



## THE CONTRIBUTION OF MOTORCYCLE BUSINESS TO THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC WELLBEING OF OPERATORS IN KISUMU COUNTY, KENYA

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**Abstract:** *Motorcycle ownership and use as a source of livelihood in developing countries has increased dramatically over the past few decades. The study investigated contributions of motorcycle business to the socio-economic wellbeing of operators in Kisumu County. It established the socio-demographic characteristics of motorcycle operators, the contribution of motorcycle business to the socio-economic wellbeing of the operators, and challenges motorcycle operators in Nyakach Sub County face. The study was a descriptive survey, a concurrent mixed-methods that sampled 122 operators using stratified and simple random sampling, and five key informants using a purposive sampling technique. Semi-structured interview schedules, focus group discussion guides, and interview schedules were used to get information from the operators and the key informants respectively. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and presented in frequency counts, percentages, mean, and mode whereas content analysis was used for qualitative data. The motorcycle business provided the operators with a source of income that enabled them to meet their daily subsistence needs, make investments, and educate their children. The study revealed that diseases, insecurity such as theft of motorbikes, difficulty accessing and paying loans, police harassment, and some customers not paying were challenges operators experienced, and concluded that the motorcycle business contributed to the socio-economic well-being of the operators. The study recommended a working relationship between the security personnel and the industry to curb theft; sensitization of industry operators on risk behavior through the County's Health Department; financial training and future studies in the industry.*

**Key words:** *Boda-boda, operator, Socio-economic wellbeing*

## 1.1 Background to the study

In the African continent, commercial 'taxi' motorcycles are known by various names; from PikiPiki (Swahili term) and BodaBoda (East Africa), Okada (Pidgin English-Nigeria), Oléyiain Togo, to Cameroon's Bendskin (Tuffour & Appiagyei, 2014). In many African towns, communities, and cities, the two-wheeled medium has become a very common means of transportation. Motorcycles are estimated to make up more than 40 percent of all cars (including cars, buses, trucks, and so on) (Iwuoha, 2013).

Since the 1990s, there has been an increase in the use of motorcycles as a motorized means of transport in many cities across the world (Fishman, Washington & Haworth, 2014; Anon, 2014). In London, it offered alternative means of transport to the upper-class passengers who felt fed up with sitting in traffic snarl-ups on their way to and from the airport (Anon, 2014). In China, motorcycle taxis have played a very big role in supporting the lives of urban migrants' subgroups from Taiwan, Vietnam, and Asia (Qian, 2014). In Taiwan the ratio of motorcycles use is about 1:2 while one out of four people uses automobiles (Nkede, 2012). In Vietnam, the use of the motorcycle is even higher because of the lack of public transport; the few available automobiles are out of reach for many because of low-income levels (Nkede, 2012).

In Africa, motorcycle operations serve as a means of living for many people (Taruwere, 2012). Motorcycle operators look up to it as a source of income for the survival of their households in Nigeria (Arosanyin, 2011). In Northern Ghana, the lives of many urban residents have improved significantly due to the high levels of motorcycle ownership and use (Dinye, 2013). With poor roads and inadequate public transport systems, many urban residents can easily move to peri-urban areas because of the increase in the use of motorcycles. The growth in the use of motorcycles has also come along with a lot of employment opportunities for the operators. Motorcycle mechanics and motorcycle spare parts dealers have gotten employment and there has also been an increase in sources for revenue generation for the local government through licensing, motorcycle registration, and levied taxes (Dinye, 2013).

In Kenya, the motorcycle business (*boda boda*) has been one of the rapidly growing sub-sectors. It has employed many youths (Olawo, Ochieng', Ombok, & Achieng', 2014). Since 2010, it has opened up several opportunities for Kenyan youths, and it is assumed that it has led to a reduction in criminal activities committed by youths (Kangethe, 2015). Motorcycle riders, mechanics, and spare-part dealers have earned daily income from motorcycle-related activities to support their livelihoods (Nyachio, 2013) and as a result, the Government of Kenya made acquisition of motorcycles affordable to many in 2008 by zero-rating to promote jobs in the transport industry. The operators who adopted this business increased their incomes by 50 percent, thus leading to an improvement in the standard of living of people involved in the motorcycle business. (Olawo *et al.* 2014). The Nairobi Stock Exchange Kenya (NSE) (2018) report indicated that approximately 600,000 commercial cyclists take home an average of Ksh. 1,000 daily.

