RESEARCH ARTICLE　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　**OPEN ACCESS**

INFLUENCE OF WOMEN CHARACTERISTICS ON GENDER VIOLENCE EXPERIENCES OF WOMEN USING *'BODA BODA'* PUBLIC TRANSPORT IN KILELWET SUB-LOCATION, NAKURU COUNTY, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

Gender violence is a common occurrence both locally and globally. Although it occurs in many spheres of life, most studies have focused on gender violence that occurs at home. The aim of this study was to establish the factors that determine gender violence experiences of women using public transport specifically in the 'boda boda' public transport. The specific objective of the study was to establish the influence of women characteristics on gender violence experiences of women using 'boda boda' public transport in Kilelwet Sub-Location of Nakuru County Kenya. The study incorporated the descriptive research design in the collection and analysis of data. The target population was comprised of 920 women that rely on 'boda boda' transportation in the study area, three 'boda boda' public transport administrators within the study area and the Area Assistant Chief. From this population, a sample of 90 female 'boda boda' transport users were selected using the systematic sampling method that entailed picking every 10th female customer from boda boda boarding stations until the desired sample size was attained. All the 'boda boda' transport administrators and the Area assistant Chief were included in the study. Both quantitative and Qualitative approaches were applied in both data collection and analysis. Findings of the study revealed that incidents of gender violence on female 'boda boda' users are quite prevalent with 63% of the respondents reporting having experienced some type of violence. The most common type of violence was offensive verbal comments and staring. Education level, occupation, and the frequency of 'boda boda' use were the women characteristics that significantly determined the gender violence experiences of the female 'boda boda' users. Based on these findings, the study recommends that policy makers create awareness programmes that targets women with low level of education and who frequently use 'boda boda' transport.

INTRODUCTION

Public transport industry is one of the industries that has significant effect on the economic growth and development of Nations. It provides mobility and access to areas of interests such as work places and markets. The movement of people and goods occur on daily basis in a working economy. Thus, the transport sector holds crucial role in any given Nation. Generally, the main users of public transport are women (E. K. Omari, 2018). This is because women play vital roles in the economic development of Nations of the world as they provide for their families and transport goods from one place to another. This view is supported by the World Bank Group Report - Mainstreaming Gender in Road Transport (2019) which highlighted that women make more and complex trips than men. These differences stem from the social and economic roles of men and women. For example, in the case of women, public transport provides access to various resources and opportunities such as work, shopping, childcare, education and health facilities, whereas men are more likely to rely on private

vehicles (Kemtsop & Starkey, 2013). In view of this, women are more at risk of experiencing different forms of violence in the public road transportation (Obure, 2017). Interestingly, what should be a common daily and normal activity such as travelling from one place to another using various modes of public transport poses challenge to women both locally and globally. Studies have shown that while they are using public transport, women have experienced gender based violence ranging from rape, robbery, staring, inappropriate body contacts, offensive sexual comments and other forms of direct gender violence (Loukaitou-Sideris, 2014). This reduces their freedom of movement and their ability to participate in public life. Women's safety in public road transportation is often overlooked or sometimes it is not treated with the seriousness it deserves. Furthermore, this form of violence is enhanced by the cultures that treat women and women issues as trivial and therefore stigmatise women who experience the violence (Molin, 2018). Notwithstanding, gender violence on public road transport is prevalent, it tends to be invisible due to extremely high rate of under reporting by women who fear reporting in case they are stigmatised, and this eventually undermines

the intensity of the offences. More importantly, men are the key perpetrators of this violence and yet they are not involved in the interventions to address this form of violence. Gender violence against women using public transport and its associated spaces has and continues to be a global problem. The World Bank study in Lima revealed that while for men in Peruvian capital, speed was decisive factor in choice of public transport, for women, personal security and protection from harassment and sexual abuse mattered most (Dunckel-Graglia, 2013). Yet another study by Ball and Wesson (2017) where 16600 women in twenty-two countries were interviewed, 80% – 90% of them had experienced incidents of harassment in public transport. In addition, the study showed that 66% of German women had been groped or fondled and 47% of Indian women had witnessed someone exposing themselves in public transport. On the other hand, a survey conducted by Action Aid revealed that 84% of Bangladeshi women experienced staring, deliberate touching, groping and sexual comments while travelling (Mazumder & Pokharel, 2019).

