

Relationship Between Boda Boda Business And Enrollment Rate Of Boys In Secondary Schools In Rukiga District.

Muhwezi Ambrose¹, Dr. Moses Ntirandekura, PhD²

1, 2 Metropolitan International University

Abstract

This study examined the relationship between boda boda business and the enrollment rate of boys in secondary schools in Rukiga District, Uganda. The research adopted a cross-sectional survey design utilizing both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Data were collected from 263 respondents, including boda boda operators, parents, school administrators, and education officials in Rukiga District. The study employed questionnaires and interview guides as primary data collection instruments. Results revealed a significant negative relationship between boda boda business involvement and boys' secondary school enrollment ($r = -0.687, p < 0.001$). The findings indicated that 58.3% of boys dropped out of secondary school to engage in boda boda operations, with income prospects being the primary motivating factor (72.4%). The study found that boys earned between UGX 15,000 to 50,000 daily from boda boda operations, which significantly influenced their decision to abandon formal education. Additionally, the research established that 64.2% of parents supported their sons' involvement in boda boda business due to immediate financial returns. The study concluded that the lucrative nature of boda boda business posed a substantial threat to boys' educational attainment in Rukiga District. Recommendations included the implementation of district-level policies restricting school-age children from operating boda bodas, establishment of educational support programs targeting vulnerable boys, community sensitization campaigns on the long-term benefits of education, and creation of alternative income-generating activities for families to reduce economic pressure on boys to engage in boda boda business prematurely.

Keywords: Boda boda business, enrollment rate, secondary schools, boys' education, Rukiga District, school dropout

Background of the Study

Education remains a fundamental human right and a critical driver of socioeconomic development in Uganda. The Government of Uganda has made considerable efforts to improve access to education through initiatives such as Universal Primary Education (UPE) and Universal Secondary Education (USE), which aimed to increase enrollment rates across the country (Julius & Nancy, 2025b). Despite these interventions, secondary school enrollment, particularly among boys in rural districts, continued to

face significant challenges that undermined educational progress and national development goals (Mark et al., 2023).

Rukiga District, located in southwestern Uganda, experienced unique socioeconomic dynamics that influenced educational patterns among school-going children. The district's economy was predominantly agrarian, with subsistence farming being the primary livelihood activity (Julius & Nancy, 2025c). However, the emergence and expansion of the boda boda

Received: 02.01.2026

Accepted: 08.01.2026

Published on: 30.01.2026

(motorcycle taxi) industry transformed the economic landscape, creating new income-generating opportunities that attracted young people, including school-age boys (Mable & Roger, 2024). The boda boda sector grew exponentially across Uganda, becoming a vital component of the transport system and a significant source of employment for youth (Kazaara & Nancy, 2025).

The allure of immediate income from boda boda operations presented a compelling alternative to formal education for many boys in Rukiga District (Oromo et al., 2023). Unlike traditional agricultural activities that required land ownership and long-term investment, boda boda business offered quick financial returns with relatively low entry barriers. Boys could earn daily income that often exceeded what their educated peers might earn after completing secondary education, creating a perception that formal schooling offered limited economic value (Promise et al., 2024).

Problem Statement

Despite government initiatives to promote universal secondary education in Uganda, Rukiga District experienced declining enrollment rates among boys in secondary schools, a trend that coincided with the rapid expansion of the boda boda business in the area (Julius & Nancy, 2025a). Education stakeholders in the district observed that many boys either dropped out of secondary school or never enrolled after completing primary education, opting instead to engage in boda boda operations (Julius & Kazaara, 2025). This phenomenon raised serious concerns about the long-term educational attainment and human capital development among male youth in the district.

The immediate financial gains from boda boda business appeared to overshadow the perceived long-term benefits of secondary education, creating a value conflict that influenced boys' educational choices (Julius & Audrey, 2025). While the boda boda sector provided employment and income, the abandonment of formal education potentially limited boys' future opportunities, perpetuated intergenerational poverty, and undermined national development objectives. Furthermore, the lack of comprehensive empirical data on the specific relationship between boda boda business and boys' secondary school enrollment in Rukiga District hindered the development of evidence-based interventions (Kazaara, 2025). Without understanding the nature, magnitude, and underlying factors of this relationship, education planners and policymakers could not design effective strategies to address the enrollment crisis

Received: 02.01.2026

Accepted: 08.01.2026

Published on: 30.01.2026

and ensure that economic opportunities complemented rather than competed with educational advancement (Anthony et al., 2023).