According to the Chairman of the Motorcycle Assembly Association of Kenya (MAAK), Isaac Kalua, about 99 percent of motorcycle riders earn about Ksh1, 000 per day on average (Kangethe, 2015). This greatly exceeds the wages of those in the informal sectors with jobs that require limited

skills like casual security, retail businesses, and construction. Motorcycle business in Kenya is thus very competitive and to survive in this business, one has to be innovative, have a good customer care, abide by the law, be reliable and maintain the motorcycle regularly (Iwuoha, 2013). Motorcycle use and operation thus provide opportunities to promote a healthy living environment for the operator which defines the concept of wellbeing according to Playford (2001).

Wellbeing represents a situation where people can access employment opportunities, quality housing, participate in social and civic activities, and access community services and facilities; they can promote a healthy living environment and reduce opportunities for crime concerning community values (Playford, 2001). It depicts the expression of the highest level of quality of life measured in terms of; better living standards, healthy lives, conducive environment, united communities, high levels of education, availability of leisure time, political participation, and access to important elements in the community such as arts, and culture (Institute of Wellbeing Canada, 2012). These aspects of wellbeing also ensure that people come together to take collective actions which are aimed at improving their social, economic, physical, and environmental wellbeing, as they preserve the most important aspects of their culture (Flo & Smith, 2012) and describe the concept of community development in a wider perspective. Thus, this study focused on the collective actions taken by motorcycle business operators to improve their living standards.

## 1.2 Literature Review

Scholars in a wide range of disciplines have attempted to define, measure and analyse wellbeing in various contexts: Pollard and Lee (2003) define well-being as an inherently positive state of happiness while McGillivray and Clarke (2006) posits that wellbeing involves good health or lack of ill-being, better living standards, a collective or shared understanding and sustainability. According to McGregor (2008), wellbeing is not just a matter of wealth alone since not all human needs can be met by the use of money: issues like relationships between individuals, values, and inspirations mean a lot to others and describe how satisfactory the quality of their lives might be (McGregor, 2008).

Surveys of wellbeing define wellbeing in three dimensions: 1) whether one is satisfied with his or her life; is in a good state of health or has a disability; and whether one can positively function in the community (Kahn & Juster, 2002). Wellbeing represents a situation where one coexists peacefully with others in the community, meet their daily needs, achieve their life goals, and enjoy life satisfactorily (Jongudomkarn and Camfield, 2005).

Traditionally, people have measured well-being in terms of material possessions of wealth or the amount of income one earns (Conceição & Bandura, 2008). However, there are some elements of quality of life that cannot be described in terms of money: Wellbeing depicts the ability of individuals to express the highest level of life enjoyment which is not necessarily described by having good living standards, good health, good education, ample time for recreation and ability to participate in the political issues of the community. (Institute of Wellbeing Canada, 2012).

Well-being is a multi-dimensional concept that encompasses every aspect of human life (Concieacao & Bandura, 2014). It considers the psychological, physiological, social, cultural, and economic needs of people and their communities (Wilkinson, 2013). It thus represents a situation

where people can get employment opportunities, build good houses, participate in social and political activities, and access services and facilities available in the community to promote a healthy living environment and reduce opportunities for crime concerning community values (Playford, 2001). This study emphasised the socio-economic well-being of motorcycle operators in Nyakach Sub-County, Kisumu County.

Socio-economic wellbeing considers both the economic status and quality of life for people (Forest Range Assessment Program (FRAP), 2003). This cover themes such as income-earning opportunities, the absence of poverty, educational quality, public safety, involvement in local civic and interest groups, and various aspects of a clean and enjoyable environment.