In Britain, research by Transport for London (2016) found out that about 15% of women and girls had been subjected to unwanted sexual behaviours such as being stared at, followed, robbed or raped in the London public transport networks. The vast majority of this went unreported. In Africa, many cities including Nairobi, Kenya's capital were not designed particularly with women's safety in mind. The lack of street lights and safe public spaces means girls and women often do not feel safe while travelling to school or going to work at night. They sometimes face regular harassment, abuse and intimidation. The government of Kenya zero rated the motorcycle with 250 cc and below in 2008 making public transportation using motorcycle commonly referred to as 'boda boda' very affordable to the low income earners. As a result, the number of motorcycles grew to an estimated 1,393,390 between 2008 and 2018 providing livelihoods to estimated 4.8 million people (Opondo & Kiprop, 2018). Estimates from the investor's data centre indicate that 'boda boda' operations have seen the growth of Kenya's economy (Amadi & Ombisa, 2016). On average, the 'boda boda' transport system brings in a daily earning of Ksh 700 million which would amount to about $7million and with an estimated 357 billion annually (Daily Nation, 2020). Despite such immense contribution to the National economy, the sector has been linked with crimes targeting its users especially the women and girls (Amadi & Ombisa, 2016). A report by Opondo and Kiprop (2018) that was published by Kenya National Crime Research Centre, showed that defilement constituted 17% of crimes committed by 'boda boda' riders. A survey conducted by the Women Empowerment Link (2015), indicate that women have experienced harassment and abuses ranging from derogatory comments to rape while using 'boda boda' public transportation. In the survey, 54% of 400 sampled women stated that they had experienced gender violence including physical, sexual and psychological harm. The same study further revealed that 'boda boda' operators often drop girls and women far from their intended destinations or in secluded areas so as to try and secure sexual favours from them. In addition, more than six out of ten respondents stated that they had encountered someone who had been abused while on a 'boda boda'. Despite the large number of violent incidences, few systematic studies have been conducted to examine factors that predispose or protect women using this means of transport to violence. It is in light of this that this study aims to establish how characteristics of women determine their gender violence experience when using 'boda boda' public transport with a specific focus on Kilelwet Sub-Location.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study incorporated the descriptive research design in collecting and analysing data to realise the research objectives. The study targeted the population of women using 'boda boda' public transport in Kilelwet Sub-Location in Nakuru County (N= 920), 'boda boda' public transport administrators (N=3) and Area Assistant Chief. According to the population statistics from the Area Assistant Chief, Kilelwet Sub-Location has adult female population of 1,150. The

study by Nyaga and Kariuki (2019) established that 80% of women in the rural area rely on 'boda boda' transport. The current study assumed that this claim holds for Kilelwet Sub-Location. The 80% thus translate to a figure of 920 female 'boda boda' users. From the population of female boda boda users, a sample of 90 respondents was selected using the systematic random sampling method. The sample size was determined using the Taro Yamane sample size formula. The researcher used the "boda boda" boarding stations as point for locating and selecting the women. From the reconnaissance visit, the researcher identified 10 "boda boda" boarding stations. During the study 9 respondents were selected from each station using the systematic random sampling where every 10th female customer that came to take a "boda boda" or alighted at a specific boarding station was selected. The sampling interval was selected using the formula:

$$Interval\ (k) = \frac{N}{n}$$

Where N is the population of female "boda boda" users (920) and **n** is the desired sample size (90). Data was collected on the spot from each respondent who agreed to participate in the study. All the 3 "boda boda" administrators and the Assistant Chief were included in the study and thus no sampling was done for this category of respondents. Table 1 presents a summary of the study sampling plan.

