

 Research Article

Women Criminality and Education for Sustainable Development: A Study of Abraka Kingdom

Lilian O. Itoje-Akpokiniovo¹ , Omoriwhovo Enoch Oghenevo¹ , Great Iruoghene Edo² 

¹Department of Sociology, Delta State University, Abraka, Delta State, Nigeria

²Department of Chemistry, Delta State University of Science and Technology, Ozoro, Nigeria

Abstract

This research investigates whether education influences women to engage in criminal activities in Abraka Kingdom for the purpose of sustainable development. It investigates whether socio-economic as well as educational factors increase women's participation in criminal behaviour and how education can reduce crime rates and promote long-term development. This is done through interviews, surveys, analysis of secondary data. This work showed that poverty, lack of employment and limited educational access affect female involvement in criminal activities. Women with limited education are more likely to steal, deceive and sell sex to survive because of financial problems and limited options. It says education prevents issues because it gives women the skills to get jobs, start businesses and fulfill social duties. The result indicates that education and job training for women is needed to empower them and reduce their risk of criminal activity. The study highlights constraints such as limited geographical scope, reliance on self-reported information and lack of long term analysis. The research found improving women's education is essential to reduce female criminal behaviour and promote long-term sustainable development. It suggests policy measures, community education and government support for programs promoting women's empowerment. Continuation studies should consider other locations, use long-term research methods and examine the effects of institutional policies on female criminals. To fill these gaps society could use education to prevent crime and promote sustainable development. The study contributes to conversations about gender, crime, and education by recommending measures to promote educational and socio-economic progress of women in Nigeria and other countries.

Keywords: Criminality, Women Criminality, Education, Sustainable Development

✉ Correspondence
Great Iruoghene Edo
greatiruo@gmail.com

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1. INTRODUCTION

Criminality is inherently intertwined with human nature and society. This is why no society can claim to be entirely devoid of crime. However, the types of criminal behavior often reflect the social and economic development of a society. Consequently, it is not surprising that societies with lower levels of development may witness a surge in violent crimes, including armed robbery, politically motivated killings, illegal weapon usage, ethnic and religious conflicts, among others. It is undeniable that Nigeria has faced a significant increase in crime since the mid-seventies, a situation described in criminological terms as a “crime-problem.” This occurs when the frequency and severity of crime escalate from normal or acceptable levels to pathological, thus becoming a “social problem.” Consequently, crime has not only become widespread but has also attained monstrous proportions. The term “criminality” was initially coined to explore the nature of crime through Cesare Lombroso’s seminal work “The Criminal Man,” first published in 1887. Lombroso utilized the prevailing Darwinian evolutionary theories of his time to substantiate the perceived inferiority of criminals in comparison to “honest” individuals, of women to men, and of Black people to White people. His book “Criminal Man” discusses the common association of crime with men,

acknowledging that women also commit crimes, albeit with varying degrees of intensity or severity. Nonetheless, economic development—be it through industrialization, urbanization, or the resultant proliferation of job opportunities—has led to an increase in criminal opportunities for women. This complexity necessitates an expansion of the field of criminality to more thoroughly include the study of female crime, as argued by Hussein (2018). Armentrout (2004) points out that criminality remains predominantly a male-focused area of research, which contributes to the public's lack of awareness regarding female crime reports, a phenomenon often referred to as the dark figure of female crime.

The difference in crime rates between females and males in Nigeria, as well as other places like the Abraka Kingdom in Delta State, has been attributed to women's unreported crimes and the "chivalrous treatment" female offenders receive from male officers in the criminal justice system (Agboola, 2014; Barkan, 1997; Fontebo, 2013; Suleiman, 2014). However, feminist scholars have contested these views, asserting that female criminality is not fully understood. They also argue that male criminologists, who have historically led the field, lack a deep comprehension of the gendered social realities and criminal behaviors of women. Historically, women have been associated with various forms of criminal and deviant behavior. Recently, there has been a moral panic concerning the perceived rise in women's criminality. In Nigeria, women's participation in criminal activities ranges from domestic violence and violent crimes, such as armed robbery and homicide, to organized and cybercrimes, including drug trafficking, impersonation, and fraud, as well as consensual crimes like prostitution and drug abuse. Recent reports indicate that women are increasingly involved in political thuggery in some northern Nigerian states. Statistics from the Nigerian Prison Service (2007; 2009) show that, although crimes were predominantly attributed to men in the past, this is no longer the case due to a steady rise in the number of women involved in crime. A 1988 study at Enugu Prison revealed that out of 1,700 inmates, only 4% were women, suggesting that female involvement in crime was negligible and inconsequential. However, this is not the case today, as the number of women playing significant roles in crimes is escalating. Jacobson (2009) notes that the number of young female offenders has increased by 17 percent over the past four years, compared to a 4.5 percent increase for males. The most significant increases have been in traffic offenses and offenses against the justice system, including breaches of bail or bonds and obstructing police. In these categories, the number of women convicted rose to about 35 percent between 2003 and 2007.