The pursuit of economic and social survival has made many young people and middle-aged men get into a variety of jobs such as motorcycle operations (Olawo et al., 2014). According to Mutiso and Behrens (2013), the motorcycle business has created employment opportunities and thus contributed to socio-economic benefit. Motorcycle transport is therefore a form of employment to many young and even old people across the nations and for the majority of operators, motorcycles are very rewarding since they can get a certain amount of money for income out of it.

In Nigeria, motorcycle operations employed millions of unemployed youths. The standard of living of 'okada' riders and their family improved; they used a generator to watch films and listen to radio and television, drilled wells for potable water, had quality three square meals per day and assurance of having a personal house in their community (Okonkwo, Ehemute, & Nwosu, 2010). Some government employees also engaged in the business to supplement family incomes by working after normal work hours (Kumar, 2011). In Kano, those who had been retrenched from civil service or retired and other business persons who were struggling with their business were also absorbed in the motorcycle taxi business either as owners or as riders (Meagher, 2013).

In Uganda, the Motorcycle business has had a great impact on the youths through the creation of employment opportunities (Sentongo-Kibalama, Kisaalita & Josephat, 2007). According to Howe (2002), the greatest impact that the motorcycle business has had on the poor is through the employment provided. He said that each motorcycle business directly employs six people and on average, each operator supports six people including themselves.

In Rwanda, the 'moto' sector employed and supported a very large number of people. 10,486 motorcyclists were recorded in official databases (Rollason, 2012). A conservative estimate suggested that as many as 4.5 percent of the city's population, equivalent to 47,187 people depended on motorcyclists for their livelihoods and that motorcyclists were not poor but enjoyed relatively high and stable incomes (Rollason, 2012).

In Kenya, the number of motorcycle business operators increases day by day (Olawo et al., 2014). Motorcycle taxi business provides employment opportunities to many unemployed youths and this has been a driving force to a continuous encouragement of the kind of business in any part of the country, Nyakach Sub-County not exclusive. About 1.2 million Kenyans earn direct livelihoods from the motorcycle business (Kalua, 2013). Apart from actual riders, other motorcycle business beneficiaries include motorcycle owners, mechanics, spare parts dealers, salespersons, and producers. Kiosks vendors have also gotten opportunities to sell food items in the 'stages' where the operators park to wait for customers. Therefore, the motorcycle business has helped to improve the socio-economic standing of many youths in the communities (Mutiso & Berhens, 2013).

This, however, does not come without challenges. Various studies reveal that the motorcycle business industry provides an array of challenges not just to motorcycle operators but also to the members of the public (Kisia 2010, Kitara, 2011, BBSAK 2012 Ntshinga, W., Eloff, J., Hillebrand, C., Burger, D., Zoller, K., Nkaelang, B., & Van Eerden, T., 2012 and Mutiso & Behrens 2013).

According to the Boda Boda Safety Association of Kenya (BBSAK), motorcycle operators are prone to accidents. It is difficult for them to access driving licenses because of low socioeconomic status and which consequently leaves them inadequate in safety skills. A report aired by National Broadcasting Station (NBS) Television (2012) revealed that many motorcycle operators find difficulties as far as affording driving school fees is concerned. Therefore, they opt for unlicensed training offered by other operators that are cheap but inefficient. The accidents experienced in the motorcycle business, as reported by Kisia (2010), has seen many hospitals in Western Kenya establish special wards for victims of motorcycle accidents. The accidents have also been blamed on the increased competition in the industry that means that motorcycle operators have to make more trips a day to continue generating money which not only causes fatigue but also risky driving and therefore resulting accidents (Kitara, 2011).

Many of the motorcycle operators are attacked by merciless robbers who steal their motorcycles or even kill them while on duty (Mutiso & Behrens 2013). Across the country, there are very few designated areas for their operations and they are constantly harassed by law enforcement officers. Besides, the government has not fully recognized the industry despite its popularity (BBSAK Website).

