

# Boda-boda Business Activity and Socioeconomic Transformation in Wakiso District, Uganda

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## Abstract

**Purpose:** This study established the effect of Boda-boda Business Activity (BBA) on socioeconomic transformation in Wakiso District, Uganda.

**Methods:** This study employed a descriptive design with quantitative and qualitative approaches. A total of 89 respondents were determined from 114 people at the boda-boda stage in Kitemu. Questionnaires and interviews were used to collect data. The data were analyzed using SPSS to generate descriptive statistics. SEM was employed to establish the causal effect between the variables.

**Results:** The results indicated that people joined BBA to earn a living to support their families (Mean=4.4; Std.D=0.756), due to a lack of jobs (Mean=4.07; Std.D=1.055), and ease of repairing motorbikes (Mean=3.85; Std.D=1.417). Furthermore, BBA had a significant effect on socioeconomic transformation ( $\beta=0.392$ ;  $p<0.000$ ).

**Conclusion:** The BBA has the potential to bring substantial socioeconomic transformation, including employment creation (mean=4.0), improved mobility (mean=4.12), and stimulated local commerce (mean=3.79) in Kitemu Ward. Thus, the BBA had a positive effect on socioeconomic transformation ( $\beta=0.392$ ,  $p<0.001$ ).

**Limitation:** The study employed a descriptive survey design on motorbike riders in Kitemu Ward, which might hinder generalization of the study findings. Thus, more studies need to be conducted using different research designs on a larger sample of boda-boda stages in Wakiso.

**Contributions:** This study provides information to the Ministry of Work and Transport on how the boda-boda sector can be improved to enhance socioeconomic transformation in Wakiso.

**Keywords:** Boda-boda, Destinations, Mwanyizabala, Socioeconomic Transformation, Transport

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## 1. Introduction

Globally, motorcycles (boda-bodas) have been in use for decades, transporting people and their goods to various destinations (Bakari & Ntui, 2023; Lenshie, Ezeibe, Joshua, & Nwangwu, 2022). For example, boda-boda as they are known today, entered into use in 1910 after the World War I, commonly used by armed forces to connect to their point of destination. Thereafter, boda-bodas were widely used for leisure, recreation, and racing in the 1950s. Boda-boda seem to be least adopted in developed countries as obviously is in developing countries. For example, in Asian countries such as India, Pakistan, and Thailand, motorbikes are used for public transit in city centers (Wanume, Nduhura, Mugerwa, Bagambe, & Ninsiima, 2019). The reasons behind the use of boda-bodas were their

convenience and ease of riding for racing and pleasure (Hussein, Mpeta, & Mkoba, 2022), and such benefits have extended to the African society.

On the African Continent, the growth and use of motorcycles has lasted for decades, moving people and their goods to various locations (Olvera, Plat, & Pochet, 2020). Such growth is attributed to inefficient road networks, poverty, and unemployment (Bakari & Ntui, 2023; Luvunga, 2021). To ease movement, people frequently use motorbikes to negotiate through and catch time to their destinations (Wanume et al., 2019). Furthermore, the use of boda-bodas in Uganda is similar to that in other countries. In Nigeria, for example, boda-bodas transport passengers in the cities of Ibadan, Yola, and Akure, among others. It is reported that the emergence of boda-boda as means of transport in Nigeria was due to the limited supply of new vehicles from the 1970s (Amone, 2021; Olawo, Isaac, Ombok, & Achieng, 2014). This means that boda-bodas are an initiative for the alternative growth of African communities. They enable inter- and intra-commuting of passengers, employment, and socioeconomic transformation, including but not limited to women's stalls, restaurants, and cobra, which aid the transportation of goods from rural areas. However, the existence of the boda-boda business has adversely impacted developing countries (Mbegu & Mjema, 2019). Unintended negative impacts are also felt in the East African region.

In East Africa, boda-bodas started way back in the 60s as bicycle riders transporting people and goods across borders without any documentation (Atugi & Chrispen, 2018). To attract business, the bicycle riders would say, "Border – to – Border hence *boda-boda*. It was not until the 1990s that motorcycles began to replace bicycles (Hussein et al., 2022). Thus, the emergence of boda-bodas as an engine for growth has enhanced the improvement of transport routes and other socioeconomic services (Ibid). In Kenya, boda-bodas are designed for short-distance services, feeder to urban, and feeder to main roads (Nyaga & Kariuki, 2019). This affirms that boda-bodas allow easy in-time movement and connection of people and their products. In Kenya, the boda boda business sector has tremendously grown as a lucrative avenue for the job potentials of the youth. Every year, Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania register a high number of motorcycles (Mbegu & Mjema, 2019).