Like many other areas in Nigeria, the Abraka Kingdom faces similar issues. Therefore, exploring the relationship between female crime and economic growth could shed light on the broader Nigerian situation and inform the development of effective control strategies. Oloruntimehin's early research (1982) on female criminals in Nigeria suggested a possible link between female crime and factors related to family history and socioeconomic status.

The increasing number of female criminals in our nation is a cause for alarm. Women are engaging in a wider variety of crimes, many of which remain unreported due to the challenges law enforcement faces in tracking these crimes under new guidelines. This project seeks to explore the dynamics and escalation of female criminality in Abraka Kingdom, Delta State, Nigeria, and its severe negative impact on economic development. It suggests reconsidering certain policies targeted at women to effectively address crime within Nigerian society. While strategies effective against male criminality also tend to work well against female criminality, this study will offer gender-specific approaches to crime reduction that are conducive to economic growth in Abraka Kingdom, Delta State, Nigeria.

Furthermore, prior studies on women's involvement in crime in Nigeria have primarily examined the influence of various socio-economic as well as cultural factors (Anaekwe & Oli, 2020; Okafor & Uzoh, 2021). A small-scale study is currently underway to assess the potential impact of education on women's criminal behavior in specific areas such as the Abraka Kingdom. Many studies focus on male criminal behavior, leaving female offenders overlooked in discussions on crime. It is not well understood exactly how education, or the lack of it, influences women's involvement in criminal activities.

Current research suggests that providing women with more opportunities for formal education is believed to result in a decrease in crime. This particular work contends that simply having access to education is not enough; instead, the quality, importance, and practicality of education, especially in vocational skills and economic empowerment, are essential in preventing crime. While research from Rakshit and Neog (2021) has shown a link between higher education and reduced crime rates globally,

several educated women may turn to white-collar crimes as a result of widespread joblessness and financial struggles.

This study examines how the specific socio-economic conditions within Abraka Kingdom influence the behavior of female criminals, addressing a previously overlooked aspect of the topic. The article expands on the concept of education for sustainable development (ESD) by looking at how tailored educational programs, skill-building initiatives, and community interventions can effectively lower rates of female crime in a sustainable manner. This method of education guarantees that education serves the dual purpose of promoting literacy and economic independence, while also helping to prevent crime. The sudden rise in female crime rates and also the development of different types of female criminal behavior in the Abraka Kingdom, Delta State, and throughout Nigeria, policymakers, researchers, require scholars, and the criminal justice system to closely examine as well as address this issue. The unique aspect of this particular study is its specific concentration on a particular area, questioning established beliefs, and incorporating ESD into a comprehensive plan to decrease crime and promote sustainable development for women in the Abraka Kingdom..

1.1. Conceptual Clarifications: Gender, Crime, Female Criminality and Economic Development

Gender is often described as a social construct encompassing the roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes that society deems appropriate for men and women. The American Psychological Association (APA) defines gender as “the attitudes, feelings, and behaviors that a given culture associates with a person’s biological sex.” This concept, which emerged in the 1970s through the work of feminist theorists challenging the subordinate status of women, extends beyond biological sex, suggesting that biology does not predetermine destiny. It is essential to differentiate between gender and sex, as gender pertains to the cultural categorization of individuals into male or female groups, each associated with distinct social roles.

Crime is typically defined as any act or omission that contravenes the law and is subject to punishment by the state. Paul Tappan, a renowned criminologist, in his 1947 work, characterized crime as “an intentional act or omission in violation of criminal law, committed without defense or justification, and sanctioned by the state as a felony or misdemeanor.” This definition highlights the legalistic nature of crime, focusing on actions that are expressly prohibited by law and punishable by state authorities. Dutelle (2009) defines crime as an act or omission prohibited by public law, making the offender liable to punishment under that law. Tepperman (2006) views crime as a violation of criminal law. While both definitions underscore the legal context of crime, Dutelle’s definition encompasses the concept of omission (failure to act), whereas Tepperman’s definition concentrates solely on the act of violation.

