

Are Malawian Youth Ready to Accept the
Constitutional Court's Presidential Elections
Case Verdict? Evidence From 10 Districts of
Malawi.

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Article History

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Introduction

M&A- Research and Development Policy is a premier research firm that conducts a wide range of development research, consultancy services and tailored training. Its mission is to conduct applied research that informs policy and practice to reduce poverty and promote sustainable development. It provides high-quality research and policy advice, thereby bridging the gap between research and policy. As part of its mandate, M&A commissioned a research study between November and December 2019 to get a deeper understanding of the levels of preparedness among the youth to accept the results of the ongoing Presidential Elections case that is currently in the Constitutional Court.

Ethics approval for the study was obtained from the National Committee on Research in the Social Sciences and Humanities (NCRSH) of the National Commission of Science and Technology (NCST) [Protocol No. P11/19/439].

Methodology

The study used a mixed methods approach, involving quantitative and qualitative data collection methodologies. The choice on the use of both the quantitative and qualitative data methodologies was to ensure that the subject under study is comprehensively addressed. The study employed a multi-stage sampling method. First, the districts where the data were collected were purposively sampled based on the degree of electoral violence experienced between June 2019 to present. The second stage involved a purposive sample of one community in the selected districts where electoral violence occurred. The third stage involved a random sample of 2 group villages (GVH) within the selected community. The fourth stage involved a random sample of around 25 youths in each GVH.

Data

Data were collected between 10 and 19 Dec 2019 from 472 youth as shown in Table 1.

District	Community	No.of Youths Interviewed
Karonga	Lupembe	42
Mangochi	M’baluku	75
Mulanje	Mkando	43
Chikwawa	Ngabu	45
	Dyeratu	25
Blantyre	Bangwe	43
Zomba	Chikanda	46
Ntcheu	Tsangano	24
Dowa	Mponela	52
Mchinji	Kamwendo	34
Lilongwe	Msundwe	43
TOTAL		472

Results

Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Sample Youth

The study collected data from 472 Youths, of which 37.1% were female. The majority of the sampled youth (58.5%) were single. The main occupations of the sampled youth show that 22% were students, 17% were smallholder farmers, 28% were doing small-scale businesses including street vending, and 4% did not have any occupation. Other characteristics are as follows:

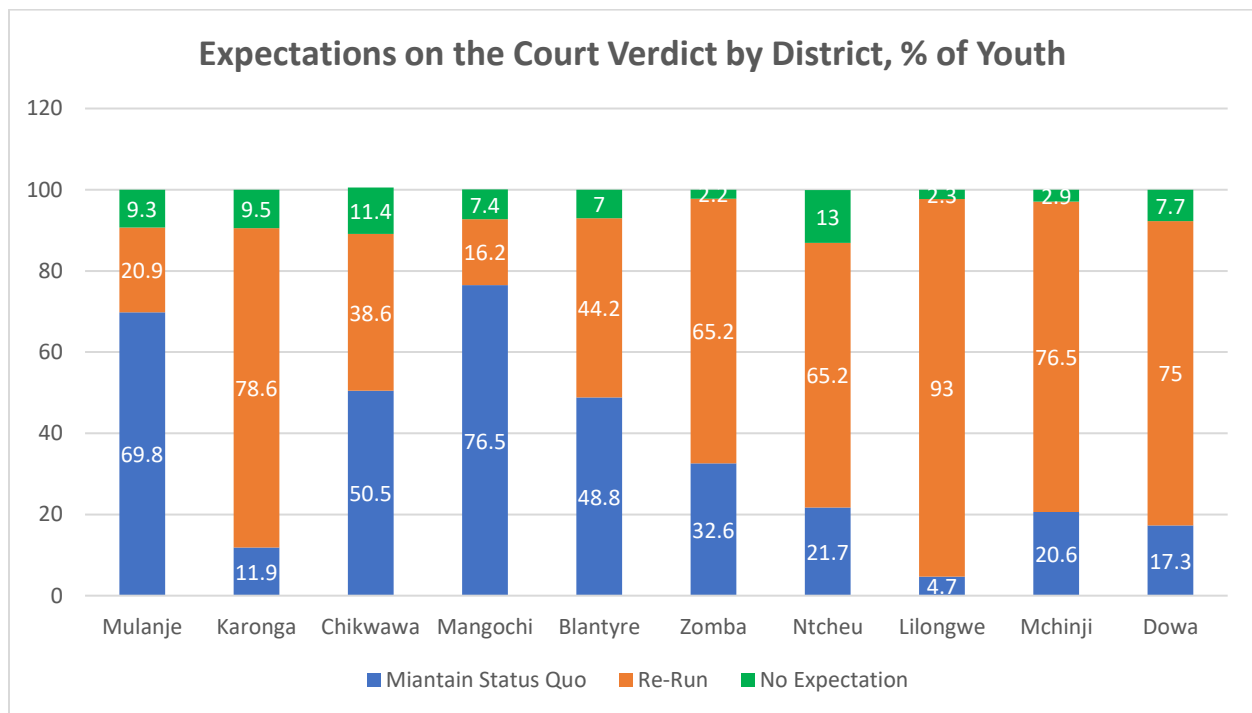
- Average age = 23 Years (Minimum=18 Years; Maximum = 35 Years)
- Education – Average of 9 Years of schooling (equivalent to Form 1).
- 76.7% voted in 2019 elections o 47.8% of these, it was their first time to vote.
- The majority are politically active. 81.8% reported belonging to a political party.