Across East African Countries, motorbikes are promoted to enhance the movement of people from one location to another (Wanume et al., 2019). Interestingly, boda-boda eased transport, and it is cost-effective and up to date. They are used as the quickest means of transport for people in the region (Bakari & Ntui, 2023; Kitara & Ikoona, 2022; Nyaga & Kariuki, 2019). People can easily navigate through traffic jams to reach their destination on time. It is reported that boda-bodas can navigate through small narrow roads, are affordable, and are readily available anytime (Hussein et al., 2022). Thus, the majority of the youth are involved in the boda-boda sector, and approximately 3.5 million people earn a living, and communities enjoy the availability of transport (Amone, 2021). Such opportunities in the boda-boda sector have continued in other countries in the region.

In Uganda, boda-bodas started way back in the 80s in Busia, a border town between Uganda and Kenya, to transit goods between the two countries (Okebiro, Mose, & Mamboleo, 2022). By then, Uganda produced a lot of coffee and sugarcane, which were heavy for bicycle transport into Kenya. This paved the way for commercial operators to import motorbikes from Asia. Although motorbikes are expensive to buy, they consume very little fuel. Furthermore, bicycles coupled with high-cost transport and motorbikes have enhanced the transportation of goods such as sugarcane and coffee into Kenya from Uganda (Kitara & Ikoona, 2022). Additionally, while used clothes were taken to Kenya, riders transported cooking oil, soap, and other consumer goods into Uganda. It is worth noting that as riders delivered goods to either side of the country, on their way back they carried people, hence the name "border –to – border" which later transformed into boda-boda (Ibid). As a result, the rider activities that started at the Kenya-Uganda border spread to other parts of Uganda, East Africa, Central Africa, West Africa, and the rest of Africa.

In the Buganda region, especially in the Greater Masaka and Mpigi districts, where coffee production was booming and had a high sales value in the mid-90s, coffee farmers bought motorbikes called "*Mwanyizabala*" which meant got from coffee sales (Gamberini, 2014). This helped them ease coffee transportation to stores (growers) and their movement from homes to towns, but also carrying goods

back home (Wanume et al., 2019). Notably, in the Greater Masaka and Mpigi districts, coffee buyers still use motorbikes, although in other areas, they are integrated into the boda-boda business. Thus, in Uganda, boda-bodas have been commercialized, especially in cities like Kampala, where they are registered and pay taxes. However, this has not been applied nationwide because of resistance and political interference. Notably, in countries where they are clearly regulated, such as Rwanda, boda-bodas strictly follow Road Safety policy measures, which is not the case among Uganda's boda-boda riders. Nevertheless, the boda-boda business contributes greatly to social sector transformation in Uganda. Against this background, this study sought to establish the effect of the boda-boda business activity (BBA) on socioeconomic transformation in Wakiso District, Uganda.

## **2. Literature review**

### ***2.1 Factors leading people into boda-boda business activity***

In 2021, the unemployment rate was 17%, which is a threat to socioeconomic and political growth, resulting in high crime rates, robbery, and petty theft (UBOS, 2021). This is because the youth are locked out of the formal employment market. This is attributed to inadequate knowledge and skills, networks, relationships, and social capital (Emmanuel, 2023). Given the large number of young people and the limited job opportunities and job creation in many locations, operating a boda-boda business is the ideal option because it requires little cash and offers immediate income opportunities. This contrasts with Okebiro (2019), who pointed out that boda-boda riders enjoy flexible working hours and self-employment because most of them do not get formal employment. Joining the boda-boda industry as a full-time job or supplemental means of making a living is the sole opportunity for many to have an alternate source of income from agriculture. Furthermore, the casual nature of this industry has contributed to its rise because it is more accessible than other industries that demand technical expertise and academic credentials. Gitonga (2014) also notes that most people who engage in boda boda business are those who drop out of school; they lack formal education and skills for white-collar jobs. The boda-boda sector thus becomes an ideal fallback business that any school dropout or someone who has done little schooling can do. Similarly, Sseguya (2017) noted that the business provides an opportunity for people to survive without special training. People who might not be employed in other industries due to their particular nature are employed in the boda boda sector. The other reason for embarking on boda-boda business is economic pressure to feed the families. According to Olutayo and Adeyemo (2024), boda-boda riders are young men with family responsibilities and little access to employment. The boda boda business offers the means to meet the fundamental needs of families, but it does not provide long-term solutions for better revenue generation and sustained economic growth. According to Sseguya (2017), the flexibility of the boda-boda business is that anyone can start operation from the onset and this is competitively advantageous to those want immediate earnings due to pressing needs.