On the use of helmet, a study carried out by Kitara (2011) revealed that not all operators understand the need of using a helmet. The study also revealed that not all passengers would want to wear the helmet for safety purposes (p.98). This reality puts the operators in conflict with law enforcement and cases of accidents are common. Many women passengers do not want to hold onto the drivers, they are reluctant to “spoil their hair” with the helmet. It makes passengers less secure and the motorcycle less balanced (Ntshinga, W., Eloff, J., Hillebrand, C., Burger, D., Zoller, K., Nkaelang, B., & Van Eerden, T., 2012).

The motorcycle business has also faced several accusations from the general public. In Kisumu, motorcycle operators are accused by the public as far as all manner of crimes are concerned, for example, abduction, hit-men, and gangs for hire. Other studies have also observed that motorcycle operators are blamed for criminal activities such as rape and mob justice – they have killed innocent people who are suspected to be criminals without verification. Along the Lake Victoria belt, motorcycle operators are also blamed for spreading HIV/AIDS and causing school drop-outs of young girls (Action in the Community Environment (ACE) Africa Report, 2017).

The challenges facing motorcycle operators were summarized in a study by Oino and Kuloba (2011), where they assessed the challenges and risks facing the motorcycle industry. The study highlighted the challenge of diseases such as pneumonia and HIV/AIDS. The motorcycle operators were exposed to strong winds, cold, and dust while riding which put them at risk of respiratory infections such as pneumonia. The study also reported the theft of motorcycles as a challenge where the motorcycle operators are hijacked and robbed of their motorcycles, sometimes leaving them injured or dead. The study also reported accidents and harassment by police.

### 1.3 Materials and Methods

This study employed a mixed-method (embedded) approach because of the need to include both qualitative and quantitative data to answer research questions Creswell, Plano, Clark, Gutmann, and Hanson, (2003) and a descriptive survey design to establish the contribution of motorcycle business to the wellbeing of operators in Nyakach Sub-County, Kisumu County. (A structured interview schedule was used to collect information from motorcycle operators to find out their status according to the variables of the study.

The study location was Nyakach Sub-county, Kisumu County. The topography of Nyakach Sub-county made it suitable for motorcycle transport since most of its parts cannot be accessed by use of motor vehicles due to the escarpments, slopes, and bushes that make maneuvering to the Sub-county very uneasy. With a fertility rate of 5.8, it is composed of a very young population majority of whom are unemployed thus seeks alternative means of livelihood in the motorcycle business (the Republic of Kenya Population and Housing Census Report, 2010). Due to its increasing young population, the economy of Nyakach Sub-county is faced with challenges of high poverty. The Sub-County has an absolute poverty index of 60.5 percent (the Republic of Kenya Population and Housing Census Report, 2010). The majority of its members practice subsistence farming, livestock keeping, and fishing as their main source of livelihood.

With the predominantly subsistence agriculture and moribund fishing industry, the sub-county is therefore faced with declining employment opportunities for the youthful population and to change the situation, there is a need to develop an infrastructure that will support the economic foundation (National Council for Population and Development (NCPD), 2017). The transport industry is deemed necessary especially with the increasing rates of motorcycle registration. Thus, motorcycles become a better alternative means of transport since they can penetrate and navigate through paths and bushes despite the terrain.

The study population consisted of motorcycle business riders or operators in towns and centres of the three regions of Nyakach Sub-County – Upper, Lower, and West Nyakach. According to the rules provided by the National Transport and Safety Authority (NTSA) in 2014, every operator must join an association. It was therefore assumed that every operator in the regions belonged to the association. According to the Chairperson of the Nyakach Boda-boda Association, the records of registered operators in the association were estimated at 1220 members in the umbrella association: Upper – 650 members, West – 250, and Lower – 320 members (Nyambudha, 2018). The study used stratified sampling to select the motorcycle business operators from the three regions of Nyakach Sub-County which were considered as strata. The strata consisted of motorcycle business riders, owners, and users.

The researcher did a pre-visit to the area of study to get acquainted with the operations of Nyakach Sub-county motorcycle operators' representatives. It is upon this visit that the Chair of Motorcycle Association in Nyakach Sub County provided the information that due to the requirements by NTSA, all operators had joined the association. The chairperson also provided a list of registered members which was used as a sample frame. From the list provided, operators were selected from different regions using simple random sampling.

