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## Role of Interest and Social Contact on Approval of Illegal Behaviour in Awka Metropolis, Anambra State, Nigeria

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### Abstract

*The study examined the role of interest and social contact on approval of illegal behaviour in Awka metropolis, Anambra State, Nigeria. Two hundred and forty-four youths drawn from Awka metropolis, Anambra state served as participants in the study. They comprised of 126(59.8%) males, and 118(40.2%) females. Their age ranged from 18 to 39 years with a mean of 28.06, and a standard deviation of 6.36. Simple random sampling was used to choose the participants. Three instruments were used: Interest Scale, Social Contact Scale (SCS), and Approval of Illegal Behaviour Scale. The study used factorial design, and Two-Way analysis of variance (ANOVA) as appropriate design and statistics. The result indicated that interest and social contact corrected model accounted for 57.8% variance on approval of illegal behaviour, with  $(F3, 40) = 56.09, p < .05; R = .578, R^2 \text{ adjusted} = .567$ . However, interest did not indicate a significant difference on approval of illegal behaviour in Awka metropolis, Anambra State at  $(F3, 40) = 3.46, p > .05$  at 0.2%. Conversely, social contact showed a significant difference on approval of illegal behaviour in Awka metropolis, Anambra State at  $(F3, 40) = 33.34, p < .05$  at 21.3%. There was a significant interaction between interest and social contact on approval of illegal behaviour among youths in Awka metropolis, Anambra State at  $(F3, 40) = 3.97, p < .05$  at 0.3%. This implies that forensic psychologists are expected to engage in public awareness of social contact, and how it can negatively cause approval of illegal behaviour. This will help to educate youths on how to relate socially without approving illegal behaviour.*

**Keywords:** Interest, Social Contact, Approval of Illegal Behaviour and Youths

## INTRODUCTION

Nigerian youths are faced with several challenges that may have affected them. These challenges may be access to functional and qualitative education, unemployment, migration, inadequate supply funds and religious fanaticism. Probably, these produce unwholesome attitude and approval of illegal behaviour among the youths. Hence, Oviawe (2010) believed that the increasing rate of crime such as armed robbery, advance fee fraud (419), corruption, prostitution, nepotism, drug trafficking, cultism and other social vices are the product of persistent poverty and illegal behavior approval. The challenges to approval of illegal behaviour among the youths in Nigeria have often been attributed to the declining influence of the family, and the negative impact of significant others.

Thus, approval for illegal behaviour can be defined as the concept that involves support for a variety of human behaviour that has been described in society as wrong, bad, immoral, or deviant. Therefore, the term "illegal behaviours" herein is used to refer to a variety of acts that are widely regarded as constituting legal problems and/or result in legal problems such as (but not limited to): forging, writing bad checks (i.e., writing checks, including digital payment checks, that the individual later cancels or knows in advance will go unpaid) or paying bills from accounts that no longer have funds, prostitution, different types of fraud (e.g., number "rackets" or embezzlement), theft and legal tax issues (Grant & Chamberlain, 2023). It is important to note that whether a particular instance of such an act is illegal is dependent on context, legal frameworks, and geographical jurisdictions. Hence, supporting or accepting any wrong actions and also violating a given societal or group's norms, rules, or laws can be termed as approval for illegal behaviour. These approved actions could violate a law of nature, science, or the rules of God.

Though, Nagasawa, Qian, and Wong (2000) confirmed that some youths conform and approve of some illegal behavior as norms in response to certain forces that control and regulate human behaviour. Some persons see it as a rite of passage in many countries especially among boys, and the majority grows out of it. It forms a continuum from minor to more serious activities and risk-taking, and for some, it is the beginning of a longer and more serious career. Some approved illegal behaviour of young adults include taking part in

vandalism, stealing, getting involved in gangs, illicit activities, drug abuse, engaging in unsafe sex, joining "tags" in dangerous situations, climbing on the rooftops of public buses, engaging in individual or group fights among others. All these risky behaviours affect public order and a sense of safety.