### ***2.2 Influence of boda-boda on socioeconomic transformation***

Notably, because of the employment impact it has, the boda-boda enterprise has been crucial in changing the economic and societal status of nations where formal job opportunities are scarce. As stated by Sseguya (2017), the sector can potentially eradicate poverty because many youths and families have immediate incomes. Due to comparatively lower equipment costs, people can start their own businesses and generate daily revenue, which helps most households meet their fundamental needs. Boda-boda enhances access of many families to basic services such as education, health, and shelter which has enhanced the quality of life of people. Furthermore, Wanume et al. (2019) noted that boda-boda services have provided mobility and covered long distances in reaching markets, health facilities, and schools among others, making integration economically possible in rural areas.

However, the development of the boda-boda business is constrained by several socioeconomic factors. For example, Gitonga (2014) notes that while many boda-boda riders have the initial cash flow, majority of them fail to accumulate wealth over time because of low levels of financial literacy and lack of good saving disposition. The lack of proper financial management is the reason why most riders resort to living paycheque to paycheque and using money to fund their immediate wants. As a result, boda-boda offers people or communities short-term solutions, which translate to limited opportunities for

economic development. Gitonga (2014) warned that since the business is informal, many riders are easily exploited and have limited access to social security amenities. This activity does not have the potential to bring about widespread socioeconomic transformation. Labor has also shifted in certain ways, and communities find more youths practicing boda-boda riding rather than formal employment, which scares away the working strength from agricultural practices. Note that the boda-boda business contributes to socio-economic transformation but at the same time enjoys some potential challenges that are rooted in issues of financial viability, labor, and the business model, and structural ambiguity to the informal employment structure of the boda-boda business.

*H<sub>1</sub>: Boda-boda business activity influence socioeconomic transformation in Kitemu ward*

### 3. Research Method

This study was conducted in Kitemu Ward, Kyengera Town Council, Wakiso District, Uganda. Data were collected between July and August 2024 from boda-boda riders at various roadside stages. Roadside boda-boda stages were considered because they had organized leadership structures to guide the boda-boda business activity amongst the riders. The study employed a descriptive survey design using both qualitative and quantitative data collection approaches (Mbowa, Businge, Ssemaluulu, & Eton, 2023). This included only those boda-boda riders at the specified roadside stages who participated in the study. This helped the researchers elicit data for generalization to other areas in Kyengera Town Council. The study targeted 114 people, of whom 89 respondents were determined using Sloven's formula. Six boda-boda stage chairpersons from Kitemu ward were chosen by purposive sampling, while 83 boda-boda riders were chosen using simple random sampling.

However, riders who were unregistered members of the selected roadside stages were excluded from the study. Therefore, the researchers collected data through structured questionnaires (boda-boda riders) and key informant interviews (stage chairpersons). It should be noted that to obtain data from boda-boda riders, the researchers provided a clear introduction to the stage chairpersons. To ensure the validity and reliability of the data collection tools, the researchers piloted the questionnaire on boda-boda riders with 10% of the participants who were not involved in the main study. The outcome was above 0.7 the threshold, which showed that the tool was reliable for data collection. Similarly, validity was based on valid statements divided by the total number of settlements in the questionnaire. The validity of the questionnaire was analyzed using the content validity index, and the results revealed that the statements in the questionnaire were valid, as they measured above the 0.7 threshold.

The researchers eased data collection through the KoboCollect data tool, and the questionnaire was embedded herein. Thus, the researchers administered the questionnaire through face-to-face interviews, and the responses were captured using the KoboCollect tool. Thereafter, the data were saved and forwarded to the server and later converted and exported into MS Excel for further editing and coding. Later, it was transformed and exported into SPSS version 23 to generate descriptive and inferential statistics for analysis as specified (Musah, James, Asiedu-Ampomah, & Koomson, 2025). To evaluate the association between variables and arrive at a more comprehensive conclusion, the researchers employed regression and correlation analyses. This allowed the researchers to provide informed decisions and recommendations for improving the boda-boda business sector.

