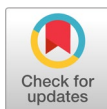


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Economic Globalization and Pathways to Female Offending in Nigeria: Evidence from Female Inmates in South-West Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examines the effect of economic globalization on female criminality among female inmates in selected correctional centres in South-west Nigeria. Three (3) correctional centers were purposively selected from South-western Nigeria. A total of 443 inmates were selected using systematic sampling technique and 40 participants were interviewed using purposive sampling. A mixed methods approach was adopted for this study where both questionnaire and in-depth interview were used to collect quantitative and qualitative data respectively. For quantitative data, descriptive and inferential analyses were conducted. For descriptive analysis, frequency distribution and percentage methods were used; while multivariate analysis of logistic regression were used to test the formulated hypotheses. Content analysis was conducted to analyse the qualitative data for this study. The study found that women's involvement in white collar jobs AOR=4.29; 95% CI: [1.43–6.59] had significant positive effects on female criminality. The study concluded that economic globalization had a positive effect on female criminality among female inmates in selected correctional centers in South-west Nigeria. Based on the conclusion, the study recommended that law enforcement agencies such as the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) and other relevant agencies should be at alert monitoring their activities.

Keywords: criminality, crime, economic, female criminality, globalization, white-collar crimes

Introduction

Change is an unstoppable force that has become increasingly evident

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through the advancement of mankind over time. A key characteristic of the globalization process is the spread of ideas, institutions, and customs from one part of the world to another. People, information, ideas, capital, and products are all integral components of the globalization process, which establish networks of linkages between continents and within continents. The mobility of financial and production variables has risen in recent years as a result of the expansion of transportation, communication, and technological linkages across nations. Globalization has accelerated as a result of this growth. The term globalization is commonly used to describe the process of integrating the world's capital and goods markets. Thus, globalization may be characterized as the integration of international markets and civilizations as a result of advances in communication and technology. Globalization is a process that crosses national boundaries, merges economies with cultures, as well as creates complex interdependencies.

Globalization revolves around economic, socio-cultural, political (Heshmati & Lee, [2010](#)) and technological (Information and Communication Technology) dimensions. The economic dimension of globalization results in a world market where manufacturers may compete by assuring the free movement of capital, technological advancements in communication, and improvements in transportation infrastructure. It includes increasing amounts of global trade and capital, role of transnational corporations, division of labour (García-Dorado, [2019](#)), and (importantly from a broadly Marxist point of view) increasing amounts of inequality between rich and poor regions around the world. One way in which economic globalization relates to crime in Nigeria is in baby factory business. Recently, the police uncovered a baby factory allegedly operated by a woman in Rivers State (Iheamnachor, [2023](#)). Baby factories are partly patronized by ritualists and those who need children but unwilling to follow legitimate process. In other words, some women tend to engage in criminal activities due to economic reasons or gains.

The socio-cultural dimension of globalization is the cultural reflection of those who live in the economic and political dimensions of the world (Kaypak, [2011](#)). The increasing communications between cultures may have led to more cultural clashes the world over; more 'ordinary people' coming into conflict with their more traditional political orders. Organizations created as a result of political coalitions becoming

concentrated and their formalized reflection on authority and diplomacy being a part of globalization's politics. As such, the exclusion of women in leadership and politics is widely criticised leading to the emergence of women as leaders occupying critical positions around the world. While some perform wonderfully well, while there are those who performed disappointedly and below expectation. Examples in Nigeria include the corruption cases of Diezani Allison-Madueke (Isamotu, [2022](#)) and Patricia Etteh (Embu & Igomu, [2017](#)).

Another dimension is technological dimension (ICT). Also, the instantaneous connectivity through the internet deserves special mention in its own right in relation to global crime. This probably more than anything else has changed the nature of crime across societies as it creates so many opportunities for people anywhere in the world to commit crime and for people to be unwitting victims of crime. It is possible for one individual to send out literally millions of phishing emails or comments to millions of people in a single day in attempt to get them to click on a link which will invariably elicit their personal information from them or get them to download some dodgy software for free access to their data. The Deep Web and Dark Web also make it easier for people to trade in illegal goods and services online and to network and have conversations which may result in very serious criminal activities. All of these do not exclude female participation. Recent reports indicate cases of female involvement in cybercrime including online hook-up and dating fraud in Nigeria (Ibrahim, [2022](#); Olawin, [2022](#)).

It has been said that globalization has radically reshaped human behaviour in the past forty years. In light of the rapid expansion of technology across boundaries, new markets have opened up across borders. For instance, due to increasing tendencies of globalization, African countries served as producers of raw materials for industries in western countries during the colonial era (Akindele et al., [2001](#)). Thereafter, a free trade zone has been established around the world, allowing countries to import goods from wherever they like. The flow of trade has increased and all classes, including rich and poor, have been connected as a result of numerous communication lines. The countries have a profound effect on each other in every facet of their lives.

Underneath the glitz and glamour of the outside, however, is a chamber filled with terror and peril. One of the negative effects of globalization is



the growth of an extensive web of illegal marketplaces, including the smuggling of illegal goods such as narcotics and human organs, prostitution, slavery, and other forms of crime including child pornography. Black markets and criminal businesses have sprung up due to globalization. As a result, they have become a major source of conflict in all countries and a danger to global security (Elfes & Birch, [2015](#)) including Nigeria. Female crime appears to be a prominent topic of discussion. Throughout history, women have committed fewer and less serious offenses than men (Islam et al., [2014](#)). However, during the past thirty years, female crime has increased. Research on female crime has gotten minimal attention, with few studies on it (Islam et al., [2014](#)).

Like men, women's illegal behaviours may disturb societies as they put the moral and social structure at danger. Many societies require women to carry out most of the household responsibilities (Olujobi, [2001](#)). In homes, women take care of everyone, including their husbands and children. Meanwhile, in the recent decades, the roles of women increasingly include providing for the family (economically). In some cases, women appear to be the household heads (Ghajari & Hghparast, [2022](#)). Due to this conflicting structure, many women are unable to shoulder the loads they were previously able to bear (Barberet, [2014](#)). This has led to an increasing number of divorces or family breakups (Olujobi, [2001](#)), which exacerbates their plight by failing to address the needs of both parents and children. As a result of this, they resort to criminal behaviour in order to get their situation better.