These approved illegal behaviours often alter positive benefits youths could offer such as providing a sense of belonging, and controlling one's life in a personal or collective manner (McGraw, 2006). Some authors have identified the essential characteristics of some unintentionally approved illegal behaviour focused on white-collar crime as financially motivated, nonviolent, or non-directly violent behaviour committed by individuals, businesses and government professionals. The illegal behaviours are believed to be committed by middle- or upper-class individuals for financial gains (Blundell, 2014; Newton & Felson, 2015). This could be the reason Moore (2015) says that there is now ample and accumulating evidence in developed and developing countries that the conditions under which youths grow up are crucial for their approval of illegal behaviour either because of personal interest. Since interest is associated with any form of decision or choice. In this respect, it is evident that interest may or may not influence the approval of illegal behaviour.

Interest is a trait like preferences for activities, contexts in which activities occur, or outcomes associated with preferred activities that motivate goal-oriented behaviors and orient individuals toward certain environments (Rounds, 1995; Su, Rounds, & Armstrong, 2009). It is the self-sustaining motives that lead people to engage with certain objects, activities, or ideas for their own sake. It is also viewed as relatively stable dispositions that facilitate fit (e.g., congruence) between people and their environments (Rounds & Su, 2014). Importantly, relative stability does not mean that interests never change for any individual over the life span. Rather, it means that the relative standing of any individual in a population remains consistent to a certain degree.

Thus, youths may be interested in one illegal behavior or the other, but they cannot be generally interested in the same way that they might be considered to be curious open to experience or have a growth mindset (Dweck, 2006; Grossnickle, 2016). It could be linked to the fact that people's level of interest is malleable and can change from one moment to the

next. The state of interest combines positive affective qualities, such as feelings of enjoyment and curiosity, with cognitive qualities of focused attention, as well as perceptions of value and personal importance (Hidi & Renninger, 2006; Linnenbrink-Garcia et al., 2010).

Hence, being in a state of interest means that positive affective reactions and cognitive functioning are intertwined, which makes cognitive engagement and focusing of attention feel relatively effortless. Thus, the state of interest is ideal, and one to strive for whenever possible. This is not only because this state of being interested is typically charged with positive feelings and engagement, but also because interest can energize higher levels of performance. Due to youths' interest has been linked to a relatively enduring predisposition to attend to certain objects and events and to engage in certain activities which often makes some of them approve of certain behaviours without a second thought (Krapp, Hidi, & Renninger, 1992; Renninger, 2000). This behaviour perhaps is associated with a psychological state of negative affect and persistence, that tends to result in increased negative behaviours. For example, young adults with an interest in fame and conservation seek opportunities to engage in associated activities and while so engaged experience enjoyment and expand his or her knowledge, thereby viewing illegal behaviour as normal behaviour, probably because of social contact.

Social contact is the process of reciprocal influence exercised by individuals over one another during social encounters (Beard, 2014). It may be any process that involves reciprocal stimulation or response between two or more individuals. These can range from the first encounters between parent and offspring to complex interactions with multiple individuals in adult life. Social contacts include the development of cooperation and competition, the influence of status and social roles, and the dynamics of group behaviour, leadership, and conformity. Persistent social contact between specific individuals leads to the formation of social relationships. It is only through close observation of social contact that social organisation and social structure can be inferred (Brym et al., 2013).

However, in contemporary society, this social contact can also be social encounters that are technologically mediated like texting, skyping, or messaging. Social contact between people occurs every day in which the preexisting closeness of the targets may be virtually non-

existent (Wesselmann et al., 2012). Due to its efficacious in reducing bias and discrimination between groups, and increases mutual trust, solidarity and forgiveness (Coban, 2020; Christ & Kauff, 2019). Consequently, social contacts, in and of themselves, and the quality of those interactions are important among young adults. For example, Latane (1981) suggests that the effect other people have on a person is a function of several factors including the quality and immediacy of the contacts. Social contacts and impact occurs, and can only occur when there is another actor with whom a target can contact. Yet such contacts have received relatively little attention.

