

**SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE AND STUDENTS' CLASSROOM BEHAVIOUR IN PUBLIC
SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ONNA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA**

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the influence of social media usage on students' classroom behaviour in public secondary schools in Onna Local Government Area. The study specifically focused the influence of Facebook and WhatsApp on students' classroom behaviour in public secondary schools in Onna Local Government Area. Two specific objectives, two research questions and two hypotheses were raised to guide the study. Ex-post facto research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised 3178 SSII students in 9 public secondary schools in Onna Local Government Area during the 2025/2026 academic session. A sample of 1,080 students was selected using a simple random sampling technique. A researcher-developed instrument titled Social Media Usage and Learning Behaviour Questionnaire (SMULBQ) which was subjected to face validation and reliability test was used for data collection. Mean, standard deviation and p-value derived from the dependent t-test analysis were used to answer research questions and testing the hypotheses at .05 alpha level. The findings showed that usage of Facebook and WhatsApp significantly influenced students' classroom behaviour in public secondary schools in Onna Local Government Area. It was concluded that social media is a powerful factor in the classroom behaviour of students in public secondary schools because it has become an integral part of students' everyday social and learning experiences. It was recommended that Classroom teachers should incorporate Facebook and WhatsApp into instructional strategies by creating class groups and discussion forums that promote active learning, collaboration and continuous engagement among students.

KEYWORDS: Social Media Usage, Facebook, WhatsApp, Classroom Behaviour, Secondary School Students

INTRODUCTION

Over the years, classroom behaviour among students has become a source of concern to educationists as well as psychologists due to its significant influence on teaching effectiveness and learning outcomes. Classroom behaviour refers to the observable actions, attitudes and responses of students during instructional activities. These actions include but not limited to, attentiveness, participation, compliance with rules and interaction with teachers and peers. It encompasses both

positive behaviours such as active engagement and cooperation, as well as negative behaviours such as disruption, inattentiveness, noise-making, and disobedience. Among public secondary school students, there has been a growing trend of poor classroom behaviour characterized by lack of concentration, frequent distractions and diminished respect for instructional authority. Adeyemi and Adewale (2021) averred that inappropriate classroom behaviour often reflects underlying environmental and social influences that shape students' attitudes toward learning. Similarly, Eze and Okeke (2020) observed that indiscipline in schools is increasingly linked to factors beyond the classroom, including technological and social changes.

One of the most influential of these contemporary factors is social media usage, which has rapidly become an integral part of students' daily lives. Social media has grown from a small communication channel into an important part of everyday life which has shaped how people interact, learn and access information. As social media continue to become relevant, the number of users has continued to rise globally and many individuals now spend several hours each day browsing, posting and engaging across different platforms. This rapid growth has made social media a major force in personal relationships, education, business and public life. As the platforms evolve and new trends emerge, users, especially young people, increasingly rely on it for entertainment, expression and connection. These developments have raised important concerns about the learning behaviour, information quality and the influence of online interactions on attitudes and wellbeing of users. Recent observations shown that among users of social media, young people constitute the major consumers. This observation is in line with Harvey (2023) who opined that the use of social media has grown widely in society with recent statistical data showing high consumption rates among secondary students.

Social media usage is not only observed among students, organisations as well as big brands rely on these platforms as a primary avenue for communication, promotion and customer engagement, using them strategically to attract and retain new and existing target markets (Ekanem, 2023; Asuquo, 2026). In addition to serving these corporate purposes, social media usage offers students deeper benefits that extend into their view of self, community and the world. For young users, engaging in various forms of social media has become a routine activity that enhances communication, builds social connections and strengthens technical skills (Ekanem, 2023).