Although crime has historically been associated predominantly with males, studies of Nigerian criminal justice have documented the increasing visibility of women's involvement in criminal activities. In Nigeria and across the world, similar trends have been seen in the past. For example, in the 1970s, five males to one female are arrested, ten males to one female are convicted, fifteen males to one female are convicted to correctional facilities and twenty males to one female are imprisoned and detained in reformatories (Sutherland & Cressey, [1978](#)). An investigation of Nigeria's Enugu jail in 1988 found that just 4% of the 1,700 inmates were female, with 96% being male (Ameh, [2013](#)).

Implying from the above figures, 'crime is a man's profession' and the number of female criminals is minimal and negligible. This is no longer true, even globally, since the number of women taking the lead in crimes is

on the rise on a daily basis. According to Kareem ([2024](#)), the percentage of young female offenders is increasing geometrically far above the percentage of young male criminals. Traffic offenses and offenses against the court system, such as breaching bail or bonds and obstructing police, have seen the greatest increase. Between 2003 and 2007, the number of women convicted in each of these categories rose by nearly 35 percent. Over the years, this trend has continued to increase. In 2019 only, female criminals constitute 27 percent of all total conviction (Thompson, [2021](#)). It is in view of the above that this study investigated economic globalization and female criminality in Nigeria with focus on the South-western part of the country.

Despite growing scholarship on globalization, economic restructuring and crime, important gaps remain in understanding how these processes intersect with women's pathways into offending in Nigeria. Existing literature has largely examined globalization at macro-economic level. Others have focused on male-dominated forms of white-collar and organised crime. They leave comparatively limited empirical attention to how women themselves experience and interpret the opportunities, pressures and constraints associated with economic globalization. Nigerian studies on female offending have also tended to emphasise socioeconomic deprivation, unemployment, poverty, drug involvement and other immediate drivers without sufficiently examining how changing economic opportunities, occupational exposure and transnational connectivity may shape pathways into offending. The gap is therefore not simply whether globalization is associated with female criminality, but how particular dimensions of economic globalization are perceived and experienced by women who have entered the criminal justice system. This study addresses this gap as it examines the relationship between women's involvement in white-collar employment and reported/perceived forms of offending among female inmates in selected correctional facilities in South-West Nigeria, while using qualitative accounts to illuminate the mechanisms underlying these relationships.

Literature Review

Economic Globalization

The establishment of the International Economic Order (IEO) after World War II, during the Bretton Woods Conference in the 1940s in



England, marked a pivotal moment leading to today's economic globalization. Protectionism, practiced by major economic powers in the North between 1918 and 1939, was abandoned as the United States and Great Britain played crucial roles in the success of the summit (Gozgor et al., [2020](#)). The Bretton Woods conference laid the foundation for key international institutions like the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, and the transformation of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Commerce into the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in 1995 (Momoh, [2023](#)). Economic globalization refers to the expansion of economic interrelations worldwide, is governed by neoliberal principles shaping the accumulation and distribution of resources in a tightly interconnected global political economy. This phenomenon involves the transnational decentralization of services and production markets, facilitating the integration of the global market and the swift movement of information, commodities, services, and people (Kellerman, [2020](#)). Economic globalization is propelled by government deregulation policies, international transportation, technological advancements, and ecological pressures demanding integration (Bozyk, [2019](#)).

In terms of commerce, globalization signifies an increasing reliance on the flow of products and services across international borders (Perraton, [2019](#)). All countries engage in global trade, majorly contributing to their income, with global commerce reaching unprecedented levels in absolute and relative terms. Financial globalization is characterized by higher levels of cross-border foreign investment, capital movement, international financing, and joint ventures, reflecting an increase in capital movements and the breakdown of national boundaries. Economic globalization manifests through transnational flows of products and services, a march towards a global market, and an erosion of national boundaries (Perraton, [2019](#)).

Women's Involvement in White Collar Jobs and Female Criminality

The inclusion of gender in the study of white-collar crime is a relatively new and challenging area. Historically, research focused on men due to their higher engagement in criminal activities, and crimes committed by women were considered rare aberrations (Ferizović, [2020](#)). Moreover, until the mid-1970s, few feminist scholars were active in criminology and criminal justice (Gruber, [2020](#)), hindering the growth of research in this area. Several factors contributed to the underrepresentation of women in the study of

white-collar crime. First, women were traditionally engaged in domestic duties, limiting their participation in the workforce and opportunities to commit corporate or occupational white-collar crime (Galvin, [2020](#)). Second, the focus on street-level crime and the lack of attention to suite-level offenses contributed to the neglect of white-collar crimes and their perpetrators (Michel, [2016](#)).

The lack of feminist scholars and debates over definitional issues further hampered research efforts. The term "white-collar crime" itself faced challenges in definition, complicating the identification of relevant actions. While the study of white-collar crime grew over the years, the consideration of women's involvement did not emerge until 1975 (Benson & Simpson, [2017](#)). Quantitative literature (Benson & Simpson, [2017](#); Gottschalk et al., [2017](#)) in this area primarily focused on defining the phenomenon, examining offenders' demographic characteristics, exploring factors and motivations underlying white-collar crime, and addressing the scope of the phenomenon. However, the literature on women white-collar criminals remains limited compared to that on men. Studies on women white-collar criminals concentrated on three main topics: frequency, factors and motivations, and demographic differences. Frequency studies

pointed to a lower rate of women engaging in white-collar crimes, primarily attributed to fewer opportunities in the workplace (Dodge, [2019](#)). Factors and motivations were linked to moral judgment (Eaton & Korach, [2016](#)), social and financial stressors (Turner, [2014](#)), and interpersonal relations (van Onna, [2020](#)). Demographic studies highlighted differences between women involved in white-collar crimes and those in other criminal categories (Benson & Harbinson, [2020](#); Dodge, [2019](#)).