## 4. Results

### 4.1 Response Rate

Of the 83 questionnaires distributed, 68 were usable for analysis. The response rate was 81.9%. This percentage confirms that the results were good for further analysis and discussion. Thus, in business and management, 51.2% is appropriate for the study, and the results are considered reliable and replicable (Taherdoost & Madanchian, 2025).

### 4.2 Factors influencing people in the boda-boda business activity in Kitemu Ward

Table 1 provides a full account of the respondents' comments regarding the elements that influence people to engage in boda-boda commercial activities in Kitemu.

Table 1. Factors that lead people into the boda-boda business activity in Kitemu

Statement	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. D
I joined the boda-boda for the need to earn a living and look after my family	68	1	5	4.4	0.756
The limited taxis due to poor road networks	68	1	5	2.43	1.055
Boda-boda business requires less capital to start	68	2	5	3.37	0.896
Boda-boda navigate through small and narrow pathways	68	1	5	2.91	1.143
There are no government policies for joining the boda-boda business	68	1	5	2.69	1.519
I joined the boda-boda business due to lack of the job after school	68	2	5	4.07	1.055
I was influenced by relatives/friends in the boda-boda business	68	1	5	3.32	1.251
Boda-boda are easy to repair and park anywhere	68	1	5	3.85	1.417

Source: Primary Data, 2024

The results in the table indicate that the respondents strongly agreed that they joined boda-boda to earn a living and look after their family (Mean=4.4; Std.D=0.756). This implies that the lack of a stable income drives people into boda-boda to earn a daily income and provide for their families. The findings are supported by Gaba (2023) who indicated that boda-boda provide quick income to the riders, and those engaged are better than those involved in agriculture. He added that women prefer men with income, so entering the boda-boda gives pride to the riders before women.

However, the respondents disagreed that the limited taxis due to poor road network is the reason for people engaging boda-boda business (Mean=2.4; Std. D =1.55). The results imply that poor road networks do not influence them to join the boda-boda business. The results are in disagreement with Atugi and Chrispen (2018) and Gamberini (2014) who consent that boda-boda eases the movement of people in the community, and they move to all locations with poor or bad roads. It is worth noting that boda-boda riders maneuver impassable routes to move people and their products. This is supported by Okebiro et al. (2022), who note that boda-boda transit into impassable roads. In addition, most areas do not have access to taxis, and the appropriate means of transport is boda-boda.

The respondents were neutral that, boda-boda business requires less capital to start (Mean=3.4; Std.D=0.896), boda-boda navigate through small and narrow pathways (Mean=2.9; Std.D=1.143), and there are no government policies for joining boda-boda business (Mean=2.69; Std.D=1.519). This implies that the respondents were not sure whether boda-boda required less capital to start, were not aware of the policies required to join the industry, or that there were no narrow pathways. However, Okebiro et al. (2022) revealed that bodaboda are cheap to buy and maintain. This means that the respondents had not bought their own boda-bodas because they were not aware of the capital input for the start. Okebiro et al. (2022) disagree with the findings and argues that boda-bodas move people and their products on impassable routes in various communities. On the other hand, government policies exist though, they are not enforced on the bodaboda business sector. This makes riders feel that they do not exist. This suggests that the government should consider enforcing traffic safety regulations for boda boda drivers. This would help curb poor and reckless riding among riders. However, it would also minimize accidents and other indiscriminate behaviors among boda-boda riders.

However, the respondents strongly agreed that they joined the boda-boda business due to the lack of requisite jobs after school (Mean=4.07; Std.D=1.055). This clearly shows that there are limited job opportunities for people, which is why they move into the boda-boda business. Studies in Kenya have revealed that unemployment pushes people into the boda boda industry (Okebiro et al., 2022). Further, despite people having attained quality education, they miss out on desirable jobs, hence entering the bodaboda business, which is easy to start. In Nigeria, despite being educated, youth lack the skills required by employers; hence, they remain unemployed (Emmanuel, 2023). This implies that the youth

take on any job to make ends meet, including politics, though it is too costly and tied to social capital (Mwesigwa & Wahid, 2021). In Ghana, the majority of youth (67%) spend over two years without employment. This might lead youths to enter the boda-boda business to improve their well-being. Such a case is applicable to Uganda, especially in Kitemu Ward.