Research has linked social contact with several behaviours such as banditry, cultism, violence and so on (Cacioppo & Hawkley, 2003; Lang & Baltes, 1997). Although social contact alone is beneficial relative to the reduction of illegal behaviour; positive features of social contact which include informational and emotional support, companionship is beneficial for the reduction of illegal behaviour that might be orchestrated by depression and social isolation (Hays et al., 2001; Smyth et al., 2014). In contrast, negative features of social contact include social rejection, social evaluative threat, burden, and conflict that can have deleterious consequences (Filipkowski & Smyth, 2012; Wirth, Bernstein, & LeRoy, 2015).

Theoretically, Reckless (1961) containment theory explains "approval to illegal behaviour as the interplay between two forms of control known as inner (interest) and outer (social contact) containments" (DeMelo, 1999, p. 24). Reckless' basic premise was that the psychological (internal) and social (external) factors work together to contribute to conforming to illegal behaviour. According to this perspective "every youth has a containing external structure and a protective internal structure. Both of these structures buffer, protect, and insulate an individual against approval for illegal behaviour" (DeMelo, 1999, p. 24). Reckless (1961) asserts that inner containments, which are self-components, are more important than outer containments, which are one's social environment. Thus Reckless' containment theory detailed that there are pushes from within the individual, such as resentment, hostility and anger, along with outer pulls, such as poverty, discrimination, and association with gang members that push or pull youths to approval for illegal behaviour.

These internal and external forces produce approval for illegal behavior unless they are counteracted by containment. Approval of illegal behaviour or crime is highly likely to occur if the motivations of illegal acts are strong and containment is weak (International Encyclopedia of Justice Studies, 2007).

Individualization of the self" was one of Reckless' (1973b) primary foci. For him, self was not important in primitive societies. With the division of labor in the society, new alternatives were presented to the youths. Finally, youths took differing identities as a consequence of the large number of choices that they have (Reckless, 1973b). Furthermore, he suggested that while internal (interest) factors push youths toward illegal behaviour, external (social contact) factors pull him/her toward illegal behaviour. He emphasizes that not only are external factors important for understanding nonconformity, but also internal factors should be taken into account. To clarify his point of view on internal factors, he uses the analogy of malaria. Even under extreme exposure to malaria, not everybody gets it and their resistance level differs (Reckless, 1973b). Containment theory attempts to explain conforming behavior as well as illegal behaviour (Reckless, 1973b).

According to Reckless (1973) there are two dimensions of containment: inner containment and outer containment. Although the two dimensions are separated by definition, they are very much interrelated. His classification of "inner containment" as pulling factors toward crime and "outer containment" as pushing factors is crucial to understanding his theoretical framework. The focal point of inner containment is on one's self-concept, and the focal point for outer containment is on the various social institutions with which individuals come in contact (Reckless, 1973a). Reckless (1973a) states that the youth's attitudes and perceptions toward these institutions are incorporated into the individual's attitudes toward self (inner containment). In other words, an individual's self-concept is in part made up of his perceptions of the environment and institutional structures therein. The variation in responses of individuals is due to the different possibilities of balance between inner and outer containment. Thus, Reckless viewed illegal behaviour from both personal interest and social contact.

Reckless (1973b) thinks that the successful acquisition of a society's rules regarding acceptable behavior is a prerequisite for the development of inner containment. Although the social environment, or in other words external factors, may affect youth's behaviour, those factors should be filtered by the individual (Hogan & Mookherjee, 1981). Thus, a good self-concept is believed to be the main preventative factor of approval of illegal behavior (Shoemaker, 2005). Further, Reckless (1973b) stated that youths who have strong inner containment carry a good self-concept, a well-developed superego, ego strength, and a high frustration tolerance. Also, external factors, such as the family, should help the individual develop these factors. As the inner control is formed, youths need fewer outer controls (Thompson & Dodder, 1983). Furthermore, Reckless (1973b) assumed that a good self-concept and inner containment are also dependent upon goal orientation. Unlike strain theories, containment theory suggests that established legitimate goals provide a sense of direction which would, in turn, lead to conformity. Containment theory assumes that these goals are obtainable for all individuals and will decrease the ambitions of individuals (Lilly et al., 2007). Frustration tolerance is another factor of inner containment. Reckless (1973b) realizes that individuals try to control their biophysical motives. This control also may create frustration as a result of different opportunities that are available to them (Lilly et al., 2007). Hence, individuals' control forms vary based on the levels of frustration tolerance.

