
ASSESSING THE FACTORS INFLUENCING MOB JUSTICE WHICH CAUSE FREQUENT DEATH IN LILONGWE, A CASE STUDY OF KAMKOTA COMMUNITY

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Article Received: 01 July 2026, Article Revised: 21 July 2026, Published on: 08 August 2026

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Doi: <https://doi-doi.org/101555/ijarp.7404>

ABSTRACT

Mob justice refers to acts of violence meted out against an individual or individuals alleged to have committed a crime such as rape, theft of any kind, robbery. Through this study is has found that the inability of authorities to ensure equity, fairness, and impartiality within legal and other state agencies to facilitate the mitigation of mob justice. This study aims to explore assessing factors influencing mob justice. Data were collected using a survey questionnaire, interviews from 50 community residents. Quantitative results of this study show that both men and women perceive that bribery of leaders is a common cause of mob justice. In this study, the qualitative results obtained from focus group discussions and interviews show a high level of perceived corruption within the local leadership as well as state machinery to conclude cases may take long time, which erodes trust in the system. The respondents expressed frustration with the slow decision-making suspect are caught they reported that this process also contributes to the rise of mob justice. Delay in court trials and lack of judiciary support are recurring themes in these discussions. Despite the challenges, there is a shared aspiration for change among the respondents, indicating a community desire to seek alternatives to mob justice and to embrace legal solutions. Respondents believe that lack of trust leads some community members to take matters into their own hands and engage in mob justice. Mob justice undermines the authority and legitimacy of formal legal institutions, erodes trust in the state's ability to maintain law and order, and weakens the overall social networking. The research recommends that the government should prioritize the eradication of corruption at local level then at higher level as well. Efforts should be made to foster a

stronger bond between citizens and security personnel, and to build confidence between citizens, law enforcement and the judiciary. Further, educating citizens about the due process of law and the consequences of mob justice, and incentivizing professionalism among public authorities are imperative. It is also essential to ensure that those involved in mob justice are swiftly brought to justice.

KEYWORDS: Mob Justice, Human rights, Security agencies, Lilongwe district.

INTRODUCTION

Mob justice was a form of punishment or retribution where the concerned people were taking law into their hands without handing over to the authority to look into matter by following the law of the land where a person suspected of wrongdoing was being manhandled in different ways such as humiliation and even sometime beaten, and killed by people. Unfortunately, mob justice was then becoming rampant, uncontrollable in our country. Individuals suspected of wrongdoings are extra-judicially punished by being beaten and even killed by vigilantes or a crowd (New Dawn Newspaper, 2023).

1.2. Background

Mob justice started way back as small activity of human rights violation but it was discovered that was not be treated as just human right violation but it should be called mob justice where people took the laws into their hands. Once internal control failed within the security framework, mob justice through beating, whipping, burning houses and other forms that contributed violets. Mistrust and dissatisfaction of the communities give rise to looting, demolishing and torching and damaging even government infrastructures. If communities felt offended by knowing that nothing could be done for the law to take it course, they opted for unlawful act which was against the Laws of Malawi. This contributed to introduction of community police to safeguard people rights at the grassroots before police services came in to pursue the matter with all expertise for investigations. The hallmark of community policing is to bring together the community and police to solve neighborhood safety and security problems (Setu and Tekle, 2017: 9).

Research objective

Main objectives

To assess the factors that influence of mob justice among communities that has increase death of innocent people.

Specific objectives.

1. To assess how often death caused by mob justice was occurring.
2. To assess the impact of mob justice to the development of the community
3. To determine the possible solution to the mob justice related cause.

Research questions

Research Questions would help to find factors that actually influence communities to believe mob justice as the solution to their concern. Participants gave updated information from the study area where research has been targeted for solution.

1. How frequently was death caused by mob justice in most communities occurred?
2. What were the effect of mob justice related death to the development of the community?
3. What were possible solutions put in place to cub the death caused by mob justice?