Despite the growth in research, knowledge about white-collar criminality by women remains limited, with most literature focusing on men (Ferizović, [2020](#)). This study aims to contribute to the understanding of female white-collar offenders by examining their personal, family, and social histories in relation to their criminal conduct, providing introspective and retroactive accounts.

Research Gap and Contribution of the Study

Although scholarship on globalization and crime has expanded considerably, important conceptual, empirical and contextual gaps remain in explaining how economic globalization may intersect with women's

pathways into offending. Existing literature establishes that globalization has transformed the movement of capital, commodities, information, technology and labour across national boundaries (Kellerman, [2020](#); Perraton, [2019](#)). However, much of this literature is concerned with the macro-economic consequences of globalization, including international trade, financial flows, technological transformation and economic integration, rather than with how these transformations may shape gendered patterns of criminality. Consequently, the mechanisms through which changing economic opportunities and pressures associated with globalization may influence women's involvement in offending remain insufficiently specified.

A second gap concerns the gendered character of the white-collar crime literature. Existing scholarship has historically concentrated on male offenders, with women receiving comparatively limited attention (Benson & Simpson, [2017](#); Ferizović, [2020](#); Galvin, [2020](#)). The literature that does examine female white-collar offenders has primarily addressed their frequency, motivations, demographic characteristics and access to occupational opportunities (Benson & Harbinson, [2020](#); Dodge, [2019](#); Eaton & Korach, [2016](#)). Although these studies provide important foundations, they provide limited insight into how women's increasing participation in economic and occupational spaces associated with globalization may interact with the structural pressures and opportunities that shape their involvement in offending. Thus, the existing literature does not adequately explain the relationship between women's changing economic roles and the forms of criminality identified among women within the criminal justice system.

A third gap is evident in the Nigerian context. The literature reviewed in this study demonstrates growing evidence of female involvement in different forms of crime, including cybercrime, fraud, drug-related offences, trafficking and other forms of organised or financial offending (Agboola et al., [2022](#); Jegede et al., [2016](#); Ogunleye et al., [2019](#)). However, these studies tend to examine particular forms or pathways of female offending rather than directly examining how economic globalization and women's participation in emerging economic spaces may be connected to these patterns. For example, research on female participation in cyber fraud in South-West Nigeria has examined pathways and motivations for cyber-fraud involvement (Ogunleye et al., [2019](#)), while Jegede et al. ([2016](#))

examined gendered participation in technologically driven crime. These contributions are valuable, but they leave insufficiently explored the broader relationship between economic globalization, changing occupational opportunities and the diverse forms of offending reported among women in Nigeria.

A further gap concerns the limited integration of structural explanations with women's own experiences of offending. Existing research identifies socioeconomic and interpersonal factors associated with female offending, including financial stress, social circumstances and interpersonal relationships (Turner, [2014](#); van Onna, [2020](#)). However, less attention has been given to how these factors interact with wider transformations in the economic environment. This is important because economic globalization may simultaneously expand legitimate economic opportunities while also generating inequalities, competitive pressures and new opportunities for illegitimate economic activity. Social Anomie Theory provides a useful basis for examining this tension because it draws attention to situations in which culturally valued economic goals become disconnected from legitimate institutional means of achieving them (Baumer, [2007](#); Merton, [1968](#)). The empirical question, therefore, is not simply whether globalization increases crime, but how changing economic opportunities, constraints and aspirations may create conditions in which some women adopt illegitimate means of achieving economically valued goals.

Finally, there is a methodological gap in the existing evidence considered in this study. Much of the literature identifies statistical relationships or describes particular forms of female offending, while comparatively less attention is given to combining quantitative evidence on women's perceptions and experiences with qualitative accounts capable of explaining the social and economic processes underlying those patterns. A mixed-methods approach can therefore provide a more nuanced understanding by examining both the observed patterns and the contextual explanations provided by women in custody and relevant criminal justice officials. Such an approach is particularly important in the Nigerian context, where female offending may be shaped by the interaction of economic pressures, gendered responsibilities, cultural expectations, occupational opportunities and changing technological environments.

This study addresses these gaps by examining the relationship between economic-globalization -related employment, particularly women's

involvement in white-collar occupational spaces, and patterns of female offending among women in selected correctional facilities in South-West Nigeria. Rather than assuming that globalization produces criminality in a direct or uniform manner, the study examines the ways in which economic opportunities, pressures and social conditions may intersect with women's pathways into offending. By bringing together quantitative evidence from female inmates with qualitative accounts of their experiences and those of relevant criminal justice personnel, the study contributes contextual evidence to the comparatively underdeveloped literature on economic globalization and female offending in Nigeria. The study consequently extends existing scholarship by placing gender, economic transformation and female offending within the same analytical framework.

Theoretical Framework: Social Anomie Theory

Merton's anomie theory, developed in 1968, addresses the connection between individual distress and deviant behaviour in the context of societal disruption or organisation. This theory carries implications for both macro- and micro-level crime studies across various social levels (Baumer, [2007](#)). At a broader level, anomie theory suggests that certain disruptive factors within industrialised societies can result in widespread normlessness, whereby individuals may struggle to conform to, or deliberately reject, the established societal norms governing their behaviours and aspirations.

Merton's theory of social anomie categorises individuals into ritualists, retreatists, or rebels. This study focuses on the innovator. Merton ([1968](#)) contended that despite frequent unsuccessful attempts, most individuals persist in pursuing cultural ideals and institutional methods. However, societal pressure may lead some to compromise their values commitment. While remaining dedicated to common economic goals, they may lose commitment to institutional methods, allowing for engagement in crime on an emotional level. This phenomenon is termed "innovation" and can occur throughout a success-oriented culture but is more prevalent in areas with limited access to institutional resources.