Additionally, Reckless (1973b) believed that increasing individualism is a reason for lower levels of frustration tolerance. Norm retention is another factor of inner containment. Norm retention refers to "adherence to, commitment to, acceptance of, identification with, legitimating of defense of values, norms, laws, codes, institutions and customs" (Reckless, 1967, p. 476). For Lilly et al. (2007, p. 91) it is not norm retention, but "norm erosion," which is the main problem leading to the approval of illegal behaviour. Finally, containment theory does not cover all approval of illegal behaviors, such as crimes that emerge as a consequence of strong inner pushes, such as personality disorders, anxieties, and compulsions. Reckless' containment theory excluded the offenders on the periphery, including those who committed crimes because of some organic brain dysfunction, psychological disorders, or whose deviant behavior was part of the social norm for their group.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study is to explore if social contact and interest will play roles on approval of illegal behaviour youths in Awka metropolis, Anambra State. Specific objectives, the study sought to identify:

1. Whether interest will play a role on approval of illegal behaviour among youths in Awka metropolis, Anambra State.
2. If social contact will impact approval of illegal behaviour among youths in Awka metropolis, Anambra State.
3. The interaction between interest and social contact on approval of illegal behaviour among youths in Awka metropolis, Anambra State.

**Research Questions**

1. What role will interest play on approval of illegal behaviour among youths in Awka metropolis, Anambra State?
2. How does social contact impact approval of illegal behaviour among youths in Awka metropolis, Anambra State?
3. Will there be interaction between interest and social contact on approval of illegal behaviour among youths in Awka metropolis, Anambra State?

**Hypotheses**

1. There will be no significant difference between youths with high interest and youths with low interest on approval of illegal behavior in Awka metropolis, Anambra State.
2. Youths with high social contact will not differ significantly from youths with low social contact on approval of illegal behavior in Awka metropolis, Anambra State.
3. There will be no significant interaction between interest and social contact on approval of illegal behavior among youths in Awka metropolis, Anambra State.

**METHOD****Participants**

Two hundred and forty-four youths drawn from Awka metropolis, Anambra state served as participants in the study. They comprised of 126(59.8%) males, and 118(40.2%) females. Their age ranged from 18 to 39 years with a mean of 28.06, and a standard deviation of 6.36. The marital status revealed that 125(51.2%) were unmarried, and 119(48.8%) were married. Employment data showed that 114(39.4%) were unemployed, and 130(60.6%) were employed. The educational data revealed that 64(27.6%) has M.Sc., 66(32.3%) has B.Sc., 61(21.3%) has SSCE, and 53(18.9%) has FSLC. Simple random sampling was used to choose the participants. Simple random sampling is a subset of individuals (a sample) chosen from a larger set (a population). This principle states that every object has the same possibility to be chosen.

### **Instruments**

Three instruments were used: The interest Scale, Social Contact Scale (SCS), and Approval of Illegal Behaviour Scale adapted from the Deviant behaviour variety scale.

