

## Factors Influencing Female Involvement in Crime and Criminality Among Inmate of Igbeba Correctional Centre, Ijebu Ode, Ogun State, Nigeria

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### Abstract

The study investigates factors contributing to female involvement in crime and criminality among inmates of Igbeba correctional centre. Ijebu - Ode. A mixed -method approach was employed, combining survey and interview with 30 females' inmates in Igbeba Correctional Centre, Ijebu - Ode Ogun State. Stratified sampling technique was adopted to pick thirty (30) female inmates Igbeba Correctional Centre, Ogun State. Three (3) research questions were raised and answered in this study. Simple percentage, mean and standard deviation statistical tools were used to analyse the gathered information. Findings show that, socioeconomic factors (poverty, unemployment and lack of education), gender-based violent, family dynamics and mental health issues significantly influence female criminal behaviour. Also, societal expectations and gender stereo types perpetuate female involvement in crime. Female criminality is a threat to the security of a nation and a major factor associated with underdevelopment because it reduces the quality of life, destroys human and social capital and damages relationship between citizens and the states and discourages both local and foreign investments. The findings highlight the need for gender-sensitive rehabilitation programs, addressing the unique challenges and experiences of female offenders. Policies and practices within correctional institutions must prioritize gender-responsive programming, ensuring that resources and support systems are tailored to address the specific circumstances of female inmates. The study's recommendations aim to inform evidence-based policies and practices, reducing recidivism and promoting successful reintegration of female inmates into Nigeria society.

### **Background to the Study**

Human societies have societal norms that spell out appropriate and inappropriate behaviour. In modern society, norms have been codified and made into laws such that laws themselves have become norms. Wherever laws have been created, there will always be individuals or groups that break them by getting involved in proscribed behaviour. The involvement of females in crime and criminality has become a growing concern globally with Nigeria being no exception. Despite making up a smaller proportion of the prison population, female offenders often face unique challenges and experiences that distinguish them from their male counterparts. In traditional societies, women were bearers and nurturers of children and the social responsibilities that go with these biological and social functions demand that they should be worthy in character (Ameh, 2018). This reinforced the notion that they were unlikely to commit crime (Rennison, 2016). However, reports in the media and academia validate the notion that female involvement in crime has been increasing in frequency and scope. In contemporary society, the new wave of crime cuts across all sections of the society involving men, women and children (Chukuezi, 2019). Unlike in the traditional society, crime cannot be said to be solely a male phenomenon as there has been a steady increase in the population of women involved in crime. According to Lombroso, & Ferrero, (2017) the term female criminality refers those kinds of crime which is committed only by female. Report by the Institute for Criminal Policy Research [ICPR] (2015) reveals that the female prison population worldwide has increased by more than 50% since the year 2000. Nonetheless, it also states that the proportion of females within the total prison population is comparatively low in African countries. Chukuezi (2016) attributes this to the apparent under-reporting of criminality, unavailability of forensic instruments and ineffectiveness of law enforcement agencies in dealing with crime situations prevalent in most African nations. A fact which clearly calls for closer examination of how they are treated within the criminal justice system and whether in fact the criminal justice system in general and the prison service can be said to be gender sensitive or not.

Pollack (2019) nevertheless, perceives female criminality as a “hidden crime” claiming that women commit just as much crime as men but their crime is more easily hidden because of the chivalry of law enforcement officials in dealing with female offenders. In early age the concept of female criminality was a unique matter to society because the society was male dominated and the women had a little scope to contribute with the works of men. The main duty was to house works and rearing children. As they couldn't go outside the concept of crime was unknown to them and they were frightened to do any illegal work. But due to the change of time and development in the field of science and technology the negative and dominating attitude towards women began to disappear (Chukuezi, 2016).

### **Statements of Problems**

In Nigeria, female criminality is becoming a cliché as the number of females involved in suicide bombing, ritual killings, public funds embezzlement and other forms of violent and non-violent crimes is steadily increasing posing a challenge to the nation's security.

Some case in point is the arrest of Mariam Ayilaa 27-year-old woman by the Police in Ogun State for kidnapping a 13-year-old girl, Sofiat Yusau in Dec 22, 2022. Also, on Jul 30, 2022, two women have been arrested by the police for allegedly stealing a baby boy in Ogun State. Maryam Sanda by the Nigerian Police Force on the suspicion that she stabbed her husband, Bilyaminu Halliru Bello, on the grounds that he was having extra-marital affairs. In the media/ national news, women are paraded alongside men by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) for cases of internet fraud. More to worry is also the involvement of women in terrorist activities in Nigeria, cases of women involved in kidnapping, human trafficking, the list is long.

