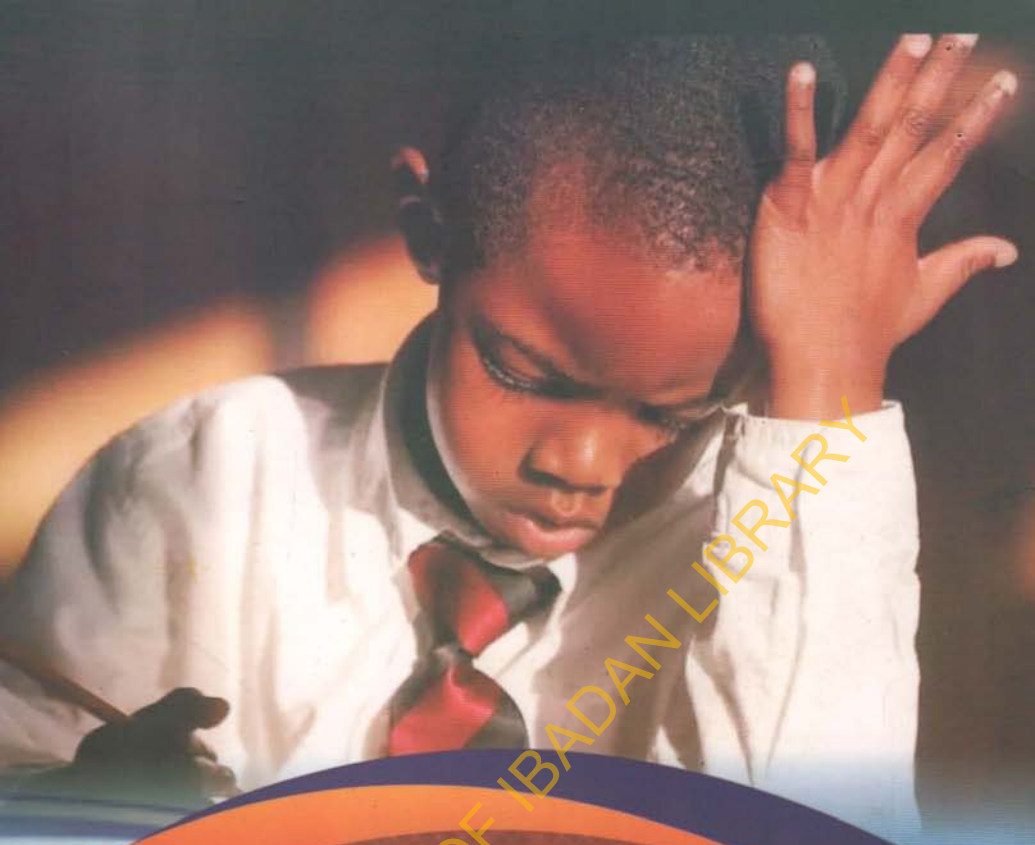

BUILDING A SAFER WORLD THROUGH EDUCATION

Edited by
M.K. AKINSOLA
K.O. OJOKHETA
J.A. ADEMOKOYA

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Contents

Page

1. Using Technology To Bring A Positive Change in The Lives of Adult Literacy Learners: Excerpts From Some Innovative Projects-**Omobola Adelore, PhD, Gloria Adedoja, Ph.D, Solomon Ojedeji**
   * *Department of Adult Education*
   ** *Department of Science Technology and Mathematics Education*
   ***Department of Adult Education University of Ibadan - 1 - 16

2. Students' Consciousness and Demand For Legal Rights In Tertiary Institutions In Nigeria: Implications For A Safer Environment In Higher Institutions- **Atanda, A. I**
   Department of Educational Management
   University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria - 17 - 30

3. The Place Of Academic Optimism, Locus of Control And Learning Intentions of Sandwich Degree Students In Government-owned Tertiary Institutions In Osun State, Nigeria - **Alebiosu, Yejide O. (Ph.d), M. O. Ogundokun, Ph.D**
   **Osun State University*
   ***Department of Guidance and Counselling*
   University of Ibadan, Ibadan. - 31 - 46

4. Vocabulary Knowledge, Content Familiarity, Attitude and Students' Achievement In Drama In Literature-in-english: Implication of Findings In Building A Safer World.
   Ezeokoli, F.O. , Akinsulire, Y. P.
   Department of Teacher Education. University of Ibadan. Oyo State, Nigeria. 47 - 66