With the help of the Nyakach Boda-boda Association, the first respondents were selected from each stratum respectively. Thereafter, the other respondents were selected randomly from the groups of operators since the study was conducted on the days in which each group (that is from Lower, Upper, and Central Nyakach) were having their association meetings and so they could be easily reached. The distribution of the samples is as shown in Table 1

**Table 1: Distribution of Samples**

<b>Region</b>	<b>Population Size</b>	<b>Sample size</b>
Upper Nyakach	650	65
West Nyakach	250	25
Lower Nyakach	320	32
<b>Total</b>	<b>1220</b>	<b>122</b>

**Source: Nyakach Motorcycle Business Association Registration List (2018)**

Three focus group discussions comprising of eight operators each were selected purposively from the three regions in Nyakach Sub- County and operators who participated in the discussions were selected using convenient sampling; only those who were available after the operators' meetings participated. Five key informants (one Social Development Officer (SDO), three area chiefs, and one chairperson of the motorcycle association) were selected using purposive sampling.

The key data collection tool for the motorcycle operators was semi-structured interview schedules which were administered in form of a face-to-face interview to 122 respondents sampled from Nyakach Motorcycle Business Association Registration List and the responses recorded by the investigator due to the nature of the work the operators engage in which could not allow them to sit and fill in questionnaires. The instrument had both open-ended and closed questions to allow the researcher to probe further for information not addressed in the instruments. Interview guides were used with the key informants. Focus group discussion guides were also used to collect qualitative data for the study. Three focus group discussions, each composed of eight motorcycle operators, were conducted with motorcycle business operators from the three regions sampled, and data from these groups was recorded by the use of audio recorders and written notes.

The collected data were organized into frequency distribution tables and presented in form of tables using generated percentages and the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 21 was used to analyze the resultant information. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze quantitative data while qualitative data were analyzed based on analysis of the meanings and inferences given by the respondents using content analysis. The audio recordings from the focus group discussions were listened to and transcribed into word, from where excerpts were drawn based on the relevance to the research questions.

## 1.4 Discussion of findings

### Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Motorcycle Business Operators

The study sought to establish the socio-demographic characteristics of the operators in terms of age, gender, education level, marital status, household size, employment status before joining the motorcycle business, motorcycle ownership, experience level, and the number of hours worked in a day. The results for age, gender, education level, marital status, and numbers household size were as shown in Table 2 below:

**Table 2: Socio-demographic Characteristics of Operators**

Variable	Categories	Frequency (n)	Proportion (percent)
Age (years) N=122	Less than 20	2	1.6
	20-34	83	68.0
	35-49	29	23.8
	50 and above	8	6.6
Gender N=122	Male	118	96.7
	Female	4	3.3
Education Level N=122	Primary and below	48	39.3
	Secondary school	68	56.6
	Tertiary	5	4.1
Marital Status N=122	Single	33	27.0
	Married	89	73.0
Household Size N=122	Five (5) and below	65	53.3
	Six (6) and above	57	46.7

**Source: Field data, 2018**

The age range of most operators (68 percent) was between 20-34 years. Those between 35-49 years were 23.6 percent, while 6.6 percent were above 50 years and the least (1.6 percent) were aged less than 20 years. As can be observed, the motorcycle business in Nyakach Sub-County is dominated by the youth with those below 35 years of age totaling to 69.6 percent. This finding concurred with that by Olawo *et al.* (2014) which opined that motorcycle-based transport provided employment opportunities to a lot of youths.

Looking at gender, most (96.7 percent) of the respondents were males, with females standing at 3.3 percent. This shows that the motorcycle business in Nyakach Sub-County is largely dominated by males and with only a few females. In terms of education, the majority (56.6 percent) of the motorcycle operators, had attained secondary education, 39.3 percent primary education, and below, and 4.1 percent had received tertiary education. The majority (73 percent) of the respondents were married, while 27 percent were not. Concerning the household sizes of the motorcycle operators involved in the study, the majority (53.3 percent) of them had five and below members in their households, while the rest (46.7 percent) had six or more members in their households.

