parity-based democracy and inclusive sustainable development (ILO, 2020). Of the total rural employment in Latin America and the Caribbean, just over a third is female (35%). That reflects an increase from 33.9% in 2005 (ILO, 2020) and in fact, Latin America and the Caribbean is the region of the world where participation of women in rural employment rose to the most between 2005 and 2020. The Andean and some Caribbean countries are particularly notable for their high levels of female rural employment; in Peru and the plurinational state of Bolivia women accounted for between 45% and 47% of rural employment in 2020. In contrast, female rural employment rates in Central America are not as high: in Mexico, Honduras, Nicaragua and Guatemala, women occupy between 25% and 30% of rural jobs.

The United States has made considerable strides toward the inclusion of women. Women have caught up with men and surpassed them on most measures of educational attainment. Occupational segregation has decreased as has

the gender pay gap. More male partners and Women are contributing to housework and childcare. Women's share of high-level elected political positions has been rising. Sexual assault has been falling. (Lane, 2021). On March 08, 2021, President Biden signed an executive order establishing the white house gender policy council and recognizing that the participation of all people including women and girls across all aspects of our society is essential to the economic well-being, health, and security of the nation and the world. A recent study by the UNDP on regional initiative ASEAN 2018/2021 gives gender diversity and inclusion for a fair business environment and ASEAN narrative. Gender inclusion is where all individuals, regardless of whether they are born male or female have a sense of belonging and empowerment, equal access to opportunities and equal participation in activities, including the three decision-making of an institution or community. Given the unique perspectives and experiences that women and men bring, a gender-diverse leadership and board could promote a more balanced decision-making process (Cristina ESG, 2018).

A Cross-National Investigation, by Gupta et al. (2019) provides an examination of implicit theories of entrepreneurship, an important aspect of which is gender, based on survey data of working adults and business students in the USA. The authors find that in the USA, masculine as opposed to feminine characteristics are predominately attributed to entrepreneurs, and these masculine characteristics are also consistent with social role expectations for men and inconsistent with the expected characteristics of women. This means that American men, not women, are seen as entrepreneurs because this career choice is consistent with men's masculine characteristics. Furthermore, high growth and commercial businesses were associated with men in the USA. Role models often come from within the family as daughters learn from their parents and are encouraged by entrepreneurial mothers and fathers, with entrepreneur mothers having a particularly powerful influence on their daughters' aspirations and self-efficacies (Greene et al. 2013; Hoffmann et al. 2015). Women more than men have been associated with being nurturing, collaborative, cooperative, affectionate, and concerned for others, which are qualities that are particularly important leadership characteristics (Dorfman et al., 2004). Prior research has suggested that women particularly excel at empathy and judging emotions (Kirkland et al., 2013; Macaskill et al., 2002; Mandell and Pherwani 2003), building friendships and community (Ferriman et al. 2009), or managing sensitive relationships.

In Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, power analysis shows how wider economic trends have increased female employment and access to resources, this has often challenged gender relations between men and women in households, leading

to conflicts in families and, paradoxically, a wider resurgence of social control over women. (Nordund, 2014). Network researchers have examined a broad range of types of ties. These include communication ties; such as who talks to who, or who gives information or advice to whom; formal ties such as who reports to whom; affective ties such as who likes whom; or who trusts whom; and materials or workflow ties such as who gives money or other resources to whom; proximity ties; who is spatially or electronically close to whom and cognitive ties such as who knows whom. Networks are typically multiplex, that is, actors share more than one type of tie. Political economic analysis in a 2012/2013 PCA of mining in Malawi found that women's specific priorities are systematically neglected in resource decision-making. This was due to the power of male traditional elders over other individuals in the community particularly women (Tiltonese, 2013).

The constitution of Kenya (COK) (2010) recognizes women, youth, persons with disabilities and ethnic minorities as special groups deserving of constitutional protection. Article 81(b) points out that not more than two-thirds of the members of elective public bodies shall be of the same gender. Article 27 obligates the government to develop and pass policies and laws, including affirmative action programs and policies to address past discrimination against women. Many strides have been shown in various studies on how women's inclusion is important for sustainable development. This has been localized in Kenyan Associations in various policies and constitutional frameworks. Hence women's inclusion by involving them in the *boda boda* enterprise is an area that needs to be examined.

Ndiku (2017) noted that in Kenya across all social echelons, the transport sector is not perceived to be a sector for women. Apart from inadequate access to capital, credit and backup assets for women to enter into business and the *Boda Boda* sector in particular, other challenges women face have been raised by women themselves. It would appear from reported evidence from the women that, essentially, women riders face special challenges evidently because of their gender. Observed and reported evidence on women in the transport sector denotes that their numbers are low in this sector. Factors cited for this include issues related to the social construction of what roles women play in society. In the *Boda boda* sector, reported evidence indicates that some women passengers do not want to use the women riders as they fear for their riding safety.