Table 1. Sampling Plan Summary

Respondent Category	Population	Sample Size	Sampling Method
Female "boda boda' users	920	90	Systematic
"Boda boda" administrators	3	3	Census
Assistant Chief	1	1	Census
Total	924	94	

Research Instruments: Data was collected using survey questionnaires and an interview guide. The questionnaires were used to collect data from the women using "boda boda" public transport. The questionnaires comprised both the open and closed ended questions (structured and unstructured). The interview guide was used to collect data from the "boda boda'' administrators and the Assistant Chief, who were the key informants in the study. The interview guide was semi-structured thus had a set of uniform questions for all the targeted respondents. Equally, it allowed the researcher to ask follow-up questions depending on the interviewee's response to the uniform questions.

Data Analysis Procedures: Quantitative data gathered through survey questionnaires was coded and entered into the Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25 where it was analysed using descriptive statistics including frequencies, percentages, and means. Cross-tabulation with chi-square was used to test the significance of the relationship between the dependent and independent variable of the study. This inferential test was preferred because most of the data was categorical. Qualitative data was collected using open-ended questions and interview guides and analysed using the thematic content analysis technique. This method entailed organising responses into themes and identifying frequencies occurring into the themes to form broader themes and categories. Finally, categories of responses was identified and classified as per the research objectives. Triangulation of qualitative and quantitative data was factored in during the presentation and interpretation of the research findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A total of 90 questionnaires were administered by the researchers. The sorting process established that four questionnaires were not properly completed and were excluded. Consequently, a total of 86 questionnaires were analysed giving a response rate of 95.6%. The

high response rate was due to the use of the face-to-face method of administering questionnaire where the researcher met with respondents and administered the questionnaires on-the-spot.

Gender Violence Experiences of Women in Public Transport: The dependent variable of the study was gender violence experience of women in public transport focusing on women using *'boda boda'* public transportation in Kilelwet Sub location in Nakuru County, Kenya. To assess gender violence experience of female *'boda boda'* users in Kilelwet, respondents were asked whether they have ever experienced any of these forms of violence themselves. Their responses are summarised in Figure 1 below.
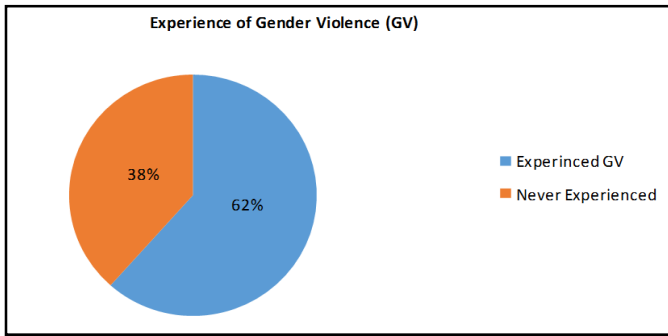
Source: Field Data (2021)

Figure 1. Distribution of Respondents based on Experience of Gender Violence

Figure 1 above shows that more than half (62%) of women who use public transport in Kilelwet have experienced some form of violence in the *'boda boda'* public transport. This finding implies that gender violence against women is persistent in public transportation in Kilelwet. These findings concur with the study in Karachi 2014 which found out that 85% of working women and 82% of female students around the globe experience some form of harassment in public transport. The study further sought to determine the specific form of violence experienced by the respondents. To further assess this, respondents were presented with a list of different forms of violence to which women are exposed and asked to select the forms of violence that were common among *'boda boda'* users in their areas. Table 2 below is summary of these responses:

Table 2. Common Forms of GV Experienced by Female '*Boda Boda'* users in Kilelwet

Form of Gender Violence	No. of Respondents	Percent of Respondents
Staring	68	79.1
Offensive sexual verbal comment	53	61.6
Robbery	46	53.5
Inappropriate touching	41	47.7
Rape	30	34.9
Inappropriate body contact	25	29.1

Source: Field Data (2021)