The study also found that most (57.7 percent) of the respondents were previously employed before

joining the motorcycle business, while the remaining (42.3 percent) were unemployed. The majority of the respondents were previously engaged in various activities such as using bicycles to carry people, construction, fishing, teaching (as untrained teachers), electrical, décor, shoemaking, security guard, and selling in butchery which did not offer them enough means for survival. So, they decided to join the motorcycle business because it provided them with better employment opportunities than the activities they previously engaged in. Nearly half of the respondents (44.3 percent) who were not employed before the business also got some job to do. This result is congruent with the study by Mutiso and Berhens (2013), which indicated that the motorcycle business had helped to solve the problem of youth unemployment.

Concerning how long the respondents had been in the motorcycle business, most (73.8 percent) of the operators, had worked for three years or more while the remaining 26.6 percent had worked for less than three years. This was a probable indication that the motorcycle business was sustainable to the respondents thus they would engage in the business for a longer period.

The study also tried to determine whether the respondents owned the motorcycles they were operating or not in the socio-demographics. The results indicated that the majority (54.9 percent) of the respondents did not own the motorcycles they were operating – they were just hired riders. Only 45.1 percent of the respondents owned the motorcycle they operated. This showed that the majority of the operators hired the motorcycles they used and this was in line with the findings by Meagher (2013) that a significant proportion simply operated the motorcycles as riders even though some of the motorcycle operators owned the motorcycles they ride.

On the respondents' engagement in the motorcycle business, the majority (51.6 percent) of the respondents were in the motorcycle business on a full-time basis, while 48.4 percent were engaged on a part-time basis. This was an indication that to the majority of respondents, the motorcycle business was the main source of livelihood. This was consistent with the findings by Arosanyin (2011), that motorcycle operator took the business as the main economic activity to earn the income for the survival of their families and dependents. The 59 operators working part-time in the motorcycle business were involved in a range of activities including farming, fishing, part-time teaching, construction, electrical works, security, shoemaking, décor, brick making, and touting in 'matatus' and used the motorcycle business to supplement the income they got from the different activities. This was a clear indication that the income they got from the other activities was not enough for their wellbeing thus they engaged in a mix of commercial activities including motorcycle business operations.

The study further sought to establish the number of hours a day the operators worked in the motorcycle business. From the results, the least hours a day worked by the respondents in the motorcycle business was three hours; while the highest number of hours worked a day was 14 hours. A majority (51.6 percent) worked more than eight hours a day, while the rest (48.4 percent) worked eight (8) hours a day or less. This showed that most operators were working overtime and the result was similar to what Kageha (2015) found out; that the operators faced the risk of frustrations and working many hours to get the required amount to take to the owners of the motorcycles at the end of the day.

## Motorcycle Business on Socio-economic Wellbeing of the Motorcycle Operators

To explore the contribution of motorcycle business to the socio-economic wellbeing of the motorcycle operators, the study sought to determine the amount of income earned by the motorcycle operators and how they spent the money received, compare the income of the operators to the income they got from the previous job, and the contribution of motorcycle business to the social and economic wellbeing of operators in Nyakach sub-county.

The researcher asked the operators to estimate how much money they made from the motorcycle business on a good day and how much they made on a bad day. The findings were as indicated in Table 3. On a good day, that is when business is at its peak, the majority (53.2 percent) of the motorcycle operators earned Ksh. 800-1200, 32 percent earned Ksh. 1000-1500 and 14.8 percent earned Ksh. 1200-2000. On the other hand, on a bad day, that is when the business is at its lowest, the majority (61.5percent) of the respondents earned between Ksh. 500-700, 21.3 percent earned Ksh. 800-1000 and the least (17.2 percent) earned Ksh. 300-500. The incomes earned by the respondents in this study highlighted the benefits obtained directly by the engagement of the motorcycle operators in the motorcycle business, just as was pointed out by Mutiso and Behrens (2013) that the motorcycle business provided an opportunity for the operators where they can get a certain amount of money for income.