Interest Scale developed by Gerbasi, and Prentice (2013): The scale contained 26 items designed to measure individuals' interest. The scale has two subscales: Self, and others interest. Participants rated each of the 24 items on a 5-point scale, ranging from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (5). Psychometric properties of the SI and OI subscales. Means and standard deviations for the SI and OI subscales were similar across the three student samples (SI: M1a = 4.68, SD1a = 0.82; M1b = 5.12, SD1b = 0.86; M1c = 4.73, SD1c = 0.82; OI: M1a = 4.81, SD1a = 0.92; M1b = 4.44, SD1b = 0.98; M1c = 4.56, SD1c = .93). To assess the reliabilities of the subscales, and a Cronbach's alpha for each subscale in each sample; these alphas ranged from 0.76 to 0.88, clearly in the acceptable range. The researchers conducted a pilot test using the participants of the study, and reported Cronbach alpha of 0.73 for the overall scale. The subscales: 0.88 for self-interest and 0.60 for others-interest was confirmed.

Social Contact Scale (SCS) developed by Islam and Hewstone (1993): The scale 10 contained items to measure the social contact between Muslims and Hindus living in India. While adapting to the Turkish language by Akbaş (2010), the expressions in the scale were translated as Alevis-Sunnis for the researcher's study. In this research, the expression

"Syrian migrants" was used instead of "Alevis-Sunnis". The Social Contact Scale consists of two subscales to measure the quantitative and qualitative aspects of social contact. The Quantity of Social Contact subscale aims to measure the frequency of social contact between two groups whereas the Quality of Social Contact subscale contains questions regarding the quality of social contact between two groups. Each subscale contains five questions. The sixth item in the scale is calculated by reverse coding. In the Quantity of Social Contact subscale, each item is evaluated with a Likert-type five-point rating ranging from "Never" (1) to "Always" (5). A high score indicates more frequent social contact with the other group. In the Quality of Social Contact subscale, on the other hand, each item is evaluated according to the question with a Likert-type five-point rating (For example, "Definitely not equal" (1) and "Definitely equal" (5)). A high score obtained from the subscale indicates more quality social contact. The total variance explained by the Social Contact Scale is 62.2%, and the Cronbach Alpha values are calculated as .83 for each subscale. The researchers conducted a pilot test using the participants of the study and reported Cronbach alpha of 0.70.

Approval of Illegal Behaviour Scale adapted from the Deviant Behaviour Variety Scale developed by Sanches et al. (2016): The scale contained 19 items composing the final version of approval of illegal behaviour. Question format and score calculation for each of the 19 approvals of illegal behaviour items. Items had different severity levels and pertained to 11 categories: thefts, alcohol and drug consumption, verbal and physical aggression, possession of weapons, vandalism, truancy, driving without a license, assault, use of public transport without paying, lies and defiance of authority, and selling drugs. Participants are asked whether they have committed it during the last year. Answers are given in a 1) Strongly Agree, 2) Agree, 3) Sometimes, 4) Disagree and 5) Strongly Disagree format. A participants' variety score, which is a sum score, is calculated by summing the dichotomous scores on each item, and it ranges between 0 and 19, with higher scores indicating a wide variety of deviant behaviors committed. The researchers conducted a pilot test using the participants of the study, and reported Cronbach alpha of 0.67.

## **Procedure**

The questionnaires were personally administered by the researchers to the participants. The questionnaires were administered to them while in schools, marketplaces, and offices. Instructions were given to them on how to fill out the questionnaire. Considering the number of items in the questionnaire and to avoid response bias, the participants were allowed to go home with the questionnaire so that they could carefully fill it because of the schedule with their work. The completed questionnaires will then be collected three days later. Ethically, since the study involved the use of human participants; ethical considerations were taken into account. The purpose of the study and its objectives were explained, confidentiality of the responses given and the use of the data as well as the benefits and risks of participating in the study were also explained. The respondents were requested to confirm if they were willing to participate in the study and informed that they should feel free not to answer any question that they were not comfortable with, however, the importance of answering all the questions was emphasized.

## RESULTS

This chapter was presented in this section.