Female criminality is the participation of women in criminal acts, an occurrence that criminology increasingly acknowledges. As defined by Meixiang in 2016, it is the intentional violation of criminal law by a female perpetrator. While it mirrors male criminality, it is distinguished by gender perspectives. Therefore, female criminality encompasses any breach of criminal law by women, differing from male criminality not in the gravity of the offense, but in the gender-based differences. Traditionally, women have been less prone to engage in criminal activities than men, yet their involvement has been on the rise.

Economic Development: Economic development is perceived as the structural transformation of an economy through the adoption of advanced and automated technology to enhance labor productivity, employment, income, and the people’s standard of living. Economic advancement should be complemented by improvements in infrastructure, along with social, political, and institutional reforms to facilitate the economy’s transformation (Myint and Krueger 2016).

1.2. Study Area

Abraka, a town in Delta State, Nigeria, is renowned as part of the Urhobo kingdom and the location of Delta State University’s main campus. Established by the Benin Prince Avwra, it has become an important socio-political entity and emerging metropolitan town. Officially recognized in 1978, the kingdom is made up of two formations; Umiagwa-Abraka and Oruarive-Abraka kingdoms. With a tropical climate, the area is a popular and preferred tourist destination with scenic attractions such as Abraka Beach, known for its natural springs and leisure activities. Abraka is a beloved destination for both local and

international tourists, offering natural spring waters and recreational facilities for activities like canoeing, fishing, swimming, barbecuing, and picnicking.

The Abraka Kingdom is undergoing economic growth, spurred by its rich cultural heritage and natural resources. The presence of the Delta State University bolsters its reputation as an educational hub, attracting students and tourists alike, thereby encouraging the growth of community local commerce. Agriculture, especially maize and water yam cultivation, along with tourism focused on the Abraka River Resort and its beaches, are key economic drivers. Nonetheless, the region faces challenges like insufficient infrastructure and limited access to essential services, which impede progress and call for development plans to enhance living standards and economic prospects.

In the Abraka Kingdom, criminality especially female criminality is shaped by socioeconomic factors, such as poverty and scarce job opportunities. The increasing rates of crime, especially property-related offenses, indicate a deterioration in community trust and moral values. Female criminality in Abraka intersects with economic progress, mirroring wider societal challenges. Women are often found in low-wage, labor-intensive roles, which may push them towards criminal activities as a means of survival in tough economic times. Additionally, issues like drug and alcohol abuse are driving up crime rates, particularly among the youth and women. Initiatives to combat these problems include community-based interventions that aim to lower crime and enhance economic prospects, underscoring the necessity for specialized support for women to promote enduring development and diminish criminal behavior.

1.3. Theoretical Framework: Structural Strain Theory and Women Liberation Theory

Examining female criminality through the lens of economic development is vital to grasp the distinct socio-economic obstacles confronting women in Abraka Kingdom. Early theories attributed female criminality to physiological and psychological traits, yet modern scholars have dismissed these biological explanations. They argue that societal influences are responsible for the behavioral differences between genders, and that changes within society have altered these patterns. These researchers identify economic, social, and political stressors as the catalysts for female criminality. The study will employ Structural Strain Theory and Women's Liberation Theory to investigate the factors influencing female criminal behavior and its impact on economic development.

1.4. Structural Strain Theory

Structural Strain Theory, formulated by Robert K. Merton, suggests that society emphasizes certain goals and prescribes legitimate means to achieve them. When there is a mismatch between societal goals and the available means to achieve them, it leads to a state of anomie. Modern strain theories have developed from the concept of "anomie," or lack of norms. Emile Durkheim, a French sociologist, first addressed the concept of anomie. In his works, "The Division of Labor in Society" (1893) and "Suicide" (1897), Durkheim proposed that groups and social organizations significantly influence misconduct. He argued that societal norm breakdown, often due to rapid social change, results in institutions failing to effectively regulate individual behavior. Expanding on Durkheim's ideas, Merton (1957) introduced what is known in sociology as strain theory. Merton described anomie as the disparity between societal goals and the methods available to individuals to reach them.