5. Teaching Productivity Among University Staffers In Oyo and Osun States As An Antidote For A Safer World: Issues of Organizational Commitment And Workload

UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN LIBRARY

Adewuyi Habeeb Omoponle, Jimoh, A. M. Ph.d
Department of Guidance and counselling Faculty of Education, University of Ibadan, Nigeria. - 67 - 82

6. The Role of Core Cognitive Life Skills In Redirecting Academic Stress Among Learners With Hearing Impairment
Afusat Olanike Busari, PhD.
Department of Guidance and Counselling University of Ibadan Ibadan, Nigeria - 83 - 104

7. Education For Citizenship, Sustain Abledemocracy and Development In A Multi-cultural Society: The Nigerian Experience - **S.O. Ajitoni, Ph.D**
Department of Arts and Social Sciences Education University of Ibadan,Ibadan. - 105 - 129

8. Demographic Factors And Pre-service Teachers ICT Utilization Capacity In The University Of Ibadan Open Distant Learning Programme, Nigeria-
Isah, Emmanuel.A. (Ph.d) , Odedoyin, Moses.A.
Department of Educational Management, Faculty of Education. University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria- 130 -144

9. Heal The World: Understanding Palliative Care of Terminally Ill Individuals
Sanda, Mercy Olufunmilayo Ph.d., Oyewole, Femi Ebenezer
**Department of Adult Education, University of Ibadan, Ibadan.*
***Department of Adult Education, University of Lagos. Akoka.* -145-167

10. Functionality Of Teaching Biology In Senior Secondary School In Nigeria For Securing A Safer World
Adedamola A. Kareem. Ph.D
Department of Science and Technology Education University of Lagos, Nigeria. 168-186

UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN LIBRARY

11. Attitude Of The Sighted Public Towards Persons With Visual Impairment: Implications For Building A Safer Society
Ejmanya, Ekelediridiukwu E, Okelola Olakunle S., Okoh Bibiana I.
Dept. of Special Education University of Ibadan- 187-205

12. Psycho-social Factors Affecting Adherence To Antiretroviral Therapy Among People Living With Hiv/Aids In Health Facilities In Ibadan Metropolis
OmotoshoT.Elizabeth, Uwakwe C.B.U Ph.D
**Oyo State College of Nursing and Midwifery Ibadan, Nigeria*
***Department of Guidance and Counselling Faculty of Education, University of Ibadan, Nigeria. -* 206-227

13. Conflict Management: An Indispensable Tool In Building A Safer World In A Violent School Environment
Christianah Oluwakemi Alabi
Department of Curriculum &Instruction Emmanuel Alayande College of Education, Oyo.- 228-246

14. Influence Of Teaching-learning Quality On Employability of Secondary School Students In Oyo State
Adedeji, S.O., Odiase, Kehinde Ben
**Professor of Economics of Education Department of Educational Management*
***Academic Advisor, Dept. of Educational Management Distance Learning Centre University of Ibadan, Ibadan -* 247-265

15. Sexuality Education As Sustainable Paradigm For Building A World Free of Sexually-related Diseases Among Senior Secondary School Girls In Oyo State Nigeria
Ojedokun, I. M. Ph. D
Department of Social Work, Faculty of Education, University Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria- 266-284

UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN LIBRARY

16. Towards A Safer World: The Imperativeness of The Educational Philosophy Of 3hs
Omokhabi, Abiola Adiat Ph.D, Fadiya Abiodun Adesope, Ph.D, Babalola Najim Akorede
Department of Adult Education,University of Ibadan, Nigeria- 285-294

17. Women In Community-Driven Development: Implications For A Safer World- **Olajide, O. E. Ph.D**
Department of Adult Education University of Ibadan, Ibadan - 295-308

18. Building A Safer World Through A Regulated Workers' Education In Nigeria- **Oyelekan Ayantunji**
Department of Human Resources Development, Osun State University, Okuku Campus,-Osun State, Nigeria- 309-316

19. Building A Safer World For The Old People: The Need For Professional Education In Social Gerontology
Momoh Agbomehre Medinat Ph.D, Adegbola Gbeminiyi Mujaheed
Department of Adult Education University of Ibadan, Ibadan - 317-333

20. Understanding Key Components Of Managing Conflict: Implications For Building A Safer School Environment
Dr.Olayemi Jumoke Abiodun-Oyebanji
Department Of Educational Management Faculty of Education University of Ibadan- 344-350

