
Christiana Ebobo Urowoli¹, Olusola Arowolo Aluko²

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**ANALYSIS OF THE SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC
PROFILES OF FEMALES DETAINED FOR ARMED
ROBBERY IN LAGOS STATE, NIGERIA:
selected cases in Nigerian Correctional Services, Kirikiri,
Panti and Ikeja Police Commands**

Key words: Armed Robber, Correctional Services, Demographic profile, Female, Police Commands

ABSTRACT: The involvement of females in armed robbery operations posed a major concern to the public as well as the female folks. This paper therefore attempted an analysis of the demographic profiles of detained female armed robbery offenders in Lagos State, Nigeria. The paper examined the socio-demographic profiles of detained female armed robbery offenders at the Female Custodian Center of Nigerian Correctional Services, Kirikiri, Panti and Ikeja Police Commands, Lagos State, Nigeria. The study adopted the cross-sectional exploratory research design. The sampling was mainly purposive and the instrument for data collection was questionnaire. Data was analyzed using SPSS version 2.0. The study revealed that female armed robbers are mostly singles within the age brackets of 21–25 years and their educational status was mostly secondary school certificate. It also revealed that the married female armed robbery offenders were married to armed robbers or live-in-lovers to armed robbers. Therefore, the paper concluded that most females in armed robbery were influenced by financial gains. The study therefore recommended that females should be encouraged to focus on educating and empowering themselves rather than getting involved in ‘quick wealth’ criminal activities and depending on handouts from men.

¹ Department of Criminology and Security Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences, National Open University of Nigeria, e-mail: cebobo@noun.edu.ng.

² Department of Sociology, Faculty of Social Sciences, Olabisi Onabanjo University Ago-Iwoye, Ogun State, Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

The prevalence of armed robbery incidences in Nigeria is in alarming propensity as a result of the widening gap between the poor and the rich and the seemingly downturn in economic fortunes (Odumosu, 1999; Chukuezi, 2006; Kunnuji, 2016; Otu, 2010; Nwalozie, 2011). Although armed robbery operations span homes, offices, shops, restaurants and places of worship, they are prevalent in banks and big organizations such that no place is safe from the attacks of armed robbers in Nigeria (Abanyam *et al.*, 2013). During most of these armed robbery operations, they make use of dynamites and other deadly weapons with which they rape, maim, kill and cart away properties worth millions of naira. The use of sophisticated weapons, use of specialized skilled men, large number at operations and mastery of the act became rampant in armed robbery operations beginning from 1999 (Chukuezi, 2006; Otu, 2010; Nwalozie, 2011). Armed robbery operations are carried out with specialized skilled men ranging from welders, bricklayers, key duplicators and their machines, carpenters, and dynamite experts so as to ease the process of breaking into any building, safes, houses, warehouses and the likes.

Some studies concluded that majority of the convicted female armed robbers are highly intelligent or qualified to be one but are forced into robbery because of their low socio-economic status which reduced them to poverty and desperation to meet their basic needs (Maritz, 2010; Nositer, 2011; Aborisade & Oni, 2020). According to Shubert, (2003), the higher the incident of poverty among females, the higher the incident of crime because most offenses committed by females are crimes that deliberately promote economic opportunity or that advance an individual's socio-economic status. Therefore female inclusion in the work force significantly contributed to their involvements in armed robbery (Chukuezi, 2009; Otu, 2010; Nwalozie, 2011; Ozo-Eson, 1997). This also negatively impacts the family as it led to reduced female traditional role of socialization of the offspring which also led to their recruitments into armed robbery gangs without the knowledge of the parents. Peer pressure also

contributes to females' involvements in armed robbery in contemporary Nigeria (Esiri, 2016; Aborisade & Oni, 2020).