Objective of the Study

To establish the relationship between boda boda business and enrollment rate of boys in secondary schools in Rukiga District.

Methodology

This study employed a cross-sectional survey research design, which allowed for the collection of data at a single point in time to examine the relationship between boda boda business and boys' secondary school enrollment in Rukiga District. The design was appropriate as it enabled the researcher to gather both quantitative and qualitative data efficiently while capturing the current state of the phenomenon under investigation (Nafiu, 2013). The study utilized a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative techniques for measuring variables and establishing relationships with qualitative methods for exploring underlying factors and contextual understanding (Jallow et al., 2022).

The target population comprised boda boda operators, parents with school-age boys, secondary school administrators, district education officials, and local council leaders in Rukiga District. The sample size for this study was 263 respondents, determined using Slovin's formula (1960) to ensure representativeness while managing time and resource constraints (Olanrewaju et al., 2021). This formula was appropriate as it provided a statistically acceptable sample from a finite population, balancing accuracy with feasibility (A & Ahmed, 2019). Stratified random sampling was employed to ensure representation across different sub-counties of Rukiga District, while purposive sampling was used to select key informants such as school administrators and education officials who possessed specialized knowledge relevant to the study (Suzan & Gracious Kazaara, 2023).

Data collection involved both primary and secondary sources. Primary data were collected using structured questionnaires administered to boda boda operators, parents, and education officials. The questionnaires contained both closed-ended questions for quantitative data and open-ended questions for qualitative insights (Kazaara, 2025). Additionally, interview guides were used to conduct key informant interviews with school administrators and district education officers, providing in-depth information about enrollment trends and the perceived influence of boda boda business on boys' education (Julius, 2025). Secondary data were obtained from school records, district education reports, and existing literature on youth employment and education in Uganda.

Data analysis was conducted using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25 (Nelson et al., 2022). Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations to summarize respondent characteristics and study variables. Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to determine the nature and strength of the relationship between boda boda business involvement and boys' secondary school enrollment rates (Julius & Kazaara, 2025). Qualitative data from open-ended questions and interviews were analyzed thematically, identifying patterns and themes that provided contextual understanding of the quantitative findings.

Received: 02.01.2026

Accepted: 08.01.2026

Published on: 30.01.2026

Results

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The study successfully collected data from 263 respondents across Rukiga District. Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N=263)

Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	189	71.9
	Female	74	28.1
Age Group	15-20 years	67	25.5
	21-30 years	98	37.3
	31-40 years	64	24.3
	Above 40 years	34	12.9
Respondent Type	Boda boda operators	112	42.6
	Parents	95	36.1
	Education officials	38	14.4
	School administrators	18	6.8
Education Level	Primary	87	33.1
	Secondary (incomplete)	94	35.7
	Secondary (complete)	58	22.1
	Tertiary	24	9.1

Source: Primary Data, 2025

The demographic analysis revealed that male respondents constituted the majority (71.9%), reflecting the male-dominated nature of boda boda business. The largest age group was 21-30 years (37.3%), representing young adults who were either operating boda bodas or had sons of secondary school age. Boda boda operators formed the largest respondent category (42.6%), followed by parents (36.1%). Notably, 35.7% of respondents had incomplete secondary education, suggesting they had dropped out before completing their studies.

Relationship Between Boda Boda Business and Boys' Secondary School Enrollment

The core objective of the study was to establish the relationship between boda boda business and boys' enrollment in secondary schools. Table 2 presents the correlation analysis results.