Women are seen as innovators when the social anomie hypothesis is applied to the problem of globalization and female crime. Economic success has been a culturally defined objective, but inefficient methods of achieving it have led some to turn to crime as a way to get there. Merton also argues that anomie as a cultural trend may have an influence on criminal behaviour

at the level of both individual reactions and social processes. One of the possible responses of girls to the culture of achievement is criminality (as shaped by their structural location as well as socialization into the normative structure). On the other hand, women's illegal behaviour has a direct effect on other people in the system. For example, if a given crime becomes common and "successful" in achieving valued goals (say, if many individuals begin to profit from cybercrime), this in turn may undermine the legitimacy of the institutional norms for others in the system.

Applied to this study, Social Anomie Theory provides a mechanism for understanding how economic globalization may alter the relationship between culturally valued economic goals and legitimate means of achieving them. Globalization may expand aspirations through greater exposure to consumer markets, occupational competition, financial opportunities and transnational economic networks while simultaneously producing or intensifying unequal access to legitimate economic resources. Women situated within these structural contradictions may respond differently depending on their social and economic circumstances. In Mertonian terms, offending may represent an innovative adaptation where culturally valued economic goals are pursued through illegitimate means. The theory therefore does not imply that economic globalization mechanically produces female offending; rather, it directs attention to the structural conditions under which global economic opportunities and constraints may make illegitimate adaptations more conceivable or accessible.

Methodology

The study adopted a convergent mixed-methods approach in which quantitative and qualitative evidence were used to address complementary dimensions of the research problem. The quantitative strand identified patterns in respondents' assessments of the relationship between economic-globalization -related employment and female offending, while the qualitative strand provided contextual explanations of how economic pressures, occupational opportunities, social relationships and cultural conditions were perceived to shape women's pathways into offending. Integration occurred at the interpretation stage by comparing areas of convergence, complementarity and divergence between the statistical results and interview accounts. Consequently, qualitative evidence was not treated as statistical confirmation of the quantitative findings; rather, it was



used to explain and contextualise the patterns identified quantitatively.

The study was carried out in Lagos and Ogun States. This is because the states possess the largest number of prisons in the region. The study adopted survey research design using mixed methods to improve the validity of study results (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). The population of this study is all female inmates currently serving sentences in South-west correctional facilities. Inmates who have already been sentenced and those who are awaiting trial were all included in this category. They are the most suitable to answer the questions since they can speak from experience. In this study, the term “female inmates” refers to women held in the selected correctional facilities, including both convicted prisoners and women awaiting trial. The study does not treat custodial status alone as evidence of criminal guilt. Accordingly, references to “female offending” are used cautiously to refer to self-reported, alleged or legally established offending as appropriate to the respondent’s custodial status.

A multistage sampling procedure was employed. First, correctional facilities with female inmates in Lagos and Ogun States were purposively selected. Second, a quota of approximately 70% of the verified female inmate population in each selected facility was established. Third, individual respondents were selected systematically from the facility registers using a predetermined sampling interval. Thus, probability-based systematic selection was applied at the respondent-selection stage within the facility-specific quotas, rather than assuming that all female inmates across the study area had an equal probability of selection. The figure of 496 represents the recorded female inmate population reported for the selected facilities as at 15 December 2022. Because custodial populations are dynamic and change through admission, release, transfer and changes in custodial status, the population was subsequently verified at the point of fieldwork. The verified population during the June–August 2023 data-collection period was 443 inmates, comprising 226 inmates at the Female Custodial Facility, Kirikiri; 165 at the Maximum Security Custodial Centre, Ibara; and 52 at the Ijebu-Ode Custodial Centre. The sampling frame for the study was therefore based on the verified population of 443 rather than the earlier administrative figure of 496. Forty qualitative participants were interviewed. This comprised 30 female inmates: 10 from each of the three selected correctional facilities. Also, 10 key informants were drawn from correctional and police personnel.

The study distinguishes between economic-globalization -related exposure and female offending outcomes. Economic globalization was operationalised through indicators relating to women's involvement in white-collar employment and exposure to economic and occupational practices associated with increasingly interconnected markets. Female offending was not operationalised as a binary criminal/non-criminal status because all quantitative respondents were drawn from correctional facilities. Instead, the analysis focused on respondents' reported/perceived patterns of offending and their assessment of the relationship between women's involvement in white-collar employment and specific forms of offending. This distinction is important because the sample does not contain a non-incarcerated comparison group from which the probability of criminal involvement could be estimated. Where ordinal response categories were analysed, ordinal logistic regression was used only where the dependent variable satisfied the assumptions of an ordered outcome. The proportional-odds assumption was assessed before interpreting the model. Odds ratios are therefore interpreted as changes in the odds of reporting a higher category of the specified outcome, rather than as evidence that economic globalization causes women to become criminals.

Questionnaire was administered to collect quantitative data. Validity checks were performed on the calculated questions to verify that they captured the relevant information. For qualitative data collection, a detailed interview guide was employed. As such, the interview allowed participants to express their in-depth views on the subject matter under research. The study was carried out with high sense of ethical consideration, hence, ethical clearance was obtained from the Faculty of Social Science Ethical Committee, University of Ilorin. For quantitative data, descriptive and inferential analyses were conducted. For descriptive analysis, frequency distribution and percentage methods were used; while multivariate analysis of logistic regression were used to test the formulated hypotheses. Content analysis was used to analyse the qualitative data for this study.

Results

Table 1 indicates that the youngest among the participants was 23 and the eldest was 59 years old. All the participants were on social media. They all committed different kinds of crime. Stealing was identified by the participants as a common crime committed by women in South-west Nigeria.