Against the backdrop, it is essential to explore the influencing factors that contribute that contribute to the involvement of female in crime and criminality in Nigeria correctional centre with the experience of female inmates in Igbaba correctional facilities as focus of study. By examine this factor, the study seeks to contribute to the development of effective rehabilitation strategies and policies that address the specific needs of female offenders, ultimately reducing recidivism and promoting successful reintegration into society. It is apparent from the proposition of the theory that many cultural and structural systems all over encourage people to strive towards certain goals or material achievements which can only be obtained legitimately through education and employment, which presumably lead to better life. Women all over the world were for a long time discriminated upon in so many ways such as education, employment, remuneration and ownership of property. Lopez-Rey summarises the situation as follows: "In many countries political and legal rights of women are constitutionally proclaimed, but not always recognised, the right to equal employment is seldom accompanied by equal remuneration" (Lopez-Rey; 2000).

He further contends that this situation is more significant due to factors such as the growing number of unmarried women with children, the greater frequency of divorce and separation, as well as shorter life span for men as compared to women (Ibid; 2000). This represents a marginalised group with no easy way of achieving their goals. They are consequently more exposed to the use of illegitimate means and more so due to recently added family responsibility. López-Rey (2000) continues to observe that acts such as abortion, infanticide, child abandoning and cruelty to children prevail among women of the less privileged classes because the male may turn his back thereafter. Abortion is on the other hand easier for those with financial means, and this leaves the disadvantaged with the responsibility of bearing unwanted children, who easily become victims of infanticide, child abandonment and cruelty.

Another relevant theory instrumental to explaining the female criminality prevention strategy is situational crime prevention. Situational crime prevention theory suggests that crime takes place when two things are present: opportunity and motivation. Clarke (as cited in Hussein, Mukhtar & Umar, 2018) states that situational prevention comprises opportunity-reducing measures that: (1) are directed at highly specific forms of crime; (2) involve the management, design or manipulation of the immediate environment in a systematic and permanent way possible; and (3) make crime more difficult and riskier, or

less rewarding and excusable as judged by a wide range of offenders. From the perspective of the situational crime prevention, therefore, all motivating factors for the female criminality should be identified and opportunity for perpetrating the must be undermined. Having done that, the criminal activities among women will also be prevented or drastically reduced. For example, Hussein *et al.* (2018) identified some of the motivating factors for some crimes, such as drug abuse. Among other factors, the chances of accessing drugs are neighbourhood drug sellers must be blocked; as well as other socio-economic determinants, like poverty or unemployment. Thus, Hussein *et al.* (2018) recommended the rehabilitation of the drug seller through reformatory therapies and alternative legitimate occupations, the adolescence cannot find a place to buy the drug.

A study conducted by Okafor and Uzoh (2019) titled Socio- economic determinants of female criminality amongst inmates of correctional services in south-east Nigeria. The Structural- Strain theory and women liberation theory were adopted as theoretical framework while the mixed-method was adopted as the research design. Freda Adler (1975) studied prostitution, drug addiction and juvenile delinquency among females. She has attributed these crimes to the liberation movement of women and women's assertiveness. She contends that educated girl and women are more willing than ever to challenge traditional restrictions and social roles. The easing of restraints of women is further likely to increase female crime.

Empirical studies conducted on female crime in India have by and large supported this author's etiological explanation. Sharma (2013) concluded in this study that strained interpersonal relation with husband and other family members, husband's extra family relation, deprivation and denial of basic needs of life (like affection, security etc.) were the main causes of frustration and ultimate crimes. Rani Bilmoria (2010) and Sohoni Neera Kuckreja (2016) also supported this author's theory of family maladjustment as cause of female crime. (Ram Ahuja, Sociological Criminology). Family was found to be an importance factor in criminality. For example, in excise offence, when husband was arrested for illicit distillation, his wife too was arrested for helping the husband in illegal activities. In these cases, the wife merely helped her husband in his economic pursuits because of her religious study and not because of any desire to violate the social or legal norms.