21. Cognitive Restructuring Therapy On Reduction of Mathematics Anxiety Among Senior Secondary School Students In Two Local Government Areas of Oyo State, Nigeria
Adetola, O. Adeyemi Ph.D, E.O. Oladunmoye, Ph.D
Department of Guidance and Counselling University of Ibadan, Oyo State Nigeria- 351-374

UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN LIBRARY

22. Demographic Factors Affecting Co-habitation Among Undergraduate Students Of Government Tertiary Institutions In Oyo State: Advocating Safer Relationships On Campus
Dr. Olufunmilayo O. Folaranmi , Gugong, Alfred Helen (MSW)
Department of Social Work Area Council Service Commission University of Ibadan. - 375-394

23. Educational Management Training: A Requisite For Institutional Administrators In Building A Safer World
Agbojo Amos Olorunwa
Department of Educational Management, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria- 395-410

24. Expressed Pre-retirement Feelings Of Immigration Officers In South-west Nigeria: Implication For Asafer World Through Education
Awosanya O.O. , Lawrence, K. C
University Of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria- 411-428

25. Exploring The Potentials Of Safety-based Training For Building Workplace Safety Culture In The Manufacturing Industries
Ojo Funmilola Elizabeth (PhD)
Department of Adult Education, Faculty of Education, University of Ibadan- 429-450

26. National Youth Service Corps Skill Acquisition and Entrepreneurship Development Scheme: Opportunities and Challenges - **Adisa Biodun Olubunmi Akanni**
Department of Adult Education, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria- 451-463

27. Social Media, Peer Influence And Family Structure As Facilitators In-school Adolescents' Sexual Risky Behaviour In Osun State: Implication For Safer World
Falaye A. O., Lawrence C.K., Oyelade O.
Department of Guidance and Counselling, University of Ibadan- 464-481

UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN LIBRARY

28. Building A Safer World: Sustaining A Declining Quality of Secondary Education In Ibadan Metropolis of Oyo State
Kemi Victoria Awofiranye
Department of Educational Management
University of Ibadan, Ibadan.- 482-496

29. Adolescents Sense Of Identity And Its Implications For Developmental Appropriate Interventions For Building A Safer World Through Education
Ofole Ndidi Mercy (Ph.D)
Department of Guidance and Counselling,
Faculty of Education University of Ibadan, Nigeria- 497-521

30. Smoking Behaviour, Rebellion And Aggression As Correlates of Antisocial Dispositions Among Adolescents In Remand Homes In Ogun, Osun and Oyo States
Adebowale, Titilola Adedoyin (Ph.D)
Department Of Social Work, Faculty Of Education
University Of Ibadan, Ibadan- 522-541

31. Translating Words To Deeds: Achieving Gender Equality In The Nigerian Educational Sector Through Building A Safer World - **Dr.Chinwelhuoma**
Department of Educational Foundations
National Open University of Nigeria, Abuja- 542-560

32. An Appraisal Of Underdevelopment In Nigeria's Education Sector And Potential Remedies: A Quest Towards Building A Safer Nigerian Society
Chukwu, Christian Chima PhD, & Ikwun, Rigobert Odama
**Department of Sociology/Intelligence & Security Studies,*
Novena University, Ogume, Delta State, Nigeria;
***Department of Haematology,*
University of Calabar, Calabar.- 561-574

UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN LIBRARY

33. Stakeholders' Participation In School Health Programs: Pathway To Safer Schools For A Safer World.
Adewale Owolabi, Amao-Taiwo, Bukola
**Medifield Healthcare **University of Lagos-* 575-586

34. Perceived Participatory Decision Making, Provision of Infrastructure And Safety Culture In Nigerian Universities, Lagos State- **Okeleke, Queen Oluwatoyin; Nwankwo, Sarah Princess; Oladejo, Maruff Akinwale , Ejiogu, Aloy**
Department of Educational Management
University of Lagos, Akoka- 587-603

35. Analysis of Selected Contemporary African Drama In Building A Just And Safer Society
Clement Olujide Ajidahun, Ph.D
Department of English Studies Adekunle Ajasin University
Akungba Akoko, Ondo State- 604-617