Table 1*Demographic Characteristics of the Participants (Kirikiri)*

S/N	Name	Age	Social media	Crime committed/Allegation	Common crimes committed by women
1	Inmate 1	34	TikTok, LinkedIn, WhatsApp	Blackmailing	Petty theft, fraud, prostitution, breach of trust, baby factory business, human and drug trafficking
2	Inmate 2	32	Instagram, TikTok, WhatsApp	Conspiracy	Prostitution, stealing, drug peddling, conspiracy and murder
3	Inmate 3	23	TikTok, WhatsApp	Stealing	Stealing, murder and drug trafficking
4	Inmate 4	28	Instagram, TikTok, WhatsApp	Murder	Stealing, murder and drug trafficking
5	Inmate 5	59	Instagram, TikTok, WhatsApp	Killing of dog	Money laundering, kidnapping and breach of trust
6	Inmate 6	27	Instagram, TikTok, WhatsApp	Drug peddling	Drug peddling, human trafficking, stealing
7	Inmate 7	37	WhatsApp, TikTok, Facebook	Stealing & Money Laundering	Prostitution, Money laundering, stealing
8	Inmate 8	33	Instagram, WhatsApp, TikTok, Twitter	Drug trafficking	Drug trafficking, stealing, cybercrime and kidnapping
9	Inmate 9	45	WhatsApp, Facebook, TikTok, Twitter	Cybercrime	Cybercrime, fraud, assault and stealing
10	Inmate 10	55	WhatsApp	Baby factory	Baby factory prostitution, murder, and assault

Table 2 shows that the youngest of the participants was 24 while the eldest was 51 years old. Only a participant had no social media account. Stealing was the main offence among the participants. Further, stealing and prostitution were the main crimes believed by the participants to be common among women in South-West Nigeria.

Table 2*Demographic Characteristics of the Participants (Ibara)*

S/N	Name	Age	Social media	Crime committed/Allegation	Common crimes committed by women
1	Inmate 1	64	Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, WhatsApp	Fraud	Kidnapping, Child Abuse, Money laundering, drug trafficking. Prostitution.
2	Inmate 2	32	Facebook, TikTok, WhatsApp	POS fraud	Kidnapping, Robbery and Raping.
3	Inmate 3	53	Instagram, TikTok, WhatsApp	Drug peddling	Prostitution, Robbery, Ritual
4	Inmate 4	57	WhatsApp	Baby factory business	Fraud, stealing, murder, kidnapping, conspiracy and prostitution.
5	Inmate 5	42	Instagram, TikTok, WhatsApp, YouTube, Society Gist	Drug trafficking	Drug peddling, prostitution, murder, stealing, drug trafficking
6	Inmate 6	22	Instagram, TikTok, WhatsApp	Drug peddling / hawking	Prostitution, conspiracy, Child Trafficking, Stealing
7	Inmate 7	38	WhatsApp, TikTok	Money laundering	Prostitution, Money laundering
8	Inmate 8	29	Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp	Assault	Assault, Stealing, Kidnapping and prostitution
9	Inmate 9	47	WhatsApp, Instagram, Bloggers & Write Ups	Murder	Robbery, Kidnapping and Murder.
10	Inmate 10	52	TikTok, WhatsApp	Breach of trust	Baby factory, child trafficking, husband snatching, and prostitution.



Table 3*Demographic Characteristics of the Participants (Ijebu Ode)*

S/N	Name	Age	Social media	Crime committed/Allegation	Common crimes committed by women
1	Inmate 1	29	WhatsApp TikTok Facebook	Breach of trust	Money laundering, kidnapping, drug trafficking, selling of fake goods, prostitution and robbery
2	Inmate 2	24	Facebook WhatsApp	Stealing	Prostitution and child trafficking
3	Inmate 3	40	Not on social media	Stealing	Stealing and prostitution
4	Inmate 4	33	Instagram, TikTok, WhatsApp	Drug trafficking	Stealing, prostitution, kidnapping and drug trafficking
5	Inmate 5	27	Instagram Facebook WhatsApp YouTube	Stealing & drug trafficking	Stealing, murder and prostitution
6	Inmate 6	28	Instagram, TikTok, WhatsApp	Kidnapping	Stealing, fighting, kidnapping and ritual
7	Inmate 7	37	WhatsApp TikTok YouTube	Murder	Stealing, human trafficking, baby factory business
8	Inmate 8	31	Facebook Instagram WhatsApp	Breach of peace	Breach of trust
9	Inmate 9	51	WhatsApp Facebook	Breach of trust	Prostitution
10	Inmate 10	34	Instagram Facebook WhatsApp YouTube	Child abuse	Kidnapping, stealing, breach of trust, human trafficking and child abuse

Table 3 reveals that the youngest participant was 22 and the eldest was 64 years old. The participants had access to social media before they were arrested. Drug-related offences were dominant among the crimes committed by the participants. Kidnapping was identified as common crime

among women in South-West Nigeria.

In this section, results on the types of crime committed by selected women were presented and analysed. Specifically, frequency distribution and percentage methods were used. This is shown in Table 4 as follows:

Table 4

Perception of Respondents on Types of Crime Committed by Women in South-West, Nigeria