Consequently, the effects of armed robbery are numerous; For instance, in Nigeria 3,840 armed robbery incidents claimed about 50% (4,268) out of a total of 8,516 deaths recorded within June 2006 to September, 2015 (Ukoji & Okolie-Osemene, 2016). In the same period, 819 deaths were recorded for Lagos State, Nigeria resulting from armed robbery incidents (Ukoji & Okolie-Osemene, 2016). Properties lost to armed robbery in Nigeria within this period were uncountable. As such, those who survived armed robbery operations are traumatized for a long time while some others are forced to live with the memories throughout their lifetime because of the havoc it wrecked on their families. Females' involvements in armed robbery lead to negative role modelling for the offspring of such families (Umar, 2015; Hassan *et al*, 2012). The study carried out by CLEEN foundation also revealed that the trend of armed robbery victimization is on the increase in Nigeria; rising from 11% in 2010 to 17% in 2012 (CLEEN, 2012). As such, armed robbery is a major contributor to the fear of crime which has negatively affected personal freedom since fear of being robbed has forced people to limit their public activities in Nigeria (Aborisade, 2017). This increase in armed robbery operations in the recent times is not without females' involvements (Aborisade & Oni, 2020). The submissions of these scholars on armed robbers made it a necessity for the researcher to examine the socio-demographic profiles of female armed robbers in the "male dominated gangs". Hence, this study attempted filling this gap that has been identified. It was limited to the socio-demographic profiles of detained female armed robbers in the Female Custodian Facility, Kirikiri, and suspected female armed robbers in police custody at Panti and Ikeja Police Commands, Lagos State, Nigeria. The research questions that guided this study were: What are the socio-demographic profiles of the detained female armed robbery offenders in Lagos State, Nigeria? What are the family background and Childhood experiences of violence of the detained female armed robbery offenders in Lagos State, Nigeria? What is the social/criminal status of the detained female armed robbery offenders in Lagos state, Nigeria?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

RATIONAL CHOICE THEORY

The rational choice theory has its root in the classical school of criminology which was developed by the Italian “social-thinker” Cesare Beccaria (Siegel, 2005). Classical Criminology suggests that “people have free will to choose criminal or conventional behaviours...and that crime can be controlled only by the fear of criminal sanctions” (Siegel, 2005). There are three models of criminal behaviour in the rational choice theory: rational actor, predestined actor, and victimized actor.

The rational actor proposed that individuals choose whether to commit a crime or not. With this belief, crime could simply be controlled by increasing the penalty of offending (Burke, 2001). The predestined actor proposes that criminals cannot control their personal urges and environment, thus, inducing them to commit crime. The way to solve this problem would then be to change the biological, sociological and psychological environment of the offender (Burke, 2001). Finally, the victimized actor model proposes that crime is the result of the offender being a victim of an unequal society. As such, crime could be controlled by reforming legislation (Burke, 2001).

However, Cornish & Clarke, (1986) were the first criminologists to offer a conception of crime as the outcome of rational choices and decisions which was built on developments in the economic analysis of criminal behaviour. The characteristic feature of their rational choice approach of reasoning criminals who make rational decisions based on ‘strategic thinking’. It is predicated on the assumption that offenders seek to benefit themselves by their criminal behaviour; which involves making of decisions and choices, however rudimentary on occasion these processes might be; and that these processes exhibit a measure of rationality, albeit constrained by limits of time and ability and the availability of relevant information (Cornish & Clarke, 1986). Here, female criminality, specifically, armed robbery is the outcome of a thought process and the eventual decision making of the actor (female robber) who must have considered the cost and perhaps the consequences of such action. The choice of rob-

bery is made by the 'actor' after strategic thinking/weighing of the gains and pains involved in it before carrying it out in action. This corroborates Klein and Kress's (1970) theory which proposed that, occasionally, female offenders act rationally like their male counterparts. To Siegel, (2005) the offender is completely rational when making the decision to commit a crime. Though, the variety of reasons could be based on a variety of personal needs, including: greed, revenge, need, anger, lust, jealousy, thrills, and vanity. Hence females in armed robbery see robbery as the easiest of all crimes because of the swiftness in operation and ease of meeting their needs (Maher, 1997; Miller & Stiver, 1998; Schwartz & Steffensmeier, 2016).