Empirical review

The frequency of death caused by mob justice related.

Kronyan Nawin Jappah, Effects and Amelioration of Mob Justice in Liberia and this was from Syracuse University in Liberia where he found that mob justice was rampant in their country because of a weak judiciary when it came to ruling on criminal cases, the country history of civil conflict and political instability among citizens, increased to poverty together with unemployment, and a lack of access to basic resources were reasons that contribute to mob justice. Similarly, in Nigeria, Salihu et al. (2018) examined how public dissatisfaction with the justice system contributes to mob justice. Shodunke et al. (2023) explored mob justice issues and their intersection with human rights in Nigeria. Achieving a balance was difficult.

The effects of mob justice related death to the development of the community.

Brian Ikejiaku and Jasmine Osabutey, (2022), Assessment of the effects of Mob Justice on the Rule of Law and Democratization in Africa: a Case Study of Ghana The researcher argued on the negative effect of mob justice implication on the rule of law is that mob justice does not undermine criminal justice alone.

Research design and methodology

Research design refers to the overall plan, structure or strategy that guides research from its conception to the final data analysis (Ranjit, 2019a). The study adopts causal research design because research wanted to find out why mob justice was still rampant in some communities

such as Kamkota village in T/A Sabango. The research adopted Quantitative methods because researcher wants to solution to the problem which was more objectives to the problem why people were using mob justice as concrete solution.

Study population

The study population was comprised of 30 male and 20 females from Kamkota village where they would represent the whole village in the provision of the data. 50 members of communities were involved to who were going to respondents. By selecting a representative sample, researchers could draw meaningful conclusions about the general population and generalize their findings to a broader context (Meredith, 1998)..

Sample size

The sample size was 50 from Kamkota village, T/A Tsabango in Lilongwe district because was practical and defensible and its strikes a good balance between statistical capability and logistical feasibility and it has reasonable cost. The sample represents a smaller, manageable group that researchers use to make inferences and draw conclusions about the entire population (Taherdoost, 2018, Bhardwaj, 2019).

Quantitative instrument

Researcher uses questionnaire as the main instrument used to collect data apart from other recordings. Building upon this, Rashid (2020) outlines that the questionnaire proves cost-effective even when dealing with a large and widely dispersed population. Therefore, research use questionnaire as an instrument to collect data.

Data analysis

The researcher uses quantitative tools to analyses the data. Data analysis was the process where data collected was summarized in the systematic way so that true reflection was imaged. Microsoft excel was a tool used to analyze data.

4.2.1. Respondents age range.

This research involves all ages especially from the age of 15 years old and above who were actively involved in many activities which were taking place in the communities because they were able to make decisions on their own without being influenced by anybody.

Table 1 respondents age arrangement.

Age range	Respondents numbers
15-25	8
26-35	16
36-45	17

46 & above	9
Total	50

Source: Primary data

The feedback was also presented in the percentage which shows how respondent according to age participated in the survey. Below was the diagram of the respondent's involvement in percentages. Results of the respondent's participation in research shows that random selection assisted to had all age groups participated in this research and the outcome reflect true views of the people of Kamkota village. This demonstrate people knew the importance of being involved in research which helped in making decision for the benefit of all in the communities. The middle-aged groups were highly involved because those in the age between 36 to 46 and 26 to 35 had the highest proportion of percentages of 34% and 32% respectively.

4.2.2. Respondents gender

It was very important for researcher to involve all people of different sex for determination of the activeness of entire village when something was happening for the benefit of common people because report should not show true reflection on the ground if gender was omitted for the respondents and the bias which came with gender has also been omitted as well.

Table 2. Respondents gender.

Gender	Respondents
Male	28
Female	22
Other	0
Total	50

Source: Primary data

The researcher collected all questionnaires distributed to respondents, 28 males received and returned them and 22 females also received and returned the questionnaires represented 100% acceptability of selected participants. Females used to shun such activities because they were not seen any benefit from the authority but research has been exceptional and it showed that people were willing to end the syndrome of taking laws into their hands without being heard in the court of law.