**Table 1:** One showing Inmates population in Igbeba Correctional centre

S/n	Inmate Classification	Frequency(M)	Frequency(F)	Total (%)
1	Convicted	142	13	155 (25.54)
2	Awaiting Trial	410	17	427 (70.35)
3	Lifers	24	-	24 (3.95)
4	Lodgers	01	-	01 (0.16)
	Total:-	577	30	607 (100%)

Table one above shows female inmate classification based on the population in Igbeba Correctional Centre. From the total population of six hundred and seven (607) inmates

house in Igbeba correction facilities, out of which thirty (30) were female making percentage of (4.94%) From the stated population, one hundred and fifty five (155) (25.54%) are convicted, four hundred and twenty seven (427) (70.35%) are awaiting trial, with twenty four (24)(3.95%) lifers and (1)(0.16%) of the total population are lodgers respectively.

### **Research Questions**

Based on the study, the following questions are developed.

- i. What influence does socioeconomic factors such as: poverty, unemployment and lack of education) have on the involvement of female crime and criminality among female inmate in Igbeba Correctional Centre?
- ii. How did the family background and interpersonal relationships contribute to crime and criminality among the female inmate of Igbeba Correctional Centre?
- iii. What influence did substance use such as (drug and alcohol consumption) contributes to crime and criminality among female's inmate of Igbeba Correctional Centre?

### **Methodology**

The researcher carried out the study through descriptive survey research design. This method was taken for easy collection of data from all the groups of the population by selecting samples from the chosen population. The population for this study comprises of thirty (30) female inmate housed in Igbeba Correctional Centre, Ogun State. The sample size for this study comprises of 30 female inmate in Igbeba Correctional Centre, Ijebu Ode, Ogun State. For the selection of the sample, stratified sampling technique was utilized to select one thirty (30) female inmate in Igbeba Correctional Centre, Ogun State.

The research instrument adopted was structured questionnaire and interview. Questionnaire is the easier and most flexible tool for data collection because it is economical way of accumulating information which permits wide coverage and puts less pressure on the respondents. Questionnaire items were used to facilitate a reliable study. The questionnaire has two-sections A and B. section A was on personal data of the respondents that is, some personal information about each respondent such as Age, Gender and Religion while section B consists of thirty (30) open ended questions. To ascertain reliability of the instrument, Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) method of reliability was adopted. The questionnaire with the same contents was administered to the same respondents, under the same condition after a week interval. The result obtained in the administration was correlated, the reliability co-efficient is 0.62 which is reliable enough for this study.

The questionnaire containing questions on factors influencing female involvement in crime and criminality among inmate were administered personally with the assistant of correctional officers who were on duty as at the time of administration of the questionnaire. The completed questionnaire was collected immediately for high return rate. Data collected was analysed using simple percentage, mean and standard deviation statistical tools.



### Analysis of the Research Questions

**Table Two: Research Question One:**What influence does *socioeconomic factors* such as: *poverty, unemployment and lack of education*) have on the involvement of female crime and criminality among female inmate in Igbeba Correctional Centre?

**Table 2:** Showing the influence of socio-economic backgrounds such as poverty, education level, and unemployment status among female inmate of Igbeba Correctional Centre.

S/N	ITEMS	Frq		Percent		Mean (x̄)	S.D
		(N)	%	(N)	%		
1.	Socio-economic background significantly affects the likelihood of female incarceration.	22	73%	8	27%	3.99	.79
2.	Poverty plays a significant role in the involvement of females in criminal activities.	21	70%	9	30%	3.99	.79
3.	Limited access to education increases the likelihood of female involvement in criminal activities.	23	77%	7	23%	3.89	.77
4.	Employment opportunities significantly impact female involvement in criminal activities.	20	67%	10	33%	3.75	.76
<b>Overall Total</b>		<b>Mean (x̄) = 3.85 and STD = 0.77</b>					

Results from table 2(Two) above show the influence of socio-economic backgrounds such as poverty, education level, unemployment status among female inmate of Igbeba Correctional Centre. The findings indicate socio-economic background significantly affects the likelihood of female incarceration ( $\bar{x} = 3.99$ ,  $SD = 0.79$ ), poverty plays a significant role in the involvement of females in criminal activities ( $\bar{x} = 3.99$ ,  $SD = 0.79$ ), limited access to education increases the likelihood of female involvement in criminal activities ( $\bar{x} = 3.89$ ,  $SD = 0.77$ ) and employment opportunities significantly impact female involvement in criminal activities. This reveals that the mean and standard deviation of the items listed above is high ( $\bar{x} = 3.85$ ,  $SD = 0.77$ ) showing that socio-economic backgrounds such as poverty, education level, employment status stands as a contributed influence in crime and criminality among the female inmate in Igbeba Correctional Centre as at the time this research is carried out.