**Table 3: Motorcycle Operators' Daily Income**

Nature of Day	Gross Income Earned (Ksh)	Frequency (n)	Proportion (percent)
Income on a good day N=122	800 – 1200	65	53.2
	1000 – 1500	39	32.0
	1200 – 2000	18	14.8
Income on a bad day N=122	300 – 500	21	17.2
	500 – 700	75	61.5
	800 – 1000	26	21.3

**Source: Field data, 2018**

Out of the amount of income earned a day from the motorcycle business, the motorcycle operators did indicate their expenditure categorized into three basic categories: owner (the amount surrendered to the owner of the motorcycle), fuel, and daily household expenditure for the operator mainly in the form of food.

Since 67 respondents (54.9 percent) were riders and not owners of the motorcycles, they submitted a standard Ksh. 300 to the owners of the motorcycles daily regardless of whether it was a good or bad day. This finding was consistent with that of Meagher (2013) and Nyachieo (2015), where it was pointed out that those motorcycle operators who did not own the motorcycles but were simply riders had to daily return to the owners of the motorcycle. In the case of Nyakach, the average daily remittance to the owners was Ksh. 300. The remaining 45.1 percent are owners and therefore did not incur this expenditure from their income. All the respondents incurred the fuel cost. A majority (60.7 percent) reported spending Ksh. 200 a day on fuel, 28.7 percent spent Ksh. 150, while the remaining 10.7 percent spent Ksh. 100. For domestic purposes (household consumption), a majority (54.1 percent) of the respondents spend Ksh. 200 a day, followed by 26.2 percent who

spend Ksh. 300 a day, and finally 19.7 percent of the respondents who spend Ksh. 400 a day. This was above the global poverty index of one dollar a day thus indicated that the motorcycle business contributed positively to the wellbeing of the operators.

The study also sought to compare the income obtained from the motorcycle business to that of the previous jobs the motorcycle operators were involved in. All the motorcycle operators (100 percent) previously engaged in other jobs before venturing into the motorcycle transport business reported that the income earned from the motorcycle business was higher compared to the earnings from their previous jobs. This finding was consistent with a study conducted by Mbugua (2011) which found that compared to their earlier sources of income, virtually all (95.7 percent) of motorcycle operators had improved livelihoods.

For all the 59 motorcycle operators who have engaged in other jobs aside from the motorcycle business, they were all of the opinions that the motorcycle business was a better income generator than their other jobs. However, as shown in Table 4 below, there were diverse opinions as to how this was exactly true.

**Table 4: Comparison between Motorcycle Business and Other Jobs**

Category	Frequency (n)	Proportion (percent)
Pays better	36	61.0
Provides constant and consistent cash	23	39.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source: Field data, 2018**

The majority (61.0 percent) of the 59 operators with other jobs said the motorcycle business paid better than the other jobs they were doing, while 39.0 percent were of the response that the motorcycle business, unlike the other businesses they were engaged in, provided them with constant cash which flowed consistently.

The study also sought the views of operators as to whether they were doing better socially and economically since they started the motorcycle transport business. Most of the respondents (89.3 percent) thought that their social and economic wellbeing had improved while the remaining 10.7 percent were not sure. 74.6 percent of the motorcycle operators reported to have built a house, 59.8 percent could pay for their children's school fees, 59.0 percent afforded their children three meals a day, 53.3 percent had bought livestock, 33.6 percent had connected electricity to their homes, 13.1 percent contributed towards medical insurance cover, and 9.0 percent had bought motorcycles, thanks to the income obtained from the motorcycle business. Moreover from the discussion with the operators, there was a general agreement that the motorcycle business had made their lives better. This finding on the contribution of motorcycle business to the social and economic well-being is consistent with the findings of a study by Mbugua (2011) that motorcycle taxis had improved the livelihoods of about 95.7 percent of the respondents.