4.2.3. Level of education of respondents

The respondents involved in research were of different levels of education as it has been witnessed by the way respondents had been demonstrated. Respondents were asking to tick where they were fitting and that had been summarized in table below.

Table 3. Level of education.

Level of education	Number of respondents
Primary	16
Secondary	28
Degree and Masters	5
PhD	1
Total	50

Source: Primary data

Researcher wanted to know the level of education for those who participated in the survey, so that could easily facilitate to identify which level of people support or do not support the conduct of mob justice. It has been noted that 56% which was the majority of the respondents were those that only qualified for Malawi School Certificate of Education (MSCE) and had relevant knowledge about the evil of mob justice. 36% were those that completed their education at with Primary School Leaving Certificate (PSLC) while 10% were those with master's degree and bachelor's degree and lastly only 2% was holding PhD.

4.3.1. Involvement in mob justice

Most people were involved in mob justice without knowing the reason of acting that was likely to cause damages or took the life of the accused and its an act that violated human rights in general. It was the time to know from the respondents if they had ever involved in an Act of mob justice or any activity that could be considered as such. The summary was summarized in the table below:

Participants	Numbers
Yes	30
No	20
Total	50

Source: Primary data

Research has found that 30 respondents were involved in mob justice representing 60% while 50 respondents were not taking part of any act of mob justice considering that was an offence and it also violated human rights of the people who were denied to be heard in the court of law representing 40%. The result is that people need to be educated regardless of the level of

education the negative effects of taking law into their hands because 60% representing serious un aware of the law and how does it affect other people more especially those who are close related to the victim of mob justice.

4.3.2. Causes of community involvement in mob justice.

Researcher wanted to know what actually causes mob justice in communities and respondents answered their feelings what led them in the act of violates. 30 respondents express that what led them in the act was lack of trust in security agencies, 1 respondent has the view of that it took long time to punish the suspects while 19 respondents indicated that, it was community frustrations.

Table 5. Causes of community involvement in mon justice.

Causes of mob justice	Respondents
Luck of relationship with security agencies	30
No tangible assistance	1
Frustrations	19
Total	50

Source: Primary data

According to the figure above the high number of the respondents were lacking relationship with security agencies on how they treated suspects representing of 60% of total respondents while 19 respondents shows that mob justice was taking due to frustrations over the situation and was representing 38% which also was on the higher side as well but only 1 respondent show that no tangible assistance representing 2%. The result means more people in a community needed awareness campaign to reduce or end this malpractice because it violated human rights as the graph presented although people with different views on how they got involved in mob justice but the main goal was to punish suspect on their own without formal hearing of the scenario.

4.3.3. What leaders could do to stop mob justice

It was important for leaders to find ways to stop the conduct of taking law into their hands through mob justice and respondents were given options on the ways of stopping this conduct.

What leaders can do to stop mob justice.

Options	Numbers
1. Stop corruption and bribery	15
2. Make court process speedy, affordable and fair	2
3. Build good relationship between the police and citizens	6
4. The suspect should be handed to leaders within village for quick action	12
5. Conduct awareness about the evil of mob justice	15
Total	50

Source: Primary data

According the survey conducted conduct, respondents had completely well expressed their view on how to handle such matters at community level. 15 respondents representing 30% were of the view of conduct awareness about the evil of mob justice, 15 respondents again also were of the view of stop corruption and bribery and also representing 30% while 12 respondents representing 24% were of the view that suspect should be handed to leaders within the communities for quick action while 6 and 2 representing 24% and 12% respectively were of the view that building relationship between police and citizens and made court process speedy, affordable and fair. The conclusion was that, conducting awareness to all people was very important because communities would be knowledgeable about the evil of mob justice and also stop being corrupt once suspect were apprehended and should be handed to security agencies for formal justice.