Table 2: Correlation Between Boda Boda Business Involvement and Boys' Secondary School Enrollment



Variables	Pearson Correlation (r)	Sig. (2-tailed)	N
Boda boda business involvement & Boys' secondary school enrollment	-0.687**	0.000	263

Note: ** Correlation is significant at the 0.001 level (2-tailed)

Source: Primary Data, 2025

The correlation analysis revealed a strong negative relationship between boda boda business involvement and boys' secondary school enrollment rate ($r = -0.687, p < 0.001$). This statistically significant result indicated that as involvement in boda boda business increased, the enrollment rate of boys in secondary schools decreased substantially (Nelson et al., 2023). The correlation coefficient of -0.687 demonstrated a strong inverse relationship, suggesting that boda boda business had a considerable negative influence on boys' educational participation in Rukiga District.

Factors Contributing to Boys' Preference for Boda Boda Business

Table 3 illustrates the various factors that motivated boys to choose boda boda business over secondary education.

Table 3: Factors Influencing Boys' Preference for Boda Boda Business (N=263)

Factor	Frequency	Percentage
Immediate income generation	190	72.4
Poverty and family financial pressure	168	63.9
Perceived low value of education	142	54.0
Influence of successful boda boda operators	135	51.3
High unemployment among educated youth	127	48.3
Peer pressure	119	45.2
Lack of school fees	156	59.3
Desire for independence	108	41.1

Note: Multiple responses were allowed

Source: Primary Data, 2025

The data indicated that immediate income generation was the most significant factor (72.4%), followed by poverty and family financial pressure (63.9%). The lack of school fees (59.3%) and perceived low value of education (54.0%) were also prominent factors. These findings suggested that economic considerations primarily drove boys' decisions to abandon formal education for boda boda business.

Dropout Rates and Enrollment Patterns

Table 4 presents data on boys' dropout rates and their subsequent involvement in boda boda business.

Table 4: Boys' Educational Status and Boda Boda Involvement





Status	Frequency	Percentage
Dropped out to join boda boda business	153	58.3
Never enrolled in secondary school	87	33.1
Currently enrolled but operating part-time	23	8.7
Parental Support for Boda Boda Business		
Parents who supported sons' boda boda involvement	169	64.2
Parents who opposed but couldn't prevent it	68	25.9
Parents who actively discouraged it	26	9.9

Source: Primary Data, 2025

The results showed that 58.3% of boys dropped out of secondary school specifically to engage in boda boda operations, while 33.1% never enrolled in secondary school after completing primary education. Remarkably, 64.2% of parents supported their sons' involvement in boda boda business, primarily due to the immediate financial contribution to household income. Only 9.9% of parents actively discouraged their sons from abandoning education for boda boda operations.

The comprehensive analysis of results demonstrated that boda boda business had a substantial negative impact on boys' secondary school enrollment in Rukiga District. The strong inverse correlation, combined with high dropout rates and parental support for boda boda involvement, painted a concerning picture of educational attainment among boys in the district. The primacy of economic factors in driving these decisions highlighted the complex interplay between poverty, immediate survival needs, and long-term human capital development in rural Ugandan communities.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

The study conclusively established that a strong negative relationship existed between boda boda business and boys' secondary school enrollment in Rukiga District. The correlation coefficient of -0.687 demonstrated that boda boda business significantly undermined boys' participation in secondary education, creating a substantial barrier to educational attainment and human capital development in the district. The research revealed that economic considerations were the primary drivers of boys' decisions to abandon formal education, with immediate income generation, poverty, and family financial pressures being the most influential factors.

The high dropout rate of 58.3% among boys who left secondary school to engage in boda boda operations indicated a systemic problem that required urgent intervention. The finding that 64.2% of parents supported their sons' involvement in boda boda business reflected a community-level shift in values, where immediate economic survival took precedence over long-term educational investment. This value orientation was further reinforced by the perceived low value of education, high unemployment among educated youth, and the visible success of some boda boda operators who achieved financial stability without formal secondary education.

Received: 02.01.2026

Accepted: 08.01.2026

Published on: 30.01.2026



The study concluded that the boda boda phenomenon in Rukiga District represented more than just a transport business; it constituted a socioeconomic force that was reshaping educational patterns and potentially compromising the future prospects of an entire generation of boys. The immediate financial returns from boda boda operations, ranging from UGX 15,000 to 50,000 daily, created a powerful incentive that formal education could not compete with in the short term. However, this short-term gain potentially came at the expense of long-term opportunities, skill development, and socioeconomic mobility that secondary education could provide.