Experiential reports from women in the *Boda boda* sector show that the language used particularly by male members of society about women *Boda boda* riders is outright wrong and insulting to women. Women in the *Boda Boda* Sector and transport as a whole are called lewd names by community members, both men and women. This includes

being viewed and spoken of in a demeaning manner with negative invocations to their person, character, conduct and behaviour, such as loose women. Other remarks women riders get are condescending in regard to the role women should or should not play in this sector.

Another challenge faced by women is that some men refuse to pay women riders for bona fide services rendered after a *Boda boda* ride or carriage of goods from one destination to another. Another major challenge faced is that some male riders refuse cash payment by women, instead requesting sexual favours as pay for services. Reported evidence shows also shows that, women in *Boda boda* as riders are perceived to be unduly aggressive, which is not expected of women in society, in an occupation attributed to men.

The negative connotations attributed to the sector such as the overall sexual permissiveness of the *Boda boda* riders, are then transferred to the women riders. In this regard, women are then perceived in bad light in society.

The Boda boda Safety Association of Kenya (BAK), the national body of commercial motorcycle riders duly registered under the Kenya Societies Act custodian to 1.6 million riders across 47 counties in Kenya has launched a female chapter that entails women riders. The association seeks to improve the welfare of *boda boda* women entrepreneurs through training on road safety, social-economic empowerment, and security. The women riders are trained in self-defense to secure themselves and their customers in case of danger. Nationally, there is a challenge for women working together, most successful family enterprises do not survive under the next family generation.

In Homabay County, the motorbike is a popular means of transport. They are considered faster, affordable and give a good source of income to some people (operators). Looking into life, a female Palagie who became popular after venturing into the business, “Mama Boda boda” a mother of six, says that a motorbike is her only income to feed and raise her six children. A small number of female riders have ventured into the business with no luck locally as a result of the difficulty of balancing between the business and taking care of families in the rural, unlike the male genders in the enterprise. Locally, women venturing into business find challenges like; gender discrimination and lack of access to capital, leaving the business male dominated. Co-entrepreneurs ventures have been lauded for allowing flexible schedules. It has also been credited for giving a lot of opportunities for couples to think about their relationship.

## Theory of Social Network

A social network theory is a map of all the relevant ties between the nodes being studied. Traditional sociological studies assume that it is the attributes of individual actors that matter – social network theory produces an alternate view, where attributes of individuals are less important than their relationships and ties with other actors within the network. Social network theory is a sociology-based theory that builds upon the relational dimensions. Conceptualization of nodes, the actors in the network and ties and the relation existing in these actors.

This theory is grounded in three principles; first, the behavior of a node is influenced by the behavior of other nodes in the network. Secondly, the ties between nodes form the basis for the exchange of both goods and ideas. Third, these ties have the ability to create structures among the actors in the network that can influence their behavior (Wassermann and Faust 1994 as cited in Hafrel-Burton et al., 2009).

The social network analysis gives the characteristics of a social network that determines the social capital of its individual actors. In contrast to physical and human capital, social capital focuses on relations between persons. “Social capital is not just the sum of the institutions which underpin a society- it is the glue that holds them together” (World Bank). It is a cultural resource characterized by norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness. It is also understood as a social intelligence needed for successful interpersonal interaction. The central premise of social capital is that individuals benefit from various norms and values that a social network fosters and produces, such as trust, reciprocity, information and cooperation. These norms and values provide the necessary preconditions for collective action of central importance to the concept of social capital in the notion of trust.

People are more likely to form social or economic ties with others. In conformity to this study women's involvement are a connected link of the nodes and ties within a household that brings on board both genders. The management and owning of *boda boda* enterprise management leads to livelihood and empowerment as advocated by the network theory when the tie is strong. The theory also relates to how couples relate, the better the relationship between the couples the more women's inclusion into the *boda boda* enterprise increases. This enhances more chances of women being included in the *boda boda* business due to good relationships back at home.