Youth Perceptions on the Court Case.

- Awareness of the court case is very high. 98.3% of the sampled youth are aware.
- Overall, 39.0% are expecting the status quo to remain; 53.7% are expecting a re-run; and 7.3% have no specific expectation. Youth expectations by district is shown in the figure below:

Willingness to Accept the Court Outcome if the Court Does not Rule in their Favor

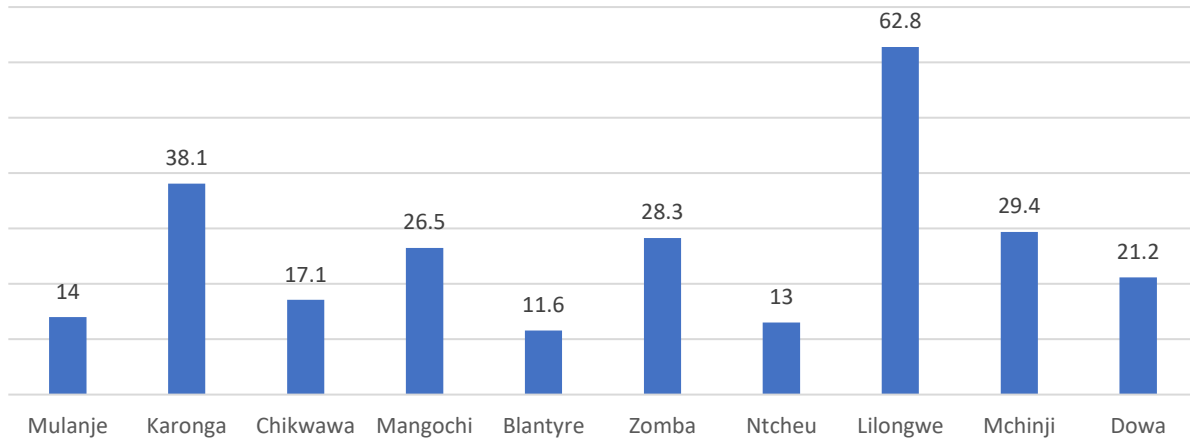
- The majority of both female (74.1%) and male (73.8%) survey participants are willing to accept the court outcome even if the court does not rule in their favor. Willingness to accept the court verdict does not seem to vary by sex of the youth [$\chi^2(1)=0.005, p=0.947$].
- Willingness to accept the court



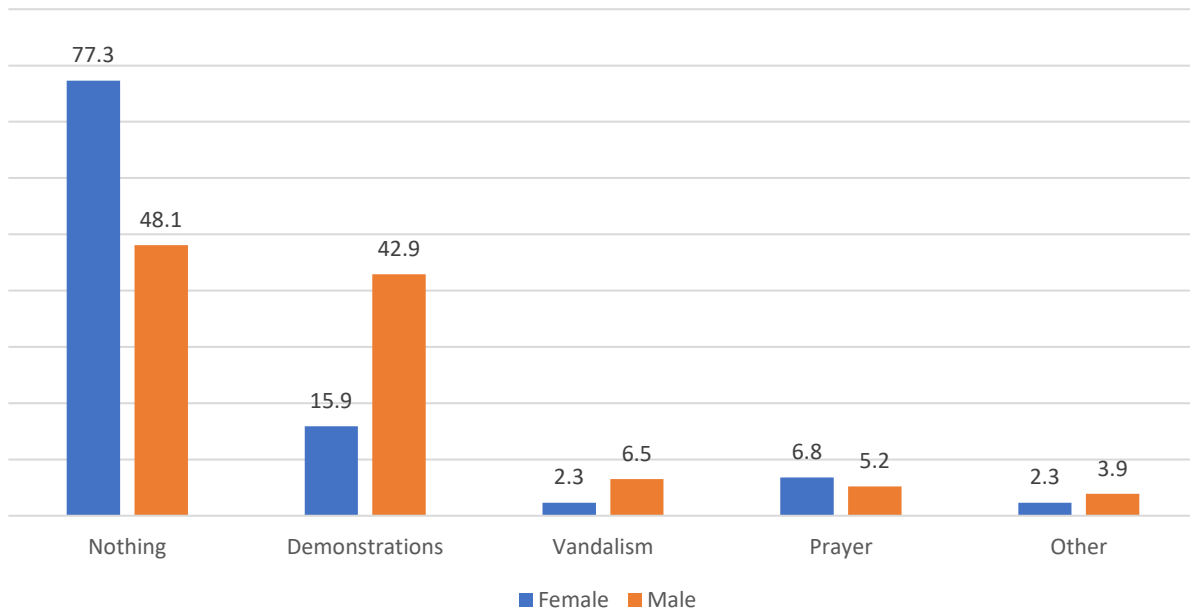
verdict does not seem to vary by the level of education of the youth; neither is it dependent on whether the youth is a member of a political party or not.