Furthermore, the study concluded that the relationship between boda boda business and boys' education was mediated by poverty and limited economic opportunities in Rukiga District. Families facing financial constraints viewed boda boda business as a practical solution to immediate survival needs, even when they recognized the value of education. This situation created a poverty trap where the need for immediate income prevented investment in education that could break the cycle of intergenerational poverty.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions, the study offered the following recommendations to relevant stakeholders:

To Rukiga District Local Government:

The district should develop and enforce comprehensive policies that restrict school-age children from operating commercial boda bodas during school hours. These regulations should be embedded within district bylaws and enforced through collaboration between education officials, police, and local council leaders. Additionally, the district should establish an education monitoring system that tracks boys' enrollment, attendance, and dropout patterns, with specific attention to those engaging in boda boda business. The local government should also create alternative vocational training programs that could be pursued after completing secondary education, demonstrating clear pathways from education to employment.

To Schools and Education Officials:

Secondary schools in Rukiga District should implement flexible learning arrangements, including evening classes and weekend programs, that accommodate boys from economically disadvantaged backgrounds who may need to work part-time. Schools should establish guidance and counseling programs that specifically address the boda boda phenomenon, helping boys and their families understand the long-term consequences of abandoning education. Additionally, schools should strengthen community engagement initiatives that involve parents and local leaders in promoting the value of education and creating support systems for vulnerable boys at risk of dropping out.

To Parents and Community Members:

Parents should be sensitized through community dialogues, religious institutions, and local media about the long-term benefits of secondary education compared to immediate gains from boda boda business. Community-based organizations should establish support groups that provide both financial assistance and mentorship to boys from poor families, reducing the economic pressure to drop out of school. The community should develop alternative economic

activities that engage adults rather than school-age children, thereby reducing the normalization of boys abandoning education for commercial activities.

To Government Ministries and Development Partners:

The Ministry of Education and Sports should expand the Universal Secondary Education bursary scheme to include comprehensive support that covers not only tuition but also scholastic materials, uniforms, and other education-related costs that create financial barriers. The government should implement strict age restrictions and licensing requirements for boda boda operators, ensuring that only individuals who have completed at least secondary education can obtain licenses. Development partners should invest in economic empowerment programs for families in Rukiga District, reducing the household-level poverty that compels boys to seek immediate income through boda boda business.

To Boda Boda Associations:

Boda boda associations operating in Rukiga District should establish internal policies that discourage the recruitment of school-age boys into the business. These associations should partner with education stakeholders to create scholarship programs funded by a percentage of membership fees, supporting the education of members' children and vulnerable boys in the community. The associations should also promote a culture of educational attainment by recognizing and celebrating members who support their children's education or who pursue further education themselves.

For Future Research:

Future studies should conduct longitudinal research that tracks boys who chose boda boda business over education to assess long-term socioeconomic outcomes and quality of life indicators. Comparative research across multiple districts would provide broader insights into regional variations in the relationship between boda boda business and boys' education. Additionally, research should investigate interventions that have successfully balanced economic needs with educational attainment in similar contexts, providing evidence-based models for Rukiga District. Studies should also examine the experiences of girls and their educational patterns in relation to alternative economic activities, ensuring gender-inclusive approaches to addressing education challenges in the district.

References

- A, S. M. D. A. U. Y. N. L., & Ahmed, H. O. (2019). *On a Semi-Markov Model for Stock Exchange using Capital Assets*. 6(1), 138–144.
- Anthony, D., Kazaara, A. G., Kazaara, A. I., Ismail, L., & Prudence, K. (2023). *The Impact of Teachers ' Teaching Methods on Students ' Performance in English Subject in Secondary Schools In Uganda , A Case Study Of Selected Secondary Schools In Kampala & Wakiso*. 7(3), 290–297.
- Audrey, A., & Nancy, M. (2025). *Alone but Not Lonely : Reconceptualizing Solitude as a Disciplinary Resource in African Higher Education*. 9(11), 117–126.
- Jallow, M. A., Abiodun, N. L., & Weke, P. (2022). *Stochastic Forecasting of Stock Prices of Capital Assets Using Semi-Markov Model*.