With Rational Choice theory therefore, the immediate gratification and cost of armed robbery is put in place by female armed robbers as well as their consequential expectations and how they make rational calculations on their robbery techniques, gains and losses. Thus, females' choices of armed robbery are never by chance but by rationally calculated choices.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted the descriptive and cross sectional research design. Considering the nature, conception and coverage of the study, quantitative method was adopted in the collection of data and SPSS version 2.0 was used for analysis of data generated in this study.

Lagos State was adopted for this study because the incidences of armed robbery groups led by females was becoming rampant and on the increase in recent times (*The Punch* 2018; *Pulse.ng*, 2017; *Pulse.ng*, 2017; *Pulse.ng*, 2016; *Pulse.ng*, 2015). Lagos State is also inhabited by representatives of all the ethnic groups in Nigeria as well as being the economic, industrial, commercial, financial and socio-cultural nerve-centre of Nigeria known for different economic activities. Consequently owing to the teeming population and level of economic activities of the state, crime and vices have been consistently on the increase over the years (NBSR, 2008; Maritz, 2010; Omotor, 2010; Ikoh, 2011; Usman *et al.*, 2012; Hove & Ngwerume, 2013; Otu & Elechi, 2015; Kunnuji, 2016).

The population of this study were all the 'on trial' and 'convicted' female armed robbery inmates at the Female Custodian Facility, Kirikiri and all the female armed robbery suspects awaiting trial in the State Criminal Investigation Department (CID) Pantl and Special Anti-robbery Squad (SARS) located at Ikeja, Lagos State, Nigeria. Therefore, a non-probabilistic sampling technique (mainly purposive) was employed to select respondents for this study. As such all the available and willing female armed robbery inmates 'awaiting trial,' 'on trial' and 'convicted,' in the Female Custodian Facility, Kirikiri and female armed robbery suspects in police detention, Lagos State Command were sampled for this study. The Female Custodian Facility, Kirikiri housed a total population of 292 inmates who were admitted for various offenses as at the time of this study. Out of this number, 244 were awaiting trial/on trial, 43 were convicted, one (1) was serving life sentences and four (4) were sentenced to death (NCSR, 2020). Out of this number, 23 females were admitted for their involvements in armed robbery operations into the Female Custodian Facility, Kirikiri, Lagos State, Nigeria. While 12 other females were arrested and detained at the Lagos State Command for their involvements in armed robbery. This brings the total sample size of this study to 35. All the 23 female armed robbery inmates at the Female Custodian Facility, Kirikiri therefore became the major sample for this study. In addition, 12 other female suspects that were arrested and detained at the police commands at the time of this study complemented them. Hence, the sample size used for this study was 35 female armed robbery offenders consisting of suspects, awaiting trial and convicted armed robbery inmates in the Female Custodian Facility, Kirikiri, Criminal Investigation Department (CID), Pantl, Yaba and Special Anti-robbery Squad (SARS), Ikeja, Lagos State, all research ethics observed.

The distribution was as follows:

Female Custodian Facility, Kirikiri	(12 Convicted, 5 On-trial 23 and 6 Awaiting trial)
SARS (Ikeja) Armed Robbery Suspects	7 Awaiting trial
CID – (Pantl) Armed Robbery Suspects	5 Awaiting trial
Total =	35

INCLUSION CRITERIA:

- Convicted female armed robbery inmates (Female Custodian Facility Kirikiri)
- Female armed robbery inmates on trial (Female Custodian Facility Kirikiri)
- Alleged Female armed robbery suspects awaiting trial (Police custody; SARS and PANTI)

Exclusion criteria:

- Non female armed robbery inmates on trial or convicted (Female Custodian Facility Kirikiri)
- Non female armed robbery suspects awaiting trial (Police custody; SARS and PANTI)

CONTENT VALIDITY

To determine the face and content validity of the instruments of this study, the assistance of specialists and experts in Criminology was consulted in order to ascertain whether the indicator captures the construct it was set out to measure. Also, to ensure the reliability of the instruments, a pilot study was conducted by administering ten percent (10%) of the instrument to the respondents. This pre-tested was to ascertain the reliability and strength of the instrument to capture the completeness and suitability of the questions, how orderly the questions were and probable logistic problems that could occur during data collection. Therefore during the main interview, it was a smooth ride because everything had been put in place and the challenges surmounted.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