Table 2 illustrates that staring was the most frequently identified form of gender violence with 68 respondents (79.1% of the total cases) indicating that this form of violence was commonly experienced by female *'boda boda'* users. This finding implies that staring is the most common form of gender violence experienced by women using *'boda boda'* public transportation in Kenya. This finding is consistent with the study by the Asian Development Bank (2014), which also found that starring or leering was one of the two major types of violence against women using public transport in Karachi and Pakistan. Offensive sexual verbal comment came second with 53 respondents (61.6% of cases) indicating that this violence was prevalent. Forty-six respondents (53.5% of cases) selected 'robbery' as the violence commonly experienced by female *'boda boda'* users in the study. Less than half of the respondents 41 respondents (47.7% of cases)

selected 'inappropriate touching' and 30 respondents (34.9% of cases) selected the option 'rape' and 'inappropriate body contact' was selected by 25 respondent (29.1% of the total cases). This implies that the three forms of violence are least common in the study area.

Women Characteristics and Gender Violence Experiences: The objective of the study was to establish how characteristic of women influence the experience of gender violence in public transportation. Several characteristics were examined including age, education level, occupation, marital status, and frequency of *'boda boda'* use.

Age and Gender Violence Experience : Data regarding the age of the respondents was collected in order to determine how it influences women experiences of gender violence and it is captured in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Statistics on Respondents' Age

Statistics	Value
Mean Age	31.79 years
Minimum	19 years
Maximum	50 years

Source: Field Data (2021)

Table 3 above portrays that the respondents had a mean age of 31.79 years implying that the majority of the respondents who travel using *'boda boda'* in the location of study are young women. The statistics further indicate that the sample comprised of women of diverse age. The youngest was 19 years old while the oldest was 50 years. This data was converted into categories by coding those who were 35 years or below as youth while the rest were grouped in the 'older persons' category. This categorical age data was then cross-tabulated with the data showing the distribution of respondents based on experience of gender violence in order to determine the relationship between the two variables. Table 4 is a graphic representation of the results.

Table 4. Cross-Tabulation of Age and Experience of Gender Violence Data

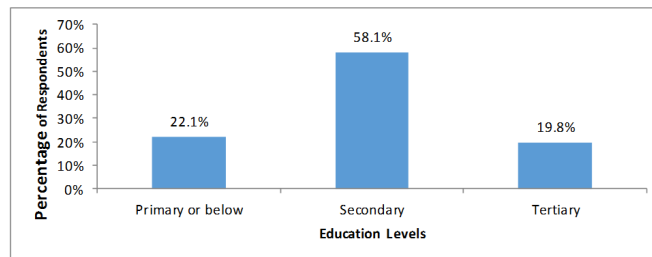|		Experienced Gender Violence		Total N (%)
		No N (%)	Yes N (%)	
Age Category	Youth	23 (39.0)	36 (61.0)	59 (100)
	Older	10 (37.0)	17 (63.0)	27 (100)

Source: Field Data (2021)

Table 4 shows that the proportion of youthful women that had experienced gender violence in *'boda boda'* transportation was 61% while the proportion of older women that had experienced the same was 63%. The chi-square test shows that there is no statistically significant difference between these two proportions (X^2= 0.030, df= 1, p=.863). These results suggest that the age of the women does not have a statistically significant influence on gender violence experiences of women using *'boda boda'* transportation in Kilelwet. They suggest that youths and older women have equal risk of experiencing gender violence. The finding is consistent with the data captured during the interviews where most of the respondents indicated that violence in the *'boda boda'* public transport sector affect women of all ages. However, the findings contradict the study by Ceccato (2017), who found out that there was a link between age and women safety while on transit, with younger women having higher risk of experiencing harassment. However, the inconsistency may be due to contextual differences between the two studies as Ceccasto study was conducted among University students in Stockholm, Sweden.