Received: 02.01.2026

Accepted: 08.01.2026

Published on: 30.01.2026

- Julius, A. (2024). *Staff Development and its Impact on students Academic Performance Among selected secondary Schools in Kanungu District*. 8(4), 155–160.
- Julius, A. (2025). *Discipline as the Unseen Catalyst : Fostering Innovation and Creativity in Ugandan Universities through Structured Integrity*. 9(8), 201–207.
- Julius, A., & Audrey, A. (2025). *Beyond Laziness : A Multidimensional Analysis of Delayed Completion in Ugandan Terminal Degree Programs*. 9(10), 202–210.
- Julius, A., & Kazaara, A. G. (2025). *Age and Culture as Correlates of Learner Discipline in Higher Institutions of Learning in Uganda*. 9(11), 109–116.
- Julius, A., & Nancy, M. (2025a). *Bridging the Chasm : An Evaluation of the Transition from Secondary Education to Higher Learning in Uganda : A Case Study of Avance International University and Mbarara University of Science and Technology*. 9(10), 163–172.
- Julius, A., & Nancy, M. (2025b). *Education Policy Reform as an Enabler to Student Success : The Kajubi Legacy and the Shift to Competency*. 9(11), 288–296.
- Julius, A., & Nancy, M. (2025c). *The Digital Crossroads : A Comparative Analysis Of OpenAI And Google AI For Enhancing Learning Among Gen Z In Ugandan Private Universities*. 9(10), 84–92.
- Kazaara, A. I. (2025). *The Double-Edged Sword : Discipline Practices and Student Academic Performance in Central Uganda 's Secondary Schools*. 9(8), 132–137.
- Kazaara, A. I., & Nancy, M. (2025). *Research Framework : Betting Among Ugandan University Students*. 9(10), 123–128.
- Mable, N., & Roger, K. (2024). *Metropolitan Journal Of Academic Pedagogical Research ISSN : 3006-6425 Metropolitan Journal Of Academic Pedagogical Research ISSN : 3006-6425*. 3(7).
- Margaret, O. J., & Kazaara, A. I. (2024). *Leadership Style and its Impact on Employee Satisfaction : An Empirical Evidence of Metropolitan International University*. 8(4), 127–131.
- Mark, N., Kazaara, A. G., Deus, T., Nelson, K., Catherine, M., Christopher, F., Benefansi, I., & Brighton, B. (2023). *Analysis of Students ' Enrollment and Graduation Rates in Gulu University in Uganda . A Case Study of Gulu University*. 7(2), 1–9.
- Nafiu, L. (2013). *Statistical Analysis of Knowledge and Awareness to Universal Basic Education in Nigeria*. *Science Journal of Education*, 1(3), 28. <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.sjedu.20130103.11>
- Nelson, K., Christopher, F., & Milton, N. (2022). *Teach Yourself Spss and Stata*. 6(7), 84–122.
- Nelson, K., Kazaara, A. G., & Kazaara, A. I. (2023). *Teach Yourself E-Views*. 7(3), 124–145.
- Olanrewaju, R. O., Waititu, A. G., & Abiodun, N. L. (2021). *On the Estimation of k-Regimes Switching of Mixture Autoregressive Model via Weibull Distributional Random Noise*. 10(1), 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.5923/j.ijps.20211001.01>
- Oromo, O. D., Julius, A., & Nelson, K. (2023). *Effect of Covid-19 Lockdown on Household Income in Uganda A Case*

Received: 02.01.2026

Accepted: 08.01.2026

Published on: 30.01.2026

Study of Kitoro Parish , Entebbe Municipality. 7(4), 107–117.

Promise, O., Henry, M., & Julius, A. (2024). *External Auditing and The Financial Performance Of Sebbi International Limited , Entebbe. 8(6), 156–161.*

Suzan, W., & Gracious Kazaara, A. (2023). *The Impact of Western Education on Social Economic Development of Communities in Uganda-A Case Study of Wakiso Town Council Wakiso District (Vol. 7).*