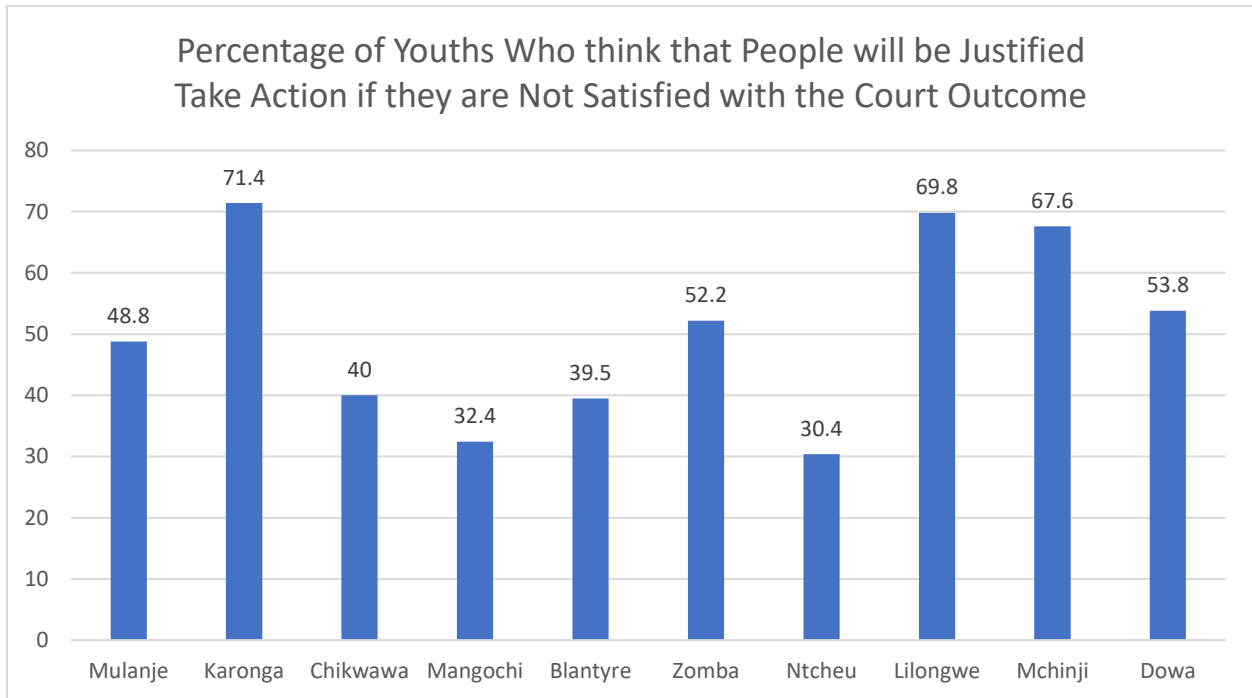
- The proportion of the youth who are not willing to accept the court verdict if it is not in the favor is reported in the figure below:

Percentage of Youths NOT Willing to Accept the Court Outcome if the Court Does not Rule in their Favour



If the Court Does not Rule in Your Favour, What Action Are You Likely to Take? (Percentage of Youth by Sex)





Conclusion

The Malawian youth remain active in the political arena of the country. They are aware of the on-going presidential elections court case. The massive involvement of young people in the electoral violence in the past is a cause for worry. Given their numbers, energy and subjectivity to a number of social and economic challenges the youth are likely to be used in escalating violence based on political lineage for economic gains or merely in pursuit of their ideologies. Social commentators observe that the youth are placed in a rather difficult situation that places on the perpetrators' side of the violence as well as on the victims' side. While these results are not representative of the entire youth population in Malawi, they offer useful insights into the expectations of the youth in violence hotspot areas on the elections case. The results of this study provide entry points for youth engagement to promote acceptance of elections' case verdict and promote peace-building efforts targeting the youth. This is

critical as the nation awaits the outcome of the highly anticipated Presidential Elections case ■

Makoka and Associates is a premier consultancy firm that conducts a wide range of research, commissioned studies and consultancies. It has expertise in the field of rural development, agricultural marketing and value chains, rural finance, poverty, livelihoods, and health linkages, programme process and impact evaluations. It was established in 2013 to provide high quality consultancy services in the field of research and development policy to local and international clients.

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