**Research Question Two:** What is the influence psychological profiles such as trauma, mental health issues, personality traits, and coping mechanisms among female inmate of Igbeba Correctional Centre?

**Table 3:** Showing the influence psychological profiles such as trauma, mental health issues, personality traits, and coping mechanisms among female inmate of Igbeba Correctional Centre

S/N	ITEMS	Freq		Percent		Mean ( $\bar{x}$ )	S.D
		(N)	%	(N)	%		
1	Trauma significantly affects the behavior of female inmates at Igbeba Correctional Centre.	23	77%	7	23%	3.98	.79
2	Mental health issues play a significant role in the experiences of female inmates at Igbeba Correctional Centre.	21	70%	9	30%	3.85	.77
3	Personality traits influence the interactions and dynamics among female inmates at Igbeba Correctional Centre.	19	63%	11	37%	3.79	.75
4	Coping mechanisms impact the adjustment of female inmates to life in Igbeba Correctional Centre.	18	60%	12	40%	3.64	.73
<b>Overall Total</b>		<b>Mean (<math>\bar{x}</math>) = 3.81 and STD = 0.76</b>					

Results in table 3 above show the influence psychological profiles such as trauma, mental health issues, personality traits, and coping mechanisms among female inmate of Igbeba Correctional Centre. This findings indicate trauma significantly affects the behavior of female inmates at Igbeba Correctional Centre ( $\bar{x} = 3.98$ ,  $SD = 0.79$ ), mental health issues play a significant role in the experiences of female inmates at Igbeba Correctional Centre ( $\bar{x} = 3.85$ ,  $SD = 0.77$ ), personality traits influence the interactions and dynamics among female inmates at Igbeba Correctional Centre ( $\bar{x} = 3.79$ ,  $SD = 0.75$ ) and coping mechanisms impact the adjustment of female inmates to life in Igbeba Correctional Centre. This reveals that the mean and standard deviation of the items listed above is very high ( $\bar{x} = 3.87$ ,  $SD = 0.79$ ) showing the influence psychological profiles such as trauma, mental health issues, personality traits, and coping mechanisms among female inmate of Igbeba Correctional Centre.

**Research Question Three:** How does the familial backgrounds and interpersonal relationships influence female involvement in crime and criminality among female inmate in Igbeba Correctional Centre?

**Table 4:** Showing the family backgrounds and interpersonal relationships among female inmate of Igbeba Correctional Centre

S/N	ITEMS					Mean ( $\bar{x}$ )	S.D
		Frq (N)	Percent %	Frq (N)	Percent%		
1	My family has a history of involvement with the criminal justice system	19	63%	11	37%	3.75	.78
2	My family has struggled with substance abuse issues.	20	67%	10	33%	3.79	.78
3	I have experienced physical or emotional abuse within my family.	18	60%	12	40%	3.75	.78
4	I have experienced financial instability within my family.	22	73%	8	27%	3.94	.79
<b>Overall Total</b>		<b>Mean (<math>\bar{x}</math>) = 3.89 and STD = 0.79</b>					

Results in table 2 above show familial backgrounds and interpersonal relationships as an attributed factor influencing female involvement in crime and criminality among female inmate in Igbeba Correctional Centre. These findings indicate family has a history of involvement with the criminal justice system ( $\bar{x} = 3.75, SD = 0.78$ ), my family has struggled with substance abuse issues ( $\bar{x} = 3.79, SD = 0.78$ ), I have experienced physical or emotional abuse within my family ( $\bar{x} = 3.75, SD = 0.78$ ) and have experienced financial instability within my family ( $\bar{x} = 3.94, SD = 0.79$ ). This reveals that the mean and standard deviation of the items listed above is very high ( $\bar{x} = 3.89, SD = 0.79$ ) showing that familial backgrounds and interpersonal relationships have a great influence in crime and criminality among the female inmate in Igbeba Correctional Centre as at the time this research is carried out.