Among the most commonly used social media platforms are Facebook and WhatsApp. These platforms provide continuous access to communication, information and entertainment. Okorie (2023) noted that Facebook enables users to interact through posts, comments and multimedia sharing, thereby creating an environment of constant engagement. This continuous interaction shape how students allocate their attention and process information. Eze and Chukwu (2023) observed that while Facebook can support academic collaboration through group discussions and information sharing, its algorithm-driven content often exposes students to non-academic materials that compete with study time. Adekunle (2024) further explained that the personalized nature of content delivery encourages prolonged usage which may lead to reduced concentration and increased distraction during learning activities. This implies that, students who frequently engage with Facebook may develop fragmented attention patterns, reduced persistence on academic tasks and a preference for quick, surface-level information processing. Nwosu (2023) added that exposure to misinformation and non-academic content can further distort students' focus and learning priorities, thereby negatively influencing their overall academic behaviour.

Similarly, WhatsApp plays a crucial role in shaping students' learning behaviour due to its immediacy and interactive features. As a messaging platform, WhatsApp allows students to exchange information rapidly through text messages, voice notes, and multimedia content. Okafor (2023) highlighted that its communication and group interaction features enable collaborative learning through peer discussions and sharing of academic materials. This can positively influence learning behaviour by promoting cooperation, active engagement, and access to diverse learning resources (Ibrahim, 2023). However, the same features that enhance communication also contribute to behavioural challenges in learning contexts. Frequent notifications, group chats, and status updates can interrupt students' concentration, leading to divided attention and reduced cognitive engagement during study periods or classroom instruction. Musa (2023) noted that the constant need to check messages fosters habitual distraction, which undermines effective study habits and sustained focus. Furthermore, Nwankwo (2024) emphasized that the integration of academic and non-academic interactions on WhatsApp often blurs the boundary between learning and leisure, resulting in procrastination and reduced academic discipline.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Observations indicate that many students in Onna Local Government Area seem to spend considerable time on social media platforms such as Facebook WhatsApp, Instagram, and TikTok, even during school hours. This excessive engagement could result in habitual distraction, reduced attention span, and compulsive checking of notifications, all of which interfere with effective classroom participation. The prolonged exposure to these platforms seem to lead to behavioural tendencies such as restlessness, divided attention and lack of sustained focus during lessons. These issues seem to result in situations where students fail to follow instructions, engage minimally in classroom discussions, and exhibit disruptive behaviours that undermine the learning environment. Furthermore, the integration of entertainment content, peer interactions, and non-academic activities on social media may encourage off-task behaviour and reduce students' commitment to academic responsibilities. Students seem to develop poor classroom habits, including lateness to lessons, incomplete assignments, and low levels of engagement in collaborative learning activities.

These behavioural challenges not only disrupt classroom management but also have far-reaching implications for students' academic achievement and overall educational development. Poor classroom behaviour could limit students' ability to fully benefit from instructional activities, reduce teachers' effectiveness and negatively affect the learning outcomes of other students in the class. Moreover, persistent distraction and lack of engagement may hinder the development of essential cognitive and self-regulatory skills required for academic success. Despite the growing concerns surrounding social media usage and students' behavioural outcomes, existing studies have largely focused on its influence on academic performance, social interaction, or psychological well-being, with limited empirical attention given to how social media usage influence classroom behaviour of public secondary schools in Onna Local Government Area, which has created a gap in knowledge. Therefore, this study examined the influence of social media usage on students' classroom behaviour in public secondary schools in Onna Local Government Area.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The main purpose of the study was to determine the influence of influence of social media usage on students' classroom behaviour in public secondary schools in Onna Local Government Area. Specifically, the study determined:

- i. The influence of Facebook usage on students' classroom behaviour in public secondary schools in Onna Local Government Area.
- ii. The influence of WhatsApp usage on students' classroom behaviour in public secondary schools in Onna Local Government Area.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study.

- i. What is the influence of Facebook usage on students' classroom behaviour in public secondary schools in Onna Local Government Area?
- ii. How does WhatsApp influence students' classroom behaviour in public secondary schools in Onna Local Government Area?

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The following research hypotheses were formulated for the study.