The intense focus on wealth accumulation as a symbol of success in society often undermines the effective control of institutionally sanctioned ways of becoming wealthy. As a result, fraud, corruption, vice, and crime—essentially the full range of prohibited behaviors—become more prevalent. (Merton, 1938, p.59). Robert Merton's theory suggests that the elements contributing to societal order and disorder, such as crime versus social norms, are intertwined. Cultural values, while having beneficial roles, can also lead to negative outcomes (Hagen & Daigle, 2018). Merton posited that those at society's lower echelons might react to this pressure in various ways. The combination of different attitudes towards societal goals and varying access to the means of achieving them results in diverse forms of deviance.

Conformity: involves individuals pursuing a societal goal through legitimate means. Even if a conformist may not achieve the societal goal, they have sufficient faith in society to pursue legitimate avenues. For instance, a student attending school to further a professional career is conforming by adhering

to the American cultural value of achieving success through sanctioned methods (Inderbitzen, Bates, & Gainey 2016).

Innovation: occurs when an individual aligns with the cultural goal of society but attains it through illegitimate means. For example, thieves who aspire to the cultural goal of wealth but attain it illegally through actions like drug dealing or embezzlement are considered innovators.

Ritualists: are individuals who have abandoned the hope of attaining society's sanctioned goals but continue to follow society's approved methods. An example is a middle manager who realizes they will not advance but remains in their role.

Retreatists: such as dropouts or hermits, are individuals who have renounced both the goals of society and the legitimate means to achieve them, living entirely outside established norms. Drug addicts and individuals like Chris McCandless—a graduate of Emory University who was found deceased in Alaska after trying to eschew capitalism, hitchhike northward, and subsist off the wilderness—are examples of those who retreat from both societal expectations and approved methods (Krakauer 2018).

Rebellion: operates entirely outside of Merton's framework. Rebels seek to replace the established societal goals with their own and create new methods to achieve them. The clearest instances of rebellion are terrorist groups, which pursue typically political objectives through violent means (Inderbitzen, Bates, & Gainey, 2016).

Merton (1938) posited that economic inequality, limited educational opportunities, and joblessness can lead to strain, prompting individuals to resort to crime as a way to deal with their socio-economic struggles. Women, in particular, who believe that legitimate means do not suffice to meet all their material needs, may turn to illegal activities. This sets the stage for various crimes – theft, corruption, consensual crimes (such as trafficking in illegal goods and services, and prostitution), terrorism, cybercrime/fraud, and assault. Women hindered from achieving their socio-economic objectives through lawful means might attempt to fulfill them unlawfully. In Abraka Kingdom, these structural disparities and economic strains significantly contribute to female criminal behavior.

1.5. Women Liberation Theory

The Women's Liberation Theory, introduced by Freda Adler in 1975, posits that as women gain more freedom and opportunities, their participation in criminal activities might also rise. Adler contends that the liberation movement, despite empowering women, simultaneously introduces them to new pressures and criminal opportunities. Rita's 1975 theory suggested that the women's movement would grant women access to occupations previously dominated by men. This increased access could lead to a rise in crimes, particularly financial and white-collar offenses such as fraud and embezzlement. In her publication "Sisters in Crime" (1975), Adler expanded on Simon's property crime prediction by anticipating the rise of a new type of violent female criminal. She theorized that women's liberation would lead to women becoming more like men in all aspects, including criminal behavior. Adler acknowledged the feminist movement for advancing women's status in areas like family, marriage, employment, and social positions. Historically, women shared the same ambitions as men but lacked the means to achieve their goals legitimately, akin to an oppressed class. Success required women to gain status through men by adhering to the male-defined standards of femininity. Women's liberation has since modified these constraints on women's behavior and opportunities. Advances in medicine, education, economics, politics, and technology have liberated women from unwanted pregnancies, equipped them with skills traditionally held by men, and leveled their physical strength with weapons, Adler argued. The competition with men in legitimate workplaces was paralleled by female criminals striving for their place in the criminal hierarchy. Women have become doctors, lawyers, soldiers, and similarly, burglars, forgers, embezzlers, and terrorists. Adler rejected biological and psychological theories as insufficient in explaining female criminality.