Education Level and Gender Violence Experience: The study assessed the respondent education levels in order to determine whether this characteristic influence women experiences of gender violence in public transport and specifically the *'boda boda'* public transport. They were classified into three categories. The first category was "primary education and below. This group also encompassed women who had started but did not complete primary

education and those who had no education at all. The second category was 'secondary education' comprising of women who enrolled to secondary schools even if they did not complete secondary education. The final category was 'tertiary education' comprising of women who had completed secondary education and pursued higher education programme or vocation skill training as summarised in Figure 2. As shown in Figure 2 above, slightly more than half of the respondents (58.1%) had some secondary education. This finding indicates that the education level of female *'boda boda'* users in Kilelwet is almost similar with the education level of the general female population in Kenya. According to UNDP (2013), the proportion of women with secondary education in Kenya stood at 52.1% in 2013. It is likely that this proportion has increased in the 7-year period due to government programmes such as Free Day Secondary Education. About 22.1% of the respondents had the primary level of education or lower while 19.8% had some tertiary education. This data was cross-tabulated with the data on the respondents' experience of gender violence in order to determine the relationship between the two variables. Table 5 below presents the results.

This pattern suggests that there is a negative association between level of education and experience of gender violence. It means that women with higher levels of education are less likely to experience gender violence when using public transportation and vice versa. These findings are consistent with the study by Ceccato (2017) who found that being informed is a decisive factor in women experiences of gender violence in public transportation. This scholar observed that being informed influences a woman's choice of means of travel, time of travel, and destination to travel. These factors have a major impact on safety. This position is reinforced by interview data where most of the interviews described victims of violence in the *'boda boda'* sector as less enlightened as evidenced in this male narrative: *"Most of the victims are not enlightened; most of them lack basic education making them vulnerable to operators with evil intentions." (Respondent1M, Intv., 2021).*

Occupation and Gender Violence Experience: The study also collected data regarding the occupation of the respondents with the view of determining whether occupation has an influence on gender
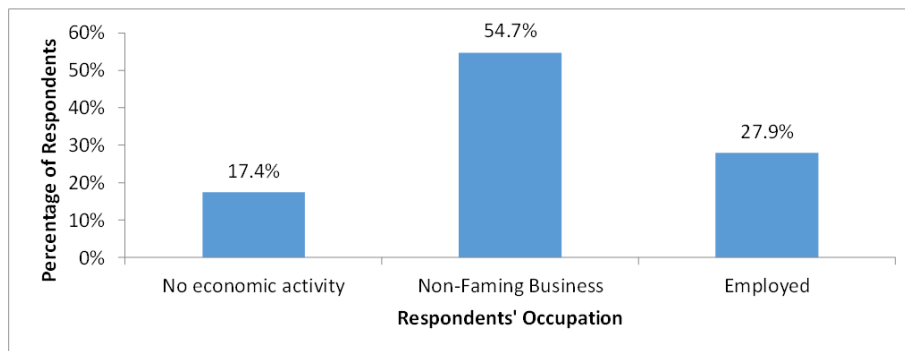

Source: Field Data (2021)

Figure 2. Respondents Highest Education Level

Table 5. Cross-Tabulation of Education Level and Gender Violence Experience Data

		Experienced Gender Violence		Total N (%)
		No N (%)	Yes N (%)	
Highest Education Level	Primary or below	5 (26.3)	14 (73.7)	19 (100)
	Secondary	17 (34.0)	33 (66.0)	50 (100)
	Tertiary	11 (64.7)	6 (35.3)	17 (100)

Source: Field Data (2021)

Source: Field Data (2021)

Figure 3. Distribution of Respondents by Occupation

Table 5 above indicates that proportion of women who had experienced some form of gender violence was highest in the primary or below education level (73.7%) followed by the secondary education category (66%) while the tertiary category had the lowest proportion (35.3%). The chi-square test shows that the difference in these proportion is statistically significant at the 0.05 level of significance ($X^2= 6.557$, df= 2, p= .038). This implies that there is a statistically significant relationship between education level and gender violence experience of women using *'boda boda'* transportation. The results in Table 4.5 above further illustrates that the percentage of women who had experienced gender violence is declining as you move from a lower to higher category of education.

violence experience. This findings are captured in Figure 3. Figure 3 above illustrates that the majority of the respondents (54.7%) were in non-farming business. This finding implies that the majority of female *'boda boda'* users in the location of study are business women. These findings are consistent with the study by Opondo and Kiprop (2018), who found out that *'boda boda'* has become a preferred means of transportation among traders because they are fast, affordable, facilitate transportation in impassable roads, and available even in remote locations. In addition, about 27.9% of the respondents were employed persons while 17.4% were not engaged in any economic activity. There was also a category for "farming" but none of the respondents selected this category. This implies that female

farmers are not frequent users of *'boda boda'* transportation in the area. It may also suggest that farming is not a common occupation in the area. This data was cross-tabulated with the data on respondents' experiences of gender violence in order to determine whether there is a relationship between the two variables. Results are presented in Table 6 below.