- i. There is no significant influence of Facebook usage on students' classroom behaviour in public secondary schools in Onna Local Government Area.
- ii. WhatsApp usage does not significantly influence students' classroom behaviour in public secondary schools in Onna Local Government Area.

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

Ex-post facto research design was adopted for the study. The research design is a non-experimental research approach in which the researcher investigates possible relationships between variables after the events or conditions of interest have already occurred (Amajuoyi and Joseph, 2016). This design is considered suitable for this study because it enabled the researcher to study the influence of social media usage on students' classroom behaviour without manipulation of data collected because students have already been exposed to social media platforms prior to the study.

POPULATION OF THE STUDY

The population of the study comprised 3178 SSII students in 9 public secondary schools in Onna Local Government Area during the 2025/2026 academic session (Akwa Ibom State Secondary Education Board, AKSSEB, 2026).

SAMPLE AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

A sample size of 1080 SSII students was selected for the study. The sample size represented 33% of the population size. The sample size was selected using simple sampling procedure. A balloting system was adopted to select 5 public secondary schools from the 9 schools in Onna

Local Government Area. In each selected schools, 216 SSII students were selected. The process ensured that all the members of the population have equal chance of being selected for the study.

INSTRUMENTATION

Researcher's made instrument titled: Social Media Usage and Learning Behaviour Questionnaire (SMULBQ) was developed and used as instrument for data collection. Five items each were develop to measure students use of Facebook and Whatsapp. 20 items were developed measured learning behaviour of secondary school students. Response on the questionnaire were rated using a four-point rating scale and weighted SA-4, A-3, D-2 and SD-1.

METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

Mean, standard deviation and p-value derived from the dependent t-test analysis were used to answer research questions and testing the hypotheses at .05 alpha level.

RESULT

Research Question One

What is the influence of Facebook usage on students' classroom behaviour in public secondary schools in Onna Local Government Area?

Table 1: Summary of dependent t-test analysis of the influence of Facebook usage on learning behaviour of secondary school students

Variables	N	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean Difference	Correlation coefficient	P-value
Facebook usage	1080	16.24	3.16	49.47	.499	.000
Learning Behaviour	1080	65.71	8.66			

The result in Table 1 shows the influence of Facebook usage on students' classroom behaviour in public secondary schools in Onna Local Government Area. The result shows that the mean responses of students on Facebook usage and learning behaviour are 16.24 and 65.71 respectively, which leads to a mean difference of 49.47. The standard deviations also show that the students did not differ in their responses on Facebook usage and learning behaviour. The high mean difference produces a correlation coefficient of .499 that is significant because $p = .000$ to show that Facebook usage has high influence on learning behaviour. Hence, this result indicates that Facebook usage greatly influences students' classroom behaviour in public secondary schools in Onna Local Government Area.

Research Question Two

How does WhatsApp usage influence students' classroom behaviour in public secondary schools in Onna Local Government Area?

Table 2: Summary of dependent t-test analysis of the influence of WhatsApp usage on learning behaviour of secondary school students

Variables	N	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean Difference	Correlation coefficient	P-value
WhatsApp usage	1080	14.74	2.62	50.97	.404	.001
Learning behaviour	1080	65.71	8.66			

The result in Table 2 shows the influence of WhatsApp usage on students' classroom behaviour in public secondary schools in Onna Local Government Area. The result shows that the mean responses of students on WhatsApp usage and learning behaviour are 14.74 and 65.71 respectively, which leads to a mean difference of 50.97. The standard deviations also show that the students did not differ in their responses on WhatsApp usage and learning behaviour. The high mean difference produces a correlation coefficient of .404 that is significant because $p = .001$ to show that WhatsApp usage has high influence on learning behaviour. Hence, this result indicates that WhatsApp usage greatly influences students' classroom behaviour in public secondary schools in Onna Local Government Area.

Hypothesis One

There is no significant influence of Facebook usage on students' classroom behaviour in public secondary schools in Onna Local Government Area.