As women have become more adept in professional fields outside the home, their educational attainment and independence have grown, leading to a shift away from traditional domestic roles. Adler's research on prostitution, drug addiction, and juvenile delinquency among females suggests these issues may be linked to the women's liberation movement and increased assertiveness among women. She posits that educated women are more likely to question established norms and values, potentially leading to a departure

from their traditional social roles. Supporting Adler's perspective, Armentrout advocates for societal recognition of gender equality, where women enjoy the same rights and privileges as men. This concept of female liberation is pertinent to current studies, such as the involvement of women in cybercrime, fraud, murder, abortion, prostitution, and drug abuse within the Abraka kingdom, which seems to support Adler's theory of female criminality. Reports indicate that middle and upper-class women are more likely to engage in such crimes. The emancipation of women in Nigeria, which allows more females access to education and the workforce, may also increase the likelihood of legal infractions. In Abraka Kingdom, the evolving roles of women, their greater workforce involvement, and changing gender norms could be influencing female crime patterns.

This study applies certain theories to the Abraka Kingdom to explore the socio-economic factors that influence female criminality and their effects on economic growth. The Structural Strain Theory will shed light on the economic strains and structural disparities that lead women to commit crimes. In contrast, the Women's Liberation Theory will examine how evolving gender roles and expanded opportunities for women may lead to criminal activities. Comprehending the dynamics between structural strain and women's liberation is crucial for crafting effective policies and measures to mitigate female criminality and foster economic progress in Abraka Kingdom. This theoretical framework will steer the data analysis and interpretation, offering a detailed perspective on the elements that affect female criminality in this setting.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Research Design

In the case of Women's Criminality and Education for Sustainable Development: a study of the Abraka Kingdom, a convergent mixed-methods design would be appropriate. A convergent mixed-methods design can simultaneously collect and analyze quantitative as well as qualitative data. Cette démarche is advantageous because women's participation in criminal activities is a complex problem which requires both statistical trends (quantitative) and personal insight (qualitative). This ensures findings from different data sources complement each other to increase validity and reliability of study. This design ensures a balanced analysis suitable for forming education and crime prevention policies for sustainable development.

For the quantitative and qualitative components, the demographic information, selection criteria, and sampling techniques were structured separately.

- Inclusion criteria: Women who have lived in Abraka kingdom for at least 5 years. Those with and without a criminal record, willingness to participate in the study and ability to read and respond to survey questions (or provide assistance for illiterate respondents).
- Exclusion criteria: Non-residents of the Abraka Kingdom. Women under 18 years old are not allowed to smoke. Unwilling participants
- Sampling technique: Representativeness among sub-groups will be ensured by stratified random sampling method. The population will be sorted into strata according to education and criminal record. Then a simple random sample will be drawn from each stratum for balanced representation. Sample size is determined using statistical formulas based on the number of women in the Abraka Kingdom with a margin of error of 5%.

2.2. Qualitative Component

In the qualitative research a smaller, more focused sample will be used to gain deeper insights. Participants will come from: Previous criminal activity has been linked to the area. Women who have pursued education after criminal activity. Law enforcement officers & community leaders. Educators and social workers work with issues involving women.

2.3. Selection Criteria

- Inclusion Criteria: Women experiencing crime (ex-convicts, rehabilitation, or victims of crime). Community leaders, educators, and law enforcement officers who understand women's crime patterns are necessary. Those who are willing to participate in in-depth interviews or focus groups.
- Exclusion Criteria: People who do not want to participate and people who have no direct experience or expertise in the subject.
- Sampling Technique: In the qualitative research a smaller, more focused sample will be used to gain deeper insights. Participants will come from:
- Previous criminal activity has been linked to the area. Women who have pursued education after criminal activity. Law enforcement officers & community leaders. Educators and social workers work with issues involving women.

