

**SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS AND THEIR EFFECTS ON SOCIO-ECONOMIC
WELLBEING OF MOTORCYCLE TAXI RIDERS IN HOMA BAY COUNTY, KENYA**

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DECLARATION

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other University

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ABSTRACT

Motorcycle taxis have become a popular means of transportation which generates income for many riders in Kenya. However, there are various factors which expose riders to internal and external shocks and stresses which affect the riders' socio-economic wellbeing (SEWB). Studies that have been conducted so far largely focus on "social vices" allegedly being committed by motorcycle taxi riders (MTRs) hence a persistent knowledge gap on SEWB of riders'. Acknowledging that MTRs are a valuable community resource because they facilitate transportation of people and goods, this study investigated selected characteristics and their effects on socio-economic wellbeing of motorcycle taxi riders in Homa Bay County, Kenya. The study objectives included to: establish the demographic characteristics of MTRs and their effect on the riders' SEWB, assess whether social connectedness among MTRs and their communities have an effect on the riders' SEWB, determine the effect of involvement of MTRs in groups on their SEWB, analyze the relationship between motorcycle taxi ownership status of MTRs and their SEWB and establish the levels of SEWB of MTRs in Homa Bay County. Cross-sectional survey research design was used to investigate the problem, guided by Theory of Social Capital and Theory of Constraints. Social protection approach was adopted to conceptualize this study. Systematic random sampling was used to select 430 MTRs out of which 415 participated in the study, hence 97% response rate. Key informants including six traffic police officers, nine officials of Homa Bay County boda boda SACCO and 10 community leaders were purposively sampled and interviewed for additional information. Research instruments used included: questionnaire, interview guide and focus group discussion guide as well as observation checklist. Data from this study was analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze quantitative data whereas qualitative data were thematically analyzed and also used to complement quantitative data. Findings were presented using tables, pie charts and graphs. Chi-square test statistically confirmed a highly significant relationship ($p=0.013$) between localities of motorcycle taxi operation (rural and urban) and SEWB and a significant relationship ($p=0.036$) between ownership status of motorcycle taxi and SEWB of MTRs. Chi-square tests also revealed that there is no significant relationship ($p=0.622$) between genders of MTRs and their SEWB, MTRs riding license possession status and their SEWB ($p=0.783$), social connectedness among MTRs and their communities and the riders' SEWB ($p=0.226$) as well as MTRs involvement in groups and their SEWB ($p=0.176$). The study concluded that motorcycle taxi riders in Homa Bay County experience high levels of SEWB at 63% with probability error of 5%. Implications of the study findings to MTRs, policy makers and academic researchers were also outlined. The study made a number of recommendations for policy, practice and for further research. For practice, promotion of riding of self-owned motorcycle taxi was emphasized if disposable income of MTRs were to increase hence possibility of higher SEWB. Other viable interventions that could enhance SEWB of MTRs were also recommended.