Table 3: Summary of dependent t-test analysis of the influence of Facebook usage on learning behaviour of secondary school students

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Mean difference	t-value	p-value	Decision at $P \leq .05$ alpha
Facebook usage	1080	16.24	3.16	49.47	166.01	.000	Significant
Learning behaviour	1080	65.71	8.66				

*significant at $p \leq .05$, $df = 1079$

The result in Table 3 shows if there is significant influence of Facebook usage on students' classroom behaviour in public secondary schools in Onna Local Government Area. The result indicates that the t-value of 166.01 is significant because the p-value of .000 is less than .05 alpha level. Hence, there is a significant influence of Facebook usage on the students' classroom behaviour in public secondary schools in Onna Local Government Area.

Hypothesis Two

WhatsApp usage does not significantly influence students’ classroom behaviour in public secondary schools in Onna Local Government Area.

Table 4: Summary of dependent t-test analysis of the influence of WhatsApp usage on learning behaviour of secondary school students

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Mean difference	t-value	p-value	Decision at P ≤ .05 alpha
WhatsApp usage	1080	14.74	2.62	50.97	180.01	.001	Significant
Learning Behaviour	1080	65.71	8.66				

*significant at $p \leq .05$, $df = 1079$

The result in Table 4.9 shows if there is significant influence of WhatsApp usage on students’ classroom behaviour in public secondary schools in Onna Local Government Area. The result indicates that the t-value of 180.01 is significant because the p-value of .001 is less than .05 alpha level. Hence, there is a significant influence of WhatsApp usage on the students’ classroom behaviour in public secondary schools in Onna Local Government Area.

DISCUSSION

The findings of the study revealed that Facebook usage positively influence students’ classroom behaviour in public secondary schools in Onna Local Government Area. The corresponding test of hypotheses revealed that there is a significant influence of Facebook usage on the students’ classroom behaviour in public secondary schools in Onna Local Government Area. This finding suggests that when the facebook is appropriately used, it can enhance students’ engagement, interaction and participation during classroom activities. It further indicates that the influence is consistent and meaningful, implying that Facebook usage contributes in measurable ways to variations in students’ classroom conduct. This positive influence may be attributed to the interactive and collaborative features of Facebook, which support communication and information sharing among students. The finding is consistent with Okorie (2023) who found that Facebook enables users to interact through posts, comments, and multimedia sharing, which translate into increased participation in classroom discussions and improved peer-to-peer interaction.

The findings of the study revealed that WhatsApp usage positively influence students’ classroom behaviour in public secondary schools in Onna Local Government Area. The corresponding test of hypotheses revealed that there is a significant influence of Whatsapp usage on the students’ classroom behaviour in public secondary schools in Onna Local Government Area. This result implies that WhatsApp usage contributes to improved learning and behavioural outcomes such as active participation, attentiveness and effective peer interaction during classroom instruction. This may be attributed to the fact that Whatsapp has the capacity to facilitate instant communication and collaborative learning. The finding of the study aligns with that of Okafor (2023) who found that WhatsApp supports group interaction and real-time exchange of information, thereby enabling students to engage in peer discussions and share academic materials. Similarly, the finding is consistent with that of Ibrahim (2023) that the platform enhances access to educational resources and promotes cooperative learning practices.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that social media usage especially Facebook and WhatsApp has a significant positive influence on students' classroom behaviour in public secondary schools in Onna Local Government Area. The results indicate that when these platforms are utilized for academic purposes, they enhance students' participation, attentiveness, collaboration and overall engagement during classroom instruction.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Classroom teachers should incorporate Facebook and WhatsApp into instructional strategies by creating class groups and discussion forums that promote active learning, collaboration and continuous engagement among students.
- The Ministry of Education should develop and enforce policies that regulate the use of smartphones and social media during school hours to minimize distractions and ensure that usage aligned with academic objectives.
- Parents should actively monitor and guide their children's social media usage at home to ensure that it supports their academic development and does not interfere with study time or classroom conduct.

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