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Interest and Social Contact on Approval of Illegal Behaviour**

<b>interest</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>N</b>
High	52.73	6.62	123
Low	41.06	6.27	121
Total	47.95	8.65	244

  

<b>Social contact</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>N</b>
High	54.43	6.62	125
Low	42.15	5.61	119
Total	47.95	8.65	244

**Table 2: Two-Way Analysis of Variance of Interest and Social Contact on Approval of Illegal Behaviour**

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	5452.35 <sup>a</sup>	3	1817.45	56.09	.000	.578
Interest	112.15	1	112.15	3.46	.065	.027
Social contact	1080.37	1	1080.37	33.34	.000	.213
Interest *Social contact	128.64	1	128.64	3.97	.049	.031
Error	3985.37	240	32.40			
Total	301470.00	244				

a. R Squared = .578 (Adjusted R Squared = .567)

From 1 and 2 above, the result indicated that interest and social contact corrected model accounted for 57.8% variance on approval of illegal behaviour, with  $(F_3, 240) = 56.09$ ,  $p < .05$ ;  $R = .578$ ,  $R^2$  adjusted = .567. The first hypothesis which stated that there would be no significant difference between youths with high interest and youths with low interest on approval of illegal behavior in Awka metropolis, Anambra State was confirmed at  $(F_3, 240) = 3.46$ ,  $p > .05$ , with mean differences and standard deviation within the interest:  $M = 52.73$ ,  $SD = 6.62$  (high) and  $M = 41.06$ ,  $SD = 6.27$  (low),  $N = 244$ . This means that youths with high-interest experience less approval of illegal behavior than youths with low-interest experience at 0.2%.

The second hypothesis which stated that youths with high social contact will not differ significantly from youths with low social contact on approval of illegal behavior in Awka metropolis, Anambra State was not confirmed at  $(F_3, 240) = 33.34$ ,  $p < .05$ , with mean differences and standard deviation within the social contact:  $M = 54.43$ ,  $SD = 6.62$  (high) and  $M = 42.15$ ,  $SD = 5.61$  (low),  $N = 244$ . This means that youths with high social contact experience more approval of illegal behavior than youths with low social contact experience at 21.3%.

The third hypothesis which stated that there will be no significant interaction between interest and social contact on approval of illegal behavior among youths in Awka metropolis, Anambra State was rejected at  $(F_3, 240) = 3.97$ ,  $p < .05$  at 0.3%.

### Summary of the Findings

1. Interest did not play any role on approval of illegal behavior among youths in Awka metropolis, Anambra State.
2. Social contact play significant role on approval of illegal behavior among youths in Awka metropolis, Anambra State.
3. Interest and social contact has significant interaction on approval of illegal behavior among youths in Awka metropolis, Anambra State.

## DISCUSSION

The study revealed that the first hypothesis was accepted. This showed interest did not play any role on the approval of illegal behaviour among youths in Awka metropolis, Anambra State. That means that youths with high interest approved illegal behavior less than youths with low-interest experience. This disagrees with Slot, Akkerman, and Wubbels (2019) findings that showed those adolescents' daily lives included a diverse range of parallel interests. School-related interests made up a substantial part of adolescents' daily lives, challenging the idea of mere disengagement of secondary school students in academics. The findings also showed that some interests are strongly bound to a specific context, while others appear across family and peer contexts. This perhaps may be also linked to the fact that family influence, personal interest and economic considerations exercised big influence may be the reason the youths are not interested in the approval of illegal behaviour. Theoretically, this contradicts the containment theory notion that interest could trigger approval of illegal behaviour such as internet-related crime and association with gang members that push or pull youths to approval for illegal behaviour.

The second hypothesis was rejected. Social contact plays a significant role in the approval of illegal behavior among youths in Awka metropolis, Anambra State. This means that youths with high social contact approved illegal behavior more than youths with low social contact experience. This is in line with the Litt, Zhao, Kraut, and Burke (2020) assertion that meaningful contacts are those with an emotional, informational, or tangible impact that people believe enhances their lives, the lives of their interaction partners, or their relationships are factors that facilitate approval of illegal behaviour. This implies that social contact and interactions are attributes most likely to facilitate meaningfulness including