36. Analysis Of Safety Education In The Construction Industry In Lagos State, Nigeria: Implications For Building A Safer World
Bankole Akanji Rafiu Ph.d, Ajala Anthony, Genty Kabiru Ph.D & Oderinde Michael Adekunle
Dept. of Industrial Relations and Personnel Management
Faculty of Management Sciences Lagos State University, Ojo.- 618-634

37. The Challenges Of Inadequate Physical Facilities In Public Secondary Schools Towards Building A Safer School Environment
Oluwatoyin Isaiah Awolola, Bolaji Gabriel Popoola
Department of Educational Management
University of Ibadan, Ibadan.- 635-652

38. Prevalence Of Juvenile Delinquency: A Strategic Threat To Building A Safer World - **FAMUYIWA, S.A. (Ph.D)**
Department of Human Kinetics and Health Education
University of Ibadan, Ibadan- 653-667

UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN LIBRARY

39. Exploring The Perspectives of T. S. Eliot's Work: "Murder In The Cathedral" For Building A Violence-free World
Odiaka, Stella Ifeyinwa Ph.D.
Department of Adult Education University of Ibadan, Ibadan- 668-679

40. Predictors Of Under-utilisation of Telemedicine Services Among Healthcare Practitioners In Oyo State Hospitals
Araromi, O.I and Oladipo, I.O.
Dept. of Human Kinetics and Health Education University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria- 680-698

41. Life Skills For Social Media Usage And Safety Behaviour Among Young Adults - **Omoregie C. O Ph.D**
Department of Adult Education University of Ibadan- 699-706

42. Between A Safer Society And A Safer School School: The Quest For Psychology Of Peace - **Oyesoji Aremu**
Strategic Studies Unit Institute for Peace and Strategic Studies, University of Ibadan- 707-730

43. Anatomy And Implications Of Hate Speeches In Building A Safer World- **Ojokheta, K.O. Ph.D, Akintola, M. A.**
Department of Adult Education,University of Ibadan, Nigeria- 731-742

44. Insecurity: Barriers To A Successful Provision Of Basic Education To Nomads
Professor Rashid, A. Aderinoye, Dr. Mildred Goren
**Dept. of Adult Education, University of Ibadan*
***Education Consultant Abuja, Nigeria-* 743-761

45. Education: A Smart Power Approach To Making The World Safe- **Samuel F.Ogundare**
Professor and Dean, College of Social and Management Sciences, Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijagun, Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State, Nigeria. - 762-783

UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN LIBRARY

46. Building A Safer Workplace: Factors Influencing Healthy Work Place Among Teaching Staff In Selected Universities
Ukpabi, Donatus Ph.D., Ishola, Ajibola. A.
**Department of Adult Education, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria.*
***Department of Psychology, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria. -* 784-805

47. Building The Culture of Peace And Peaceful Co-existence In Nigeria: The Transformative Power of The Social Media
Ojokheta, K.O. Ph.D; Oladeji, S.O. PH.D
**Professor, Department of Adult Education, University of Ibadan, Nigeria*
***Lecturer, Department of Adult Education, University of Ibadan, Nigeria-* 806-822

48. Student Academic Success In The University Of Ibadan: A Holistic Approach To Disciplinary Measures
Olufunmilayo O. Arotiba
Principal Assistant Registrar & Faculty Officer
Faculty of Education University of Ibadan- 823-837

49. Social Studies Education As An Effective Training Tool For Values and Character Development of Nigerian Youth
Ajogbeje, Olamide Olutoke
Social Studies Department, Osun State College of Education, Ila-Orangun.- 838-855

50. Implications Of Parents' Knowledge, Attitude and Practices of Child Physical Abuse In Building a Safer World
Adebunmi Oyebisi, Oyekola & Dele, Melekeowei
Department of Guidance & Counselling, University of Ibadan, Ibadan- 856-872

51. Knowledge and Attitude towards Upper Respiratory Tract Infectionsa among swimmers of Lagos State Sports Council
Omonode Tamaranmiebi Christine
Dept. Of Choaching And Training National Institude Surulere Lagos , Nigeria 873 -887

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LIFE SKILLS FOR SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE AND SAFETY BEHAVIOUR AMONG YOUNG ADULTS

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Introduction

History has been categorized into stone, iron, bronze, jet and information eras owing to predominant instrument that human beings use at each time. The 21st century is an information age because there are devices such as computer and facilities like internet that make ideas spread very fast among the people. Mobile phone became the most ubiquitous devise for receiving and passing information in the contemporary society and through it social media has been formed. According to Omoregie (2014), in Africa, mobile phones appear to be the commonest means of information but unfortunately there is little or not much learning going on by this media. Instead of using mobile phones for learning it is used mostly as a device for entertainment and leisure.