Figure 4 summarises this findings. Figure 4 illustrates that the majority of the respondents (66%) were married. This implies that the majority of female *'boda boda'* users in the location of study are married. These findings are congruent with the study by Omari (2018), who found out that 67% of female *'boda boda'* users in Kisii County were married.

Table 6. Cross-Tabulation of Occupation and Gender Violence Experience Data

		Experienced Gender Violence		Total N (%)
		No N (%)	Yes N (%)	
Occupation	No economic activity	13 (86.7)	2 (13.3)	15 (100)
	Non-Farming Business	13 (27.7)	34 (72.3)	47 (100)
	Employed	7 (29.2)	17 (70.8)	24 (100)

Source: Field Data (2021).
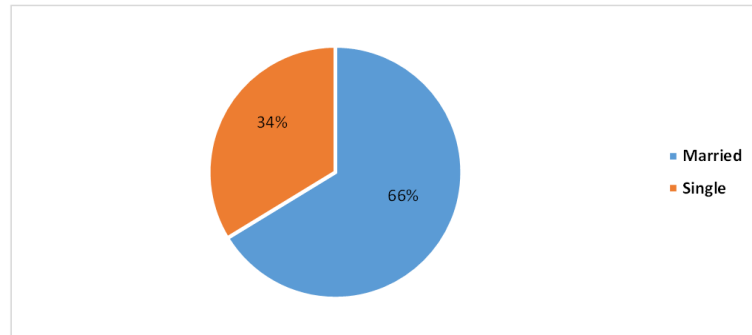
Source: Field Data

Figure 4. Distribution of Respondents by Marital Status

Table 7. Cross-Tabulation of Marital Status and Gender Violence Experience

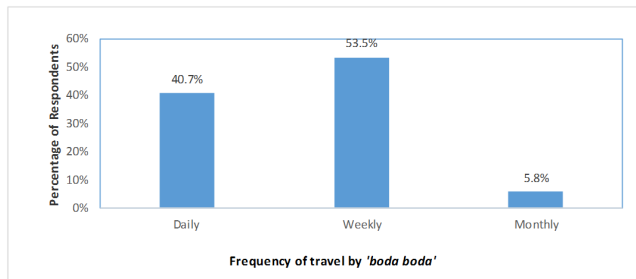|		Experienced Gender Violence		Total N (%)
		No N (%)	Yes N (%)	
Marital status	Married	22 (38.6)	35 (61.4)	57 (100)
	Single	11 (37.9)	18 (62.1)	29 (100)

Source: Field Data (2021)

Table 6 above shows that the proportion of women who had experienced gender violence in *'boda boda'* transportation was highest in the non-farming business category (72.3%) followed closely by the employed category (70.8%). This proportion was much lower among women in the no-economic activity category (13.3%). The chi-square test shows that the differences between these proportions is statistically significant (X^2= 17.935, df=2, p=.000). These results imply that occupation is a statistically significant determinant of experiences of gender violence among women using *'boda boda'* public transportation in this particular location. The findings suggest that women involved in economic activities, whether business or in employment, are more likely to experience gender violence in public transport than women who are not involved in any economic activity. The most plausible explanation for this relationship is that women involved in economic activities are more likely to use *'boda boda'* transportation due to the travelling demands of their occupation. Thus the frequent use of *'boda boda'* may explain their high exposure to gender violence.