2.4. Instruments

A structured questionnaire will be developed to collect statistical data from women in Abraka Kingdom. The questionnaire will contain Demographic Information such as age, marital status, education level, occupation etc. Crime Factors - Types of crimes, reasons for involvement, recidivism rates - Education and Crime Reduction (Education level / participation in vocational training / perception of education's role in Crime prevention). Social/Economic Factors (income level, family background, social influences)

- Validity and reliability of the questionnaire: Criminologists, educators and social scientists reviewed the questionnaire to ensure that all relevant concepts regarding women's criminality and education for sustainable development are addressed. A pilot study of 15-20 women will be undertaken to test whether questions are clear and appropriate.
- Reliability: It will administer the questionnaire twice, two weeks apart, to check for consistency of responses among respondents. Any correlation coefficient greater than 0.7 is considered reliable. Cronbach's Alpha also measures consistency within the questionnaire - whether similar questions produce the same answers.
- Qualitative data collection instrument: Women in or affected by crime (ex-convicts, victims, and those pursuing education after criminal activity). Police officers & community leaders. Educators and social workers who serve at-risk women. 2-3 focus group discussions (FGDs) (6-10 participants per group) with women from different backgrounds (educated / uneducated, ex-convicts / community activists). Talks will cover perceptions of crime, societal attitudes and education as a tool for preventing criminal behavior.
- Trustworthiness of Qualitative Instruments: Triangulation involves cross-checking responses from interviews, focus groups, and survey data for credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability. Permitting members to review transcripts was done for member checking by allowing participants to review transcripts. The final analysis included direct quotes and verbatim responses to support interpretations.

2.5. Data Collection Procedures

Both questionnaire and interview methods were employed, but in-depth interviews and focus group discussions were preferred. Qualitative data was obtained from interviews and focus group discussions with female convicts and students at Delta State University. Quantitative data was primarily collected via questionnaires distributed to Delta University female students. On the appointed day and time, research assistants visited the Abraka Divisional Headquarters/Abraka Police Station bearing the authorized letters of the Divisional Police Officer (D.P.O.).

A pilot study with 10-15 participants assessed the clarity, reliability, and validity of the questionnaire using stratified random sampling based on education and criminal record. Trained research assistants administered the questionnaires in community centres, correctional facilities and homes.

The key informants were: Women involved in crime (ex-convicts, offenders in rehabilitation). Police officers, educators & community leaders. Snowball sampling was used to reach women with past criminal records who were hard to reach. Interviews or focus group discussions were scheduled at safe and convenient locations. In-depth interviews (IDIs): one-on-one (30-60 minutes). Focus Groups: 6-10 participants per group, 60-90 minutes. Sessions were audio-recorded with consent and transcribed for analysis.

2.6. Data Analysis

Analyzing quantitative and qualitative data used different methods. Those datasets were merged using convergent mixed methods. Missing and inconsistent survey responses were checked. All data were entered into SPSS for Statistical analysis. Frequency and Percentage: Used to sum up demographic variables such as age, education level, employment status, etc.

3. RESULTS

The data collected were processed by analyzing the frequency, percentages and deriving conclusion from the results obtained from the partial statistical analysis (simple frequency) and percentages. Fundamentally, the responses of disagree, strongly disagree, agree, etc were summed in order to obtain totals, sub-totals and missing rules. This was done for all the selected socio-economic factors that represented the views of the respondents.

Analysis of Research Questions: What are the determinants of female crime among convicts at the Abraka Divisional Headquarters (Abraka Police Station) and students of Delta State University regarding economic growth in Abraka Kingdom? The analysis of this research question is as indicated in the table below.

Table 1. Respondents' Views on the Factors Influencing Female Criminality on Economic Development

Descriptions	Options	Frequency	Percentage	Decision
Drug As A Factor Influencing Female Criminality	Disagree	33	14.1	Affirmative
	Strongly Disagree	14	6.3	
	Agree	52	32.2	
	Strongly Agree	86	43.3	
	Sub-Total	185	95.9	
	Missing Values	15	4.1	
	Total	200	100	
Cybercrime/As A Factor Influencing Female Criminality	Disagree			Affirmative
	Strongly Disagree	28	12.1	
	Agree	78	34.3	
	Strongly Agree	82	52.3	
	Sub-Total	188	97.7	
	Missing Values	12	2.3	
	Total	200	100	
Prostitution As A Factor Influencing Female Criminality	Disagree	9	5.0	Affirmative
	Strongly Disagree	4	0.7	
	Agree	74	41.3	
	Strongly Agree	92	45.2	
	Sub-Total	179	92.2	
	Missing Values	21	7.8	
	Total	200	100	
Community of Residence As A Factor Influencing Female Criminality	Disagree	33	14.1	Affirmative
	Strongly Disagree	28	12.1	
	Agree	46	22.0	
	Strongly Agree	69	41.2	
	Sub-Total	176	89.4	
	Missing Values	24	10.6	