Further, on whether people were influenced by their friends/relatives to join the boda-boda business, they remained neutral (Mean=3.32; Std.D=1.251). This means that they would not ascertain how their relatives or friends led them to the boda-boda business. This also means that there are other influential factors besides friends and relatives. However, there are limited studies that account for friends and relatives as an influential factor leading people into the boda-boda industry. Therefore, this study is significant in explaining how friends and family influence people's involvement in the boda-boda industry. Interestingly, the respondents agreed that boda-bodas are easy to repair and park anywhere (Mean=3.85; Std.D=1.417). This means that the lower cost required to repair the motorbikes and the smaller space required to park push people into the boda-boda business. In support, boda-boda requires low maintenance costs (Park, Calzavara, & Courtright, 2021). Regarding parking, AFD (2020) asserts that boda-bodas do not occupy much space.

#### **4.3 Influence of boda-boda business sector on socioeconomic transformation in Kitemu Ward**

Table 2 presents the participants' responses regarding how boda-boda business operations impact Kitemu's socioeconomic change.

Table 2. Influence of boda-boda business sector on socioeconomic transformation in Kitemu Ward

Statement	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. D
Boda-boda business is a source of incomes to the people	68	1	5	4.57	0.698
Boda-boda business provide employment to various stakeholders	68	2	5	4	0.386
Boda-boda are quick to connect people, products & communities	68	2	5	4.12	0.441
Boda-boda business eases entrepreneurial startups in communities	68	2	5	4.18	0.545
Boda-boda provide tax revenue to the government	68	2	5	3.21	1.001
Boda-boda are used by security agencies for patrolling	68	2	5	2.99	1.086
Boda-boda allows people to access better opportunities and self-esteem	68	2	5	3.76	0.626
The Boda-boda business stimulate emergence of trading centers/township	68	3	5	3.79	0.724
Boda-boda business offer social services deliveries to communities	68	3	5	4.12	0.368

Source: Primary Data, 2024

The results indicated that respondents strongly agreed that the boda-boda business is a source of income for the people (M=4.0; St.D=0.698). This means that boda-bodas provide income to people in the community through jobs, selling spare parts, and restaurants, among others. Thus, when such jobs are created, people earn income, which is key to socioeconomic transformation. These findings are in line with Hussein et al. (2022), who espoused that the boda-boda industry enhances the incomes of riders in Tanzania. Okebiro et al. (2022) also agree that boda boda are source of income. This is further supported by Park et al. (2021), who echo that boda-bodas are a significant source of income for 150,000 people in Kampala and beyond.

Respondents also agreed that the boda-boda business provides employment opportunities to various stakeholders (M=4; St.D=0.386). This suggests that additional options, such as restaurants, juice bars, garages, and creative spaces, arise where boda-boda businesses open. This further offers employment avenues to people and earns income to improve their well-being, but also improves security as people

are fully engaged in development activities rather than being redundant (Byagaba & Mukiibi, 2021; Luvinga, 2021). The findings are supported by Hussein et al. (2022) who assert that boda-boda business contributes significantly to employment opportunities among the youths, thus, they should be keenly managed for the better future. More so, respondents agreed that boda-boda business stimulate the emergence of trading centres/townships ( $M=3.79$ ;  $St.D=0.724$ ). This implies that the growth of the boda-boda business also led to the emergence of towns with different socioeconomic activities. When a new boda-boda stage opens, more restaurants also open, which directly contributes to socioeconomic transformation.

In addition, respondents agreed that boda-boda business eases that entrepreneurial starts-ups ( $M=4.18$ ;  $St.D=0.545$ ). This recognizes the emergence of entrepreneurial start-ups—such as women's stalls, garages, clinics, restaurants (Ttoninnyiya), and retail stores—following the emergence of boda boda businesses. These provide constant employment to women and youth, leading to socioeconomic transformation (Wandera, 2020). The findings agree with Atugi and Chrispen (2018) who express that boda-boda business results into emergence of boda-boda spare parts shops, boda-boda garages and shopping centers, petrol stations, garages and food kiosks.

Moreover, respondents agreed that boda-bodas quickly connect people, products, and communities ( $M=4.18$ ;  $St.D=0.545$ ). This implies that people can quickly transport their products from one location to another. In addition, it improves the movement of learners from home to school and saves time they arrive at schools. Gamberini (2014) supports this by stating that boda-boda allows people to connect to other places. According to Maliro (2023), boda-bodas transport people from rural to rural, urban to urban, or in either direction (Maliro, 2023). Such mobility is important to different communities and in so doing, it expand to others areas (Muhammed, Salahudeen, & Zubairu, 2021; Park et al., 2021). Boda-bodas move people anywhere at passengers' convenience, navigating through all kinds of roads (KCCA, 2020; Mukwaya, Mbabazi, & Ernstson, 2025). This is attributed to excessive traffic congestion in the city/urban centers to the extent that passengers jump out of the taxi onto the bodaboda to quicken movement to their final destinations.