4.4.1. Suspect were given opportunity to be heard at village level.

Granting opportunity to those suspected of wrong doing was very important because it create presidency to others who were also doing the same kind of behaviour. Respondents were given opportunity to provide evidence that once suspects were caught were given opportunity to explain why were they involved in such behaviors but respondents clearly said that, at community level some were granted the opportunity while other were not given.

Table 7: Suspects were given opportunity to be heard at village level.

Options	Number
1. Yes	26
2. No	24
Total	50

Source: Primary data

Suspects were given the opportunity to be heard.

According to statistics of the respondents, 26 respondents said that opportunity was being given to suspected people before the mob justice action representing 52% while those that said no opportunity was given to suspects were 24 representing 48% which was lower than those expressed yes was being granted. The conclusion was that most of the suspected of doing bad things such as theft were given opportunity to explain to their sides.

4.4.2. Effectiveness of the police handling mob justice

Police service was one the government agencies handling cases of wrong doing and it does not entertain mob justice that's why they were taking the suspects to court for formal justice to prevail.

Table 8. Effectiveness of the police in handling mob justice cases.

Option	Number
1.Very effective	25
2.Not effective	17
3.Affair	8
Total	50

Source: Primary data

It has been spoken by respondents representing other people in the village about how police was handling any case relating to mob justice and the higher number was showing that police in Kamkota Village was handling such cases in very professional manner with 25 respondents supported the idea representing 50% of the total respondents but only 17 respondents were in favors that police was not effective in their village representing 34% while only 8 respondent representing 16% were of the view police were fair in handling such cases. The conclusion was that police in Kamkota Village T/A Tsabango were very effective when mob justice cases had happened in their communities.

4.5.1. Ways how government could intervene to address mob justice.

As the government main stakeholder of granting protection to its citizens, it has to be involved in various ways to make sure that safety was granted. Respondents demonstrated their views on the intervention of the government to address mob justice taking place in communities by promoting strong measures that all that were involved in such conduct.

Table 9. Government intervention to curb mob justice practice.

Options	Numbers
1. Building more structures for police offices close to communities	17
2. Establish lower courts at communities' level and recruit more paralegal officers	4
3. Decentralize some judicial services to chiefs to address mob justice	3
4. Empower civil rights to sensitize on laws against mob justice	26
Total	50

Source: Primary data

Communities through random selection of respondents had given the opportunities how government could intervene to solve the problem of mob justice in the communities and the most favored factor was to empower civil

rights to sensitize on laws against mob justice to all people around T/A Tsabango so that this malpractice should not happening again. This point has been chosen by 26 respondents representing 52% of the total respondents. The second point which also support how government could intervene was by building more structure for police offices to be close to the communities so that they should be able to monitor the situation and this has been supported by 17 respondents representing 34% of the total respondents but the other two factors had received less support with 8% and 6% respectively. The conclusion was that government should intervene by empowering civil rights and building more police structures close to communities to patrol and monitor the situation.

4.5.2. Ways of how Individual could help to address mob justice.

Research also wanted to find out how individuals on their own capacity could help to end such syndrome of mob justice at village level.

Table 10. Individual contribution to end mob justice.

Options	Statistics
1. Report any suspicion to the authorities	32
2. Support local authority rule of law	3
3. Not taking part in any suspected mob justice action	5
4. Build trust to police and court	9
Total	50

Source: Primary data

Respondents have placed confidence on their own capacity as individuals could also contribute to end the mob justice at local levels by reporting suspicion of any mob justice or

any wrong conduct that could mobilize people and act wrongly without following orders. The best option by respondents is to report to authority which has 32 respondents representing 65% while building trust to police and courts came second with 9 votes of respondents representing 19%. The other two options with small numbers of support from respondents were not taking part in any suspected mob justice action with 5 votes representing 10% while support local authority rule of law with 3 votes representing 6%. This has demonstrated that people should contribute individually by reporting any suspicion or wrong conduct to the responsible authorities that was best way to address mob justice at individual capacity.