### Discussion of Findings

Results from research question 1 show the influence of socio-economic backgrounds such as poverty, education level, and employment status among female inmate of Igbeba Correctional Centre. This reveals that the mean and standard deviation of the items listed above is very high ( $\bar{x} = 3.85, SD = 0.77$ ) showing the influence of socio-economic backgrounds such as poverty, education level, employment status among female inmate of Igbeba Correctional Centre. The result is in line with the findings of Adler (2015) who studies suggested that socio-economic variables influence female criminality. She further revealed a significant contribution in explaining the determinants of female criminality in her publication, *Sisters in Crime: The rise of the female offender*. She argued that as women gained more opportunities outside the home, positions previously unavailable to them, its resultant effect is the increase in female criminality.



Thus, with the increase in the number of females in the work force, there would be an analogous rise in female offending and criminality (Rennison, 2014). Adler further opined that the empowered woman is more involved in serious violent crime than the non-empowered woman. Simon (2016) gave a similar explanation stating that the involvement of women in criminal activities increases when women have different social and economic opportunities. Results from research question 2 show the influence psychological profiles such as trauma, mental health issues, personality traits, and coping mechanisms among female inmate of Igbaba Correctional Centre. This reveals that the mean and standard deviation of the items listed above is very high ( $\bar{x} = 3.87$ ,  $SD = 0.79$ ) showing the influence psychological profiles such as trauma, mental health issues, personality traits, and coping mechanisms among female inmate of Igbaba Correctional Centre. The result is in line with the findings of Burt, Healy and Bonger (2016) who explain the difference by associating it with some psychological features. Burt argues that females commit fewer numbers of crimes due to dominant feelings like tenderness, forgiveness and fear. Bonger suggests that women are far psychologically stronger than men, and thus their participation in crime is far lower than that of men. According to Bonger (2016), in the post-World War II period, a small proportion of women have participated in economic crimes due to economic deprivation. However, there are also studies arguing that women are far more disconcerting than men and psychological problems are more common in women than in men, and that, due to these reasons, women more commonly feel desperation than men do.

The results from research question 3 show the familial backgrounds and interpersonal relationships among female inmate of Igbaba Correctional Centre. This reveals that the mean and standard deviation of the items listed above is very high ( $\bar{x} = 3.89$ ,  $SD = 0.79$ ) showing the familial backgrounds and interpersonal relationships among female inmate of Igbaba Correctional Centre. This finding agreed with Dobash and Dobash, (2014) who stated that dysfunctional family environments characterized by neglect, abuse, or parental criminality can contribute to the development of antisocial behaviors and attitudes in women. Women who have experienced disrupted family structures or lack positive role models may struggle with issues of attachment, trust, and intimacy, leading to difficulties in forming healthy relationships and coping with stressors.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the study has carefully investigated factors influencing female involvement in crime and criminality in Nigeria correctional centre taking the female Inmates in Igbaba Custodian Centre as a study area. The findings from the study indicate that socio-economic factors, (e.g. poverty, education level, employment status), psychological factors (e.g. trauma, mental health issues, personality traits, and coping mechanisms) gender-based violence, family dynamics, and mental health issues significantly contributed to female crime and criminality behaviour. The result from the findings highlights the needs for gender sensitive rehabilitation programs, addressing the unique needs and challenges faced by female offenders. Policies and practices within correctional institutions must prioritize gender-responsive programming, ensuring that

resources and support systems are tailored to address the specific circumstances of female inmates.

### **Recommendations**

1. Gender – sensitive rehabilitation programs: Nigeria correctional centers should develop and implement programs tailored to address the specific needs of female inmates, focusing on education, vocational training and counseling
2. Addressing gender – based violence: The Nigerian government should establish initiatives programs to combat gender – based violence, providing support services for survivors and perpetrators
3. Family support: Correctional centers should offer family therapy and counseling to address dysfunctional family dynamics contributing to female criminal behavior
4. Mental health services: Access to mental health services and counseling should be provided to female inmates to address underlying issues contributing to criminal behavior
5. Education and employment opportunities to address socioeconomic factors driving female criminal behavior.
6. Community reintegration programs: Correctional centers should establish programs facilitating successful reintegration of female inmates into their communities upon release.

By implementing these recommendations, Nigeria can reduce crime and criminality rates among female offenders, promote successful reintegration, and address the root cause of female involvement in crime and criminality.

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