Letters of introduction for research were written to the authorities concerned and approval letters were received accordingly before the study was carried out. Participants were assured of confidentiality of their responses. Respondents were made to give voluntary consent. They were told the benefits of their participation. Also, there was no discrimination

against participants to be included in the research since selection was based on equity and fairness. Participants were allowed the freedom to decline and withdraw their involvement from the research at any point in the research process. The questionnaires were also translated into languages that were understood by the respondents. The data obtained was analyzed using SPSS version 2.0. Data collected were coded, entered into the SPSS data and variable sheets on the computer before they were analyzed and results interpreted accordingly.

FINDINGS

Data was elicited from the respondents with the use of questionnaire which was sectionalized into three sections indicating demographic and economic characteristics, family background/ childhood experience of violence and social backgrounds of the respondents.

Demographic and economic characteristics of the respondents: The study revealed that the age of the respondents ranged from 21 to 41 years and above. Majority of them were within the age bracket of 21–25 years (13, 37.1%) which was followed by 26–30 years (7, 20%). The median age is 2.00 while the mean age is 2.34. Majority of them were single (19, 54.3%) followed by six of them (17.1%) who were separated. That is, they were married before but at the time of their arrest they were single parents. Then, five of them (14.3%) were live-in-lovers to armed robbers. Out of a total of thirty five (35), thirteen (13) of them had completed the secondary school education, twelve (12) of them were primary school certificate holders and two (2) of them had HND/BSc certificates. Their ethnicity revealed that majority of them (11, 31.4%) were Yoruba, eight (8) were Ibo, two (2) were Hausa and 14 of them (40%) were from other tribes; specifically from Urhobo, Igbira and one was a foreigner from Republic of Benin (Cotonou). The residential areas of the respondents revealed that majority of them (9, 25.7%) resided at Oshodi, a densely populated area of Lagos State which is said to be one of the areas with the highest incidents of armed robbery and crimes generally. This was closely followed by six of them (17.1%) who resided at Imota - Ikorodu another densely populated area with high incidents of armed robbery in Lagos State.

However, the residential areas of the respondents spread through Magodo, (a high brow area of Lagos State) to Ajao Estate, Ikotun, Oshodi, Imota-Ikorodu and Isolo which are densely populated and known for high criminal activities such as pick pocketing, theft, kidnapping and armed robbery. The respondent who lived at Magodo was a domestic cook to a female single parent and senior citizen whom she robbed in connivance with her gang members. Then the remaining two (2) respondents residing at Cotonou at the time of their arrest, used to come in and out of Lagos state, Nigeria to carry out their nefarious activities through the border towns of Seme and Badagry. This shows cross-border armed robbery activities in collaboration with Nigerians.

The employment status of the respondents revealed that nineteen (19) of them (54.3%) were self-employed and two (2, 5.7%) of them were employed. Their occupation varied from food vendors to none. Majority of them (11, 31.4%) were petty traders while seven (7) of them were students who had no fixed income. Also, majority of the respondents (8) were within the daily income level of 1501-2000 naira and the least had below 500 naira (4 respondents). Lastly, majority of the respondents were Christians (23, 65.7%) while twelve (34.3%) were Muslims.

Respondents' Family Background and Childhood

Experience of Violence

The study revealed that majority (21) of the respondents which represent 60% lived with their parents when they were growing up. This was followed by six (6, 17.1%) of them who lived with their aunts and one of them who lived with a guardian (somebody not related by blood or family ties). Majority of them (15, 42.9%) also said their spouses were not employed. This included some of those who were married, live-in-lovers and singles who had lovers. Their spouses' occupation also showed that nine (9, 25.7%) of them were artisan, nine (9) of them were trading, eight (8) were drivers and eight were applicants. In addition, majority of the respondents (16) said they had no child, eleven of them said they had between 4-6 children. Also, majority of them (23) said their parents had between 4-6 children while four said their parents had 10 and above number of children. Majority of them (12) said they were the first born of their families while ten of