4.5.3. Type of Organization working with communities to address mob justice.

Some organizations both local and international were working around the clock to end this evil action of taking law in into people's hands because as the country we had important laws that people should abide by it.

Table 11. Type of organization working in the community.

Options	Statistics
1. Non-Governmental organization (local)	10
2. Non-Governmental Organization (International)	6
3. Public Institution	17
4. None of the above	17
Total	50

Source: Primary data

Kamkota was blessed village in T/A Tsabango because it has shown that many organizations were working in the village both local and international and public institutions, that gave an opportunity to eradicate the syndrome of mob justice through community sensitization and the same time employment opportunities. Respondents has indicated that 34% that public were doing their best to work with people in the communities in the Tsabango Village but 34% also has express not knowledgeable of any type of organization that was working in the village. For international organization, only 6 respondents representing 12% were working also in the village while only 10 respondents knew that local non-non-governmental organizations were working in the village. That concluded that government through public institutions were in the village providing awareness in different forms to let mob justice came to an end but those organizations should also introduce to people if they were public or non-governmental because 34% was a big number who had no knowledge.

4.5.4. Effort of commitment and willingness of communities to end mob justice.

Effort to end mob justice by committing themselves and willingly contributing to the initiative was very important and it lay the foundation of the people willingness to end mob justice. Leaders were the focal point to address their subjects about that evil mob justice. Respondents contributed by choosing how that can come to an end and the table below summarizes people's efforts.

Table 12. Effort of commitment and willingness of communities to end mob justice.

Options	Statistics
1. Advance level of commitment and willingness by both local leaders and subordinates	11
2. Local leaders are willing and committed but not subordinates	9
3. Subordinates are willing but not local leaders	0
4. Both are willing to end the malpractices	30
Total	50

Source: Primary data

Effort of commitment and willingness of communities to end mob justice.

The commitment and willingness by subordinates and leaders were very vital because working together was only solution to end mob justice. This collaboration was most welcome by people in T/A Tsabango because it would help to brought together all people of different mindset. Both leaders and their subordinates were willing and committed to end mob justice as it has been voted by 11 respondents representing 22%, local leaders were willing and committed but not subordinates with 9 respondents in support of that idea representing 18% but no vote from respondents for subordinates were willing but not local leaders representing 0% while 30 votes of respondents for both leaders and subordinates were willing to end mob justice in the village representing 60%. The conclusion was that both leaders and subordinates were willing to end the evil mob justice as it deprives people's rights to be heard in the formal justice.

CONCLUSION FROM THE STUDY

Mob justice often perpetuates a cycle of violence, as acts of vigilante justice could lead to retaliatory acts. This undermines the authority and legitimacy of formal legal institutions, eroding trust in the state's ability to maintain law and order, further weakening the overall social fabric. Mob justice could also deepen divisions within communities, leading to rifts between those who support vigilantism and those who advocated for a more formalized legal

system. Therefore, let's coordinate all activities taking place in the villages with authorities and local leadership to find proper ways of getting lead of mob justice.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The research results show that mob justice arises from a lack of trust in the judicial system, highlighting a pressing need for reform. To address mob justice in Community and nation at large, several recommendations were proposed. The government should prioritize the eradication of corruption within the judicial system. To achieve

This goal, a comprehensive policy framework must be established, requiring both international support and a genuine commitment from the government.

By implementing those recommendations and fostering community engagement, police reform, and improvements in the justice system, Community could take significant strides towards building a safer and more just society. By implementing targeted interventions that addresses the root cause of mob justice, it was possible to reduce its prevalence at T/A Tsabango. It was my hope that this research serves as a wake-up call for all stakeholders to come together and address the pressing issue of mob justice, ensuring a brighter future for village and its resilient people.

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