Marital Status and Gender Violence Experience: Another characteristic that was examined was the marital status of the women with the view of establishing whether it has an influence on women experiences of gender violence. Respondents were grouped into two categories based on this variable. First was the married category that comprised of women who were married or cohabiting with their spouse. Second was the single category that comprised of all women who were not involved in a marriage or cohabitation with a spouse at the time of the study. This included also women who have never been married, those who are separated or divorced and had not remarried at the time of the study, and those who were widowed and not remarried at the time of the study.

Furthermore, in order to establish whether marital status is a major determinant of gender violence experience of women using *'boda boda'* means of transport, this data was cross-tabulated with data on gender violence experiences. Table 7 below is a graphic representation of this finding: Table 7 above shows that the proportion of women who had experienced gender violence in married category was 61.4% and 62.1% in the category of single women. However, the chi-square test shows that the difference in these proportions is not statistically significant (X^2=.004, df=1, p=.952). This indicates that marital status is a not a statistically significant determinant of gender violence experiences of women using *'boda boda'* public transportation in the location of study. In particular, the findings suggest that married women and those who are single have similar risk of experiencing gender violence when using *'boda boda'* public transportation.

Frequency of 'Boda boda' Use and Gender Violence Experience: Frequency of *'boda boda'* use was assessed by requesting respondents to indicate how often they use this means of transport. Based on the responses, the women were grouped into three categories of frequency of use: daily, weekly, and monthly. This is summarised in Figure 5. Figure 5 illustrate that the majority of the respondents (53.5%) use *'boda boda'* public transportation at least once a week. Another 40.7% reported that they use *'boda boda'* on a daily basis. These results suggest that close to 95% of the respondents use *'boda boda'* transportation frequently. These findings are consistent with the study by Opondo and Kiprop (2018), who found that *'boda boda'* was a popular means of public transportation especially in rural areas where other means of transports are not easily accessible.

Source: Field Data (2021)

Figure 5. Distribution of Respondents by Frequency of 'Boda boda' Use

Data on frequency of 'boda boda' use was cross-tabulated with data on gender violence experience to assess whether there is a relationship between the two variables. Table 8 below presents the findings.

Table 8. Cross-Tabulation of 'Boda Boda' Use Frequency and GV Experience

		Experienced Gender Violence		Total N (%)
		No N (%)	Yes N (%)	
Boda boda use frequency	Daily	2 (5.7)	33 (94.3)	35 (100)
	Weekly	26 (56.5)	20 (43.5)	46 (100)
	Monthly	5 (100.0)	0 (0.0)	5 (100)

Source: Field Data (2021)

Table 8 above shows that the proportion of women who had experienced gender violence was highest in the daily use category (94.3%) with the proportion declining to 43.5% for women in the weekly use category and reduces to zero for women in the monthly use category. The chi-square test indicates that the difference in these proportions is statistically significant (X^2= 30.223, df=2, p=.000). These findings imply that 'boda boda' use frequency is a statistically significant determinant of gender violence experience of women using 'boda boda' transportation in the location of study. The results suggest that women who use 'boda boda' frequently have significantly higher risk of experiencing gender violence than those who use this means of transport less frequently.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on findings, the study concludes that gender violence is a major problem in the 'boda boda' public transport sector in Kenya. The majority of women using this means of transport experience some form of violation with the most common being offensive verbal comments and staring. The study also concludes that there are certain characteristics that make women vulnerable to gender violence when using 'boda boda' public transportation. These characteristics include education level, occupation, and frequency of 'boda boda' use. Women who have low level of education, those engaged in occupations that require regular movement, and those who use 'boda boda' transportation frequently are more vulnerable to gender violence. Consequently, remedial measures should target women with these characteristics for greater effectiveness. Policymakers in the Ministry of Transport and County government should rollout awareness campaigns aimed at sensitising women on how they can reduce their exposure to gender violence when using public transport.

The awareness campaign should be tailored to reach women with low level of education. Consequently, they should use simple messages and dissemination channels that reach this audience such as local radio stations and road shows. The awareness campaigns should also target women engaged in economic activities such as employment or business. This can be channelled through community based organisations and local markets to reach women who are most vulnerable to gender violence in public transportation.

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