S/ N	Patterns of crime	Strongly agreed	Agreed	I don't know	Disagreed	Strongly disagreed
1	Kidnapping	44 (14.24%)	36 (11.65%)	35 (11.33%)	60 (19.42%)	135 (43.69%)
2	Human / Organ trafficking	117 (37.86%)	87 (28.16%)	25 (08.09%)	37 (11.97%)	43 (13.92%)
3	Drug trafficking	103 (33.33%)	84 (27.18%)	31 (10.03%)	67 (21.68%)	24 (07.77%)
4	Prostitution	134 (43.37%)	107 (34.63%)	12 (03.88%)	33 (10.68%)	23 (07.44%)
5	Embezzlement	54 (17.48%)	58 (18.77%)	44 (14.24%)	99 (32.04%)	54 (17.48%)
6	Theft	111 (35.92%)	85 (27.51%)	17 (05.50%)	62 (20.06%)	32 (19.35%)
7	Vandalism	61 (19.74%)	66 (21.36%)	30 (09.71%)	86 (27.83%)	66 (21.36%)
8	Armed robbery	53 (17.15%)	60 (19.42%)	14 (04.53%)	78 (25.24%)	104 (33.66%)
9	Cyber-crime	67 (21.68%)	64 (20.71%)	50 (16.18%)	67 (21.68%)	61 (19.74%)
10	Money laundering	66 (21.36%)	61 (19.74%)	53 (17.15%)	65 (21.04%)	64 (20.71%)
11	Murder	81 (26.21%)	86 (27.83%)	06 (01.94%)	62 (20.06%)	70 (22.65%)
12	Circulation of fake goods	98 (31.71%)	71 (22.97%)	08 (02.59%)	63 (20.39%)	69 (22.33%)
13	Terrorism	56 (18.12%)	53 (17.15%)	55 (17.80%)	76 (24.60%)	69 (22.33%)
14	Mutiny and incitement to mutiny	34 (11.00)	29 (09.39%)	66 (21.36%)	88 (28.48%)	93 (30.19%)
15.	Fighting	121 (39.16%)	108 (34.95%)	09 (02.91%)	36 (11.65%)	35 (11.33%)
16.	Baby factory business	65 (21.04%)	62 (20.06%)	61 (19.74%)	59 (19.09%)	62 (20.06%)
17	Others	110 (35.60%)	99 (32.04%)	59 (19.09%)	17 (05.50%)	24 (07.77%)



From the Table 4, the majority of the respondents agreed that human trafficking, drug trafficking, prostitution, theft, cybercrime, murder, circulation of fake goods, fighting and baby factory business are types of crime committed by women in South-West, Nigeria. However, most of them disagreed that kidnapping, embezzlement, vandalism, armed robbery, money laundering, terrorism as well as mutiny and incitement are types of crime committed by women in South-West, Nigeria.

In this section, descriptive results on women's involvement in white collar jobs and female criminality are presented and analysed. This is achieved using frequency and percentage methods. These are presented in Table 5 as follows:

Table 5

Women's Involvement in White Collar Jobs and Female Criminality

S/N	Women's Involvement in White Collar Jobs and Female Criminality	Strongly agreed	Agreed	I don't know	Disagreed	Strongly disagreed
1	Women's Involvement in White Collar Jobs due to economic globalization has led to learning of money laundering techniques and tactics among female.	120 (38.83%)	99 (32.04%)	11 (03.56%)	39 (12.62%)	40 (12.94%)
2	Women's Involvement in White Collar Jobs due to economic globalization has led to learning of human trafficking techniques and tactics among female.	102 (33.01%)	99 (32.04%)	13 (04.21%)	47 (15.21%)	48 (15.53%)
3	Women's Involvement in White Collar Jobs due to economic globalization has led to learning of drug	101 (32.69%)	105 (33.98%)	19 (06.15%)	43 (13.92%)	41 (13.27%)

S/N	Women's Involvement in White Collar Jobs and Female Criminality	Strongly agreed	Agreed	I don't know	Disagreed	Strongly disagreed
4	trafficking techniques and tactics among female. Women's Involvement in White Collar Jobs due to economic globalization has led to learning of corruption techniques and tactics among female.	108 (34.95%)	104 (33.66%)	23 (07.44%)	34 (11.00%)	40 (12.94%)
5	Women's Involvement in White Collar Jobs due to economic globalization has led to learning of commercial sex work techniques and tactics among female.	61 (19.42%)	69 (22.33%)	41 (13.27%)	78 (25.24%)	60 (19.42%)

Table 5 the respondents agreed that women's involvement in white collar jobs due to economic globalization has led female to learning of money laundering techniques and tactics, human trafficking techniques and tactics, drug trafficking techniques and tactics as well as corruption techniques and tactics. However, the respondents disagreed that women's involvement in white collar jobs due to economic globalization has led female to learning of commercial sex work techniques and tactics among female. The qualitative data revealed that certain cultural factors can lead women into criminality. A key informant explained that: "Some cultures say that father's properties belong to the first son or the males and that females do not have right of inheritance. As such, women kill their male siblings for properties" (KII, Correctional Officer 1, 5/7/2023, Lagos). She added that: "some cultures don't train girl-child but only boys. Therefore, some girls become helpless and engage in crime" (KII, Correctional Officer 1, 5/7/2023, Lagos). The most common among them is prostitution and drug peddling.



Hypothesis Testing on the Effect of Globalization on Female Criminality

The hypothesis tested in this section is:

H₀: Women's involvement in white-collar employment is not significantly associated with reported/perceived patterns of female offending among female inmates in selected correctional facilities in South-West Nigeria.

H₁: Women's involvement in white-collar employment is significantly associated with reported/perceived patterns of female offending among female inmates in selected correctional facilities in South-West Nigeria.

Table 6

Ordinal Logistic Regression of White-Collar Employment Involvement and Reported/Perceived Female Offending

Variable	Multivariate Logistic	
	AOR [95% CI]	<i>p</i> -value
Women's Involvement in White Collar Jobs		
Agree	4.29 [1.43–6.59]	<0.01*
I don't know	1.89 [0.91–5.58]	
Disagree	1	

Note. * $p < 0.05$, AOR = adjusted odds ratio

The ordinal logistic regression indicates a statistically significant association between respondents' assessment of women's involvement in white-collar employment and the specified offending outcome (AOR = 4.29, 95% CI [1.43, 6.59], $p < .01$). Holding the other variables in the model constant, respondents in the relevant response category had approximately 4.29 times the odds of reporting a higher category of the outcome relative to the reference category. This finding should be interpreted as an association within the inmate sample rather than as evidence that white-collar employment causes women to become involved in criminality. This result is corroborated by the qualitative data. A Correctional Officer in Ijebu Ode explained that: "If a woman is working in a financial organisation and the salary is not enough, she might be forced to steal money just to care for her family" (KII, Correctional Officer 2, 27/7/2023, Ijebu Ode). In another case, for economic gain a woman may commit a regrettable crime, perhaps out of frustration. A key informant in Lagos narrated that: "A woman currently in custody claimed that she killed her husband because he refused

to buy her children's wears" (KII, Correctional Officer 2, 5/7/2023, Lagos).