Descriptions	Options	Frequency	Percentage	Decision
Poor Parental Care /Nigeria As A Factor Influencing Female Criminality	Total	200	100	Affirmative
	Disagree	3	1.3	
	Strongly Disagree	12	2.3	
	Agree	74	32.4	
	Strongly Agree	106	63.3	
	Sub-Total	195	98.1	
Pornography As A Factor Influencing Female Criminality	Missing Values	5	1.9	Affirmative
	Total	200	100	
	Disagree	7	3.6	
	Strongly Disagree	16	6.3	
	Agree	56	26.3	
	Strongly Agree	177	62.2	
Poor Educational Background As A Factor Influencing Female Criminality	Sub-Total	196	98.4	Affirmative
	Missing Values	4	1.6	
	Total	200	100	
	Disagree	30	12.2	
	Strongly Disagree	8	4.9	
	Agree	63	34.6	
Mass Consumption of Social Media As A Factor Influencing Female Criminality	Strongly Agree	86	43.4	Affirmative
	Sub-Total	195	95.1	
	Missing Values	8	4.9	
	Total	200	100	
	Disagree	43	15.5	
	Strongly Disagree	12	5.7	
Poverty As A Factor Influencing Female Criminality	Agree	65	26.5	Affirmative
	Strongly Agree	73	48.4	
	Sub-Total	193	96.1	
	Missing Values	7	3.9	
	Total	200	100	
	Disagree	4	1.6	
Poor Governmental Policies As A Factor Influencing Female Criminality	Strongly Disagree	6	2.3	Affirmative
	Agree	86	43.4	
	Strongly Agree	102	51.6	
	Sub-Total	198	98.9	
	Missing Values	2	1.1	
	Total	200	100	
Poor Governmental Policies As A Factor Influencing Female Criminality	Disagree	37	18.9	Affirmative
	Strongly Disagree	48	20.9	
	Agree	61	24.5	
	Strongly Agree	50	22.8	
	Sub-Total	194	87.1	
	Missing Values	6	12.9	
Total		200	100	

The recent economic challenges in Nigeria, intensified by the administration of His Excellency Bola Ahmed Tinubu and notably the removal of the fuel subsidy, have significantly affected female criminality and economic growth. The ramifications of these changes are profound, presenting obstacles to societal stability and the nation's development. It is vital to address these issues to nurture a secure and thriving Nigeria.

The findings align with data from qualitative analysis. One respondent noted:

The widespread sentiment among Nigerians about the current economic difficulties marked by high inflation, unemployment, and extensive poverty. Studies consistently point to corruption and ineffective governance as key factors worsening these issues, leading to a widespread recognition of the bleak economic situation. Previously, men were responsible for providing for the household, children, and relatives, which is why women were referred to by names such as Emuakpor, Vwe re ogo, Vwe re udu. However, now, no woman prefers to stay at home.

Modernization and industrialization have compelled women to seek employment. Men alone cannot sustain the desired lifestyle, necessitating women's financial contribution. Today's women, often more educated than their spouses, sometimes become the family's primary earners. To prevent their children from suffering, some women resort to prostitution, armed robbery, cybercrime, and other illicit activities. Historically, it was rare for women to engage in armed robbery, but it has become more common. Economic struggles and limited career opportunities influence women's involvement in crime. The Nigerian economy affects everyone, and those unable to adapt may resort to methods predicted by Robert C. Merton's theoretical framework of anomie and social strain. The lack of government support and social welfare exacerbates the situation. (Male, 63 years, Professor, Delta State University, Abraka.)

A respondent stated that:

Poor parental care or neglect is a social factor influencing female criminality. Parents often fail to provide special attention and support to females, despite the fact that their behavioral patterns significantly differ from those of males. Moreover, they are predominantly orphans who receive no corrective guidance even when they deviate from expected norms. (This statement was made by a 27-year-old female police officer in the Delta Division.)

An interviewee stated:

"Certainly, consensual crimes such as abortion, drug trafficking and abuse, prostitution, and the sale of nude photos are common among young women in Abraka Kingdom. They resort to abortion due to social inequities and rejection by boyfriends who impregnated them, as they are not prepared for parenthood, and to avoid the shame and stigma associated with childbirth outside of marriage." (Female, 43 years old, Lecturer, Delta State University).