However, because they relocate and interact with new individuals during riding, respondents concurred that the boda-boda business enables people to develop self-esteem and access greater opportunities. ( $M=3.76$ ;  $St.D=0.626$ ). Depending on the trustworthiness of the boda-boda rider, he or she can always be preferred by a person or household to be sent on different errands. Furthermore, because boda-boda riders interact with various people who have multiple experiences, they are exposed to more opportunities (Gamberini, 2014). Gamberini (2014) add that social interactions are fundamental motivators for people to use the boda-boda which enhances the riders' ability to remain in the business sustainably.

Further, respondents agreed that the boda-boda business offers social service deliveries to communities ( $M=4.12$ ;  $St.D=0.368$ ). This means that boda-bodas offer transport, deliveries, and health and educational services to communities. In this, they are able to carry kids to school, patients to the hospitals, and carry deliveries to their clients when contacted. Gamberini (2014) argues that bodaboda improved access to services like health, education, transport, social welfare, and market services. This is evident in almost every location where boda-bodas are used to transport learners to and from school, carry pregnant women and the sick to hospitals, and deliver agricultural products to the markets.

Furthermore, respondents were neutral on the question of whether boda-bodas provide tax revenue to the government ( $M=3.21$ ;  $St.D=1.001$ ). This signifies that the respondents were not aware of whether boda-boda drivers pay tax to the government. This means that boda-boda riders do not pay direct tax to the government, which is why they had nothing to report. Boda-boda do, in fact, pay taxes but it is still difficult to trace their contributions because the majority of them are not registered, particularly in rural areas. Finally, the respondents also remained neutral on whether boda-bodas are used by security agents for patrolling ( $M=2.99$ ;  $St.D=1.086$ ). This implies that boda-bodas rarely see police or security agents using motorbikes for patrols in their areas. The respondents may have remained neutral because the

statement was sensitive to security, and the majority had experienced injustices from security operatives.

#### 4.4 Structural Model Estimates for Relationships between Boda-boda Business Activity and Socioeconomic Transformation

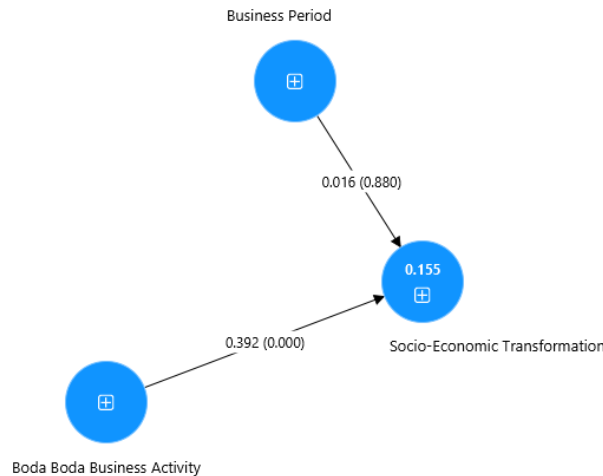


Figure 1. Influence Boda-boda business activity on socioeconomic transformation  
Source: Primary Data, 2024

The structural equation model (SEM) presented depicts the relationships between three variables: boda boda business activity, business period, and socioeconomic transformation. The path coefficient between the independent variable boda boda business activity and the dependent variable socioeconomic transformation is 0.392, and the p-value is 0.000, which confirms that boda boda business activities positively influence socioeconomic transformation with high reliability. This shows that the boda boda business contributes to generating employment and income and serves as a simulator for socioeconomic development.

The path coefficient of the business period and socioeconomic transformation ( $t = 0.016$ ,  $p < 0.880$ ) shows that the number of years spent on the boda-boda business does not significantly affect the level of socioeconomic transformation. This could imply that the length of time a rider has been in the business does not matter, but the kind and scale of the business's operations determine its effect on the community and broader economy. Therefore, in the model, time does not appear as a key factor in affecting socioeconomic results and fundamentally focuses on the scale and scope of the business.

The proposed structural equation model provides insights into the interaction between BA, BP, and SET. The path from boda boda business activity to socioeconomic transformation is imposing, with a value of 0.392 and a p-value of 0.000, indicating that business activity in boda boda positively affects socioeconomic transformation. This implies that with the growth in the volume of boda boda travel activities, there is an equal improvement in the levels of economic growth. The Boda-boda industry, in particular, offers employment, business transaction opportunities, and income generation that is important for the socioeconomic development of areas like Wakiso.