them said they were the fifth born and above in their families. In addition, majority of them (12) said their fathers' occupation was artisan, nine of them said their fathers' occupation was driver. Majority of them (18) also said their mother's occupation was trading while twelve others said their mothers' occupation was full-time housewife with no income except that was given to them by their fathers (husbands). Majority (14, 40%) of the respondents' relationships with their fathers was cordial, thirteen (13) was quarrelsome and eight was violent. Majority (26, 74.3%) also said their relationship with their mothers was cordial and 9 said their relationship was quarrelsome. Also, majority (17) of them testified that their relationship with their siblings was quarrelsome and twelve said it was violent. This goes to show that most of them did not have good relationship with their family members (significant others) while some of them had it rough experiencing violence at one point or the other with their fathers and siblings. None of them experienced violence from their mothers though they experienced quarrels (verbal abuse) from them.

Social /Criminal Status of the Respondents

The study examined the social /criminal status of the respondents which could have been responsible for their involvement in serious crime like armed robbery, arrest and conviction.

The type of offense/crime that the respondents were charged for ranged from principal armed robbery offender to conspiracy and armed robbery, stealing and armed robbery, bought stolen item, kidnapping and armed robbery to conspiracy to rob and attempt to rob. Majority of them (10, 28.6%) were charged for principal armed robbery, eight (22.9%) were charged for conspiracy and armed robbery, five of them (14.3%) were charged for kidnapping and armed robbery, another five of them were charged for stealing and armed robbery, five others were charged for conspiracy to rob and attempt to rob and the least of them (2) were charged for buying stolen items.

The study also revealed that eleven (11, 31.4%) of the respondents played the role of informants, seven (7) of them played the role of accomplice, one of them was the squad leader of the armed robbery group while four of them were arms custodians and another four were arms transport-

ers, two played the role of drivers and three were procurers in the different robbery operations that they were arrested for. However, majority of them (27, 77.1%) said it was the first time they were arrested for armed robbery. They claimed it was the only time they attempted to rob as they were lured into it by their friends and lovers when they got to know that robbery was their means of survival. At this point they couldn't break the relationship because they were deeply in love with them. But they tried to convince their lovers to desist from armed robbery, they even went to the extent of taking them to places of worship for prayers so that they could leave armed robbery, but all their efforts were to no avail. As time went on, they decided to join them as a means of support (accepting their lovers and their criminality because of the love they have for them).

However, eight of the respondents said it was the second time they were arrested for armed robbery. One of the eight said she was arrested for being an accomplice to armed robbery at first arrest and kidnapping and armed robbery at the second arrest. She was a live-in-lover to the leader of the armed robbery group who was killed by the police when they were arrested. The eight of them who confessed to second arrest for armed robbery said they were released on bail at their first arrest. They therefore said they have had one successful armed robbery operation while the other twenty seven (27) respondents said they have never had any successful armed robbery operation. They said it was during their first time of armed robbery operation that they were arrested.

The study also revealed that majority of the respondents (21, 60%) had love affair with some members of their armed robbery group while fourteen (14) of them had friendly relationships with some members of the group. This indicates that it was their spouses that introduced majority of them to armed robbery and the others were influenced by friends. This also means that love relationship with an armed robber and peer influence rather than violence experienced in childhood are strong determinants/predictors to females' involvement in armed robbery. This is because if they never had anything to do with armed robbers despite the experience of childhood violence, they would not have been involved in armed robbery. Confessions of the type of arms used by the respondents in the armed robbery operations they were arrested for, revealed that twenty two

(22, 62.9%) of them used gun, six of them used knives, two of them used spanner, two others used sticks and three used other arms which were not specified. In all, majority of the respondents were awaiting trial (18, 51.4%), five of them were on trial and twelve of them (34.3%) have concluded their trials.