It appears that some women engage in criminality as a result of economic needs. Asked on how female criminality can be reduced, a key informant explained that: "Government empowerment programme for women should go beyond paltry loans and grinding machines especially with the current hike in fuel price. Most times, women in crime are those without jobs" (KII, Police Officer 2, 26/7/2023, Ibara). Similarly, a Correctional Officer in Lagos expressed that:

The rate at which females are engaging in crimes of human and organ trafficking are increasing. They do commit crime online. One person can be here in Lagos and another person in another country, yet they can join hand together to carry out crime (KII, Correctional Officer 1, 5/7/2023, Lagos).

Another Correctional Officer at the Lagos Correctional Centre added that:

More and more females are engaging in child trafficking. There are many cases of child trafficking committed by female. There was an inmate here who was convicted for attempting to traffick about 10 teenagers to the Middle East but she was nabbed and prosecuted (KII, Correctional Officer 2, Lagos).

Also, qualitative data support the notion that most of the crimes committed by women are instigated by men. An inmate expressed that: "I was influenced to join the gang by men. When I had financial challenges many years back." (IDI, Inmate 2, Lagos).

Discussion

The study examined the relationship between women's involvement in white-collar occupational activities associated with economic globalization and patterns of female offending among women in selected correctional facilities in South-West Nigeria. The quantitative findings indicate a statistically significant association between respondents' assessment of women's involvement in white-collar employment and the specified offending outcome (AOR = 4.29, 95% CI [1.43–6.59], $p < .01$). The result suggests that respondents in the relevant category had higher odds of reporting a higher level of the specified offending outcome relative to the reference category. Importantly, because the quantitative sample comprised

women already held in correctional facilities, the finding should not be interpreted as demonstrating that white-collar employment or economic globalization causes women to become criminal. Rather, it indicates an association within a population of women who had already entered the criminal justice system.

The finding provides support for the argument that changing economic and occupational environments may create new opportunities through which women can become exposed to forms of economic and white-collar offending. The literature reviewed in this study indicates that women's participation in white-collar crime has historically received less scholarly attention than men's participation because women traditionally had fewer opportunities to occupy occupational positions associated with such offences (Benson & Simpson, [2017](#); Ferizović, [2020](#); Galvin, [2020](#)). As women's participation in formal employment and economically connected activities expands, their exposure to financial resources, organisational structures, digital technologies and occupational networks may also increase. The present finding therefore extends the existing literature by suggesting that women's changing economic roles should be considered when examining pathways into contemporary forms of offending.

The quantitative finding is further illuminated by the qualitative evidence. Participants described several forms of offending associated with economic opportunity and financial pressures, including fraud, money laundering, drug trafficking, human trafficking, theft and technologically facilitated offences. A correctional officer at Ijebu Ode, for example, explained that a woman employed in a financial organisation whose salary was inadequate might resort to stealing in order to meet family needs. This account suggests that occupational access alone does not necessarily produce offending; rather, the interaction between occupational opportunity and perceived economic insufficiency may become important. The qualitative evidence therefore provides a more nuanced interpretation of the quantitative association by indicating that economic pressures and opportunities may operate simultaneously.

This interpretation is consistent with Social Anomie Theory, particularly Merton's concept of "innovation." Merton ([1968](#)) argues that individuals may continue to pursue culturally valued goals while abandoning or circumventing legitimate institutional means when access to those means becomes inadequate. Applied to the present study, economic

globalization may contribute to heightened economic aspirations and expanded exposure to material opportunities while unequal access to legitimate resources may constrain women's capacity to achieve those aspirations. Under such circumstances, some women may adopt illegitimate means as an alternative route to economically valued goals. The qualitative evidence concerning inadequate income, family responsibilities and financial difficulties provides contextual support for this interpretation. However, the theory should not be used to imply that women experiencing economic hardship inevitably offend; rather, it helps explain how structural strain may interact with available opportunities and individual circumstances.

The findings also reveal that female offending cannot be adequately understood exclusively through economic explanations. The qualitative accounts identify cultural and gendered constraints as additional factors shaping women's experiences. One correctional officer reported that discriminatory inheritance practices may deprive women of access to family property, while unequal investment in girls' education and development may leave some women economically vulnerable. These accounts indicate that women's pathways into offending may be embedded within broader gender inequalities. Economic globalization may therefore intersect with pre-existing gendered structures rather than operate as an independent determinant of offending.

Another important finding concerns the role of social and technological networks. The qualitative evidence indicates that some forms of contemporary offending extend beyond the immediate geographical environment. A correctional officer reported that women could participate in online criminal activities with individuals located in other countries, while another described a case involving the attempted trafficking of teenagers to the Middle East. These accounts illustrate how digital connectivity and transnational networks can create new opportunities for criminal collaboration. This finding is consistent with the broader literature reviewed in the study, which identifies technology and cross-border connectivity as important features of contemporary globalization. However, these qualitative accounts should be interpreted as evidence of perceived or reported pathways rather than as estimates of the prevalence of technologically enabled female offending.

The qualitative evidence also highlights the importance of interpersonal

relationships in women's pathways into offending. An inmate reported being influenced to join a gang by men during a period of financial difficulty. This finding complements the economic-strain explanation by demonstrating that financial vulnerability may interact with social networks and gender relations. Women's participation in offending may therefore emerge from a combination of economic pressures, social influence and available criminal opportunities rather than from economic globalization alone. This interpretation is consistent with previous research identifying interpersonal relationships and social and financial pressures as relevant to white-collar offending (Turner, [2014](#); van Onna, [2020](#)).