These findings were also congruent with responses from the FGDs held with the operators. From one of the FGDs, Respondent 1(2018) said,

*“... As for me, while I have been in the bodaboda business, I have constructed a good house for myself and also connected electricity through the Stima loan. I have also been able to save some of the money I get and with the help of the banks acquired three motorcycles. I have people who ride them and bring me money every evening. Nowadays, my mother, wife, and children eat very well without any worries.*

Respondent 2 (2018) from the FGDs said,

*“With the little, I get from the motorcycle business, I have bought a few cows, goats, and chicken and also constructed a house..”*

Another discussant also said,

*Now that I am in the motorcycle business, my family is sure of eating three meals a day. I also save money and with that, I pay for my younger sister who is in secondary school. And again there is this medical insurance that came which targeted small income earners like the bodaboda people. I joined it and with the income, I get from the bodaboda business, I can pay them and I rest knowing that I am covered from any medical expenses should I fall sick.*

From the findings above, it is clear that the motorcycle business had left the motorcycle operators socially and economically better. The findings were similar to those of Okonkwo Emehute, & Nwosu, 2010) that the ‘okada’ (motorcycle) business improved the standard of living of the riders as they were able to among other things use the generator to watch television, films, and listen to the radio, drill wells and eat three quality meals a day.

### **Challenges experienced by Motorcycle Operators in Nyakach Sub-County**

The study also sought to identify the challenges experienced by Nyakach Sub County motorcycle operators. All (100 percent) the operators reported experiencing or having experienced various kinds of challenges in the motorcycle business.

the challenges faced by motorcycle operators included diseases such as pneumonia, HIV, and malaria (reported by 74.6 percent of the operators), accidents and insecurity such as theft of motorbikes (reported by 62.3 percent of the operators), low income and associated challenges such as that of paying motorbike owner and repaying finance (lending) institutions and meeting other personal needs (reported by 37.7 percent of the operators), bad weather (reported by 27.0 percent of the operators), accessing motorbike loans due to lack of security on loans (reported by 12.3 percent of the operators), lack of respect from community members (reported by 11.5 percent of the operators), police arrests and harassments (reported by 10.7 percent of the operators), and some customers who do not pay (reported by 3.3 percent of the operators).

The discussions with the motorcycle operators in the FGDs also elicited responses that confirmed these findings with the operators highlighting challenges such as diseases, accidents and insecurity, bad roads, police arrests, and income fluctuation and associated difficulties such as payment of owners and servicing loans which sometimes led to their motorbikes being repossessed. They also highlighted the negative reviews by some community members. One discussant from the FGDs summarized the challenges faced by motorcycle operators in Nyakach as; low income, bad state of roads and accidents, insecurity, diseases, harassment from police, and lack of respect from

community members.

The challenges pointed out in this study, particularly diseases (such as pneumonia and HIV/AIDS), motorcycle theft, and police arrests, are consistent with the findings reported by Oino and Kuloba (2011) which reported such incidences and experiences as some of the challenges facing motorcycle operators and those reported by Mutiso and Behrens (2011) which revealed that many of the motorcycle operators were attacked by merciless robbers who stole their motorcycles or even killed them while on duty.

## 1.5 Conclusions

In conclusion, the motorcycle business has left the motorcycle operators socially and economically better contributed to the socio-economic wellbeing of the operators since it provided the operators with a source of income that enabled them to meet their daily subsistence needs, while they were also able to make some significant investments such as building their houses, buying livestock, educating their children (paying school fees), connecting electricity to their homes, contributing towards medical insurance, and some were also able to engage in other investments such as buying another motorcycle (s).

## 1.6 Recommendations

To help ensure the enhancement of the socio-economic wellbeing of operators, the study recommended that; motorcycle operators work closely with the police and the County Commissioner's office through the Chiefs to help them pursue those engaging in motorcycle thefts and apprehend them through law enforcement and improve the state of security in Nyakach, they are sensitized on risk behaviours associated with and prevention of diseases such as HIV, pneumonia, and malaria through the County's Health Department to address the health challenges they experience, financial training be availed to the motorcycle operators to equip them with skills on how to save and even invest and to help them to overcome some of the challenges related to income and finally that motorcycle operators to be sensitized on the traffic rules and the expectations of the law enforcers through the office of their Chairman so to reduce the cases of police arrests.

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