Finally, nine of the respondents (25.7%) who have concluded their trials got 5-9 years sentence, two of them got 14 years sentence and one got 21 years sentence while the male members of her group got life sentences. The remaining twenty three respondents were yet to get their sentences as they were yet to conclude trials.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Following the results of this study, it can be rightly said that all the age brackets were involved in armed robbery, but females within the age brackets of 21–25 years and 31–35 years committed armed robbery offences more than the others. Aborisade & Oni, (2020) also confirmed that most of the respondents in his study were within the ages of 18 and 28 years and the mean age being 25 years. This corroborates Schwartz & Steffensmeier's (2015) study in America where they found that female's age, youthfulness and sexuality were major determinants of recruitments into armed robbery gangs. This also explains the reason more of the respondents involved in armed robbery were single (54.3%) females who had never been married, followed by females who were live-in-lovers to armed robbers (14.3%). This shows that there is a high tendency of single females' involvements in armed robbery based on the criminal statuses of their intimate partners. Like Steffensmeier, Schwartz & Roche, (2013) opined, females risk criminal involvements in order to sustain or establish valued relationships with the males. This is also backed up by that fact that they are likely to have low sense of responsibility towards others apart from themselves. They also had flexible time to indulge in armed robbery without having to report to any man- head for permission of movement.

It can be deduced from this study that marriage negatively influenced females' involvements in armed robbery. This is because marriage provides

a sense of responsibility and security to married females. This can be hinged on emotional attachment and its influence on crime which discourages females from committing crime as propagated by Travis Hirschi, (1990) in his Control theory which states that strong attachment to significant others is one of the reasons for avoidance of crime. One of the female armed robbers arrested in 2018 also confirmed this when she confessed that she left armed robbery because she fell in love with a senior police officer who established a supermarket for her. This can be corroborated with Alimoski & Stanojoska, (2015) and Maguire, Morgan & Reiner, (2010) study which revealed that females retire from crimes without hesitation when they attain critical age which is attained earlier than their male counterparts. Critical age here may connote youthfulness, age, responsibility and serious/commitment in relationships with the opposite sex that could lead to marriage and family. This could also be the reason why females seldom commit professional crimes (Maguire, Morgan & Reiner, (2010). It can therefore be drawn from this study that single females who do not have strong attachment to significant others are more prone to armed robbery. Some other respondents, who were married, were married to armed robbers while some others were live-in lovers to armed robbers. This significantly influenced their involvements in armed robbery as they were principal offenders, arms custodians, arms transporters and procurers as revealed in the study. Perhaps, if these females were not married to armed robbers or do not have love affairs with them, they wouldn't have been involved in the act. The study revealed that some other respondents were accomplices, conspirators and informants in the robbery operations they were arrested for.

Another salient point revealed in this study was that the females involved in armed robbery in Lagos state were mostly primary and secondary school certificate holders. This also corroborates Aborisade & Oni, (2020) study where they found that most of the respondents were primary and secondary school certificate holders and some of them registered and got their primary and secondary school certificates while in custody. Their level of education also influenced the kind of occupation they got as well as their income levels. Hence it can be said that females who get involved in armed robbery are those of low educational and occupational statuses

who could hardly get for themselves the basic necessities of life. This means that they were poor, low standard of living and were economically deprived (Otu, 2003; Chukueze, 2009; Aborisade & Oni, 2020). Aborisade & Oni (2020) in their study described the environment where their respondents lived in their early years to be “dense, poor and mixed-use neighborhoods” which is mostly occupied by people who live below the poverty line.

Their level of involvement with significant others in the family were also low. Their level of involvements indicated mostly violent and troublesome relationships which also means that they must have been used to violent lifestyles and relationships, so having to be involved in violent crimes was not new to them (48.6% + 34.3% = 80.9% were quarrelsome and violent as against 17.1% of the respondents’ relationships with their siblings which was cordial). This corroborates Aborisade & Oni (2020) where they found that most of their respondents grew up in abusive environments, large/disorganized families, infested with domestic conflicts while it contradicts Otu, (2003) study where he found that majority of the respondents showed cordial relationships with their family members. However, Otu, (2003) samples were mixed while Aborisade & Oni (2020) samples were mainly females just like the present study.