The descriptive findings further demonstrate that female offending in the study context is heterogeneous rather than confined to one particular category of crime. Respondents identified human trafficking, drug trafficking, prostitution, theft, cybercrime, murder, circulation of counterfeit goods, fighting and baby-factory-related activities among the forms of offending associated with women in the study area. This diversity is important because it cautions against treating "female criminality" as a single homogeneous phenomenon. Different offences may involve different motivations, opportunities, social relationships and structural conditions. Consequently, the relationship between economic globalization and female offending should be understood as multidimensional rather than as a simple linear relationship between global economic integration and crime.

Taken together, the quantitative and qualitative findings suggest that economic globalization may be relevant to female offending through several interconnected pathways. First, changing economic structures can expand women's access to occupations, financial systems and technologies that may provide opportunities for offending. Second, economic pressures and unequal access to legitimate resources may create conditions consistent with Mertonian strain and innovation. Third, digital connectivity can facilitate relationships and criminal activities that extend beyond local communities. Fourth, gendered cultural practices and interpersonal relationships can shape how women experience and respond to these economic opportunities and pressures. The mixed-methods evidence therefore suggests that female offending is better understood as the outcome of interacting structural, economic, technological and social processes than as a direct consequence of globalization .

The findings broadly complement previous studies showing that women

can participate in financial, cyber, organised and other forms of offending, including research on female involvement in technologically driven crime in Nigeria (Jegade et al., [2016](#)) and pathways and motivations for female cyber-fraud involvement in South-West Nigeria (Ogunleye et al., [2019](#)). They also support the broader literature indicating that women's involvement in white-collar crime remains comparatively underexamined despite their increasing participation in occupational and economic spaces (Benson & Harbinson, [2020](#); Dodge, [2019](#); Ferizović, [2020](#)). The contribution of the present study lies in bringing these issues together within the Nigerian context and examining them alongside women's own accounts and the perspectives of criminal justice personnel.

Nevertheless, the findings must be interpreted within the methodological boundaries of the study. Since the quantitative respondents were exclusively women in selected correctional facilities, the study cannot determine whether economic globalization increases the probability of criminal behaviour among women in the general population. Nor can the cross-sectional design establish temporal or causal relationships between economic globalization and offending. The statistical finding should consequently be interpreted as an association among women within the criminal justice system, while the qualitative evidence provides contextual explanations for possible pathways rather than causal confirmation of the statistical result. This qualification is particularly important in avoiding the assumption that participation in white-collar employment is itself a predictor of criminality.

In all, the findings indicate that the relationship between economic globalization and female offending in South-West Nigeria is complex and mediated by economic pressures, occupational opportunities, gendered inequalities, technological connectivity and interpersonal relationships. The evidence provides support for viewing women's offending through a structural and gender-sensitive lens in which global economic transformation interacts with local social conditions. Social Anomie Theory offers a useful explanation of how tensions between culturally valued economic goals and unequal access to legitimate means may contribute to innovative adaptations, but the findings also demonstrate that such adaptations are embedded within wider gendered and social contexts. The study therefore contributes to a more nuanced understanding of female offending by moving beyond the assumption that women's criminality can



be explained by individual characteristics alone and by highlighting the interaction between economic transformation and women's lived social circumstances.

Conclusion

The study indicates a significant association between women's involvement in white-collar employment and reported/perceived patterns of female offending among women in the selected correctional facilities. The qualitative evidence further suggests that economic pressures, unequal access to legitimate opportunities, gendered responsibilities, social networks and expanding technological and transnational opportunities may shape pathways into offending. However, because the quantitative sample consisted entirely of women in correctional custody, the findings should not be interpreted as demonstrating that economic globalization causes women to become criminal or as estimating the prevalence of female criminality in the general population. Rather, the findings provide contextual evidence on how economic-globalization -related opportunities and pressures may intersect with pathways into offending among women already within the criminal justice system. Rather than treating women's participation in white-collar employment as a risk factor in itself, interventions should strengthen organisational transparency, financial controls, ethical training and gender-responsive workplace safeguards. Law-enforcement agencies should focus on evidence-based identification and investigation of financial and organised criminal activity irrespective of gender. At the same time, women's economic empowerment programmes should address structural barriers to legitimate employment, income security and access to financial resources. Such measures are consistent with the study's finding that economic pressure and unequal access to legitimate opportunities may form part of women's pathways into offending.

Limitations of the Study

This study has several limitations. First, the quantitative sample was drawn exclusively from women held in selected correctional facilities. Consequently, the study cannot estimate the prevalence or probability of female criminality in the wider female population, nor can it establish whether economic globalization increases the likelihood of offending compared with non-offending women. The findings should therefore be interpreted as evidence concerning women already within the criminal

justice system rather than as population-level estimates of female criminality. Second, the study was conducted in selected facilities in Lagos and Ogun States and therefore should not be generalised uncritically to all women in South-West Nigeria or Nigeria as a whole. Third, some of the evidence is based on respondents' retrospective accounts of the circumstances surrounding their offending, which may be affected by recall, social desirability and legal-status considerations. Fourth, the cross-sectional design limits causal inference. The statistical findings demonstrate association rather than temporal causation. Finally, qualitative accounts from correctional and police officials provide institutional perspectives that may differ from the experiences of women themselves. These limitations were addressed analytically by triangulating quantitative responses with inmate and key-informant accounts and by avoiding causal interpretation beyond what the design permits.

Author Contribution

Kafayat Toyin Araba: conceptualization, methodology, software, validation, formal analysis, investigation, resources, data curation, writing – original draft writing – review and editing, visualization, supervision, project administration. **Afeez Folorunsho Lawal:** methodology, data curation, writing – review & editing. **Moshood Issah:** methodology, data curation, writing – review and editing. **Jamila Yusuf:** methodology, resources, supervision, validation.

Conflict of Interest

The authors of the manuscript have no financial or non-financial conflict of interest in the subject matter or materials discussed in this manuscript.

Data Availability Statement

Data supporting the findings of this study will be made available by the corresponding author upon request.

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