### 3. Methodology

This study used descriptive survey research methodology because it involves an in-depth analysis of women's involvement in Boda boda enterprise management by questioning both the riders and their women's Perceptions, attitudes, behavior, or values (Mugenda and Mugenda 2003). This design helped the researcher establish the contribution of women's involvement in Boda boda enterprise management to household livelihood empowerment in Homabay Sub-County, Kenya. The study was conducted in Homabay Sub-County, Homabay County- Kenya. Homabay County is a former Nyanza province of Kenya, and it borders five counties: Migori to the south, Kisii and Nyamira to the east and Kericho and Kisumu to the northeast. According to Kenya Population and Housing Census (2019), Homabay County's population was 1,131,950 in 2019 of which 539,560 are males, 592,367 are females and 23 intersex persons. The county has a population density of 359 people per square kilometer and an area of 3,154.7km. The study population of interest included Boda boda riders within Homabay Town Sub- County which has been estimated to be 8,000, according to the records in Homabay Town sub-county Boda boda Association. The study employed a simple random sampling procedure to select the participants of the study. The sample size can be determined by the procedure as prescribed by Fisher et al., (2013) since the target population was estimated to be lesser than 10,000. Fisher and colleagues' sample size formula is as stated below:

$$n = Zpq/d$$

n= desired sample size where the population is more than 10,000

Z=standard normal deviation, set at 1.96 which corresponds to 95% confidence level

p=proportion in the target population estimated to have particular characteristics desired, usually estimated at 0.5

q=1-p (proportion in the target population not having the particular characteristics desired)

d=degree of accuracy required, usually set at 0.05 level

In this study, proportion of target population with desired characteristics was set at 0.5 deviation standard, proportion of target population not having desired characteristics were also set at 0.5, Z is 1.96 and desired accuracy level set at 0.05 therefore the sample size was calculated as:

$$n = \frac{Zpq}{d}$$
$$n = \frac{(1.96) * (0.5) * (1-0.5)}{0.05} = \frac{0.9604}{0.025}$$

Therefore n=384

However, the purposively sampled target population from a registered Homabay Sub-County boda boda was determined as 8000. Since this was below 10,000 the

required sample size had to be smaller than the calculated 384. Therefore, a final sample estimate (nf) was calculated using the Fisher et al. formula:

$$nf = \frac{n}{1 + (n/N)}$$

Where;

nf= the desired sample size (where the target population is below 10,000)

n= the desired sample size (where the target population is more than 10,000)

Therefore;

$$nf = \frac{384}{1 + (384/8000)}$$
$$= \frac{384}{1 + 0.048}$$

Therefore nf=366

Therefore, the study sample size was 366 boda boda riders and spouses who were selected, from the 170 stages of operation in Homabay Town Sub-County. The study used interviews and questionnaires as the main instruments for data collection and focus Group discussion was used in order to gain an in-depth understanding of social issues. Descriptive statistics was used to summarize the demographic data which were presented by use of tables, bar graphs and pi-charts. Demographic data was used as a control variable to see its influence on the independent and dependent variables. Data was presented mainly using tables. The qualitative data from the interview schedules were categorized, and coded, and overarching themes in the data were developed; the data analysis was assured to be reliable and valid, and feasible and reasonable interpretations for the findings were presented. Encoding responses from surveys and presenting clear data analysis was based on data analysis was conducted using SPSS (Version 21.0), a computerized statistical tool.

### 4. Result and Discussions

#### Women Inclusion in Boda boda Enterprise Management

The study sought to assess the level of women's inclusion in *Boda boda* enterprise management in influencing household livelihood empowerment in Homabay Town Sub-County, Kenya. Women's involvement influences resource mobilization on the growth of *Boda boda* Enterprise Management on Household.

The statement of Women's involvement in common planning on boda boda enterprise management opens up economic opportunities as presented in Table 1.

**Table 1: Women Inclusion and Boda boda Enterprise Management**

Aspect	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	SD
Women's involvement in common planning on boda boda enterprise management opens up economic opportunities	59(17.5%)	125(37.0%)	52(15.4%)	21(6.2%)	81(24.0%)	3.38	.05
Lack of communication limits women from getting involved in boda boda enterprise management	56(16.6%)	99(29.3%)	42(12.4%)	28(8.3%)	113(33.4%)	4.32	0.081
Women offer social support when involved in boda boda enterprise management	44(13.0%)	98(29.0%)	40(11.8%)	28(8.3%)	128(37.9%)	3.91	0.105
Women's involvement improves Boda boda enterprise management for better economic growth	48(14.2%)	98(29.0%)	39(11.5%)	29(8.6%)	124(36.7%)	4.10	0.103

**Source:Researcher(2023)**

The results showed that the majority of respondents disagreed with the aspect of women's involvement in common planning in boda boda enterprise to open up economic opportunities 125(37.0%), followed by those who strongly agreed with 81(24%), 59 (17.5%) strongly disagreed, 52(15.4%) neutral, 21(6.2%) agreed.

Due to lack of communication women are limited from getting involved in boda boda enterprise management as shown in Table 1 The study showed the majority of the respondents 113(33.4%) strongly agreed that Lack of communication limits women from getting involved in boda boda enterprise management followed by 99 (29.3%) who disagreed, 56 (16.6%) strongly disagreed, 42 (12.4%) were neutral, 28(8.3%) agreed. From the findings, it was noted that most of the respondents strongly agreed that lack of communication limits women from getting involved in boda boda enterprise management.