However, the linkage between the business period and socio-economic transformation is nearly zero, with a path coefficient of 0.016,  $t = 0.180$ ,  $p = 0.880$ . This implies that boda boda business experience does not impact the creation of socioeconomic change, as measured by the number of years an individual has been involved in the business. In that regard, how long a rider has been in the business does not seem to correlate with these broader socioeconomic shifts in the industry. This result might



suggest that the effects of socioeconomic changes are better measured by the density and efficiency of commerce rather than the years of engagement with the sector.

The model shows that boda boda business activity is the main process of socioeconomic transformation, and not the time that people have spent in business activity. This may be due to the tendency toward the informal sector in Uganda, where the boda-boda industry offers players short-term financial prospects despite requiring labor inputs. The direct positive impact of business activity on socioeconomic change is evident from its contribution to the creation of access to urban centers, trade, and mobility. Such activities result in enhanced income for riders and, in effect, enhance the economic status of their households and the entire society.

In addition, because there is no substantial correlation between the Business Period and Socioeconomic Transformation, it is implied that policy changes should enhance the operational efficiency of the boda boda sector rather than the length of the Business Period. This may include the education and training of riders in areas such as business, customer relationship, and risk control to improve the economic returns of riders' operations. Mbowa et al. (2023) note that training remains vital to improve the competencies of business operators, of which boda-bodas are not exceptional. This implies that when the quality and efficiency of boda-bodas are improved, riders play a more significant role in socioeconomic redevelopment, irrespective of boda-boda working experience.

#### 4.5 Bootstrapped Estimates for structural Model

Table 3. Bootstrapped Estimates for structural Model

	$\beta$	Std. Error	T statistics	p values	95% Bias - CCI
Business Period $\longrightarrow$ Socio-Economic Transformation	.020	.108	.152	.880	[-0.22,0.201]
Boda-boda Business Activity $\longrightarrow$ Socio-Economic Transformation	.392	.104	3.765	.000	[0.157,0.569]

Source: Primary Data, 2024

The findings from the structural model are presented in terms of bootstrapped estimates to establish the nature of the association between the independent constructs: boda boda business activity, business period, and socioeconomic transformation. Comparing the business period and socio-economic transformation indices revealed a path coefficient ( $\beta$ ) of 0.020 and a standard error of 0.108. The value of the T-statistic is 0.152 and the p-value is 0.880, which means that such a relationship is not statistically significant. The 1.95% CI differs from -0.22 to 0.201, indicating that the business period is relatively influential, although it is difficult to affirm whether this influence is positive or negative, since it covers negative and positive effects above and/or below a central/nominal value of 0.

However, the coefficient for boda boda business activity and socioeconomic transformation suggests a moderately positive relationship, which is statistically significant ( $\beta = 0.392$ ; SE = 0.104). The calculated t-statistic is 3.765, which gives the calculated probability, or p-value, of 0.000.

Therefore, the null hypothesis can be rejected, and factor Boda Boda business activity has a strong, significant positive impact on socioeconomic transformation. The 95% bias-corrected CCI varied from 0.157 to 0.569, suggesting a plausible and positive effect. This relationship shows that economic participation in the boda-boda business leads to a drastic change in socioeconomic fortunes.

In this regard, the assessment highlights how boda boda business activity is the leading driver of social and economic development within the community. The large and statistically

significant bootstrapped coefficients show that participation in boda boda operations translated to important socioeconomic changes in income and service access, which also helped foster total economic advancement. This is supported by the confidence interval, which, when combined with the p-value, shows that with a certain degree of certainty, it is possible to state that, in almost all situations, an increase in business activity corresponds to positive socioeconomic effects. The bootstrapped estimates for the structural model afford precise descriptive statistics concerning the business period and boda-boda business activity on socioeconomic transformation. The estimated path coefficient of the business period on socioeconomic transformation was 0.020, with a standard error of 0.108, a T statistic of 0.152, and an insignificant p-value of 0.880. Therefore, a 95% bias-corrected and accelerated confidence interval for the difference is (-0.22, 0.201); therefore, it can be said that the value of interest is zero, implying that this relationship is not significant. This means that the length of time spent in the boda-boda industry has no discernible impact on socioeconomic transformation, at least not to the degree of confidence indicated.