strong ties (e.g., friends and family), community ties (e.g., neighbors), shared activities, and synchronicity that make youths find approving of illegal behaviour not as a crime but as normal behaviour. Consequently, youths engaging in social contact with positive motives such as friendship, group discussion, business, and also honing language skills or negative motives are shown to have revenge and the desire to approve illegal behaviour. This confirmed Reckless (1973b) statement that the successful acquisition of a society's rules regarding acceptable behavior is a prerequisite for the development of approval of illegal behaviour. This denotes that social environment, or in other words external factors, may affect youth's behaviour, those factors should be filtered by the individual (Hogan & Mookherjee, 1981). For youths who have strong inner containment carry a good self-concept, a well-developed superego, ego strength, and a high frustration tolerance. Also, external factors, such as the family, should help the individual develop these factors.

The third hypothesis was not confirmed because interest and social contact has significant interaction on approval of illegal behavior among youths in Awka metropolis, Anambra State. This means that interaction between interest and social contact increases youths' approval of illegal behavior. This portrayed that social contact and interest result in the approval of illegal behaviour among youths such as premarital sex, the perception of women as sex objects, the use of profane language, the abuse of drugs and alcohol, involvement in gangster activities and sexual confusion (Chauke, & Malatj, 2018). This may be linked to cause by a lack of effective parental upbringing (Bolu-steve, & Esere, 2017). This showed that approval of illegal behaviour and antisocial behaviour is perceived as the pattern of behaviour of youths, and the causes of such occurrence in society. It seems that parents as role models, and significant others are primarily responsible for the behaviour of their ward as no proper socialization was done. As a result, they have to face the consequences of their act which may affect them for a lifetime (Adrien, 2016). This suggests that while internal (interest) factors push youths toward approval for illegal behaviour, external (social contact) factors pull him/her toward approval for illegal behaviour. Not only are external factors important for understanding nonconformity, but also internal factors should be taken into account.

**Implications of the Study**

1. The findings of the study showed that there are link between social contact and approval of illegal behaviour among youths. This will help those in forensic psychology to understand the relationship between the study variables. Through this understanding, they will provide some intervention techniques that will quench approval of illegal behaviour associated with social contact.
2. Youths also will benefit from this study. It will open their eyes to the impacts of social contact such as community, friends and church on approval of illegal behaviour. This understanding will make them know that socialsocial discrimination is involved without approving illegal behaviour.
3. Empirically, this study will help in future research as it will provide empirical evidence, that support and aid in literature reviews.
4. Government, parents and religious institutions will understand how social contact is part of the instigator of approval of illegal behaviour being experienced in society today. Thus, this will make them balance social contacts by inculcating relationship that reduces their approval of illegal behaviour.

**Conclusion**

The approval of illegal behaviour has gained popularity and that may be the reason, why some of the youths may have given their approval to it and probably positively benefited from the proceeds of these illegal behaviors either through social contact or even having an interest in such illegal behaviours. Hence, that makes the fight against illegal behavior challenging. Thus, this study explored the role of interest and social contact on the approval of illegal behaviour among youths. The study revealed that interest did not play any role on the approval of illegal behavior among youths in Awka metropolis, Anambra State. Conversely, social contact plays a significant role on the approval of illegal behavior among youths in Awka metropolis, Anambra State. However, interest and social contact has significant interaction on approval of illegal behavior among youths in Awka metropolis, Anambra State.

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## Recommendations

1. Forensic psychologists are expected to engage in public awareness of social contact, and how it can negatively cause approval of illegal behaviour. This will help to educate youths on how to relate socially without approving illegal behaviour.
2. Youths are encouraged to learn how to social contact without being overwhelmed with the pressure that may lead them to frustration, depression, and obsession that cause them to approve illegal behaviour.
3. Programmes are needed. These programmes are expected to aid youths' keys to social contact and interest. With that, they will know who they relate with, and how it fosters their interest, possibly leading them to the approval of illegal behaviour.
4. Government should also make policies that will make life meaningful and favourable to everybody. With that, no youth will begin to think of approval of illegal behaviour as a normal way of life.

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