The statement that women offer social support when involved in boda boda enterprise management the results was presented in Table 1. The study showed that the majority 128(37.8%) of the respondents strongly agreed that women offer social support when involved in boda boda enterprise management, followed by 98(29.0%) of the respondents who disagreed, followed by 44(13.3%) who strongly disagreed, 40(11.8%) neutral, and 28(8.3%) agreed from the findings it was noted that most of the respondents strongly agreed that Women offer social support when involved in boda boda enterprise management

The results showed that 124(36.7%) represented the majority of the respondents who strongly agreed that women's involvement improves boda boda enterprise management for better economic growth, followed by 98(29.0%) who disagreed, 48 (14.2%) strongly disagreed, 39(11.5%) neutral, 29 (8.6%) agreed.

There is evidence that women are increasingly engaging in the sector in different roles whereby they offer social support, improve boda boda enterprise management for better economic growth, and help in planning boda boda enterprise management, hence, opening up economic opportunities. The study established that lack of communication limits women from getting involved in boda boda enterprise management. The study further found that equitable engagement of women in the boda boda enterprise assists them to support one another within their communities.

The majority of women reported that their engagement in boda boda enterprise has enriched them both economically and socially, whereby they have formed women groups meant to support their daily livelihoods. This concurs with Golla et al. (2011) on women's economic empowerment whereby he argues that women need to succeed and advance economically with the power to make economic decisions and access productive resources like human capital, financial capital, and social capital whereby they are able to save, get loans and network. The study found that one of the interventions in supporting their livelihood was through women's groups. This was supported by one of the riders who opined that:

*“Supporting our women in joining boda boda enterprises makes our women to be empowered. Our women help us to run our homes because of the boda boda business we do. For instance, the money I get from the boda boda business has assisted my wife in joining women groups. The Kshs. 500 savings of every day in her group has helped us to keep our families and run other families’ issues. My wife is now able to run her personal affairs and she sells tomatoes in my home place.” (K11, Male, 39Years)*

Another rider alluded that:

*“When women join groups, they are able to buy personal items like clothes and run another home affair. Further, through the women's group they are able to support their parents without requesting me. In their group, they are also doing other activities whereby after the savings they have made, they share with every member and are able to meet their daily needs.” (K12, MALE, 35YEARS)*

Decision-making in business is an important aspect since it impacts the ongoing management and sustainability of a business. One of the bodaboda leaders emphasized that:

*“When they join the women groups, they grow in all aspects like they are able to attend functions without being financed by anybody. They support one another in buying utensils and even buying food. For instance, women, who are in groups get money to sell fish within Homabay town because they are able to support one another in starting a business. They further support and teach one another about family issues. As a man I support them to join women's groups since through them they learn and support their families.” (K13, Male, 40Years)*

Although most riders feel that engaging their women led to the success of their groups, one of the reasons that affected most women was the lack of information about the groups. This shows that when women participate in Boda Boda enterprise management, it helps them to grow socially and economically. Further, when they join women's groups, they learn more from one another, especially on how they save and spend money. The majority of women groups in Homabay who are in these social groups believe that their engagement in these groups assists them in fighting poverty. This is in tandem with Gaba (2022) who argues that one way of fighting poverty is to adopt a variety of ways and strategies for boosting their economy to sustain their daily lives. Hence, their participation in those groups helps them to expand their skills in agriculture and fish

farming in order to survive. One of the riders in the group also noted that:

*“Before my wife joined their group, I used to admire most of their activities like their regular meetings and the support they used to give their fellow women like giving them loans and supporting them to build their homes. This motivated me and I asked my wife to join them. Since then, we have built our house and our children are eating well.” (K14, Male, 36 Years)*

## 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

### 5.1 Conclusion

The study concluded that women's inclusion in Boda boda enterprise management influences household livelihood empowerment in Homabay Town Sub- County, Kenya. The study further concluded that women's involvement influences resource Mobilization on the growth of Boda boda Enterprise Management on Household. From the study, it was concluded that women offer social support, and financial and managerial support when involved in boda boda enterprise management hence improving its management for better economic growth. The study also established that lack of communication limits women from getting involved in boda boda enterprise management. The study further found that equitable engagement of women in the bodaboda enterprise assists them to support one another within their communities.

### 5.2 Recommendations

The study recommends that more women should be included in boda boda transport to substitute their source of livelihood and they should also be empowered through soft credits. The study further recommends the enhancement of effective communication to encourage women's inclusion in the boda boda sector.

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