This paper identified life skills such as information organisation and responsive reading and texting as desirable skills that can produce healthy safe behaviour among young adults that is 'those who are between the ages of 18 to 24 with particular attention to outcomes associated with the transition to adulthood including citizenship and educational achievements' (Jeklelek and Brown, 2005). In a study carried out by Soyele (2015), it was found out that over seventy percent of participants lacked requisite literacy skills for the usage of social media and are prone to safety problems such as identity crisis, character victimization and personality crisis.

Life skills for social media usage have become important because there is hardly any productive activity in the contemporary society that does not require one form of skill or another. The ubiquity of social media usage among young adults in Nigeria with at-

tendant security problems therefore calls for identification of specific life skills that need to be developed and non formal outlets of training that can be deployed to save the younger generation from the adverse effects of social media especially in addressing security issues.

Skills and training

Skills are usually used in the context of training and not education. Encarta (2015) defined it as 'ability to do something well usually gained through training and experience'. While education is expected to be more planned and organized with rigid and prolonged duration resulting into knowledge, training focuses on a particular task that can produce skill. This distinction is important because the definition of Business Dictionary (2016) of skill as 'an ability and capacity acquired through deliberate, systematic, and sustained effort to smoothly and adaptively carry out complex activities or job functions involving ideas (cognitive skills), things (technical skills) and/ or people (interpersonal)'broadened skills to the extent that it seems to obliterate its difference from knowledge acquisition. This is why Boulet (2015) contends that 'knowledge is theoretical and skills are practical. You can know all the rules of a sport, know all the teams and all players, know all statistics, but this only makes you knowledgeable about this sport; it does not make you any good at it. To become good at a sport one must play it, practice its techniques and improve one's skills through experience'. Beyond knowledge and education which Omoregie (2016) describes as a systematic process of knowledge and attitudinal accumulation which results in positive change of behaviour, skill extends to non - formal and informal spheres of learning which are basically promoted in training programmes. In the context of this paper life skills are seen in the domain of training and not strict educational activities.

Life skills

Life skills ordinary means skills that human beings need to live and possibly earn a living. However, there is much more to life than earning a living, and we want more from education than productive work-

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ers, we want citizens who can discharge the responsibilities that go with living in a democratic society and with becoming parents (Wingenbach & Kahler, 1997). This means that for workers to be functional in the society, they will need to have basic skills like reading, writing, speaking, listening and thinking skills such as ability to learn, creative thinking, decision making, problem solving as well as personal qualities, that is, responsibilities, self esteem, self management, sociability, and integrity. (Brock,1992).

Consequently, Life skills are the skills that make people deal effectively with day to day challenges. Since the challenges of the modern day are becoming complex, it means the skills for survival in the society are also getting sophisticated. Subastree & Radhakrisnan (2014) refers to life skills as a positive behaviour that encompasses a mix of knowledge, behaviour, attitudes, and values and designates the possession of certain skills and know how to do something positively, or reach an aim. This supports the discussion of the United Nations inter – agency meeting in 1992 where life skills education was advocated to facilitate the practice and reinforcement of psychosocial skills in a culturally and developmentally appropriate way (WHO, 1999). This means that in an age of information explosion, young adults need life skills for social media usage which would help them to organize themselves and relate more effectively in the society they belong.

Social media usage

Social media refers to virtual community through which people communicate and interact online. They include facebook, twitter, linkedIn, google+ and instagram. These are means of interaction which makes communication easier than previous eras in history. Social media is usually used interchangeably with social networking sites. social media still include other categories like blogs and microblogs, collaborative projects such as wikipedia, virtual game worlds, virtual social worlds and content communities such

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as YouTube. Broughtom (2009) opines that social networking involves use of online platform or website that enables people to communicate, usually for social purpose, through a variety of services, most of which are web-based and offer opportunities for people to interact through the internet e.g. via email or instant messaging. There are evidences of abuses in social media usage such as spending too much on phone to the detriment of more productive activities, posting private information that can undermine security to life, relating or seeking relationship with people of dubious character, rumour mongering, negative computer simulation and posting false messages as true.