In addition, their residential areas positively influenced their involvement in armed robbery. This is evident in the low and over-crowded areas they lived in. Those that lived in high-brow areas (8.6%) were there because they served as domestic servants to the wealthy people who they turn out to rob in conspiracy with their male counterparts. Most times, the areas people reside in reflect their living standards, criminal involvements and the types of crime they involve in. People residing in low income areas are likely to be of poor living standard which has been identified in studies as a prerequisite for indulging in criminal activities especially armed robbery (Chukuezi, 2006; Usman *et al*, 2013; Schwartz & Steffensmeier, 2015; Kunnuji, 2016; Aborisade & Oni, 2020). One of the respondents who lived in Cotonou shows a case of trans-border armed robbery. Her husband was a Nigerian who came in and out of Nigeria to rob with his gangs and return to Cotonou to take shelter. She was also his arms custodian and transporter in and across the Nigeria-Cotonou border until the day of her arrest.

A very major string in this study showed that some females were arrested and charged for their involvements in armed robbery; ranging from principal armed robbery offender, conspiracy and armed robbery, stealing and armed robbery, buying of stolen items, kidnapping and armed robbery to conspiracy to rob and attempt to rob. Females played the roles of informants, arms custodians, arms transporters, gang leaders, drivers, procurer and accomplice in the armed robbery operations they were arrested for. Although majority of them played the role of informants (31.4%) more than any other role. This corroborates Aborisade & Oni, (2020) study on sociological profiling of convicted female armed robbers in Lagos State, where they found that 56 females were arrested for their involvements in armed robbery offences. This study shows that majority (77.1%) of the females was first time armed robbery offenders and few (22.9%) were second time offenders. Their sentences ranged from 5-9 years imprisonment, 10-14 years and 15-21 years imprisonment. In fact the study revealed that a female who was charged for kidnapping and armed robbery and got 21 years jail term was a second time armed robbery offender. She had a love affair with the leader of the group who was shot dead by the police after interrogation while the other male members of the group got life imprisonment. The study showed that the Criminal Justice System in Nigeria has a very large number of females awaiting trials and on-trial reprimanded in custody. The number of females awaiting trial and on-trial recorded the highest number of respondents in this study (65.7%).

CONCLUSION

This study concluded that some females like their male counterparts are actively involved, convicted and incarcerated for armed robbery offences in Nigeria. The female age of criminality also came into play here because majority of the respondents were young adults who were not married. The study also established that intimacy with significant others is a prerequisite of females' involvements in armed robbery in Nigeria. Also, residential area/environment significantly influences females' involvements in armed robbery in Nigeria. It further showed that some females could actually opt

out of armed robbery when they get involved in serious love affairs that could lead to marriage. Hence, one of the females who was an active member and leader of an armed robbery group confessed that she dropped armed robbery because she fell in love with a police officer who opened a supermarket for her. But as faith would have it, some of her group members were arrested during a robbery operation and they confessed her as the leader of their group even though she was not arrested with them but from a hotel in Ondo state following tip off from those who knew her. Female's involvement in armed robbery is detrimental to the society because it affects the family's role of socialization of its members, family structure and the society as a whole. Such females become negative role models (Umar, 2015; Hassan *et al*, 2012) to their children and could also lead such children to criminality earlier or later in life. It could therefore be a case of criminals breeding and reproducing criminals in the society (cycle of criminals).

RECOMMENDATION

This study therefore recommends amongst others that:

Females should be given fair treatment and access to education and employment early in life, for it will stand as springboard for family stability and financial independence in life. Females should be financially empowered to be able to meet the basic necessities of life and sustain a family. Females should be discouraged from depending on the males for financial sustenance right from childhood. Overcrowded and low income areas should be reed of criminal activities by law enforcement close marking and counseling the young ones from time to time. The process of Criminal Justice Administration in Nigeria should be improved upon. The time spent on trial is too long and should be reduced to enable timely judgment because some of these females could actually be innocent of the charges. Re-socialization of females in the society. Females should be encouraged to go back to the drawing board where they play the traditional role of socializing the members of their families in order to curb

criminal involvements in the society. Females should not be burdened with family responsibilities early in life

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