In contrast, the path coefficient between boda boda business activity and socioeconomic transformation was 0.392 with a standard error of 0.104 and a t-statistic of 3.765. This relationship was found to be statistically significant, as evidenced by a p-value of 0.000. The t-value for the test of this path coefficient was 2.542, with a corresponding p-value of 0.011. The results also show that the 95% bias-corrected confidence interval for this path coefficient is (0.157; 0.569) and hence does not contain zero value, signifying a positive and statistically significant impact of the boda boda business activity on socioeconomic transformation. This gives the impression that the operational intensity and scope of the boda-boda business contribute to the economy's growth and development.

The analysis of these results goes further to highlight the importance of boda boda business activity in facilitating social and economic transformation at the community level. Therefore, considering the numerous benefits of business activity on the change in socio-economic conditions associated with the boda-boda sector, it can be argued that in addition to providing job opportunities, the boda-boda sector influences several changes. This may be attributable to the fact that boda-bodas enhance mobility and access to markets, thereby enhancing the economic base in areas where they are most prevalent.

## 5. Conclusion

This study established concrete data showing that boda-boda business operations power substantial socioeconomic development in Kitemu Ward in Wakiso District, Uganda. People enter the sector mainly due to economic struggles between income generation for survival (mean = 4.4) and unemployment (mean = 4.07) as the main factors. The boda-boda business has served as a crucial livelihood option, which is derived from its basic start-up costs (mean = 3.37) and operational adaptability (mean = 3.85), thus making it accessible to youth and people who lack stable formal jobs. This sector plays an essential role in reducing economic risks in peri-urban areas because of these supporting elements.

Furthermore, the study revealed that boda-boda operations contribute to socioeconomic development at three levels: through employment creation (mean = 4.0), improved mobility (mean = 4.12), and by stimulating local commerce (mean = 3.79). The sector enables community members to access essential services (mean = 4.12), which enhances their welfare status. The contributions of boda-boda operations toward formal revenue systems and security operations are surprisingly low (3.21 and 2.99, respectively), indicating only partial fulfillment of the policy objectives for formalization. This study supports a wider body of scholarly evidence that shows that informal transportation systems drive economic expansion that benefits developing nations. Bootstrapped structural analysis demonstrated the robust positive effect of boda-boda business activity on socioeconomic changes ( $\beta = 0.392$ ,  $p <$

0.001) to validate the study hypothesis. The length of time people spent running businesses in the sector (business period) did not have a meaningful effect on socioeconomic outcomes ( $\beta = 0.020$ ,  $p = 0.880$ ). Transformation occurs mainly through sector participation. The study shows that interventions need to open new opportunities in the boda-boda economy instead of simply keeping the current members in the sector.

Policy recommendations can focus on developing workplace regulations while creating financial aid to alleviate entry restrictions and establishing connections to implement boda-bodas for public service provision. The boda boda sector presents stakeholders with an opportunity to develop sustainable and equitable development when all its dimensions receive attention. This enables progress toward Uganda's overarching urbanization and poverty reduction targets. This research enhances discussions on Sub-Saharan Africa's informal economy by delivering relevant solutions that can be applied in other regions throughout the continent.

### **Implications**

This study provides new knowledge on the influence of Boda-boda Business Activity on socioeconomic transformation in Kitemu, which has never been done before. This knowledge will be used by future researchers who would like to carry out similar studies in Kitemu Ward and Wakiso District. This is because most studies have been conducted in Kenya and Tanzania, and few have been conducted in Uganda, specifically in Kampala.

The study provides insights on the boda-boda riders' behaviours which if not checked might affect the boda-boda business activity. For example, the study failed to establish studies on disrespect of the passengers, overcharging the passengers, lack of professionalism, and uncountable loss and damage by as behaviours among the boda-boda riders. Thus, this study will inform the reader that such behaviors exist with a precedent in the Kitemu ward. Policy regulators, such as traffic police, can refer to the study findings to implement and enforce traffic road safety guidelines among riders. The Ministry of Works and Transport can also use the study results to examine the conduct of riders and their contribution to increased road accidents.

### **Limitations**

The study used a descriptive survey design on riders in Kitemu Ward, which might hinder the generalization of the study findings. Thus, more studies need to be conducted using different research designs and a larger sample of boda-boda stages. And, future scholars should consider conducting studies on the impact of boda-boda behaviours on performance of the boda-boda business sector, the influence of relatives and friends as a motivating factor for people's entry into the boda-boda business activity.

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