Life skills for social media

Young adults need to deal with challenges of abuses in the usage of social media. This is because social media has produced a culture of instant messaging, hasty reactions to comments and unbridled belief in mere opinions that are not backed up with facts derived from informed judgment and objective search for knowledge. Life does not always give instant solutions to problems as the sub culture suggests. When a student uses social media to an extent that it robs him or her quality time on studying and discussion with teachers or those who are related to the study then some things have become wrong.

This means that personalities of young adults and their demographic characteristics of age, sex and educational levels have to be considered in decision on when they own personal phones and how much time they need to spend on it. Since parental control cannot be ensured in phones like cable television, extra effort should be made in determining access of young adults to phones. Their minds can be tutored to appreciate the fact that what they constantly see dominates their lives and forms their character.

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Benefits of social media

There are numerous benefits accruing from the use of Social media. Its speed, accessibility, interactivity and reach cannot be compared to other media of communication. Social media has enhanced society in areas such as:

i. Channel of quick recall and transfer of information: information is easily known and disseminated through social media platforms. It is faster and cheap when one communicates information through social media. Furthermore, information is easily verified, through social media and information on productivity is also gotten through this medium.

ii. Higher speed of communication: social media has increased the rate of communication in every area of life. People do not have to travel to places before seeing each other or transacting business again. It enables one to communicate with people with little stress and cost.

iii. Relationship formation: one of the major benefits that cannot be contended is that social media has helped to strengthen cordial relationship among people. People get to relate with new and existing friends, customers or clients through this medium and a lot of profitable offline relationships have emanated from the use of these sites. Perhaps, one of the strongest appeals of Social Media is its ability to bridge the gap between known and unknown people and can reestablish lost relationship. This particularly helps strong and budding organizations to attract and improve on their connection with clients.

iv. Social media is relatively cheap. Since most parents do not make fund available to their childrenfor calls and texting, it can be very difficult for them to utilize the phones for social networking if not that it is relatively cheap. Hence, this cheap cost has made it possible for it to strengthen relationships among young adults.

Social media and safety behaviour among young adults

In the contemporary society where there are increasing incidences of crimes, violence, conflicts, kidnapping, sexual abuses and psy-

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chological problems, it is high time young adults became conscious of safety behaviour. With the presence of social media, scenes that used to be far and hidden from ones experiences have become near. All sorts of information can be found on the social media, ranging from death from road accidents killings by war and ritualists to riots and provocative statements. The most disturbing of the trend is that some people post everything happening in their lives on social media.

Recently in Nigeria, someone who uses human beings as rituals confessed that he got information on most of his victims from social medium. He said trsces his victims through their postings unlike the age long belief of keeping ones plans to oneself until they are actualized, people now share their dreams, aspirations and even their plans on social media. For example what is the essence of posting on social media that one is in an airport about to board a flight or that he/she just arrived back in the country. These postings can constitute hazards to the user of social media. Although social media create opportunity for people to advertise of publicise their programmes, caution should be taken not to give information that would put ones security at risk. Self preservation arguably is the first law of nature since it is on it that other levels of sustenance are built. One needs to ensure safety of life by what one posts on the internet taking a cue from Yoruba saying that you can only be sure of whom you love, you cannot be sure of those who love you.

Conclusion

Since the usage of social media is growing at a fast rate in Nigeria, efforts should be made by all educational institutions and organisations to media skills that young adults will be able to use social media positively to advance their personal interest and community mobilisation. The guiding principle should be responsible reading and texting. It is not every idea or feeling or happening that should be shared on social media. The questions that should guide responsible usage of social media are: am I protected by this message? Can I keep my privacy after sharing this? Do I respect the

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person of whom I am posting? Will I be respected after posting this? What will others feel about me after seeing this?
The overriding caution is to rarely share others people posting without adequate consideration of their truth and integrity tests.
It can be recommended that non-formal outlets of training in social media and mass media be developed by professional Adult Educators to address the usage of social media and security problems among young adults. Such training should identify their personality traits and goals in life. Rather than having a training programme specifically for the social media usage, a more workable recommendation is that in the several training programmes for young adults which are organized by social, religious and business organisations, training in social media usage should feature as topics that professionals in information communication technologies can handle. It is observed that in most of the training programmes organized in the past, emphasis are usually placed on potentials of social media in the promotion of social and business benefits. While the reality of its benefits cannot be denied, there is the urgent need to provide wholistic information on its usge which includes the impending problems that can be caused by its abuses by every user especially young adults.

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