A respondent expressed that:

in Abraka kingdom, some university students and young adult women are involved in the sale and use of drugs such as crack, molly, codeine, and Rohypnol. Additionally, there is a practice of employing female students in prostitution to serve clients. The respondent cited relationship issues, family conflicts, and emotional abuse as factors leading to frustration and involvement in consensual crime. Furthermore, the prevalence of polygamous family structures, where fathers have multiple wives, often leaves mothers with the sole responsibility of child-rearing. The respondent noted that some mothers, perhaps preoccupied with their careers, neglect their children, failing to recognize them as a significant investment. This neglect particularly impacts daughters, leaving them susceptible to various influences. (Male, 49 years old, police officer, Abraka Division).

Table 1, which lists the socio-economic factors influencing female criminality in Abraka Kingdom, Delta State, Nigeria, shows that the majority of respondents confirmed all the items presented. This indicates their acknowledgment of various socio-economic factors, including drug abuse, cybercrime/fraud, prostitution, community of residence, poor parental care/neglect, pornography, lack of quality education, heavy use of social media, and poverty, as contributing to female criminality in the area. Significantly, cybercrime/fraud, poor parental care/neglect, pornography, and poverty were highlighted by a substantial majority of respondents—97.7%, 98.1%, 98.4%, and 98.9%, respectively—as key factors in female criminality.

4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study investigates the relation between female criminality and education in Abraka Kingdom highlighting the role of education in sustainable development. It demonstrates how poor education can help economic crimes and social deviance among females -. The work demonstrates that poverty, unemployment and ignorance drive females into crime. Better education, skills acquisition and financial inclusion are recommended to decrease female criminality and increase societal growth. This work

concluded that female education leads to financial stability, lower crime rates and sustainable development. It requires government intervention, policy reforms & community support to improve quality education for females in Abraka Kingdom.

This study is in line with other scientific studies that have shown that socio economic factors, especially education, are very important in female criminality. Anaekwe & Oli (2024) noted that female criminal behaviour contributes to poverty, unemployment, drug abuse, low education attainment and low skills in Nigeria. Similar findings by Okafor and Uzoh (2020) indicate frustration, family problems, peer pressure, inadequate parenting, and limited socio-economic opportunities as factors contributing to female criminal behavior in South East Nigeria.

According to Cano and Lochner (2017), higher education for American women lowers the risk of incarceration worldwide. Rakshit and Neog (2021) noted that although higher education generally carries lower crime rates, economic crimes do correlate positively with tertiary education in India. That means having a higher education doesn't necessarily prevent all criminal behavior.

In this research, low education attainment in Abraka Kingdom drives women to commit crimes including theft and fraud. It is in line with other findings that education can create legitimate financial opportunities and reduce criminal activity. But the connection between getting a higher education and committing some economic offenses in India suggests that education quality and applicability may be important in deterring female criminal behavior.

The results support earlier work indicating that education may help decrease female participation in crime. Still, they stress the need for integrated strategies including quality education, financial independence and social and economic policies to support the complexities of women's criminal behaviour. This research is based on the Abraka Kingdom, thus limiting its application to wider geographic or national applications. A more comprehensive sampling of more communities would provide a more representative picture of the relationship between female crime and education. Interviews and surveys collected some responses that may be sensitive to social desirability bias. Perhaps respondents overplayed their criminal activity or exaggerated their education because they feared judgment or legal action. The study gives a snapshot of the problem at hand. Women's participation in criminal activities and education changes over time. An extended study of patterns and cause-and-effect relationships would give more nuanced insights.

Those limitations suggest that even though research links education to lower crime rates in women, caution should be paid before generalizing findings. Longevity of data and a more rounded analysis of societal and cultural variables could lead to oversimplifying the relationship between education and crime prevention. In addition to that, using self-reported data could introduce bias and compromise objectivity of results.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on this research, the following suggestions are offered to address female criminal behaviour through education as well as support sustainable growth in the Abraka Kingdom:

- Government along with key stakeholders must take measures to make free and compulsory education more accessible to girls and women.
- Education must move beyond classrooms to include hands-on learning in entrepreneurship, farming, technology and sewing.
- Women should receive education on the impacts of crime and the importance of education through community-led awareness initiatives.
- Crime and education should be taught to women through community based sensitization campaigns.
- They deserve scholarships, mentoring, and work from private organizations working with the government.

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